



## **GEORGE WASHINGTON CARVER HIGH SCHOOL**

**Christopher B. Lindsey – Principal**

**3100 8th Street**

**Columbus, GA 31906**

**“Train up the child in the way he should go,  
and when he is old he will not depart from it.”**

### **School Improvement (SI) Plan 2007 – 2010 Part A – Narrative Section**

**Muscogee County School District (MCSD)**

<i>I. Purpose</i> .....	3
<i>II. Comprehensive Needs Assessment of the School</i> .....	4
<i>III. Schoolwide Reform Strategies</i> .....	9
<i>IV. Instruction by Highly Qualified Teachers</i> .....	11
<i>V. High Quality and Ongoing Professional Learning</i> .....	12
<i>VI. Strategies to Increase Parental Involvement</i> .....	14
<i>VII. Transition of Students to New Grade Span</i> .....	16
<i>VIII. Decisions Regarding the Use of Assessments</i> .....	17
<i>IX. Coordination and Integration of Services and Programs</i> .....	18
<i>X. Effective and Timely Assistance to Students</i> .....	19
<i>XI. Disaggregation of Data</i> .....	20
<i>References</i> .....	21

# **I. Purpose**

## **System Beliefs**

{Coming Soon}

## **System Vision**

We envision a school district in which:

- Each student is given multiple opportunities to excel in his/her academic, social, emotional and physical development in a safe, nurturing environment.
- Well-prepared, responsible, and caring employees are committed to excellence in education
- Parents, community members, staff and students, are full partners in the education of children.

## **System Mission**

The Muscogee County School District is committed to providing education experiences that will enable a student to become a lifelong learner, enter the work force with necessary skills and achieve academic and personal potential.

## **G. W. Carver Mission: Living to Learn, Learning for Life**

### **G. W. Carver Beliefs:** We believe that:

1. All students can learn.
2. Students have different learning styles and should be afforded a variety of instructional strategies.
3. A safe and physically comfortable environment promotes student learning.
4. A student's self esteem is enhanced by positive relationships and mutual respect among and between students and staff.
5. Student learning is the chief priority for the school.
6. The commitment to continuous improvement is imperative if our school is going to enable students to become confident, self-directed, lifelong learners.
7. Each student is a valued individual with unique physical, social, emotional and intellectual needs.
8. Teachers, administrators, students, parents, and community should be active participants in the education of our children.

## **G.W. Carver Vision**

The George Washington Carver family—administrators, teachers, students, staff, parents, and community—is striving to ensure that the academic achievement of our students is of foremost importance. The vision of the George Washington Carver family is to keep the three C's—Communication, Collaboration, and Cooperation in the forefront as we strive to realize our goals.

## II. Comprehensive Needs Assessment of the School

The administrators, faculty, staff, students, parents, and community of George Washington Carver High School have all come together in a concerted effort to make AYP, and thus, be removed from the current NI status. In doing this, a needs assessment was completed to determine the areas of weakness. The leadership/data analysis team began to disaggregate all demographic information relative to academic achievement (test scores, attendance/tardy rate, retention rates, grade to grade passage, etc.) This information was gathered and brought to the table for review. The GAPSS analysis was completed in November of 2006, and these results were also brought to the table. Faculty members completed surveys prior to the GAPSS analysis.

As a result of this needs assessment, the following was determined for the G.W. Carver High School family (to include ALL students—regular education, special needs, advanced placement, etc.):

- Increase the passage rate of mandatory tests (GHS GT, EOCT)
- Increase the graduation rate
- Increase student attendance rates
- Improve academic achievement
- Increase parental involvement
- Develop professional learning communities
- Refocus teacher attention to student performance
- Implement GPS
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### **Process Used for Completing Needs Assessment/School Profile**

Actively involved in the needs assessment were parents, the PTSA, Magnet Parents, GADOE, G. W. Carver Faculty and Staff, and Curriculum Council. Also, actively involved were our Partners-In-Education (PIE). They all played a part in identifying the problem areas and identifying methods by which to eliminate them.

Parental input was encouraged through letters explaining the need for improvement in areas of weakness (academic achievement, attendance, facility/safety, etc.) Parents were also sent surveys on which they could express their concerns in areas of strengths and weaknesses of George Washington Carver High School.

Parental involvement was encouraged through the PTSA and other teacher/parent contact. Parents were invited to volunteer their services at school. PTSA was instrumental in working with Mr. Lindsey in renovating and correcting the numerous safety issues in reference to the physical safety of the building (peeling paint, potholes, drainage problems, etc.)

The PTSA initiated a program in which student report cards were distributed during PTSA meetings. Parents were then invited to pick up report cards during the day. Parents signed in as they picked up the cards, and records showed an increase each grading period of the numbers of parents attending. These were all efforts to foster more parental involvement.

Our Partners-In-Education (PIE). Columbus Foundries, Georgia Power, Columbus-Fort Benning Medical Association, and Citizen's Trust Bank offer innumerable opportunities to our students. These include the All-Star Breakfast (to reward improved academic achievement in those students who often do

not make the honor roll), The Honor's Day Picnic, a shadowing program, field trips to Engineering Day, the Shakespeare Festival, and a fishing trip for special needs students who have excelled throughout the school year. They also support our students during Literary Competition, essay competitions and provide judges for math and science fairs.

In August of 2004, G. W. Carver High School was placed on NI status for AYP. The area of deficiency was test participation. Realizing that absenteeism is detrimental to students' achievement, promotion, graduation, self-esteem, and employment potential (DeKalb, 1999), several efforts have been revised and implemented to correct this deficiency.

1. The new attendance policy for MCSD has already proved to be effective. This policy states that parents of students between the ages of 6 and 16 are to be held accountable for excessive absences of their children. These parents can be fined, given community service and/or incarcerated if efforts are not made to keep their children in school. Students 17 and older will be dropped from the roll after 10 consecutive absences. Students will lose their driving permits in the event of excessive absences. Parents are notified after three absences by a letter generated from the attendance office. After 7 absences (excused or unexcused), the student loses credit and must appeal to regain credit in classes in which credit is lost.
2. School administrators will track all students assigned to G. W. Carver who are at alternative school settings (TAP, Rose Hill, etc). These students are included in our test results (oftentimes assigned directly to these alternative settings from middle school), and we are not aware of their test participation. Counselors and administrators will work directly with the counselors, faculty, and administration of these alternate settings in stressing the importance of attendance, especially during testing.
3. All CAG (Counseling Advisory Group) and classroom teachers stress the importance of attendance everyday.
4. All departments have been asked to reward students with perfect attendance. This can be done individually by teachers or as a departmental project.
5. Our Partners in Education now recognize students who have perfect attendance during the Star Student Recognition Program (recognition of students who may not be honor roll students, but are showing improvement) each nine weeks. Teachers turn in the names of any students with perfect attendance so that they may be recognized during this program.

Though we did meet AYP in terms of participation with 99%, we did not meet AYP in 2005 and 2006 for the following reasons:

(2004-2005) Academic performance: 75.9% of students in English/Language Arts and 47.7% of students in Math.

We did not meet the required 81.6% in English/Language Arts and 68.6% in Math on the GHSGT.

(2005-2006) Academic performance: 82% of students in English/Language Arts and 53.6% of students in Math.

Second Indicator: Only 47.1% of Black students graduated and 60% was required (2004-2005)  
Only 44.8% of Black students graduated and 60% was required (2005-2006)

Based on the passage rate of 1<sup>st</sup> time test takers of the GHSGT, and the percentage of black students graduating, several initiatives have been implemented to improve these statistics.

- Inclusion Classes (in an effort to increase special needs graduation/passage rate)
- A One Week/All Day GHSGT Blitz (Review)
- A Graduation Coach
- HS 101 for all 1<sup>st</sup> time freshmen (Orientation for a successful high school career)
- Two 30 minute CAG (Counselor Advisory Group) sessions per week (Tuesday and Thursday)
- ZAP (Zeroes Aren't Permitted)
- WOW (Working on the Work)
- Predictor Tests (English and Math) Pull out tutorials for juniors during Tuesday and Thursday CAG
- Predictor Tests (all areas of GHSGT) for 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> graders during GHSGT administration

In order to be in compliance with NCLB, all subgroups must also be accountable. All special needs children who are not self contained, are in inclusion classes. This was fully implemented this year with each grade level of each discipline represented.

In an effort to prepare first time test takers for the GHSGT, a predictor test in math and language arts was administered in November of 2006. These are the two areas in which we must improve in an effort to make AYP. The results of this test were used to assess the areas of weakness. Once the students were identified, letters were sent home to their parents informing them of their child's areas of weakness and of our intention to begin tutorials. They were asked to sign and return the letter. Beginning in January, 2007 until March, 2007, these identified students were pulled out during CAG periods Tuesday's and Thursday's from 7:45 until 8:20 for tutorial sessions.

During the week before the GHSGT, all juniors, 1<sup>st</sup> time test takers, and seniors who have not passed all areas of the test are involved in a one week Blitz. All disciplines must include powerpoint presentations, handouts, and other visual aids in an effort to keep the students engaged throughout this week long process. A rotating schedule was utilized this year so that the same discipline would not be at the same period each day (especially the last period, as the students are becoming tired). For example, Monday's schedule was: 1<sup>st</sup> period—Language Arts; 2<sup>nd</sup> period—Math; 3<sup>rd</sup> period—Science; 4<sup>th</sup> Period—Social Studies. On Tuesday, the Social Studies would be 1<sup>st</sup> period; Language Arts-2<sup>nd</sup> period; Math-3<sup>rd</sup> period; Science-4<sup>th</sup> period. Students were given a 10 to 15 minute break between each class period. During lunch, students went to the lunchroom and returned to the auditorium with their lunches. They were also provided fruit and drinks throughout the tutorials. In addition to this, during the week of test, students reported to the auditorium during 4<sup>th</sup> block to receive a final review of the test which would be taken the following morning.

Additionally, a breakdown of EOCT scores and content by teacher was examined in an effort to assess the areas of weaknesses. Teachers revamp their teaching styles, lesson plans, etc. to better prepare the students by focusing only on the content areas necessary.

USA Test Prep Software for EOCT & GHSGT (all content areas) was fully utilized by all teachers in an effort to strengthen the weaknesses of each individual student.

The Instructional Extension plan was funded and fully utilized. Each GHSGT area provided tutorials after school from 3 until 6 (Monday—Language Arts/Writing; Tuesday—Math; Wednesday—Science; Thursday—Social Studies). Since science is the most critical area, tutorials were available everyday after school.

Several initiatives are in place in an effort to increase the graduation rate. The appointing of a graduation coach in the school is most significant. Under this umbrella falls the implementation of several programs.

ZAP(zeroes aren't permitted) is a weekly scheduled effort to allow students to make up any assignments on which he has received a zero. On Thursdays, from 3:00 until 5:00, students report to the media center to complete work assigned to them by their teachers. Teachers fill out the paper work required to assign them to ZAP. The students sign these, and then take them to their parents, who must sign indicating that they are aware of the day and time of the child's opportunity to make up the work (70 is the highest grade that can be made.) Teachers submit the assigned work to the ZAP coordinator (the graduation coach) who will give the work to the child when he reports. Complete work is returned to the teachers' boxes the next day. If a student does not report to ZAP, the forms are returned to the teachers informing that the student did not show. The child will then be assigned to ZAP the following week. If he does not show then, then his zero stands and his ZAP assignment information is filed.

Also, in an effort to increase graduation rates is the Grade Recovery initiative. If a student (especially a senior) fails a class, teachers are asked to offer a contract in which the student will be allowed to complete a major assignment, take a comprehensive test of skills required for the class, etc. that will enable him to receive credit for the class if he passes. He also must agree to be in attendance in class everyday, unless he has documented doctor's visits or court appearances.

Also, if students receive a grade lower than 60 during the first grading period, teachers are asked to contact parents, inform them of the actual grade of the student, and let them know that the child will be given a 60 so that he still has a chance of passing the class, if he puts forth the effort necessary.

Finally, since the science portion of the GHSGT was a barrier for many seniors, a special study skills class was established during the 4<sup>th</sup> block for them. Three science teachers teamed to prepare them for the test retake.

## **Analysis of Data.**

One of G. W. Carver High School's goals is to increase student achievement at all grade levels. As is evident in our mission statement, G. W. Carver High School provides all students with a quality education that will enable them to be learners for life. In our school improvement plan, improving student achievement has been a major focus over the last five years. Teachers are encouraged to use test data to effectively improve student performance. This is a strong point among our G.W. Carver family.

When, as a result of test results, failure rates, graduation rates, attendance rates, etc., the G.W. Carver family immediately began to reassess methods of instruction. G.W. Carver faculty members began aggressively seeking the optimal method of assessment for all students. As a result, students complete portfolios, journals, projects, skits, videos, and powerpoint presentations. In science classes students perform investigations through dissections, experiments, virtual software, and research in environmental concerns.

Interrelationships between subjects are emphasized, and collaboration among classes produces integrated learning. It is common for a math class to take measurements, graph them with a

graphing calculator, analyze the data in science class, write about it in language class, and prepare it for public dissemination in technology class

Because of the low academic achievement of the special needs population, regular, mandatory SST meetings were scheduled to ensure that on-going assessments of these students' needs were met. IEP's were visited often to update. Also, during the after school tutorials and the study skills classes during the school day, special needs teachers were paired with the regular education tutors in an effort to make sure that **all** students' needs were met.

Relevant to low academic achievement is the attendance rate. Absenteeism was of great concern and contributed greatly to the failure rate. Implemented was a strict attendance policy which significantly improved our rate of attendance.

As outlined in the "Comprehensive Needs" section of this document, this policy proved to be effective. It involves the timely informing of parents of their child's absences (3 days, 5 days, 7 days) This policy states that parents of students between the ages of 6 and 16 are to be held accountable for excessive absences of their children.

As a result, attendance rates rose from 86.2 % in 2003-2004, to 92.3% in 2004-2005, to 94% in 2005-2006. As of the first semester in 2006-2007, the attendance rate was 95%.

This policy also allow us to meet AYP in reference to test participation after two years of 99 to 100% of 1<sup>st</sup> time GHSGT takers

The week long GHSGT Blitz, after school tutorials, study skills classes, pull out tutorials, etc., also outlined under "Comprehensive Needs" were implemented as a result of the low passage rate of 1<sup>st</sup> time test takers in Language Arts and Math.

## **Goals**

After careful analysis of assessed needs, we have identified areas in need of improvement. Those areas include increasing parental and community involvement (**NCLB 4**), promoting collaboration and integration of curriculum (**NCLB 1,2,3,5**), and most importantly, promoting higher student achievement (**NCLB 1,2,5**). These were shared with the faculty and staff of G. W. Carver High School and it was agreed that our action plan will be developed with these goals as a focal point. Each action plan was reviewed to ensure that it was consistent with the school's beliefs and mission.

It is our belief that the interventions discussed in each area will positively influence the three areas targeted (parental and community involvement, collaboration and integration of curriculum and higher student achievement)

### **III. Schoolwide Reform Strategies**

#### **Opportunities for All Students to Learn** (NCLB 1,2,5; IDEA 1,3)

Provisions are made at George Washington Carver High School to provide a quality education for traditional, advanced, gifted and magnet students as well as students with special needs. Since research has repeatedly demonstrated that special needs students are most successful in a heterogeneous environment, we place as many special needs students as possible in cooperative learning classes. A regular and a special education teacher staff these classes jointly. All courses are scheduled based on the individual student's IEP.

Our strong desire for success for all of our students has led us to offer both AP classes and dual enrollment (with Columbus State University and Columbus Tech) for as many students as qualify. Currently we have 130 students in AP courses.

G. W. Carver also offers the IMST Magnet program for students with a stated and demonstrated interest in science, mathematics, and/or technology. Admission is based on test scores, grades, recommendations of teachers and counselors, and the student statement of interest.

George Washington Carver assesses student needs constantly. Although students pre-register for coursework for the entire year the preceding spring, individual adjustments are made at the end of every semester. Counselors meet with the students to ensure students remain on-track for their selected diploma.

#### **Scientifically Based Strategies**

If students are to learn, then they must be totally engaged with their learning process. According to Philip Schlechty (2001), it is the business of the school to provide students with the type tasks which will solicit this engagement (p. xiv). G.W. Carver has implemented the WOW initiative which embraces this theory of engagement.

Once enrolled at G. W. Carver, every possible effort is expended to identify students with diverse learning abilities. Special needs children are now in inclusion classes in all academic areas. Special needs and regular education teachers team teach in an effort to meet the needs of all of the students enrolled in their class. Students who are identified as gifted and talented are placed in academically challenging courses. All teachers who work with gifted students are provided with the opportunity to receive extra training to assist them in working with those students. Gifted students also are assigned to work with a certified gifted and talented teacher.

Additionally, we recognize that students who have been identified as "at risk" may be hindered in their attempts to achieve academic excellence. According to Payne (2003), people whose incomes are less than \$25,000 per year tend not to attain their high school diplomas. Because of situations stemming from the lack of familial support and feelings of invisibility within the school, students from these dwellings are habitually absent (p. 10). These students receive support from counselors, the Student Support Team (SST) in which the counselors, teachers and school psychologist (a Ph.D.) help students meet their needs. Free counseling is available to our students from the school psychologist. We also have the student initiative, Peer Helpers. They also receive special support from their teachers as they work through difficult periods. In an evaluation of our school's academic day program, Beth Adams, stated in her paper that Cotton (1995) suggested that high needs students (those struggling to pass the exit exams) be placed in small classes of 22 or fewer whenever possible. It was suggested that schools use grouping

strategies to keep the student/teacher ration low, especially during instruction aimed at priority objectives (Cotton). As cited in McDonald (2002), many successful programs for at-risk students feature small classes that allow teachers to focus on students and develop strong, supportive relationships. We are attempting to lower the student/teacher ratio so that we may offer more individual attention to our students at-risk. This individual attention will afford these students the opportunity to become more comfortable with the school setting which will increase their attendance rate.

Our school addresses the developmental needs of students in numerous ways. Student evaluations and programs vary from grade to grade. For freshmen, TAP scores, previous grades, and recommendations of teachers play a vital role in their placement. The freshman counselor, magnet lead teachers, the athletic director, career education supervisor, and JROTC instructors visit eighth graders in every middle school during the spring of their eighth grade year. Together, coursework is chosen. The selections are then reviewed by the school and the parents to ensure that they are in line with the student's abilities. Students desiring to be a part of the IMST Magnet program submit an application, an essay, grades, and recommendations from their science and math teachers. Parents and students select electives for students in the magnet program jointly.

Once a student is enrolled in G. W. Carver High School, many programs are in place. CAG teachers keep individual records on and advise every student. Every grade counselor meets individually and in groups with all students to help them choose the diploma they wish to pursue. This also ensures that every student is on track. All students take achievement tests, the GHSGT, the ASVAB, ACCESS, and have the opportunity to take the PSAT, ACT, and SAT. Remedial classes and programs are available for students demonstrating that they need additional assistance. Tutoring is available for all students.

With respect to special education, federal regulations mandate annual Individualized Educational Plans (IEP's) and meetings. At those meetings, developmental needs are discussed and determined.

All courses at G. W. Carver follow the Georgia Quality Core Curriculum objectives or the newly implemented GPS. In addition, all academic departments have a pacing or curriculum guide in place. The guide identifies specific measurements and goals.

Social and emotional development also is addressed. Various classes, programs and clubs sponsor social events during the school year. G. W. Carver views itself as a family rather than a school. All of our family members are quick to respond to any need of another family member.

There is a constant, open line of communication among the administrators, teachers, parents, and the students to ensure that the student is not only learning, but also is progressing towards graduation. Accordingly, the student who is struggling can often be re-routed in a manner that strongly supports his/her chances of succeeding academically and emotionally.

An on campus probation officer has been assigned to G.W. Carver as a preventive measure. Teachers may refer students who may be struggling socially and/or emotionally to the probation officer. He counsels them one-on-one in an effort to deter any possible actions that might prove detrimental to the students.

**Use of Title I Paid Employees for Instruction or Improvement of Student Learning\*** *{Title I Schools Only: Describe how each employee paid with Title I funds will support student learning.} N/A*

## **IV. Instruction by Highly Qualified Teachers**

**(NCLB1,3,5; IDEA 1,4)**

The Muscogee County School District (MCSD) maintains a list of certified personnel who are available for employment. The MCSD personnel department interviews and screens all applicants. The school district maintains a web site listing available positions. It also advertises in appropriate professional journals, newspapers, etc. Each spring the MCSD sponsors a “Job Fair.” This is a recruiting fair, which attracts prospective teachers nationwide. The recruitment fair invites individuals completing teacher training from all colleges and universities, as well as veteran teachers who are considering relocation. All schools in the MCSD present a booth at this fair and talk to prospective teachers. In addition to the Recruitment Fair, all MCSD High Schools set up booths at the CTAE Fair in an effort to recruit qualified Career Technical Agricultural Education teachers. We feel that our students are an inducement for any good teacher, so they actively participate in this process. In the event that HQ teachers in critical areas are not available, the principal makes every effort to recommend the hiring of only those who have a background/degree in the discipline area in which he/she will fill.

Once prospects have been identified for a position at G. W. Carver, the principal (Mr. Lindsey) invites them to come to the school for an interview. If he feels that the prospective teacher would make a good match for our G. W. Carver family, he invites the chairperson of the department to join the interview. The principal and the department chairperson take the prospective teacher on a tour of our school. After all interviews are complete, Mr. Lindsey and the department chairperson discuss the relative merits of the candidates. Selection criteria is based on content knowledge, a positive attitude, knowledge of a wide variety of teaching strategies, professionalism, and a willingness to participate in all aspects of “Carver Family Life.”

## **V. High Quality and Ongoing Professional Learning**

### **Professional Learning for Staff (NCLB 1,3,5; IDEA 1,4)**

On-going professional development utilized by our staff to ensure that G. W. Carver continues to maintain highly qualified teachers includes:

- In-Tech (to ensure that all participants are skilled in the use of technology for specific subject areas. We have as many of 15 – 20 per year involved in training)
- Integrate Training (to ensure that all teachers are able to track academic progress of students)
- AP/Gifted Training for all interested teachers
- Math Collaborative
- What works in Schools workshop (2003-2004)
- Test Administration Training for all teachers (provided by Guidance department, 2004)
- Teachers trained on new attendance policy
- Framework for Understanding Poverty Workshop
- Highly Qualified questionnaires completed to assess needs of any teachers lacking highly qualified status.
- Training of more Mentors
- GPS training (Kaye Burke, Jaye McTighe)
- GAPSS Analysis
- Training for Inclusion
- Best Practice Workshops (classroom management, etc.)

### **Alignment to Standards**

Our teachers participate in local staff development, district wide in-service meetings, university offerings, and national conferences. They then utilize this information to revise classes within their disciplines. Teachers also continuously seek input from our alumni with respect to any additions that need to be added to the curriculum to better prepare our students for continuing education.

During the spring and summer of 2006, teachers were encouraged to develop effective lesson plans for each discipline in their subject areas. Learning communities were encouraged throughout the 2005-2006 school year. It was from this effort that the effective lesson plans were developed.

Teachers are provided with curriculum guides, pacing guides, GPS, QCC (for those still working under these), and TAP objectives, as well as school and district objectives. Regular departmental meetings allow discussion of concerns and needs for improvement. All teachers are strongly encouraged to check students' prior academic performance so that they will be able to work with individual students in areas of weakness. Every grading period our curriculum specialist completes a grade distribution and exception report to use as an aid to improvement in curriculum.

Textbook adoption every seven years allows revision of curriculum on a cyclical, departmental basis. Teacher, parent, student and community input is actively solicited.

## Assessment

G. W. Carver's faculty members receive feedback on their professional performance in a variety of ways. The faculty is observed by the administration during the school year. At the end of each evaluation a conference is held to discuss performance. Teachers use student-completed evaluations at the end of each semester. Teachers also visit other classrooms to observe techniques and to offer teachers feedback and advice. When an issue has a school-wide impact (such as performance on standardized tests), school-wide surveys are employed to provide useful information. Qualified statisticians analyze these surveys, and the resulting information is provided to all staff members.

Grade level analyses are done by subject and teacher to identify the breakdown of semester grades. With these analyses, instructors can compare the degree of student success in their classroom with those of other classes in the same subject. The data helps teachers and administrators to identify those classes in which students are having the most difficulty. This information is used to make such changes as course sequencing and pacing adjustments. The faculty also uses the data from standardized tests to provide them with important feedback in terms of student achievement. Specific weaknesses in areas such as reading comprehension, critical thinking, math computation, etc., are identified and teaching strategies and curriculum adjustments are made to promote improvement in these areas.

In-house assessments are very important and are used to identify necessary changes needed for greater student success.

Faculty members utilize teacher surveys given to their students at the end of each semester. These surveys help teachers evaluate their performance and help them assess progress made towards professional growth. Parents are invited to visit classrooms. Feedback from those visits also is used.

Teachers are actively involved in on-going staff development to ensure competency in assessing achievement. Because of the growing need of needs assessment, the following professional learning activities have been utilized.

- In-Tech (to ensure that all participants are skilled in the use of technology for specific subject areas. We have as many of 15 – 20 per year involved in training)
- Test Administration Training for all teachers (provided by Guidance department, 2004)
- GAPSS Analysis
- Training for Inclusion
- Data Utilization Guide Training
- Data Team
- Working on the Work (WOW)

# VI. Strategies to Increase Parental Involvement

## Parental Participation

Parents, students, alumni, administrative personnel, community, Partners-In-Education, elected officials, and business and industry work together as individuals and groups to achieve the goals and beliefs of G. W. Carver High School. The principal utilizes a wide variety of communication tools, both for communication and to elicit information. Communication modes include surveys, newsletters, booster club meetings, parent letters, committees, student-principal meetings, intercom announcements, memos, open houses, evaluations, orientations, and conferences.

Our principal is widely known and respected, and therefore is readily responded to by city officials, the media, board of education members, parent organizations, and the community as a whole. He has an open door policy, which creates an environment of comfort for every individual who wishes to voice his/her opinions. Everyone knows that his input will be weighed, and the information will be utilized when decision and policy-making occurs.

G. W. Carver High School has a systematic procedure established to ensure that the affairs of the school are properly communicated to the parents and the community. The faculty and staff recognize that promoting parental involvement is essential in increasing student achievement. Progress Reports are given periodically to parents to help them, along with the teachers, to monitor and improve student progress in all classes. Parents were also e-mailed progress reports. Students also receive these progress reports. Parental telephone contact is mandatory (logs kept of contact and results). Through a newsletter and a master calendar, test information is communicated to students, parents, and the community. The Georgia Department of Education issues the Georgia Public Report Card for parents each year. This report includes summary data about G. W. Carver High School, as well as other schools in the Muscogee County School District. The summary includes data such as number of students receiving free or reduced lunch, drop out rate, etc. In reference to the TAP, SAT, ACT, and other standardized tests, the Guidance Department distributes the results to students and plans meetings with students and teachers to interpret the results.

The following efforts have been made in continuing to increase parental involvement and awareness:

- PTSA meeting held in August to inform all parents of importance of attendance and of new attendance policy.
- Letter sent to parents informing them of NI status and their options in reference to their children.
- Parents notified by letter and/or phone call when students miss three days of school.
- Training Retreat for all PTSA officers.
- Counseling After Dark (3:00 until 8:00) is a guidance program, which allows parents to meet with counselors outside of school hours (one night each grading period)
- At least one grading period during the year, parents attend a PTSA meeting to pick up their child's report card. Teachers are available at that time for consultations.

## **Strategies for Building Parent Capacity to Assist in Student Learning**

We believe in family, and we want our students' families to be an integral part of their children's school life. To begin with, we communicate with the families through newsletters, telephone calls, and letters. Parents of students who are identified as having difficulty with the GHSGT receive registered letters explaining the student's deficiency, and notifying the parents of remedial activities as well as information on our web site. Parents also attend special seminars on study skills and test-taking skills to enable them to better assist their child.

Students and parents are provided with various websites from which they may practice for GHSGT, EOCT, SAT, etc. (usatestprep.) Students are provided with user name and password so that this site may be accessed from any location. Of course, parents may access the MCSD website for information in reference to AYP status and other pertinent information.

*Title I Schools: If the school employs one, list the duties of the parent coordinator. These duties must relate to building parent capacity to assist in academic achievement.} N/A*

## **Parent Contacts**

Parent-teacher conferences are encouraged throughout the school term. Teachers, parents, students, and the appropriate grade level counselor are present at all conferences. Notes are taken as to what all involved will do in an effort to ensure the success of the student. These conferences may be requested by administrators, teachers, parents, or counselors.

Teachers are required to contact parents of all students in danger of failing any class. Additionally, if a student is not successful and is failing at the time of progress reports or report cards, teachers call parents to inform them.

## **VII. Transition of Students to New Grade Span**

### **Plans for Transition**

It was realized after our needs assessment that far too many students were being lost between their freshman and senior year. In an effort to decrease this number, the following was implemented this year.

To assist in the transition from middle to high school, implemented was the HS 101 program. All first time 9<sup>th</sup> graders were enrolled in this course. In addition to addressing the smooth transition, this class also addresses the skills necessary to be successful high school students. These included study skills, character development, counseling, school rules, guidelines, etc. This initiative was implemented after visitation of two Atlanta area schools utilizing 9<sup>th</sup> Grade Academies. Additionally, at a High School Improvement conference held in Perry, GA, several school reform programs, America's Choice, High Schools that Work, and the Ninth Grade Academy, to mention a few, were highlighted. After attendance at this conference and visitation at schools utilizing these reforms, we decided as a whole to develop our own reform efforts, using plusses from those previously reviewed. The Ninth Grade Academy, we felt, would be most beneficial. Beginning the 2007-2008 school term, the HS101 class will be merged with the citizenship classes.

Also, efforts are being made to identify weaknesses in incoming 9<sup>th</sup> graders. The CRCT scores from feeder schools were received and the information was analyzed to determine needs of students in reference to academic achievement. This information is used to place students in appropriate remediation classes. Also, during the week of the GHSGT, all students (9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> graders) are given predictor tests in all areas of the GHSGT so that their needs can be further assessed. During weekly CAG sessions, these areas of weakness are addressed.

The magnet program holds an Open House and school visitations during the spring of each year. This is an effort to increase the numbers of students in IMST (Integrated Math and Science Technology) and advanced courses. During preplanning week of each school term, a school-wide Freshman Orientation is held. All freshmen and any other students entering G.W. Carver for the first time along with their parents are invited. These events are well attended each year.

College Transitions is an offered elective for all magnet or any college bound junior or senior. These students are exposed to various skills necessary for postsecondary institutions (application process, college research, SAT tests, etc). Also, to assist in transition from high school to postsecondary is the dual enrollment program with Columbus Tech and Columbus State University.

## VIII. Decisions Regarding the Use of Assessments

Teachers collaborate to design assessments aligned to GPS and instruction. Both formal and informal assessments are used to monitor student progress and inform instructional practices.

The school receives test data on standardized tests (including the AP tests) from the Muscogee County Department of Research and Evaluation. The mean is given in comparison to the Muscogee County Department of Research and Evaluation. The mean is given comparison to the Muscogee County School District and other high schools for ninth and tenth grade students in the area of reading and mathematics. Administrators use the test data to determine course offerings, instructional strategies, AP coursework, gifted and special remedial coursework, dual enrollment, and scholarship and award recommendations. Teachers use test data to direct and redirect instruction. Instructional strategies are flexible and relative to each student's learning style(s). Teacher lessons and classroom presentations are varied and take into consideration the individual differences of students. Teachers also take Staff Development courses that are geared toward increasing student achievement.

Our leaders believe in encouraging and empowering leadership that is in tune with current thinking and fosters creative involvement in the instructional programs. The principal believes in collaborated rather than directed leadership involvement. Therefore, shared decision-making is in place, and we find it to be extremely effective. The leadership team applies a questioning-type evaluation to all proposed ideas, including: "Will it assist or improve instruction?" "How will the school and the community benefit?" and "How will students and parents respond?" These three questions have yielded changes, which have strongly improved instruction.

The leadership team has weekly meetings, and the Leadership Group (department chairs) meets monthly. All major instructional efforts (Data Analysis, curriculum, etc.) have leadership committees, which meet as needed. Committees are selected by the principal and assistant principals in conjunction with faculty members who have expertise in a particular area. As a result, we all are regularly involved in instructional issues and programs. School funds/budgets are created which support the goals and objectives of the instructional plan.

Department and grade levels meet regularly to discuss and review teaching strategies and techniques, learning styles, student needs and other issues important to encouraging and motivating our students. Department heads hold meetings with members of their departments and share ideas. Meetings are all focused on improving teacher instruction in order to improve student achievement.

The implementation of the WOW collaborative has been instrumental in training teachers to become more effective in planning lessons that promote student engagement. All teachers meet during their planning periods twice monthly. This allows all disciplines to meet and share instructional methods used which were successful, or, perhaps, unsuccessful.

Staff members (teachers, clerical personnel, and paraprofessionals) are strongly encouraged to participate in the continuous building of an environment that is conducive for all learners. Appreciation is shown for all efforts to achieve excellence. New state and district policies, expectations, and guidelines are communicated in a timely manner. Great efforts are made to prepare students for competition in the work force and/or transition to higher levels of education on the post-secondary level.

Our principal has led the school in the establishment of clear, fair, and consistent policies. He is sensitive and supportive of staff and student needs. He uses test scores to recommend changes and modifications to instructional programs. Required lesson plans must be available and relevant to school and district goals, mission, and curriculum. He encourages and provides opportunities for staff development through conferences, workshops, and meetings.

## **IX. Coordination and Integration of Services and Programs**

State funding is used to finance the extended day and instructional extension program. This funding is necessary in order to provide quality tutorials for students in preparation for state mandated tests. Teachers often require extended day funds so that necessary instruction can be provided during the school day.

Local funds (and some state funds) are used to finance the various educational programs in the school. This includes the magnet program, the media center, basic instruction, custodial, etc.

All areas of instructions are given budgets at the beginning of the school term. The various department heads of these areas collaborate with their department members to ensure that the money is utilized so as to best benefit the needs of the students.

Both federal and local funds are utilized to fund the special needs programs.

### High Schools:

The Carl D. Perkins Vocational and Applied Technology Act is a federally funded source utilized by the CTAE personnel.

All programs in the school meet to assure that the monies may be utilized most effectively. If any one area is in need of more funds in order to maintain effective instruction, this area will be granted more funds.

Title I Schools: Tell how Title I funds will be used to supplement other funds available to the school.}

## **X. Effective and Timely Assistance to Students**

All efforts were made in an effort to identify any student who may have difficulty in mastering standards (predictor tests, 8<sup>th</sup> grade CRCT, IEP's). Once this information has been analyzed, students are placed in any classes which will allow them to hone those skills necessary to be successful (Study skills classes in all academic areas, usatestprep website, after school and homeroom tutorial etc.)

All departments take part in the implementation of after school tutorial sessions to help our students with the mandated Georgia High School Graduation Test. Practice tests for each subject area are being employed. Our teachers are also utilizing the computer labs, providing their students with additional practice and learning sessions for the GHSGT. Department heads and administrators monitor the teaching of GHSGT objectives by reviewing lesson plans.

Also in place is the graduation coach who intervenes with any senior facing difficulty with graduation. As stated earlier, the child is offered several options in an effort to graduate on time (credit recovery, ZAP, one-on-one tutorials, etc.)

We are fully aware that a child who is not emotionally and socially strong and secure, may have difficulty being academically strong. Numerous programs are therefore, available to the students who may have other issues which hinder their academic success. These include DARE, Peer Helpers, and parent/student counseling. We also have a Crisis Team and plan to address catastrophic events.

George Washington Carver also has an informal support program for our students. Teachers go out of their way to assist students.

## **XI. Disaggregation of Data**

The State provides collection and disaggregation of student achievement data results on adequate yearly progress assessments and for third, fifth and eighth grade writing assessments. The state makes efforts to report statistically sound assessment results. Disaggregated reports are published on the Georgia Department of Education (GADOE) website and released to the news media by the State Superintendent of Education. A link to the GADOE is provided on the MCSD website. The local television and radio stations and newspapers provide the local citizens with detailed information about test results.

George Washington Carver High School has designated the office conference room as the data room. All disaggregated data pertinent to student achievement is displayed in this room. The information from the GADOE website, mentioned above, is kept in that room in notebooks and is always at hand as we (leadership team, curriculum council) meet to assess needs.

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