



North Central Association Commission on Accreditation and School Improvement (NCA CASI) and the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Council on Accreditation and School Improvement (SACS CASI) are accreditation divisions of AdvancED.

Standards Assessment Report

Liberty County Schools

200 Bradwell Street
Hinesville, Georgia, United States 31313

Prepared for the AdvancED Quality Assurance Review

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Standards Assessment Report

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Introduction & Purpose of the Report

Introduction

Purpose of the Report

The Standards Assessment Report is designed to serve as a valuable self-assessment and as a tool to help school systems prepare for their Quality Assurance Review. The report is based on the AdvancED standards, which serve as the foundation of the accreditation process. In order to earn and maintain accreditation, school systems must meet the AdvancED standards, engage in a process of continuous improvement, and demonstrate quality assurance through internal and external review.

The Standards Assessment Report engages the school system in an in-depth assessment of each of the seven AdvancED standards. In completing the report, the school system identifies the data, information, evidence, and documented results that validate that it is meeting each standard. This self assessment helps the school system identify areas of strength and opportunities for improvement.

The Standards Assessment Report also serves as the primary resource for the Quality Assurance Review Team, which uses the report to prepare for the visit to the school system. The team uses insights gathered from the report and information obtained during the on-site visit to provide feedback to the school system and to make an accreditation recommendation.

Structure of the Report

The Standards Assessment Report includes four sections: 1) a review of each standard; 2) a description of the school system's methods for quality assurance; 3) optional online peer-to-peer submission; and 4) conclusion.

The review of each standard is divided into three components: 1) the Indicators rubric; 2) focus questions; and 3) overall assessment rubric. The Indicators rubric enables the school system to assess the degree to which practices and/or processes are in place that indicate adherence to the standard and Indicators. For each Indicator, the school system may check if the practices and/or processes are highly functional, operational, emerging, or not evident. The school system should use the rubric as an opportunity to ask itself challenging questions and to respond with accurate answers geared toward self-improvement. After completing the rubric, the school system can quickly see areas of strength and opportunity. The section asks, "To what degree are the noted practices/processes in place?"

The focus questions allow the school system to expand on and think more deeply about the responses to the Indicators rubric. The focus questions provide an opportunity for the school system to describe the systematic and systemic processes that are in place to support its ability to meet the Indicators. The section asks, "How are the practices/processes implemented?"

The overall assessment describes how well the school system and its schools are implementing practices and/or processes and the impact these practices and/or processes have on student results and overall school effectiveness. The overall assessment helps the school system judge where it is in relation to each standard. The "operational"

level is required in order to demonstrate meeting the standard. The section asks, "How well are we meeting the standard overall?"

The description of the school system's methods for quality assurance should include an overview of the practices and methods the school system uses to monitor and document improvement, provide meaningful feedback and support across the district, ensure that the AdvancED standards are met and strengthened, and regularly collect, use, and communicate results.

The optional peer-to-peer submission section asks the school system to share an effective practice. The submission allows the school system to highlight a practice that it feels is indicative of the quality work occurring across the system and its schools. The review team may refer to the practice and use it as the basis for identifying other successful practices occurring in the school system. In addition, the practice is included in the online AdvancED Resource Network where it can be accessed by other AdvancED schools and school systems.

The conclusion provides an opportunity for the district to share final insights and information.

Completion and Submission of the Report

This Standards Assessment Report is to be completed by the school system between six months and six weeks prior to hosting a Quality Assurance Review (QAR) visit. It is strongly recommended that a wide and broad cross-section of the school system's community participate in completing this report. The report will become the basis of the Quality Assurance Review Team's review.

Directions for Completing the Report

Follow the instructions to complete each section of the report. Be thorough and concise in your answers, focusing on quality and depth over quantity.

Demographics

# Elementary Schools:	9
# Middle Schools:	3
# High Schools:	2
# Other:	0
Grade(s):	PK,K,1,2,3,4,5,6,7,8,9,10,11,12
Enrollment:	11014

Executive Summary

Please provide an overview of the school system's profile. Please include:

- The school system's vision and goals;
- A description of the programs and services (including number and type of schools) under the jurisdiction of the system;
- Demographic information about school system's community;
- A summary of student performance across the system;
- An overview of any major trends or issues impacting the school system; and
- A summary of the major strengths and needs of the school system.

1. Vision and Mission:

The Liberty County Board of Education reviews its vision, mission, and belief statements on an annual basis in an effort to maintain its emphasis on serving the children and parents of the district while working to improve student achievement and to address the goals included in the district plan. As part of the strategic planning process, the board members, along with other stakeholders, review data and establish goal areas which are then broken down into the measurable objectives, strategies, evaluations, funding sources, and people responsible for ensuring that the strategies are implemented and improvement efforts are monitored. Using data from student achievement results, departmental and school level reports, needs assessments at the school and district levels, school council reports, and evaluations of initiatives implemented at the district and school levels, the Board approves any revisions that need to be made annually. These discussions occur in open meetings and the public may participate in the discussions. Board members and district level leaders are open to comments, recommendations, and suggestions from any stakeholders in the district throughout the school year and consider the input from stakeholders in making decisions regarding the improvement of the school district. The district's school improvement plan, which includes the goals, is published on the district website for public access to all stakeholders.

The vision, mission, and belief statements are also included on our district website for parents to review, and parents may comment on those items at any time. These statements are an integral part of the district website and are printed on district letterhead and displayed on plaques in the central office and all school buildings. School councils, Parent-Teacher Organization meetings, and district initiated Public Forums have also encouraged stakeholder involvement in the review of these statements. This review is reinforced at the school level. As the individual schools review and revise their school improvement plans and involve stakeholders, they review the district vision, mission, and beliefs and evaluate those in light of the school's vision and mission to ensure that the two levels are aligned. The school websites also contain the district vision and mission statements.

The vision and mission of the district serve as the gauge used for checking all school improvement efforts, budget for and allocation of resources, and instructional initiatives that are connected to the goals and implementation strategies of the school improvement plan. All improvement efforts are designed to support the achievement of the vision and mission.

In developing our new five-year improvement plan, a committee comprised of representatives from all

stakeholder groups reviewed the district's vision, mission, and beliefs statements in the spring of 2010. The committee made recommendations to the Board of Education, and revised vision, mission, and belief statements were adopted. These new statements were adopted by the Liberty County Board of Education on June 8, 2010, and were posted on the district website shortly thereafter. All school websites contain the schools' aligned statements and the mission of the district.

The Liberty County School System VISION states: All students will receive a high quality education providing them the knowledge and skills to be successful, contributing members of a global society.

The Liberty County School System MISSION states: The mission of the Liberty County School System is to provide all students an education which promotes excellence, good citizenship, and a love of learning.

The Liberty County School System BELIEF STATEMENTS are as follows:

1. We believe that every student should be provided the opportunity to receive an education that meets individual needs while exercising the right and responsibility to learn in a safe environment.
2. We believe that all students should model the system's organizational beliefs and hold high expectations for student success.
3. We believe that education includes the development of citizenship, personal responsibility, and respect for self and others.
4. We believe that all individuals should be treated with respect and a sense of fairness.
5. We believe that all staff should participate in results-driven professional learning which is aligned with the system's and schools' goals for improvement.
6. We believe that technology will improve student achievement and increase the school system's productivity and efficiency.
7. In order to serve a mobile population, we believe that schools must be sensitive to the needs of the community and to the changing needs of the learners as they develop educational priorities for student achievement.
8. Because education is a joint effort and responsibility among the school, the home, and the community, we support and encourage parent and community participation in the school system.
9. We believe that the local control and individual school flexibility are essential in implementing strategies to meet goals for school improvement, increase student achievement, and follow state and federal requirements.

2. Programs and Services:

The Liberty County School System personnel are assigned to the Central Office, Maintenance and Operations building, Transportation building, Pre-Kindergarten Center, eight elementary schools, three middle schools, and two high schools. The district acquired the former Brewton-Parker College—Hinesville Campus in 2009 and renamed the facility the Liberty County Schools Performing Arts Center. The Board is pursuing expansion of the facility for school and community use. Plans are in place for construction of a Career Academy with the opening anticipated during the 2011-2012 school year. The alternative school program is provided by Ombudsman Educational Services, Inc., a private corporation. The middle school program is housed at the former Board of Education renovated site. The high school program is housed in two store-front locations leased by Ombudsman. The Student Transition and Recovery (S.T.A.R.) program has been located in a building adjacent to the current Board of Education facility. However, that building has recently been demolished and two buildings at the former board location have been remodeled to house the program.

The district serves 10,667 students in well-equipped facilities. Over the past five years, student enrollment has fluctuated as military families experience deployments and transfers.

The schools within the district offer a balanced and interdisciplinary curriculum that is supported by research-based practices. Instruction focuses on the Georgia Performance Standards (GPS) in core areas and/or Quality Core Curriculum (QCC) objectives in areas that the state has not yet converted to GPS. Teachers review disaggregated data and student records to guide them in preparing a variety of human, natural, technological and material resources to enhance instruction and learning. Instructional strategies are aligned with the diverse needs of the students.

Focused teaching strategies implemented throughout the district are based on training provided by the district and through school initiatives and include the seamless integration of technology across the curriculum. Teachers are also offered training on differentiated instruction. Elementary and middle school teachers are provided with instructional guides compiled by a county wide curriculum team. The instructional guides are intended to provide support for effective teaching. They include state adopted curriculum, pacing guides, progress monitoring information, alignment to locally adopted textbooks, student work samples, and information on federal programs. High school curriculum guides include state standards and are based on Georgia Department of Education guidelines.

Enrichment and remedial activities are provided to students throughout the district. Emphasis is placed on active learning supported by the incorporation of higher order thinking skills and research-based strategies that foster a performance-based approach to learning.

Enrichment instruction is provided through the Gifted and Talented Education (G.A.T.E.) program for students who are eligible for gifted services. Elementary G.A.T.E. students are served in resource classes. These students attend the gifted class for one entire day once a week by grade level. They are also placed in a “cluster” teacher’s class for expanded services on a daily basis in schools where teachers are qualified to provide these services. Middle school G.A.T.E. students are scheduled for Advanced Content classes in core academic areas. These advanced classes are also available to high achieving students. High school G.A.T.E. students are provided Honors and Advanced Placement courses which are also available to high achieving students. Other enrichment opportunities are given to all students through fine arts, technology, career tech courses, and a wide range of extra curricular activities.

Remedial instruction is incorporated into the learning process in a variety of ways. State required Early Intervention Program (EIP) classes are scheduled at elementary schools to assist struggling students. Additional remediation is provided by Title I remediation teachers in reading and mathematics at the elementary level. Middle school students and high school students receive remediation as part of the daily schedule. All students have after-school program options available for support of learning. Response to Intervention (RtI) is also integrated into the daily instruction based on student needs. A summer school program is offered for elementary and middle school students for remediation, but not for promotion. High school students have credit recovery courses offered during the summer and may also enroll in the Ombudsman Summer School which is a tuition based credit recovery program.

Teachers, students, and parents are offered support beyond the confines of the classroom. The Student Support Team (SST) process provides structured procedures for parents and teachers when assisting students struggling with school success either academically, emotionally, or behaviorally. Each elementary and middle school has a Family Involvement Facilitator who works with 25 identified families in need. Through an alternative setting, the Liberty County Board of Education, partnering with Ombudsman Educational Services, Ltd., provides an effective alternative to the traditional classroom that helps at-risk students develop their inherent talents and achieve their potential. The Ombudsman Program is performance-based, allowing all students to work at their own pace and in many cases accelerate their own learning. School Social Workers, counselors, and nurses are employed to offer additional support in the schools.

Liberty County’s secondary schools offer students the opportunity to pursue diploma options as specified in the

Georgia Department of Education Graduation Rule. Career Technical Pathways are incorporated into the program of study. The two high schools operate under a 4 x 4 block schedule, allowing students to earn eight units per year. This schedule allows students to focus on four classes at one time. The middle and secondary schools offer career related, computer based and fine arts programs. The career, technical, and agricultural education (CTAE) curriculum is based upon the state's performance standards which have been reviewed and validated by experts in business and industry as well as by representatives from secondary and postsecondary education. The school system collaborates with Savannah Technical Institute, which provides students with even more learning opportunities.

A strong system operates smoothly and is built on a foundation of strong, highly qualified staff members. The system makes a concerted effort to recruit and hire good candidates at every level. Central office personnel travel beyond the confines of the state of Georgia to recruit highly qualified teachers, and they also attend recruiting fairs within the state. Recently the pool of qualified candidates within the state has increased. Once hired, a teacher attends system and school level orientation. Strong support is offered to novice and veteran teachers through the process of teacher collaboration in learning teams.

The system relies on research when planning instructional practices. School-based curriculum coordinators work together to align instructional practices across the district and work at the individual schools to coordinate professional learning with needs identified at the school and within the system. District level textbook adoption committees are trained in the use of research-based procedures when selecting upcoming textbooks in all subject areas. Committees meet to examine both vertical and horizontal alignment of curriculum.

Professional learning opportunities provide teachers with tools to support best practices in instruction. The function of the Liberty County Professional Learning Plan is to serve as a vehicle for enhancing the skills of certified and non-certified personnel with the goal of increasing student achievement. High quality, well designed and goal- focused training experiences, which include support for implementation, are proven to impact positively the skill levels of teachers and administrators.

The system continually reviews teacher performance to maintain quality. Administrators are trained in the Georgia Teacher Evaluation Program (GTEP). Central office personnel and board members visit school sites to review school practices. Positive practices are recognized through Teacher of the Year ceremonies, the system website, Board Recognition Nights, and through stories highlighted in the local newspaper.

Additional student services include counseling, support for English Language Learners (ELL), support for exceptional learners, and a strong media/technology program. The Special Education Program provides services to students of varying levels. Students receive services based on their Individual Education Plan (IEP). Special Education services are available to students in grades PK-12. Special Education provides a broad range of services for educational assessment including: a) Preschool Special Education Assessment, b) Elementary, Middle and Secondary Student Support Teams, and c) Psycho-Educational Assessment. Many students with disabilities have special needs that must be addressed in order to enable them to benefit from special education. In order to meet these needs, the Liberty County School System provides a full array of services.

Technology is one of the threads that weave each of these programs seamlessly together. The technology services are extensive at all levels. Each spring each certified staff member within the system completes a technology survey. Data collected from the survey is used to evaluate technology integration and to identify areas where improvement is needed. Teachers focus on using technology as a tool in the classroom. A system-level support system is provided to teachers as they integrate technology into the instruction. The school system's instructional technology team provides training to assist schools in the establishment of model technology classrooms. The focus of the model technology classrooms is to create learning environments in which technology is used as a tool to provide higher order, project based, real life teaching and learning strategies. This activity supports the Georgia

Performance Standards currently being implemented.

Employees at the district and school level ensure that the budget is well-planned, well-managed, and well-monitored. All expenditures are correlated to district or school level goals identified in the comprehensive school improvement plan. Careful budgeting allows the district to provide support services that are extensive. Food service, transportation services, and facilities management focus on the needs of the students served. Each of these services has been flexible in responding to the needs of our district's population.

3. Community Demographics:

Liberty County is located in the southeastern section of Georgia. With a population of 58,491, it is considered a fairly large county. The population is comprised of the following ethnicities: White, 47%; Black, 41%; Hispanic, 7%; Asian and Pacific Islander, 2%; American Indian, 1%; Multiracial, 3%. The median household income is \$39,997, yet 15.4% of the population lives in poverty. Among the population, 86.8% have graduated high school or continued to post-secondary school and 14.5% have completed a Bachelor's degree or higher.

The county is comprised of six districts. Each district has an elected mayor and council members to govern the community. Additionally, a county commission comprised of a chairman and six commissioners provide governance direction for the county as a whole. The chairman is elected by the district at large.

Ft. Stewart, an Army installation, is located within the county. Liberty County actively supports Ft. Stewart's Senior Leaders' and workforces' participation in local boards, committees, and civic organizations. Some military connected personnel also serve in elected governmental positions as a means of strengthening the relationship with the base. The Liberty County Board of Education also has a Ft. Stewart liaison that attends meetings and sits with the board members.

Ft. Stewart contributes to improving our communities by strengthening emergency services/preparedness, addressing environmental concerns, supporting local schools, participating in joint planning and the resulting projects, sharing recreational facilities, opening entertainment events to the general public, supporting and/or participating in local community events, partnering with the community hospital, and contributing to charities. Battalions from Ft. Stewart partner with each of the schools in the school district and remain active in school functions. Ft. Stewart provides motivational speakers for Liberty County as part of the Partners in Education program.

Other collaboration occurs through the partnership between the fort and the University System of Georgia to offer college programs via local colleges and universities to our community members. The Education Center, located adjacent to the front gate of the fort, allows community members to enroll in courses in order to pursue post-secondary educational options.

The county provides numerous options to its citizenry. Churches of many denominations are available as worship centers. The Liberty County Recreation Department provides an array of activities for youth and adults. The Y.M.C.A. is open to membership and offers activities for all age groups. In fact, the Y.M.C.A. sponsors an after-school day care in the elementary schools to assist parents who are working and need their children to remain at school beyond the regular school day. This partnership with the school district has been beneficial to both the parents and the students. Because of the diverse population in the county, a variety of restaurants are available to satisfy the culinary cravings of any resident. While industry is somewhat limited, many of the residents seek

employment in other areas or are employed at Ft. Stewart.

4. Student Performance Across the District:

Liberty County School District has a comprehensive program of assessment to determine academic needs of students. The program includes the use of national, state, and local measures, both norm-referenced tests and criterion-referenced tests. The district uses both formative and summative assessments, as well as formal and informal evaluations, to measure and analyze changes in student performance.

All required state tests are administered to students in the district. State tests consist of Criterion Referenced Competency Tests (CRCT), Georgia Alternative Assessments (GAA), Georgia High School Graduation Tests (GHS GT), Writing tests for 5th and 8th grades, Georgia High School Graduation Writing Test (GHS GWT), and End of Course Tests (EOCT). Other assessments are administered for various programs and services, but the state required tests are used to determine levels of student achievement for Adequate Yearly Progress purposes.

System and school level decisions are based on the continuous examination of data. The district maintains a current comprehensive school improvement plan based on student achievement and other data. This plan includes elements of individual school's school improvement plans and focuses on the analysis of data and using assessment to improve student performance.

As the district moved to the development of the Balanced Score Cards for district and school level improvement and monitoring during the 2010-2011 school year, the process required another thorough analysis of data in order to identify performance objectives. All Balanced Score Cards reflect a baseline for achievement and the expected annual increases for the next three to five years.

The district's elementary schools and middle schools are Title I Distinguished Schools and have made Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) for varying numbers of years. The two non-Title I high schools, however, struggle with achieving AYP because of math performance by economically disadvantaged students, Black students, and students with disabilities. These subgroups are targeted as part of the schools' improvement plans. As a result of the high schools not making AYP, the district does not make AYP requirements. Efforts are in place to address deficiencies in achievement at the two high schools, and district personnel are coordinating a math grant initiative for the two schools.

An analysis of assessment data and other student data reveals that some fluctuation in achievement occurs from year to year despite the efforts being made to improve student performance. Perhaps one of the most significant changes impacting math achievement has been the shift in Georgia from a traditional mathematics curriculum to one of integrated mathematics, particularly at the high school level but also impacting the middle schools. This impact is reflected in the End-of-Course Test (EOCT) scores in Math I and Math II. Further analysis also indicates social studies as an area in need of improvement for student performance. Both the EOCT and Georgia High School Graduation Test (GHS GT) results verify the need for attention to social studies instruction. Changes from Quality Core Curriculum (QCC) to Georgia Performance Standards (GPS) curriculum account for some of the variations in achievement in this area. However, social studies and science appear to be content areas to be targeted for improvement, especially at the middle school and high school levels. While reading, English/Language Arts, and math scores have shown improvement, these areas, too, have not yet reached the goal performance targets and are addressed in school improvement plans at the district and school levels.

Although the graduation rate is improving each year, the percentage of students graduating on time remains a concern. The rate has increased from 73.3% in 2007-2008 to 77.8% in 2009-2010. This increase has resulted from specific efforts at the school and district levels to promote tutorials, remediation, credit recovery, and other

instructional supports to assist students in being academically successful. However, the rate still falls short of the Georgia requirement of 80% graduation rate to meet AYP. Graduation coaches at the middle schools and high schools coordinate school efforts to address the graduation rate. Students in the Liberty County School System must earn a minimum of 26 Carnegie units and complete 20 hours of community service, in addition to meeting state requirements, in order to graduate.

Elementary data indicate that students at earlier grades tend to do better in academic areas. Beginning with 3rd Grade, social studies and science are added to reading, English/Language Arts, and math as measures of achievement. By 5th Grade, social studies and science begin to cause difficulties that impact student achievement. For this reason, these areas are also addressed in district and school level school improvement plans.

Students with disabilities (SWD) participate in state assessments along with other students. Their disaggregated results indicate that achievement growth is occurring. This increase is attributed to the widespread district implementation of inclusion classes, in which SWD participate in and receive instruction on the Georgia Performance Standards in each content area. Students who qualify for the Georgia Alternative Assessment (GAA) show significant performance achievement. For the 2009-2010 school year, 86% of GAA students achieved proficiency in Reading/English/Language Arts, 89% in science, and 100% in social studies.

A breakdown of state compensatory programs indicates the following categories and percentages of the student population in Liberty County were served in these programs:

Special Education K-12	9.5% (940 students)
Special Education Pre-K	(44 students)
ESOL	0.6% (61 students)
EIP	16.1% (730 students)
Remedial 6-8	3.3% (78 students)
Remedial 9-12	1.6% (48 students)

Retention and dropout rates create the district's concern for reducing these rates as part of the efforts to increase the graduation rate. Of the 468 students retained district wide last year, 61.3% (287 students) were Black; 22.4% (105), White; 8.5% (40), Hispanic; 1.5% (7), Asian; 0.9% (4), American Indian; and 5.3% (25), Multiracial. Of the 468 retentions, 59.8% (280) were males and 40.2% (188) were females. Because of school and district efforts to provide services and support for at risk students, the dropout rate for grades 7-12 has reduced from 3.1% in 2007 to 2.4% in 2010.

The school district serves a diverse population. The enrollment for 2010-2011 is 10,667. Of that number, 19.9% (2124 students) is Hispanic; 1.7% (180), Asian; 0.3% (35), American Indian; 0.4% (39) Hawaiian/Pacific Islander; 46.1% (4922), Black; 26.1% (2776), White; and 5.5% (591), Multiracial.

The subgroup of students with disabilities has reduced from 11% to 10%. The English Language Learners (ELL/ESOL) population has remained constant at 1%. The percentage of students qualifying for Free/Reduced meals has increased from 58% to 63%.

5. Major Trends/Issues Impacting the School District

One major issue affecting the educational efforts in the district is the mobility of the student population. Often students are not enrolled in a school for a full academic year (FAY) and, as a result, are unable to benefit from the educational programs the district provides. Many of these students are military connected and move into and out of the district without completing a full year of instruction. This mobility interrupts the classroom instruction as

students enter and leave and sometimes creates difficulties for transfer of credits. When students enter the district from another state, course requirements do not always coincide, especially in the area of mathematics. With the adoption of integrated math beginning in Grade 6, students from other states may experience deficits in preparation, especially at the high school where Georgia students no longer take the traditional math program of Algebra I, Algebra II, Geometry, and Trigonometry. Georgia students must take Math I, Math II, Math III, and Math IV at the high school level. This curriculum also creates difficulties for students who transfer out of the district to another state that follows the traditional math structure. Other requirements specific to Georgia, such as 8th grade Georgia History, can also create concerns for parents and students as they enter a Georgia school setting.

While high school graduation rates are rising, Liberty County is still challenged with efforts to increase the graduation rate of its students. Because graduation rate is calculated on the percentage of students who entered 9th grade and complete requirements for graduation within 4 years, the mobility rate of our students impacts this calculation. Often more students move from the district within a four year period than move into the district, thus having a negative impact on the graduation rate. Also, the academic needs of the growing economically disadvantaged, Black students, and students with disabilities subgroups is a challenge, and efforts to reduce the achievement gap between these subgroups and all other students has become a focus of improvement efforts.

The reduction in state and federal funding has also prompted some challenges within the district. Although Liberty County does benefit from Impact Aid funds, those funds and others are dwindling as changes in our student population shift. As a result of the difficult economic times and the reduction in funding for education, the district has submitted class size waivers to increase the maximum class size from previous standards, adjusted the student instructional day by adding 15 minutes of instructional time to each day to allow for a reduced school year calendar of days but maintaining the equivalent of the 180 instructional days, and furloughed personnel which has resulted in reduced number of working days paid for all staff.

The overall educational experience of the students in the district is enhanced through the quality facilities, availability of instructional technology and support services, and a focus on student achievement. The Board of Education has been supportive by ensuring that the school buildings are safe and secure and in good shape. The members have also allocated funding annually to expand the technology that is available for student, teacher, and staff use. Acquisition of technology is a major component of the instructional planning that occurs each year. The well-defined and organized range of support services assists students and staff throughout the year and provides a positive impact on student achievement. A continual analysis of programs and performance ensures that students are offered a high quality education within the framework of state and local guidelines, and efforts to improve student achievement are ongoing at both the district and school levels.

6. Major Strengths and Needs of the District Strengths:

- Facilities and resources support a quality educational program.
- The district maintains a system of fiscal responsibility and resource allocation that support the educational programs.
- Professional learning is provided in abundance to meet the needs of teachers and other staff in support of their school improvement and student achievement efforts.
- The structure and support provided throughout the district enables administrators, teachers, staff, and students to be successful in their respective roles.
- District and school instructional teams analyze data to determine areas of strength, areas of challenge, and intervention processes in a timely manner.

- Teachers are well-equipped with resources needed to implement best practices effectively.
- The district has invested in technology resources which are used for classroom instruction, remediation, and interventions.
- A great emphasis has been placed on helping at-risk students through after-school and intervention programs.
- The Board of Education is unified in its focus on student achievement and supportive of initiatives that enhance quality teaching and learning.

Needs:

- Increasing the graduation rate as defined by Georgia guidelines continues to be a priority and a challenge.
- Decreasing the drop-out rate within the district continues to be an area of need.
- Reducing the achievement gap between economically disadvantaged, Blacks, and Students with Disabilities as compared with the achievement of all students is needed.
- Improving student achievement across all grade levels in mathematics, social studies, and science is an identified need.

Standard 1. Vision & Purpose

STANDARD: The system establishes and communicates a shared purpose and direction for improving the performance of students and the effectiveness of the system.

Impact Statement: A system is successful in meeting this standard when it commits to a purpose and direction that is shared system-wide. The leadership establishes expectations for student learning aligned with the system's vision that is supported by system and school personnel and external stakeholders. These expectations serve as the focus for assessing student performance and district effectiveness. The system's vision guides allocations of time and human, material, and fiscal resources.

Indicators Rubric: Please indicate the degree to which the noted practices/processes are in place in the school system. The responses to the rubric should help the school system identify areas of strength and opportunities for improvement as well as guide and inform the school system's responses to the focus questions.

Indicators Evidence: For each Indicator, click the (Add Evidence) link to provide examples of evidence that support the rubric response.

Definitions of Indicators Rubric:

Not Evident	Little or no evidence exists
Emerging	Evidence indicates early or preliminary stages of implementation of practice
Operational	Evidence indicates practices and procedures are actively implemented
Highly Functional	Evidence indicates practices and procedures are fully integrated and effectively and consistently implemented

INDICATORS: In fulfillment of this standard, the system:

1.1 Establishes a vision and purpose for the system in collaboration with its stakeholders:

Operational

Evidence Provided:

Leadership demonstrates stakeholder support

Mission Statement visible throughout the district

Stakeholder perception data used to develop mission

Stakeholders are knowledgeable about vision, mission

Strategic Plans include mission

Vision, mission statements include all elements of stakeholder inclusion

Other: Liberty County Schools website

1.2 Communicates the system's vision and purpose to build stakeholder understanding and support:

Operational

Evidence Provided:

Meetings incorporate elements of vision, mission

Newsletters include vision, mission

Signage includes vision, mission

Stakeholders are knowledgeable about vision, mission

Website/page includes vision, mission

1.3 Identifies system-wide goals and measures to advance the vision:

Operational

Evidence Provided:

District and school improvement planning incorporates vision, mission

District Improvement Plan includes vision, mission

Goals distributed through publications and communication

Goals that are data-driven and measurable

Stakeholders demonstrate involvement in and knowledge of goal setting

Strategic Plan includes vision, mission

Strategic planning incorporates vision, mission

Other: CLIP, School Plans

1.4 Develops and continuously maintains a profile of the system, its students, and the community :

Operational

Evidence Provided:

Annual Report

Community-based data

District Improvement Plan

District profile is used during parent/community meetings

District profile is used during staff meetings

Newsletters, articles

Publications, brochures, handbooks

Stakeholders demonstrate knowledge of District profile

Other: Consolidated Application

1.5 Ensures that the system's vision and purpose guide the teaching and learning process and the strategic direction of schools, departments, and services:

Operational

Evidence Provided:

District and school improvement planning demonstrates alignment with vision, mission

District Curriculum demonstrates alignment with vision, mission

District Improvement Plan demonstrates alignment of vision, mission with teaching and learning

Extra -curricular activities incorporate vision, mission

Policies on instructional practices demonstrate alignment with vision, mission

Staff and Parent Handbooks demonstrate alignment of vision, mission with teaching and learning

Strategic Plan demonstrates alignment of vision, mission and teaching and learning

Student report cards demonstrate alignment with vision, mission

1.6 Reviews its vision and purpose systematically and revises them when appropriate:

Operational

Evidence Provided:

Agendas, minutes for strategic planning demonstrate review

Strategic Plan demonstrates review

Strategic planning process demonstrates review by stakeholders

Other: Administrative meeting agendas/minutes; Board meeting agendas; Balanced Score Card training agenda

Focus Questions:

1. What is the process for establishing and building understanding of and commitment to the vision statement among the school system and its stakeholders?

The Liberty County School System had an existing vision statement, mission statement and belief statements. The existing statements were developed by a committee that solicited stakeholders' input through survey's and discussion groups. This year, the existing statements were reviewed and modified through the collaboration of the Balance Score Card stakeholders and a committee made up of parents, students, and both certified and classified school personnel. The committee felt that only a few changes were needed in order to state the vision, mission and beliefs of the system clearly and consistently. The committee also recognizes that accomplishing the vision, mission and beliefs is a joint effort of the school, the student, the home and the community. After the modifications were made, the committee presented these for board approval. Once approved by the board, a roll out plan was developed to provide all stakeholders with the new and improved vision, mission and beliefs.

The publicizing of the updated vision, mission and beliefs began to take effect immediately. All schools and the central office were given new framed statements to be hung in a public area. These statements can also be found on our local school system website www.liberty.k12.ga.us . System letterhead has been developed that includes the system's mission statement. We are very fortunate to have a good working relationship with our local newspaper and they are working closely with us to keep all stakeholders involved.

School councils reviewed and discussed the vision and mission statements. As schools revised their school improvement plans and Balanced Score Cards, they reviewed and discussed the district vision, mission, and belief statements to ensure their school statements were aligned with those of the district.

In January each year, central office personnel, board members, and school level administrators and representatives collaborate to prepare budget recommendations. As part of this process, the participants consider the academic, physical, and fiscal needs of each school and each district department. These needs are reviewed in light of the district's vision and mission. Discussions allow for prioritizing of needs and that priority list leads to the identification of areas to be funded and the level of funding needed for each area. These proposed areas are incorporated into the annual budget and referred to the board for consideration and approval.

From time to time our system superintendent will hold a State of the Schools address and our board members hold public forums. The vision, mission, and belief statements are addressed at these events. Plans have also been made to include the statements in our code of conduct that goes home with every student for the next school year.

2. What is the system's process for maintaining and using information that describes the school system, its programs, services, and schools and their performance?

An annual process that requires a review of district demographics, programs, and services involves the development of the Comprehensive Local Education Agency Implementation Plan (CLIP) to match funding to the district's needs and long-term improvement goal areas. The district must have input from the schools based on each school's school improvement plan. Central office staff share data and provide technical assistance to the schools as they develop their school improvement plans which include Title I components and professional learning requirements which must be considered for budget purposes. These school improvement plans are reviewed and checked for alignment with the district plan and to ensure that the school plans reflect focus areas based on student achievement data.

The Liberty County School System uses a number of means to keep the public and the stakeholders abreast of the school system, its programs, services and performance. Technology is used as one of these ways. The school district website www.libertycounty.k12.ga.us hosts an abundance of information about our system. The system vision, mission and belief statements are located on our website along with a system calendar showing school events and system events, links to individual school websites, a link to our local board polices, registration information, and postings of upcoming events are just a sample of the many items that can be located at our

website. The technology department maintains this website and keeps information up to date and timely. Additionally, each of the schools has a school council made up of parents, staff and community members which meet on a scheduled basis. Schools send home newsletters and emails as well as have parent programs. Public forums that address school/district related topics are held by our Board of Education. During our Board meeting good news is shared where staff and students are recognized for an outstanding achievement. Codes of conduct are sent home with every student each year outlining information for both parents and students. Our local newspaper regularly publishes information about our school district.

Last year the school district converted to Power School for our student information system. Through Power School we are able to provide parents a portal to check student grades and attendance as often as they would like. Parents can also e-mail teachers directly from this site. This year we have also provided our high school students with a student sign in so that they can check their data as well. Plans are to continue this roll out to our middle school students. Even though parents can access grades and attendance through the parental portal, we continue to send home with every student either a progress report or a report card every 4 ½ weeks. Power School is also used to maintain student data such as attendance, grades, program of services, discipline, health, student schedules, and student demographic information to name a few.

Another way of maintaining and using data is the use of test scores. Our Board of Education members are kept abreast of overall test results as well as individual school test results on any state mandated test to include: GHSGT, EOCT, CRCT, Writing Test and AYP Data Results. Much of this test data is stored in Test Trax, a computerized program that our system utilizes to allow schools to review data and to filter data to assist them in planning for their overall school improvement.

Once test scores are received and reviewed, each school develops a school improvement plan. Although each school develops its own plan, all school plans reflect the district plan and support the system's vision, mission and beliefs. Central office staff members meet with each school to give guidance on how to coordinate the school plan to the district plan.

Our system has been in the process of developing a Balanced Score Card that has the system's vision, mission and belief statements as the driving factor in creating measures for improving student achievement. Test data along with other data factors such as the number of discipline referrals the system generated were used to determine a base line. With the baseline established, a committee determined the percentage of improvement our system will work toward for each area identified. This score card ties directly into our district plan.

3. How does the leadership ensure that the system's vision, purpose, and goals guide the work of the school system and its schools?

Keeping in mind the system's vision, mission and belief statements, our Board of Education created 5 goal areas to assist our system toward achieving its vision, purpose and goals. The Board identifies board meeting agenda items by the related goal. The goals are as follows:

Goal 1-Increase Student Achievement-

Increase achievement levels for Liberty County School System students to insure their international competitiveness and adaptability to an ever changing technological society.

Goal 2-Safe Environment for Learning and Teaching-

Provide a safe and secure environment for learning and teaching.

Goal 3-Improve Performance through Results-Driven Professional Learning-

Improve performance of students, staff and the organization through results-driven professional learning that is standards-based, job embedded and collaborative.

Goal 4-Increase Stakeholders Involvement-

Increase stakeholder involvement throughout the school system.

Goal 5-Integrate Technology into the Curriculum to Enhance Student Learning-

Integrate technology into the curriculum at all grade levels to enhance student learning and throughout the district to increase productivity and efficiency.

Our district also has leadership teams developed which help to ensure that the district's vision, purpose and goals guide the work of our schools and system. The Superintendent has a leadership team made up of a representative from each department. The Superintendent also meets with the principals as a group from all schools and our Curriculum Director meets with the curriculum coordinator from each school. Each of these groups meet on a bi-weekly schedule where up-dates are given and plans are developed to assist our system in meeting designated goals.

Each of the schools has an individual school improvement plan that ties into the overall district plan. This plan is developed using data from their school. Central office staff meet with each school to assist them in coordinating their school plan to the district plan.

A district Balanced Score Card has been developed by a committee of leaders from the district. This scorecard is a way for the system to track identified data items as a measure to ensure that the system is moving toward meeting its designated goals. This score card is used as a means to keep all stakeholders abreast of our goals and the strategies that are being used to achieve these goals.

4. What process is used to ensure that the vision and purpose of the school system remain current and aligned with the system's expectations in support of student learning and the effectiveness of the school system and its schools?

The district uses both individual school data and system wide data as the foundation for improving student achievement. Using this data, each school develops a school improvement plan which directly ties into the overall system goals. Through the disaggregation of data, areas of deficiencies are identified and strategies are put in place to improve these identified areas. Key central office staff members assist the schools in the development of their individual plans. These plans are reviewed at a minimum annually and can be reviewed more often if the need arises.

Our system has a number of support personnel in place to help facilitate the system's expectation in support of student learning. One type of support personnel are Curriculum Coordinators who are housed at each of the individual schools. Liberty County Curriculum Coordinators improve student achievement by providing timely and professional support for curriculum, instruction, and assessment at the school site level. They not only serve as the liaison between teachers, administrators, and the system curriculum department, but they also assist with effective teaching practices, help plan for both individual and whole faculty professional learning, analyze data for continued site-based and individual classroom improvement, and help to eliminate gaps in understanding for implementation of local and state initiatives.

Other support personnel are the Liberty County Instructional Specialists who assist in improving student achievement by raising teacher capacity with curriculum, instruction, assessment, and classroom management techniques. They assist with the most appropriate application of content-specific strategies based upon individual

student and/or teacher needs. They facilitate system-wide benchmarks and provide guidance for administrators, teachers, and curriculum coordinators as state and local standards, assessments, and instructional initiatives are updated and improved. In essence, Instructional Specialists provide individual, site-based, and system-wide support to guide continuous school improvement efforts for student achievement.

Graduation Coaches are housed in each of our middle and high schools. The Graduation Coach program provides at-risk students with personal services with the specific goal of helping the student graduate from high school. At-risk students are identified using data such as age, grades retained, previous class failures, attendance and standardized test scores such as CRCT and High School Graduation Tests. They may also use teacher and administrator recommendations. Graduation Coaches act as student advocates at both the middle school and high school level. In that role they work with the student, teacher and parent to arrange for extra tutoring, solicit the opportunity to do make-up work, and provide materials and resources to offer the student with the greatest opportunities for success. The position provides the parents of struggling students with a point of contact to obtain the assistance necessary for the student to improve and be successful. In addition, the at-risk student needs to know there is someone who will check on them and wants them to be successful so Graduation Coaches become encouragers and mentors, letting otherwise unsuccessful students know they are important and have the ability to succeed. They may also run staff/student mentoring programs to provide students with daily encouragement and support.

To further support student learning and the effectiveness of the school district and its schools, the district provides counselors, nurses, specialized teachers (English Language Learners, Gifted, Special Education, and Remedial) to serve students and to expand their educational opportunities and support. Other specialized support is provided through Career/Technical (CTAE) teachers, Student Support Team coordinators, and School Social Workers. An alternative education program (Ombudsman) is in place to allow students with at-risk academic and behavioral issues to continue their education in grades 6 through 12. In addition to supporting in-school suspension (ISS) programs at each school, the district also provides two other disciplinary programs. The elementary program Achieving Better Conduct (ABC) Program serves students in grades K through 5. The Student Transition and Recovery (S.T.A.R.) Program serves students from second grade through ninth grade, with a particular emphasis on services for middle school students. Central office personnel work closely with these various programs and categories of support staff and coordinate their efforts to maximize the benefits of services to students.

Overall Assessment:

Operational: The school system has committed to a shared purpose and direction. The system and its schools have clearly defined expectations for student learning aligned with the system's vision that is supported by system and school personnel and external stakeholders. These expectations serve as the focus for assessing student performance, system and school effectiveness. The vision guides allocations of time and human, material, and fiscal resources.

Standard 2. Governance & Leadership

STANDARD: The system provides governance and leadership that promote student performance and system effectiveness.

Impact Statement: A system is successful in meeting this standard when it has leaders who are advocates for the system's vision and improvement efforts. The leaders provide direction and allocate resources to implement curricular and co-curricular programs that enable students to achieve expectations for their learning. Leaders function with clearly defined authority and responsibility and encourage collaboration and shared responsibility for system and school improvement among stakeholders. The system's policies, procedures, and organizational conditions ensure equity of learning opportunities and support for innovation.

Indicators Rubric: Please indicate the degree to which the noted practices/processes are in place in the school system. The responses to the rubric should help the school system identify areas of strength and opportunities for improvement as well as guide and inform the school system's responses to the focus questions.

Indicators Evidence: For each Indicator, click the (Add Evidence) link to provide examples of evidence that support the rubric response.

Definitions of Indicators Rubric:

Not Evident	Little or no evidence exists
Emerging	Evidence indicates early or preliminary stages of implementation of practice
Operational	Evidence indicates practices and procedures are actively implemented
Highly Functional	Evidence indicates practices and procedures are fully integrated and effectively and consistently implemented

INDICATORS: In fulfillment of this standard, the system operates under the jurisdiction of a governing authority that:

2.1 Establishes and communicates policies and procedures that provide for the effective operation of the system :

Highly Functional

Evidence Provided:

Agendas, minutes of governing authority meetings

District-wide Staff and/or student handbooks

Governance Policy handbooks: board, district, school

Governing authority affirms understanding of their role in the operation of the school/district

Local, state, and federal policy handbooks

Organizational chart

Procedural policies: emergencies, contact information, calling tree, discipline, due process, logistics, placement and transfer

Staff and students affirm their understanding of emergency and operational procedures

Students and staff affirm their understanding of discipline policies and due process

2.2 Recognizes and preserves the executive, administrative, and leadership authority of the administrative head of the system:

Operational

Evidence Provided:

District staff are knowledgeable about leadership prerogatives

District staff are knowledgeable about organizational chart

District staff demonstrate knowledge about due process

Governing Board Policies demonstrate leadership prerogatives

Organizational chart

Policies demonstrate protocols for remediation and due process

Roles and responsibilities of governing board, advisory councils, and ad hoc committees are clearly outlined

2.3 Ensures compliance with applicable local, state, and federal laws, standards, and regulations:

Highly Functional

Evidence Provided:

District staff are knowledgeable about curriculum standards

District staff demonstrates knowledge and use of curriculum standards in the teaching and learning process

District staff responsible for the implementation of state and/or federal programs are knowledgeable about compliance

Documentation of adherence to ethical business practices

Documentation of compliance with all regulations regarding copyright law, intellectual property, and international restrictions

Documentation of State and Federal Compliances and Assurances, including NCLB/Title I, EEO, Title IX

Documentation with all regulations that apply to accreditation by NCA CASI, SACS CASI, or AdvancED

Stakeholders affirm compliance with Equal Employment Opportunity practices and procedures

Stakeholders affirm compliance with ethical business practices

Stakeholders are involved in the establishment and monitoring of adherence to all regulations

2.4 Implements policies and procedures that provide for the orientation and training of the governing board:

Operational

Evidence Provided:

District staff and governing board members affirm their knowledge of governing board policies and procedures

District staff and governing board members affirm their participation in orientation and training

Policies and procedures for governing board training and orientation

Roles and responsibilities of governing board, advisory councils, and ad hoc committees are clearly outlined

2.5 Builds public support, secures sufficient resources, and acts as a steward of the system's resources:

Operational

Evidence Provided:

Documentation of adherence to ethical business practices

Policies and procedures for fiscal planning: short-term and long-range

Stakeholders affirm compliance with Equal Employment Opportunity practices and procedures

Stakeholders affirm compliance with ethical business practices

2.6 Maintains access to legal counsel to advise or obtain information about legal requirements and obligations:

Highly Functional

Evidence Provided:

District staff are knowledgeable about due process and complaint resolution

District staff are knowledgeable about access to legal counsel

Documentation of access to legal counsel

Documentation of resolutions of any complaints

Staff and students affirm their involvement in the accreditation process

2.7 Maintains adequate insurance or equivalent resources to protect its financial stability and

administrative operations:

Highly Functional

Evidence Provided:

District staff affirm knowledge and support for the district's fiscal responsibility

District staff affirm knowledge of district's insurance carrier, policies, and procedures

Policies and procedures for investments

Policies and procedures for protecting assets and financial resources

INDICATORS: In fulfillment of this standard, the system has leadership that:

2.8 Provides for systematic analysis and review of student performance and school and system effectiveness :

Operational

Evidence Provided:

Advisory Committee: agenda, minutes

District staff affirm the use of student performance and organizational effectiveness data for planning

District Staff meetings: agenda, minutes, decision points

Evaluation results: professional development, efficiency, effectiveness, instructional programming, etc.

Record of student performance data analysis

Staff and students affirm their involvement in the accreditation process

Student database management system

Student performance data are used during district staff meetings

Student performance database for formative assessments

2.9 Creates and supports collaborative networks of stakeholders to support system programs:

Operational

Evidence Provided:

Accreditation team members are representative of staff and students

Artifacts displayed throughout the district demonstrate inclusion of all stakeholder communities

Calendar, agendas, minutes of stakeholder meetings

Committee members are representative of all stakeholder groups

Parent/community compacts

Record of Advisory Committees: calendars, membership, minutes

Record of co-curricular organizations and activities: calendars, membership, sponsors

Stakeholder survey data

Stakeholders affirm a sense of belonging and engagement

Stakeholders affirm that leadership hears and acts upon their suggestions and recommendations

Stakeholders affirm their involvement in a district-wide decision-making process

Stakeholders affirm their involvement in the accreditation process

Stakeholders affirm their involvement on committees

Website provides forum for feedback and dialogue

2.10 Provides direction, assistance, and resources to align, support, and enhance all parts of the system in meeting organizational and student performance goals:

Operational

Evidence Provided:

Budget reflects allocation of support for student performance targets

District staff are knowledgeable about student performance targets

District staff are knowledgeable about the alignment of resources to support student performance

District-wide walk-about demonstrate monitoring of instructional practices

Guidelines outline expectations for instructional standards

Guidelines outline expectations for student performance

Organizational chart reflects allocation of support for student performance targets

Policies demonstrate established student performance targets, measures, and strategies

2.11 Provides internal and external stakeholders meaningful roles in the decision-making process that promote a culture of participation, responsibility, and ownership:

Operational

Evidence Provided:

Accreditation team members are representative of stakeholder groups

Calendar, agendas, minutes of stakeholder meetings

Committee members are representative of all stakeholder groups

Parent/community compacts

Policies and procedures established for the inclusion of all stakeholders into appropriate district-wide decision making processes

Stakeholders affirm their involvement in a district-wide decision-making process

Stakeholders affirm their involvement on committees

2.12 Assesses and addresses community expectations and stakeholder satisfaction:

Operational

Evidence Provided:

Artifacts displayed throughout the district demonstrate inclusion of all stakeholder communities

District staff are knowledgeable about the results of a community satisfaction survey

Record of Advisory Committees: calendars, membership, minutes

Stakeholder survey data

Stakeholders affirm their satisfaction with their level of involvement

2.13 Implements an evaluation system that provides for the professional growth of all personnel:

Operational

Evidence Provided:

District staff are knowledgeable about access to and participation in a professional growth program

District staff are knowledgeable about the criteria, timeline, process, procedures, and dispositions by which they will be evaluated

Documentation of salary schedules

Handbooks demonstrate staff evaluation system

New staff orientation materials

Policies demonstrate evaluation criteria, timelines, and termination processes

Policies demonstrate professional growth opportunities

Professional development plan for all staff

Focus Questions:

1. What is the process for establishing, communicating, and implementing policies and procedures for the effective operation of the school system and its schools?

The Superintendent for the Liberty County School System is selected and hired by the board members of the Liberty County Board of Education. It is the responsibility of the Superintendent to serve as the educational leader for the school system and serve in an advisory role to the Board. Following the adoption of policies and procedures, both at the state and local level, the superintendent is required to oversee the implementation of such policies and procedures.

The Superintendent has regularly scheduled meetings with the central office directors, central office classified staff members and building level principals to keep them updated on decisions made by the Board, federal and state mandates, rules and regulations, and anticipated changes. It is the responsibility of the central office directors to communicate this information to their individual departments, and principals take the information back to their school sites for delivery to their staff members.

Local board policies are approved by the Board during board meetings. Board agendas are posted and can be viewed by the staff members district-wide. Anyone who reviews the agendas has knowledge of upcoming policies and their status (i.e. first or second reading). Once approved by the Board, policies are put into an on-line format for public access. Adopted policies may also be presented at principal meetings conducted by the Superintendent.

The Liberty County Board of Education is made up of seven members who are elected by the citizens from each of the voting precincts. The Board Chair position is also an elected position but is voted on county-wide rather than by an individual precinct. The Board meets twice each month and all meetings are advertised and agendas are posted in accordance with O.C.G.A. 50-14-1-(2) (d). One meeting is held at night (5:30 p.m.) and a work session is held in the morning (9:00 a.m.). Both meetings are recorded. The Board is responsible for adopting policies, evaluating the Superintendent, hiring staff as presented by the Superintendent, buying and selling school property, calling elections to authorize an Educational Special Purpose Local Option Sales Tax (E-SPLOST), levying the local educational millage rate and approving the local budget.

Liberty County School System, like all other school systems in Georgia, has experienced various changes recently due to the economic status of state and federal governments. Among these changes include reduction in pay, as a result of state furloughs, a change in the student academic day, and a waiver of maximum class sizes. The decisions made at the state and federal levels greatly impact the staff and students of Liberty County. Communication is even more vital with the constant changes that are needed to continue to meet new requirements, laws and regulations.

The Liberty County School System solicits legal advice in situations regarding personnel and special education issues, Office of Civil Rights (OCR) and Equal Employment Opportunity Complaints (EEOC). Harben, Hartley and Hawkins, from Gainesville, Georgia, are primarily used for these legal issues. Local attorneys, Jones, Osteen, and Jones, are the primary sources for real estate land acquisitions.

The Liberty County Board of Education is audited annually by the Georgia Department of Audits and Accounts. Auditors review financial statements and express an opinion on the “correctness” of the statements. In addition, school district processes are reviewed and compared to actual operations in order to determine if the school district is functioning within the boundaries as presented in the state approved manual, Financial Management for Georgia Local Units of Administration. Auditors also perform additional work on certain federal programs. This work is designed to evaluate the district’s compliance with federal rules and regulations as they pertain to particular federal programs.

The Mission and Vision were recently reviewed and updated to reflect more closely the goal of the system. Once revised, the Mission and Vision Statements were added to the LCSS web-site and the individual school web-sites. Each school received a newly framed Mission and Vision statements plaque to replace the previous ones that were already displayed at the school. These statements are also displayed at the Board of Education building where they

can be viewed by all staff and visitors. An advertisement in the Coastal Courier was an additional avenue used to communicate this information to the community. The individual school brochures were updated to include the new Mission and Vision statements. Other places one may find these statements are the board agendas, the LCSS letterhead, the school improvement plans, Balanced Score Card information, and the substitute training literature.

2. What process does the system's leadership use to evaluate system effectiveness and its impact on student performance?

The staff of the Liberty County School System continuously uses data to make decisions regarding student instruction. Student data drives the individual school improvement plans, which, in turn, impacts the system improvement plan. Building principals and their staff disaggregate data from many evaluation instruments including Criterion Reference Competency Test (CRCT), Iowa Test of Basic Skills (ITBS), Georgia Kindergarten Inventory of Developing Skills (G-KIDS), Georgia 8th Grade Writing Assessment, Georgia 8th Grade Technology Proficiency Assessment, Georgia High School Writing Test, Georgia High School Graduation Test (GHSGT), Advanced Placement Exams, Scholastic Aptitude Tests (PSAT, SAT), and the American College Test (ACT). For students who are in Pre-K or are served in the Severely to Profoundly Intellectually Disabled programs, portfolios are used to assess for progress and to determine academic strengths and weaknesses. This information is then used to devise plans for remediation in required skill areas. Data walls are created in the schools to provide ongoing information to the staff, students, and visitors. These walls provide an overview of student progress on assessments and indicate the percentages of students who are not meeting, meeting, or exceeding expectations in specific areas. No specific student names are listed on these data walls to provide for student confidentiality.

Standardized test scores are evaluated by system leadership to reflect areas of both strength and weakness. The scores are placed on the district Balanced Score Card and shared with the public through forum opportunities, the State of the System Address, in the local newspaper, and at open houses. Each school has a data wall that reflects standardized test results for the previous year and a school Balanced Score Card which reflects both data from previous years and targets for upcoming years. Test scores are not only disaggregated at the system and school level, but also at the classroom level through the use of Test Trax, the on-line data system purchased in 2009, piloted in 2010, and used by both elementary and middle schools in 2011.

The Liberty County School System follows the Georgia Performance Standards (GPS) and/or Quality Core Curriculum (QCC) objectives as directed by the Georgia Department of Education (GaDOE). All students have access to the GPS on their current grade levels. The delivery of the instruction is modified to meet the diverse needs of the students. Teachers use a state adopted curriculum, pacing guides, progress monitoring information, technology, portfolios, and numerous other resources to deliver and enhance instruction. Benchmark assessments are used to pinpoint strengths and weaknesses of specific skills.

Benchmark assessments have been created with teacher input, curriculum department guidance, and through the Online Assessment System provided by the Georgia Department of Education. They are given every nine weeks to eight elementary and three middle schools with the focus on reading and mathematics. Assessment results are disaggregated by standard and domain level to establish gaps in curriculum and instruction. The scores are discussed and analyzed during grade level meetings led by curriculum coordinators at each site. They are also disaggregated at the system level and discussed at system curriculum coordinator meetings so that instructional adjustments may take place before the CRCT is given.

Both high schools are creating benchmarks beginning Winter, 2011 with mathematics as the system focus. High school math teachers, two Georgia Leadership Institute consultants, the system mathematics specialist, and

administrators are working together on Saturdays and/or reduced calendar days to create benchmarks for the 2011 school year.

The Balanced Score Card is being implemented in all schools and in district-wide departments and programs. This tool will allow the district to translate the organizational mission and vision into a comprehensive set of performance measures and will provide information for strategic planning, both proactively and reactively, in the different areas. The Balanced Score Card starts with the mission and vision for the system and leads to individual accountability in areas of student achievement, student, parent and community engagement, instructional and operational effectiveness, and the organizational culture and climate within the system.

As part of creating the state required Comprehensive Local Agency Implementation Plan (CLIP), the district collaborates with other stakeholders to review the vision, mission, student performance data, and professional learning needs of the district. Using this information, the district establishes measurable objectives, specific strategies, funding sources, and evaluation techniques to focus on improvement district-wide. The strategic planning process at the district and school levels serves as a foundation for the CLIP and for other improvement planning. District and school improvement plans have a common framework based on aligned visions, missions, beliefs, and programs. Plans include research-based objectives and strategies designed to address the needs of the school and district as identified through an analysis of student performance data.

The district school improvement plan identifies those responsible for planning, funding, implementing, collecting data for, and evaluating improvement strategies and goals. As part of the CLIP process, these same areas are identified. Throughout the school year the district individuals responsible for monitoring the various components meet with the appropriate staff to analyze data, review strategy implementation and effectiveness, and determine changes to be made and new areas for focus as needed. At the school level the administrators and curriculum coordinators monitor closely the instruction and performance that occurs during the year. The district further monitors achievement of the improvement goals by working with the schools to promote achievement and evaluation of the school improvement goals. Beginning in the 2011-2012 school year the district and schools will fully implement the Balanced Score Card as a tool for transparency and for monitoring progress on achieving the improvement goals.

Other strategies incorporated to ensure the improvement plan is implemented, monitored, achieved, and communicated to stakeholders include the following:

- The district improvement plan is presented to the Board of Education for review and approval. District personnel make periodic reports to the Board throughout the year and in Public Forums to provide updates on programs and initiatives being implemented to achieve the improvement goals. An annual report of disaggregated student performance data is presented to the Board and disseminated to stakeholders through school newsletters and news media.
- The Superintendent and district administrators meet regularly with principals and others to discuss relevant issues, concerns, and suggestions for moving the district forward. Principals are responsible for sharing results of discussions with their schools staffs.
- School leaders, along with district department leaders, are assigned the primary responsibility of providing leadership and support for the improvement of teaching, learning, and student achievement. They monitor the implementation of student achievement goals and strategies through school and classroom visits, classroom observations, and collaborative efforts.
- Regular meetings between district instructional staff and school leaders promote a focus on results. The district uses student assessment data to analyze the effectiveness of the school improvement model and makes adjustments as necessary.
- The district leaders encourage collaboration and professional dialogues related to improved student achievement through grade/department level meetings, instructional leadership teams, and collaboration among schools.

- The district and schools communicate goals and expectations through a variety of resources: meeting agendas, newsletters, organizational meetings, websites, parent/teacher conferences, news media, presentations at civic organizations, open houses, and school/district state report cards available on the Georgia DOE website.
- District and school leaders meet frequently to discuss progress and success in meeting school and professional goals.
- District staff guide and support the development and implementation of the school Title I plans.
- School councils review and discuss school improvement plans and make annual recommendations to the Board of Education to impact growth in student achievement.

The SAI (Standard Assessment Inventory) survey has been given annually since 2006 but will be given twice per year beginning in the 2010-2011 school year. This survey allows leaders to look at staff perception of school climate, culture, and instructional practices. It encompasses twelve areas for job-embedded professional learning and school improvement to include the following: learning communities, leadership, resources, data driven processes, evaluation, research-based processes, design, learning, collaboration, equity, quality teaching, and family involvement. The results of the surveys are analyzed both at the system and school levels to plan for improvement initiatives.

Although the graduation rate is improving each year, the percentage of students graduating on time remains a concern. The rate has increased from 73.3% in 2007-2008 to 77.8% in 2009-2010. This increase has resulted from specific efforts at the school and district levels to promote tutorials, remediation, credit recovery, and other instructional supports to assist students in being academically successful. However, because the Annual Measurable Objective for the state increased to 80% in 2010 and graduation rate is a second indicator for AYP for high schools, the district did not make AYP. In both 2009 and 2010, however, it was the high school academic performance and/or graduation rate that did not meet Annual Measurable Objective targets set forth by the state. Students in the Liberty County School System must earn a minimum of 26 Carnegie units and complete 20 hours of community service, in addition to meeting state requirements, in order to graduate.

3. In what ways are stakeholders, including system and school staff, given opportunities to provide leadership and to contribute to the decision-making process?

The Superintendent has regularly scheduled meetings with the central office directors, central office classified staff members and building level principals to keep them updated on decisions made by the board, federal and state mandates, rules and regulations, and anticipated changes. It is the responsibility of the central office directors to communicate this information to their individual departments, and principals take the information back to their school sites for delivery to their staff members. Board agendas are also posted on the web-site and can be viewed by the staff members district wide. This keeps staff members abreast of items and issues that are coming up for discussion at the board meetings while allowing time for suggestions and concerns to be addressed through the chain of command. Each school is also divided by grade levels, subjects, or teams depending on the grade levels within the school. The grade level chairs, department heads and team leaders meet with their building administrators and serve as the liaison between their supervisors and their individual teams or departments.

Each school has a Better Seeking Team (Leadership Team) which represents the entire staff. These individuals are either chosen by the school administration or the staff based upon their ability to have a positive impact on the decision-making process, provide leadership to new staff members, and provide guidance to veteran staff members regarding changes that need to take place. This team is instrumental in the decisions that are made at the site level regarding professional learning opportunities. They work closely with the school administration to see

what opportunities new or veteran staff members may need to close the gap in some deficit areas based upon assessment results. In addition, all schools in Liberty County have the ability to use PD360 to provide differentiated professional learning opportunities for all staff members. They are able to establish areas of weakness and/or interest and use this program both at home and at school. Through PD360, teachers are able to watch real classroom videos, see experts in the field explaining a process, and log on with peers through an on-line professional learning community.

Team Meetings occur in all Liberty County schools twice per month whether meeting as the Better Seeking Team or by grade level or department. Many of these team meetings are attended by the school administration and the site-based curriculum coordinator.

During the 2009-2010 school year, the Liberty County School District piloted newly designed standards-based rubrics in order to collect data and obtain feedback for the possible revision of the current Georgia Teacher Observation Instrument (GTOI). Staff members continued to use the original version of the evaluation instrument along with the new standards-based rubrics to provide feedback to the teachers. The teachers were not evaluated on the rubrics during the pilot of the possible revisions.

Each school in the Liberty County School System has developed a site-based, data-driven school improvement plan. The school improvement committee, led by the building principal, utilizes student performance data to develop measurable improvement goals. Interventions, with supporting professional learning grounded in best practice, are then identified for improving student performance. The site-based plan, which includes specific steps for achieving the school level goals, is updated each year as the student assessment data becomes available. Site-based school improvement plans are available in the system curriculum department and at each school. Schools also post these plans on their school websites.

For areas of critical need, teachers participating in professional learning are awarded stipends. The district pays stipends to teachers who participate in the following local courses: Math and Science Summit, various new teacher trainings, Balanced Score Card, and the endorsement programs. During the 2005-2006 school year, the district initiated an extended day for professional learning and training. Schools that chose to participate designated one afternoon per week as their professional learning time. Because staff members stay until 4:15, they are allowed to leave the other days of the week after students have departed the campus. This practice is still being followed.

The technology capabilities within the Liberty County School District make it convenient to gather information from specific groups of employees or from the entire LCSS staff. On-line surveys are often conducted to get quick, accurate feedback for upcoming projects or purchases. Recently the Maintenance and Operations (M & O) Department released an on-line survey to all schools and the central office personnel requesting feedback that would be used for selecting copiers for the 2011-2012 school year. This feedback was gathered quickly and allowed more individuals to provide information to the committee for copier selection. Different schools and departments have different needs and this process provides a better opportunity to satisfy the needs at all levels. This is just one example of how on-line surveys allow more input into a district-wide decision-making process.

In the Fall of 2010 the Liberty County School System was recognized at the National School Board Association's Technology + Learning conference for recognizing the importance of using technology to improve student achievement. The system was one of three systems in the nation who were saluted for their efforts.

Each of the Liberty County Schools has a school council that is made up of seven members consisting of teachers, parents, and the business community. These council members are individually charged with maintaining a school-wide perspective, regularly participating in school council meetings, serving as a liaison between the council and

the community, encouraging parental participation, and improving student achievement and performance. This board serves in an advisory capacity and gives advice to the principal, and when appropriate, to the Board of Education. O.C.G.A. 20-2-86 (s) defines the specific matters that can be addressed by the School Councils.

4. What policies and processes are in place to ensure equity of learning opportunities and support for innovation?

Under Title IX, Education Amendments 1972, school districts are required to monitor and report gender equity to the Georgia Department of Education (GaDOE) on an annual basis. The Title IX report is completed using expenditures from each individual school, as well as, capital expenditures, for both male and female qualifying sports. The Liberty County School District has had no incidents of non-compliance nor have any allegations been made suggesting that the Liberty County School District has failed to provide equality under Title IX. The district is very proud of the state-of-the-art facilities for sporting events for our male and female students.

The district provides differentiated programs and instructional strategies to accommodate a variety of student abilities, talents, interests, and needs. Individual learning is maximized through careful weekly planning, flexible grouping, and programs which support all students, including students in need of enhanced academic assistance, students with disabilities, and students gifted academically and artistically (Gifted and Talented Education—GATE).

Enrichment and remedial activities are provided to students throughout the district. Emphasis is placed on active learning supported by the incorporation of higher order thinking skills and research-based strategies that foster a performance-based approach to learning.

Enrichment instruction is provided through the Gifted and Talented Education (G.A.T.E.) program for students who are eligible for gifted services. Elementary G.A.T.E. students are served in resource classes. These students attend the gifted class for one entire day once a week by grade level. They are also placed in a “cluster” teacher’s class for expanded services on a daily basis in schools where teachers are qualified to provide these services. Middle school G.A.T.E. students are scheduled for Advanced Content classes in core academic areas. These advanced classes are also available to high achieving students. High school G.A.T.E. students are provided Honors and Advanced Placement courses which are also available to high achieving students. Other enrichment opportunities are given to all students through fine arts, technology, career tech courses, and a wide range of extracurricular activities.

Remedial instruction is incorporated into the learning process in a variety of ways. State required Early Intervention Program (EIP) classes are scheduled at elementary schools to assist struggling students. Additional remediation is provided by Title I remediation teachers in reading and mathematics at the elementary level. Middle school students and high school students receive remediation as part of the daily schedule. All students have after-school program options available for support of learning. Response to Intervention (RtI) is also integrated into the daily instruction based on student needs. A summer school program is offered for elementary and middle school students for remediation, but not for promotion. High school students have credit recovery courses offered during the summer and may also enroll in the Ombudsman Summer School which is a tuition based credit recovery program.

Additional student services include counseling, support of English Language Learners (ELL), support for exceptional learners, and a strong media/technology program. The Special Education Program provides services to students of varying levels. Students receive services based on their Individual Education Plan (IEP). Special Education services are available to students in grades PK-12. Special Education provides a broad range of services for educational assessment including: a) Preschool Special Education Assessment, b) Elementary, Middle and

Secondary Student Support Teams, and c) Psycho-Educational Assessment. Many students with disabilities have special needs that must be addressed in order to enable them to benefit from special education. In order to meet these needs, the Liberty County School System provides a full array of services.

Liberty County School District has a Response to Intervention (RtI) program for students who are struggling in the regular education classrooms in academic areas or behaviorally. This program allows students to remain in their regular education environment while strategies are implemented and solutions are sought rather than prematurely placing students in special education environments or labeling students who only need accommodations in the classroom. After-school programs, tutoring and Saturday programs are also available to provide additional assistance for students. Students who move through the first and second tiers of RtI but continue to struggle in the classroom may be referred to the Student Support Team (SST) for more intensive interventions. If students are successful at this tier, the interventions follow the student and the team continues to monitor progress. For students who are not successful, a referral to the Division for Exceptional Learning (DEL) may be required. Once referred to DEL, the student may be evaluated and considered for special education. The students who are found eligible for special education services are referred to as students with disabilities (SWD).

Students with disabilities (SWD) are provided several placement options for instruction but all students must receive instruction on their grade-level. These students may be taught in the regular education classroom with teacher support, paraprofessional support or in a resource classroom. Regardless of the environment, all students must have access to the curriculum on their grade-level not on their ability level. They may receive additional accommodations in order to learn the curriculum but the students do not receive instruction at a lower grade level. This process helps students prepare for state tests and for graduation assessments.

The Liberty County School System offers various opportunities for students to display their talents and abilities. All students in the district are given the opportunity to participate in the Georgia Media Festival (GMF), which recognizes outstanding student-produced media projects in areas such as live action video, website design, animation and photography. This competition is open to grades kindergarten through twelfth grade and encourages cooperation, collaboration, and leadership. To be eligible for judging at the state level, all projects must be scored at the building and then system levels and earn a superior score of 96 or above to qualify for the GMF and, subsequently, move on to the International Student Media Festival (ISMF). Since 2007-08, there has been an increase of 47% in the number of students moving on to the state level competition and a 60% increase in the number of student projects successfully progressing to the ISMF. Each year an "Oscar Night" is held to showcase the students who received superior scores at the state level.

Liberty County students also participate in the Helen Ruffin Reading Bowl (HRRB) and work as a team to read books nominated for the Georgia Children's Book Award (4th grade – 8th grade) or Georgia Peach Book Award for Teen Readers (9th – 12th). Students then compete in a game format to answer reading comprehension style questions related to their reading. The top teams from each level advance to the regional HRRB. Teams can then advance to the state bowl. Liberty County has had numerous teams place at the state level over the last five years.

The Liberty County School District provides transportation to all students who reside within the district and attend Liberty County public schools. Although there is no compensation from the state department for students who are transported within the 1 ½ mile radius from their homes, the board members have elected to transport all students.

Overall Assessment:

Operational: The school system has leaders who are advocates for the system's vision and improvement efforts. The leaders provide direction and systematically allocate resources to implement curricular and co-curricular programs that enable students to achieve expectations for their learning. Leaders encourage collaboration and shared responsibility for system and school improvement among stakeholders. The system's policies, procedures, and organizational conditions ensure equity of learning opportunities and support for innovation. While these processes and conditions are being implemented, the implementation is not systemic across the system, and the results are varied.

Standard 3. Teaching & Learning

STANDARD: The system provides research-based curriculum and instructional methods that facilitate achievement for all students.

Impact Statement: Impact Statement: A system is successful in meeting this standard when it implements a curriculum based on clear and measurable expectations for student learning that provides opportunities for all students to acquire requisite knowledge, skills, and attitudes. The system ensures that teachers use proven instructional practices that actively engage students in the learning process; provide opportunities for students to apply their knowledge and skills to real world situations; and give students feedback to improve their performance.

Indicators Rubric: Please indicate the degree to which the noted practices/processes are in place in the school system. The responses to the rubric should help the school system identify areas of strength and opportunities for improvement as well as guide and inform the school system's responses to the focus questions.

Indicators Evidence: For each Indicator, click the (Add Evidence) link to provide examples of evidence that support the rubric response.

Definitions of Indicators Rubric:

Not Evident	Little or no evidence exists
Emerging	Evidence indicates early or preliminary stages of implementation of practice
Operational	Evidence indicates practices and procedures are actively implemented
Highly Functional	Evidence indicates practices and procedures are fully integrated and effectively and consistently implemented

INDICATORS: In fulfillment of this standard, the system:

3.1 Develops, articulates, and coordinates curriculum based on clearly- defined expectations for student learning, including essential knowledge and skills:

Operational

Evidence Provided:

Communication of NCLB performance targets

Curriculum pacing guides

District provides guidelines for lesson plan development that include learning objectives

District staff can articulate student learning expectations

District staff/others meet regularly to discuss student progress and remediation

District staff/others meetings highlight discussions of student learning expectations

District-wide curriculum committee: review cycle, adoption/approval policies/criteria, membership

Formative assessments: quarterlies, etc.

Graphs, charts, displays of student learning goals

Individualized Development Plans

Policies on grading criteria

Policy on credit requirements for program completion

Special program promotion, completion requirements

Staff can articulate curriculum sequencing and grouping

Student Handbook outlines student learning expectations

Students affirm their knowledge of what is expected of them

Textbooks and text selection criteria are aligned to learning goals, curriculum

3.2 Establishes expectations and supports student engagement in the learning process, including opportunities for students to explore application of higher order thinking skills and investigate new approaches to applying their learning:

Operational

Evidence Provided:

Samples of student work

Student mentoring programs

Students affirm their involvement in their own learning

3.3 Ensures that system-wide curricular and instructional decisions are based on data and research at all levels:

Operational

Evidence Provided:

Assessment data

District staff/others can identify research used to align instruction

District staff/others meet to analyze data and align instruction

District staff/others meet to review current research

District staff/others meetings regularly include data analysis

Grade reports

Professional development calendar and topics

Surveys

Transcripts, certificates

3.4 Supports instruction that is research-based and reflective of best practice:

Operational

Evidence Provided:

Agendas, minutes of staff/grade level/department/program meetings

District staff/others meet to share best practices

District staff/others meetings regularly include discussions about effective instructional design and delivery

Guidance on lesson plan development

Guidance that promotes a variety of instructional design and delivery strategies

Professional development plans

Professional learning opportunities focus on best practice instruction

Professional organization membership

Student display of project-based learning opportunities

Student portfolios

3.5 Supports a curriculum that challenges and meets the needs of each student, reflects a commitment to equity, and demonstrates an appreciation of diversity:

Operational

Evidence Provided:

Curriculum includes attention to diversity

District staff are knowledgeable about state and national curriculum standards

District staff are representative of the school and community demographics

Graduation requirements

Master schedule

Policies that reflect attention to issues of equity

Promotion, graduation criteria

Standards-based curriculum: state and national standards

Students affirm that there are opportunities to excel

3.6 Allocates and protects instructional time to support student learning:

Operational

Evidence Provided:

Instructional calendar: days, hours

Lesson plans are followed during teacher absence

Master schedule

Policies demonstrate that substitute teachers are responsible for delivery instruction

Staff affirm that their instructional time is protected

There are few instructional interruptions: PA system, visitors, etc.

3.7 Maintains articulation among and between all levels of schooling to monitor student performance and ensure readiness for future schooling or employment:

Operational

Evidence Provided:

Articulation agreements between agencies

Content-specific staff are knowledgeable about each other's course syllabus

District staff are knowledgeable about student learning expectations of previous and subsequent grade levels

Policies and guidelines granting dual-credit, transfer of credit

Transition policies

3.8 Supports the implementation of interventions to help students meet expectations for student learning :

Operational

Evidence Provided:

After-school programs

Community-based programs

Counseling programs: curriculum, schedules, staffing

District staff affirm that there are multiple opportunities for students to get support

Individualized Development/Career Plans

Online support

Policies for student orientation, interventions, remediation

Schedule of opportunities, activities that support special learning needs

Students affirm that they have opportunities to explore their interests and career options

Students affirm that they have opportunities to get support for their school experience

Supplemental educational services: NCLB tutorial

3.9 Maintains a system-wide climate that supports student learning:

Operational

Evidence Provided:

Curriculum reflects attention to issues of school climate

Database of student behavioral incidents

District staff affirm that they are involved in promoting positive school climate

District staff/others meetings provide time for discussions about climate

Parents/community indicate that the school/district focuses on positive school/district climate

Policies for student behavior, remediation, due process, appeals

Stakeholder Compact: adult and student expectations

Stakeholder satisfaction survey data

Students affirm that they are involved in promoting positive school climate

3.10 Ensures that curriculum is reviewed and revised at regular intervals:

Operational

Evidence Provided:

Agendas and minutes from school board meetings (they have to approve the curriculum changes)

Application to seek new course approval and implementation

Calendar of curriculum committee meetings

Data related to implementation of course(s)

District staff affirm that they are involved in the curriculum review and revision process

District staff are knowledgeable about the timeline and process for curriculum review

District staff stays informed of curricular changes in other entities (neighboring districts, state, federal, organizations)

Local school staff affirm that they are involved in the curriculum review and revision process

3.11 Coordinates and ensures ready access to instructional technology, information and media services, and materials needed for effective instruction:

Operational

Evidence Provided:

Budget allocating appropriate funds for technology - software, hardware, and infrastructure

Calendar and schedule of technology services to students

District staff affirm that technology supports their curriculum and instructional programs

Facilities map indicating technology services/lab

Staffing chart demonstrating allocation of appropriate technology staff

Students and staff affirm that technology is embedded within the teaching and learning process

Technology staff/services demonstrate their involvement in support of student achievement

Focus Questions:

1. How does the system ensure the alignment and articulation of curriculum, instructional strategies, and assessments in support of the expectations for student learning?

All schools in Liberty County utilize the Georgia Performance Standards(GPS) and/or Quality Core Curriculum (QCC) objectives. The standards define expectations for student learning, including essential knowledge and skills. The district adopted the curriculum maps provided by the state that allows for vertical alignment to prepare students for standards mastery. The link to this map is located on the Liberty County website. The district Curriculum Department's staff members work with schools and individuals to ensure alignment. The district provides professional learning opportunities to address curriculum standards and indicators which impact student learning.

Benchmark assessments are used to provide data at the classroom, school and system level. This data is analyzed and used to provide support for areas of need. The data is also used in making both instructional and staffing decisions. Content specialists at the district level and curriculum coordinators at the school level work with teachers to provide support with curriculum and instructional strategies as well as best practices which optimize instruction to increase student learning. School staff members have been trained on accessing Learning Village to view curriculum maps and implement instructional resources. Both our Regional Education Service Agency (RESA) and Georgia Learning Resources System (GLRS) provide professional learning to staff.

Administrators at each school use focused walk throughs to evaluate the effectiveness of teaching/learning. Lesson plan review is another measure used by administrators to evaluate the teaching/learning process in classrooms.

Vocational staff utilize the Georgia Performance Standards for CTAE pathways and individual courses within the pathway as well as end of pathway assessments. Staff participate in CTAE Resource Network sponsored workshops to share best practices and methodology of instructional strategies. The courses offered are based on state-defined competencies developed and reviewed by members of the business community as well as by teachers of the courses. The competencies are based on the knowledge and skills that a student is expected to demonstrate. Mastery of these competencies gives students an advantage in the workplace and prepares them to continue their study at the post-secondary level.

The district is also in the process of developing a Career Academy which is scheduled to begin during the 2011-2012 school year. This academy will allow students to gain hands-on training and experience in the career/technical fields. The district partners with Savannah Technical College to provide opportunities for dual credit in some areas. Dual college credits are also available to students who meet state and local qualifications for participating in the dual enrollment program.

The Division for Exceptional Learning has three instructional coaches who work with co-teaching partners in all of the district's schools. Utilizing the Georgia Online Assessment System aligned to the elements of the Georgia Performance Standards for each content area, interim assessments have been developed and given throughout the year. Instruction in both whole group and small group within these classrooms has been tailored to the results of these assessments to improve the skill level of the students in these classes.

The district provides differentiated programs and instructional strategies to accommodate a variety of student abilities, talents, interests, and needs. Individual learning is maximized through careful weekly planning, flexible grouping, and programs which support all students, including students in need of enhanced academic assistance, students with disabilities, and students gifted academically and artistically (Gifted and Talented Education—GATE).

Articulation of content curriculum across grade levels is achieved in a variety of ways. At the school level, grade/department chairs coordinate regular meetings to share research-based best practices, resources, student performance, and curriculum requirements. Participants also review the district pacing guides and scope and sequence charts to ensure content instruction is consistent. The school level Curriculum Coordinator also meets with teachers to ensure a focus on instruction and to assist in articulating grade level requirements. The district's Curriculum Director and Instructional Specialists meet monthly with the school Curriculum Coordinators to discuss instructional issues, to reaffirm the delivery of content, and to offer suggestions for improvement and training as needed. Pacing guides also demonstrate articulation of content and expectations across grade levels. The articulation process could be enhanced through multiple grade level and across school level meetings, especially by content areas.

2. In what ways does the system promote and support the implementation of research-based instructional strategies, innovations, and activities that facilitate achievement for all students?

The district offers professional learning opportunities for teachers to obtain training in their content area. Schools within the district have professional learning communities and every staff member has the opportunity to attend workshops and learn ways to improve their teaching skills. Our Technology Department and Curriculum Department offer numerous opportunities for teachers to enhance their skills.

There is district participation as a member of the CTAE Resource Network Consortium. This consortium provides various stakeholders to be involved in decisions related to career/technical education.

The Curriculum Department provides professional learning and classroom support for the implementation of research-based strategies to ensure that all students are provided with appropriate instruction, differentiated activities and learning support. The Division of Exceptional Learning also provides similar professional learning for teachers of students with disabilities.

To ensure quality instruction, the district also:

- Targets lowest achieving students to provide additional assistance in instruction
- Monitors teacher instruction through formal and informal visits to classrooms in the form of administrator walk-throughs at the school level
- Reviews weekly lesson plans and provides feedback as appropriate through school level administrators
- Reviews long-range plans for alignment to standards and compliance with district requirements
- Complies with Georgia Accrediting Commission (GAC) and AdvancEd accreditation requirements
- Provides professional learning opportunities for all staff
- Obtains the services of consultants for identified areas of need
- Provides and supports technology initiatives
- Assists schools in creating focused Action Plans as part of the school improvement process
- Maintains and updates curriculum and curriculum support
- Coordinates efforts with district/school instructional supports (grade/department chairs, special services, alternative program, after-school tutorials, Saturday tutorials, summer school, guidance and media departments, technology)
- Addresses instructional concerns and provides support as needed
- Analyzes test data to make instructional decisions
- Monitors budget and expenditures to ensure instructional focus
- Provides elementary and middle school benchmark tests
- Conducts mid-year and annual principal evaluations
- Provides professional learning on research-based best practices
- Develops and maintains pacing guides
- Collaborates with school staff to support school-level initiatives
- Provides a Prekindergarten (Pre K) program for regular and special education students
- Supports alternative school programs for middle and high school students
- Provides an in-school suspension program at each school
- Provides technology support for engaging instruction through software, hardware, and professional learning

3. What processes are implemented to ensure that all staff members are well-prepared to support and implement the district's expectations for student learning?

The mission statement is posted at all facilities. The LCSS Personnel Department actively recruits highly qualified teachers to fill vacancies. Paraprofessionals must also be highly qualified to serve in classrooms.

New Teacher Orientation is provided and teachers are also trained on effective teaching strategies at the onset of each year. A standards based observation rubric is used at each school to promote high quality teaching and learning.

The Superintendent's Council meets bi-monthly and involves all program areas – CTAE, Technology, Student Services, DEL, ESOL, Title I, Gifted, Curriculum, Alternative Education, Counselors, School Nutrition, Finance,

and Personnel. Curriculum offerings are posted and offered system-wide. Central office staff review individual School Improvement Plans and meet with school staff to ensure alignment with district goals.

There are opportunities for advanced degrees or additional coursework through collaborative agreements with higher learning institutions such as Armstrong Atlantic State University (AASU). There is also a teacher mentor program.

In an effort to ensure that all teachers, administrators, and other instructional support staff are well prepared, the district provides the following activities/supports:

- Principal and Grade/Department Chair meetings
- Instructional support (curriculum coordinators, instructional specialists, SST coordinators, counselors, nurses, and school social workers)
- District and school level professional learning, including training for custodians, food service personnel, and bus drivers
- Periodic meetings and reviews (guidance, media, curriculum technology, gifted, Title I, special education)
- Local, state, and national conferences and workshops
- Curriculum revision activities
- Long-range planning and short-range planning for instruction, assessment, and technology
- Instructional materials purchasing process
- Appropriate resources and materials to support teaching and learning
- Action Plans as part of the school improvement process
- Induction training
- Content consultant support
- Data analysis
- State testing coordination and training
- Database of student information

4. How does the system ensure that all students and staff have access to comprehensive information, instructional technology, and media services?

The district ensures a supportive climate for student learning through regular meetings and communication with designated contacts at each school. Pertinent instructional and informational links and resources are also disseminated through district and school web pages and emails.

While protecting instructional time is a district priority, not all training can be accomplished outside the school day. In those instances, substitutes are provided and shared during the day so teachers are scheduled for half-day trainings. However, the district also provides professional learning outside the instructional day. These opportunities occur on designated in-service days, after-school, summer, and some weekends. School day instructional modeling, coaching, and support are provided by instructional specialists to enhance growth in instructional strategies and learning expectations.

The District Technology Executive Director and the district technology coordinators meet with each school principal and leadership team to customize a technology plan that will help train teachers to use technology in their daily lesson planning. This training also filters down to the students because the teachers use it and expect that the students will also utilize it. This district team coaches teachers and works in classrooms at each school to improve instruction using technology. The District Media Coordinator frequently visits each school principal and media center to ensure that media specialists and teachers are using the wide variety of media services available

and promoting project based learning for students.

The system's technology plan (3 year) was developed with input from staff representing various schools, levels, and years of experience, as well as parents, students and community members.

Technology grants have provided numerous opportunities to expand the already widely available technology within the district. Students within the district compete annually in the Media Festival at the local, regional and state levels.

Students also participate in the Helen Ruffin Reading Bowl at the local, regional and state levels.

Technology grants have provided numerous opportunities to expand the already widely available technology within the district. Numerous professional learning opportunities in the area of technology are offered locally.

Overall Assessment:

Operational: The school system implements a curriculum based on clear and measurable expectations for student learning that provides opportunities for all students to acquire requisite knowledge, skills, and attitudes. The system demonstrates evidence of alignment between the curriculum and instructional practices with systematic implementation across the system. Teachers use proven instructional practices that actively engage students in the learning process. Teachers provide frequent opportunities for students to apply their knowledge and skills to real world situations. Teachers give students regular feedback to improve their performance.

Standard 4. Documenting & Using Results

STANDARD: The system enacts a comprehensive assessment system that monitors and documents performance and uses these results to improve student performance and system effectiveness.

Impact Statement: A school system is successful in meeting this standard when it uses a comprehensive assessment system based on clearly-defined performance measures. The assessment system is used to assess student performance on expectations for student learning, identify gaps between expectations for student learning and student performance, evaluate the effectiveness of curriculum and instruction, and determine interventions to improve student performance. The assessment system yields timely and accurate information that is meaningful and useful to system and school leaders, teachers, and other stakeholders in understanding student performance, system and school effectiveness, and the results of improvement efforts.

Indicators Rubric: Please indicate the degree to which the noted practices/processes are in place in the school system. The responses to the rubric should help the school system identify areas of strength and opportunities for improvement as well as guide and inform the school system's responses to the focus questions.

Indicators Evidence: For each Indicator, click the (Add Evidence) link to provide examples of evidence that support the rubric response.

Definitions of Indicators Rubric:

Not Evident	Little or no evidence exists
Emerging	Evidence indicates early or preliminary stages of implementation of practice
Operational	Evidence indicates practices and procedures are actively implemented
Highly Functional	Evidence indicates practices and procedures are fully integrated and effectively and consistently implemented

INDICATORS: In fulfillment of this standard, the system:

4.1 Establishes and implements a comprehensive assessment system, aligned with the system's expectations for student learning, that yields information which is reliable, valid, and bias free :

Highly Functional

Evidence Provided:

All stakeholders are knowledgeable about behavioral standards

All stakeholders are knowledgeable about grading and appeals

All stakeholders are knowledgeable about learning expectations and targets for student performance

Assessment system that records multiple assessments

Assessment system that safeguards validity, confidentiality, identification

Calendar of assessment activities

Database that records graduation, completion, GPA, placement, retention rates

Dedicated unit/staff for assessment and data reporting

District staff use data to inform policies and practice

Online assessment system

Policies outline administration of multiple assessments and their purpose

Policies that outline targets for behavioral standards: attendance, discipline

Record of multiple assessments administered, including program-specific required assessments

Special database for career preparation, special education, bilingual education programs

Staff affirm the use of multiple measures for student performance

Stakeholders are familiar with the administration and purpose of multiple assessments

Stakeholders are knowledgeable about the assessment schedule

Stakeholders implement multiple assessment system

Student/Staff Handbook that outlines grading scales, syllabus criteria, and appeal process

The development and administration of multiple assessments consider limited-language learners, students with disabilities, and multiple learning styles

Other: LCSS website

Other: Benchmark assessments; pacing guides

4.2 Ensures that student assessment data are used to make decisions for continuous improvement of teaching and learning:

Operational

Evidence Provided:

Agendas, minutes from staff meetings indicate use of data to drive instructional planning discussions

Agendas, minutes from staff meetings indicate utilization of data systems

Criteria for evaluation of staff performance include the use of data for instructional planning

Data graphs, charts display student performance expectations

District staff affirm their understanding of how data are used to evaluate their effectiveness

District staff are knowledgeable about how to use student performance data for the purpose of instructional planning

District staff demonstrate the use of data when planning guidelines for instruction, through vertical and horizontal articulation

District staff meet regularly to discuss student work

District staff utilize assessment data for the purpose of instructional and program planning

Examples of student work are prominently displayed

Student performance data reports, charts, graphs indicate system-wide use of data for instructional planning

Students affirm knowledge about their learning expectations

4.3 Conducts a systematic analysis of instructional and organizational effectiveness, including support systems, and uses the results to improve student and system performance:

Operational

Evidence Provided:

Data from community/business

Data from multiple surveys indicate wide scale use of data to analyze instructional and organizational effectiveness

District staff utilize business and community data to guide program planning

District staff utilize perception data from surveys to guide program planning

Stakeholders affirm their familiarity with student performance and organizational effectiveness

Stakeholders affirm their involvement in meetings in which the topic of student performance and organizational effectiveness were highlighted

4.4 Provides a system of communication which uses a variety of methods to report student performance and system effectiveness to all stakeholders:

Operational

Evidence Provided:

Agendas, minutes from meetings where student performance and school effectiveness were highlighted

Criteria that establishes student performance data as a component of parent-teacher conferences

District staff affirm the use of various communication methods to report student performance

Newsletters demonstrate communication of student performance and school effectiveness

Stakeholders affirm the use of various communication methods to report student performance

4.5 Uses comparison and trend data from comparable school systems to evaluate student performance and system effectiveness:

Operational

Evidence Provided:

Agenda, minutes of meetings in which comparative data were highlighted

District staff affirm their involvement in meetings in which comparative data were highlighted

Reports that outline comparable data analysis - across programs

Reports that outline comparable data analysis - across schools, districts, states, nationally

Other: Balanced Score Cards; LCSS website; GDOE website

4.6 Demonstrates verifiable growth in student performance that is supported by multiple sources of evidence:

Operational

Evidence Provided:

Data reports disaggregate student performance growth

Data reports include behavioral and environmental data

Data reports verify growth in student performance

District staff can identify reasons why student performance has increased/decreased

District staff can identify strategies for increasing student performance

Other: STAR SuccessMaker, remediation data

4.7 Maintains a secure, accurate, and complete student record system in accordance with state and federal regulations:

Highly Functional

Evidence Provided:

District staff affirm their comfort with the level of data accuracy and security

Policies that outline the conditions for safeguarding and transferring transcripts

Policies that safeguard accuracy and security of all data

Reports that satisfy local, state, and national requirements

Stakeholders are knowledgeable about the conditions under which transcripts are safeguarded and transferred

Stakeholders indicate that they have seen reports that satisfy local, state, and national requirements

Focus Questions:

1. How is the assessment system currently used throughout the school system and its schools to guide analysis of changes in student performance?

Liberty County School District has a comprehensive program of assessment used to determine academic needs of students. The program includes the use of national, state, and local measures and both norm-referenced tests and criterion-referenced tests. The district uses both formative and summative assessments as well as formal and informal evaluations to measure and analyze changes in student performance.

To determine and describe specific student academic needs, the Liberty County School System participates in the state testing programs annually including use of all of these assessment tools:

- The Georgia Criterion Reference Competency Tests (CRCT)
- The Georgia Writing tests for Grades 3, 5, 8, and 11
- The Georgia High School Graduation Test (GHSGT)
- Georgia Kindergarten Inventory of Developing Skills (GKIDS)
- The State checklist for eligibility in the Early Intervention Program (EIP)
- The Diagnostic Reading Assessment (DRA)
- Georgia End of Course Tests (EOCT)

Ninth Grade Literature and Composition

Math I

Math II

United States History

Economics

Biology

Physical Science

American Literature and Composition

- Georgia Alternate Assessment (GAA)
- Assessing Comprehension and Communication in English State to State for English Language Learners (ACCESS for ELLs)
- National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP)
- Standardized Testing and Reporting (STAR) for Reading
- Adopted Text Assessments
- Preliminary Scholastic Aptitude Test (PSAT)/Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT)
- American College Test (ACT)
- Benchmark Assessments
- Teacher Observation
- Checklists
- Inventories
- Rubrics
- Reading records
- Teacher developed tests
- Performance assessments
- Georgia RESA Assessment of Student Progress (GRASP)
- OAS

- Education Study Island
- Education City
- DIBELS

The Curriculum Department at the central office, along with the district directors, examine and disaggregate results of state and norm-referenced tests administered to students. Subgroup analyses are made and results are compared to comparable school districts within our Regional Education Service Agency (RESA). As data are collected, strengths and weaknesses become evident. This information is used to evaluate programs implemented in individual schools. Results are presented to board members, local school staff members, parents, and the community. Test results are also shared through the local media, parent letters, school newsletters, the system profile found within the CLIP, and the district website, www.liberty.k12.ga.us.

Staff members at the local school level use both district and school level data for assessment, evaluation, and instructional planning for both individual and group needs. Curriculum coordinators and instructional specialists are very instrumental in coordinating the analysis of data to guide instruction effectively.

The curriculum department, system directors, administrators, and curriculum specialists meet at various times to discuss data and plan for future endeavors to meet areas of need. To improve student achievement in the district, the needs are addressed with research-based interventions, actions and strategies in the CLIP (Comprehensive Local Education Agency Implementation Plan). The district profile is updated annually based upon information gathered. This update also becomes a part of the CLIP.

Data-driven instructional planning is a priority at both the district and the school levels. The assessment information provides a vehicle for professional, data-based conversations addressing student learning throughout the year. Data resulting from district benchmark assessments are particularly helpful and significant in this context. The district benchmarks are formative assessments administered to students in grades one through eight. High school benchmark assessments are used for several content areas but need to be developed for all courses. Using the benchmark assessment results, district and school level personnel are able to identify student strengths, areas in need of improvement, and areas for differentiated instruction.

Each year the district's Title I schools are required to complete a comprehensive needs assessment in order to develop their annual improvement and Title I plans. A thorough analysis of each school's student performance results is a major component of this process. This information is reviewed by each school's leadership team and by district personnel.

Response to Intervention (RTI), a model that incorporates a well-integrated system of interventions guided by student outcome data, is applied to decisions made in the general and/or special education classrooms. The RTI process is a precursor to Student Support Team involvement and moving to the next tier of support leading to consideration for special education services. The practice of providing high quality, research-based academic and/or behavioral interventions is matched to student needs which involves using student response/outcome data to make important educational decisions. Based on data, school-level teams review, plan, and evaluate student progress through progress monitoring to identify and address individual student performance.

2. What are you doing to ensure that assessment results are timely, relevant, and communicated in a way that can be used by the system, its schools, and stakeholders to aid the performance of individual students?

The Liberty County School System's curriculum department and system directors examine, disaggregate, and distribute test results for all students and subgroups. Presentations are made at board meetings, community forums, chamber meetings, and to school council groups. News releases highlighting the results of state tests are provided in the local newspaper for parents and other stakeholders. Other assessment data is released to parents through school newsletters and data walls. Achievement data is also accessible to parents through the parent portal in Power School and the district and school websites.

Student data maintained in Power School and Test Trax allow school and district administrators to examine various classifications of students and specific data variables to make informed decisions about program and system effectiveness. Results shared with staff members at the system level are used for assessment, evaluation, and instructional planning. During the 2010-2011 school year, school principals, system leaders, teacher leaders, and the superintendent created a system-wide Balanced Score Card with assessment results, baselines, and targets for all areas affecting student achievement in Liberty County. This system analysis tool includes goals for the following areas: curriculum mastery, subgroup performance, graduation rate, student engagement, parent awareness and support, community engagement, school climate, effective and efficient financial processes, effective and efficient operational support processes, maintenance of an effective instructional environment, instructional processes, positive culture, staff effectiveness and accountability, effective school and system leadership, and effective communications.

To ensure continuous student achievement in the district, needs are addressed with research-based interventions, actions, and strategies in the CLIP. Appropriate professional learning is offered to teachers to ensure adequate performance on use of targeted interventions. Parents are notified of test results in several ways: the Liberty County School System website, newsletters, parent conferences, local newspaper, report cards, forums, school board meetings, and through the new parent portal system Power School. In addition, external stakeholders are able to check individual schools' proficiency status and overall system status on several websites such as GADOE and GOSA (Governor's Office of Student Achievement).

3. How are data used to understand and improve overall effectiveness of the school system and its schools?

The system plan for Liberty County Schools and the individual school plans contain a number of methods for assessing the academic status of students. Assessments, both formal and informal, are important in fulfilling grant reporting requirements as well as providing school improvement data. Currently all assessments, including benchmark results, are incorporated into each individual school's Balanced Score Card which directly supports plans for individual or subgroups of students. Currently, the major focus regarding assessment remains on the analysis of CRCT data for elementary and middle schools and GHSGT data for our high schools. However, the phase-in plan for the EOCT tests will impact data analysis and overall grade calculations for high school students beginning in school year 2011-2012. Mathematics achievement is an area of focus for improvement throughout the district.

RTI, Tier I & II, and SST assessments are used to identify students with special needs by the special education department followed by a comprehensive psychological assessment. The school system considers and re-evaluates every three years and, if needed, repeats it. Progress monitoring is used to determine goal mastery. This information is used to form groups within classrooms to provide appropriate differentiated instruction. Additional safety nets are in place in the form of after school, during school day, or Saturday tutorials. By analyzing student work, the schools are more able to refine instructional practices so that students are able to meet grade level or subject matter performance standards.

District achievement data are maintained electronically and are available at the district and school levels through Test Trax. The parent portal in Power School enables parents to have access to and to be informed about their child's grades, school assignments, and attendance history.

Teachers at each school are provided time to plan, collaborate, and meet by grade level and/or department area. The focus of these meetings is to review and discuss assessment and accountability results, share ideas, and plan instruction to best remediate or enrich learning programs for students.

4. How are staff members across the system and its schools trained to understand and use data to impact teaching and learning in the classroom?

Principals share results with staff members at the local school level. This information is used for assessment, evaluation, and instructional planning for individual students and subgroups. The major goal is for all schools to use test results to guide instruction. For the system to be successful in this effort, the district provides professional learning opportunities to help staff members examine and use test results effectively. Professional Learning Community (PLC) time is used to examine data and plan for instruction. The system has placed curriculum coordinators in all schools. They are instrumental in helping analyze, disaggregate, and provide test data to individual teachers. Curriculum coordinators are trained to understand test analysis and are readily available to ensure that teachers have the training needed to use test data to drive instruction. The district's Title I staff also guide schools in analysis and effective use of student achievement data. The analysis of data allows school and district personnel to use data effectively to drive instruction and to make programmatic changes. Through a collaborative effort, district administrators, school administrators, and teachers use data to identify appropriate professional learning activities. Data are used to determine appropriate instructional materials and equipment needed and to assist in determining adjustments that are essential to the instructional focus.

The district curriculum department coordinates efforts in collecting and analyzing test data. Testing data is annually updated as results from standardized tests trickle into the system. The curriculum department consisting of a director and three instructional specialists oversee the disaggregation of data to see academic achievement and to determine progress made across all groups of students. To compare our system with like systems, test results are compared to other schools in our RESA (Regional Education Service Agency) area as well as to state results. This comparison helps us determine how well our students perform in comparison to other systems. Areas of deficiency are addressed to ensure ongoing achievement and continuous improvement in the district by using research-based interventions, activities, and strategies. These interventions are addressed in the CLIP.

Liberty County School System maintains a secure, accurate, and complete student record system in accordance with state and federal regulations. The student record system used by Liberty County School System is Power School. Within Power School student demographic information, discipline records, attendance, and grades are kept. Power School also has the capability to allow parents to login and view their child's grades. Power School is used to report all information needed annually by the state. Each school maintains a permanent record for each student in addition to the information kept in Power School. These records archive grades and attendance and follow students throughout the entire school experience. The system also keeps records on students with special needs, gifted students, and ELL students. These records contain student support information and testing information and are housed at the central office.

Overall Assessment:

Operational: The school system uses a comprehensive assessment system based on clearly defined performance measures that yield valid and reliable results. The assessment system is used to assess student performance on expectations for student learning, evaluate the effectiveness of curriculum and instruction, and determine interventions to improve student performance. The assessment system yields timely and accurate information that is meaningful and useful to system/school leaders, teachers, and other stakeholders in understanding student performance, school and system effectiveness, and the results of improvement efforts.

Standard 5. Resource & Support Systems

STANDARD: The system has the resources and services necessary to support its vision and purpose and to ensure achievement for all students.

Impact Statement: A system is successful in meeting this standard when it has sufficient human, material, and fiscal resources to implement a curriculum that: enables students to achieve expectations for student learning, meets special needs, and complies with applicable regulations. The system employs and allocates staff well-qualified for their assignments. The system provides ongoing learning opportunities for all staff to improve their effectiveness. The system ensures compliance with applicable local, state, and federal regulations.

Indicators Rubric: Please indicate the degree to which the noted practices/processes are in place in the school system. The responses to the rubric should help the school system identify areas of strength and opportunities for improvement as well as guide and inform the school system's responses to the focus questions.

Indicators Evidence: For each Indicator, click the (Add Evidence) link to provide examples of evidence that support the rubric response.

Definitions of Indicators Rubric:

Not Evident	Little or no evidence exists
Emerging	Evidence indicates early or preliminary stages of implementation of practice
Operational	Evidence indicates practices and procedures are actively implemented
Highly Functional	Evidence indicates practices and procedures are fully integrated and effectively and consistently implemented

INDICATORS: Human Resources. In fulfillment of this standard, the system:

5.1 Establishes and implements processes to recruit, employ, retain, and mentor qualified professional and support staff to fulfill assigned roles and responsibilities:

Operational

Evidence Provided:

Agendas, minutes, decisions for district and school level IEP meetings

Appropriate space is provided for special need support programs

District staff can affirm that special needs students receive needed support

IEP: Individualized Education Plans

Personnel policies ensuring appropriate hiring practices

Personnel policies ensuring certification, licensure, evaluation, training

Professional learning opportunities

Program descriptions: Special Needs Populations

Schedules: District, School, Extra-Curricular; Transportation

Staff Handbooks

Staff schedules and assignments

Student Handbook

5.2 Establishes and implements a process to assign professional and support staff based on system needs and staff qualifications as may be required by federal and state law and regulations (i.e., professional preparation, ability, knowledge, and experience):

Operational

Evidence Provided:

Personnel policies ensuring certification, licensure, evaluation, training

Policies regarding NCLB highly qualified teachers

Professional learning opportunities

Staff can affirm that they are teaching in their major area of study

Staff schedules and assignments

Staffing of both administrative and teaching positions is appropriate and adequate

5.3 Establishes and implements a process to design, evaluate, and improve professional development and ensures participation by all faculty and staff:

Operational

Evidence Provided:

Budget demonstrates appropriate allocation for PD

Calendar, agenda, summaries of PD opportunities

District monitoring of professional development implementation

District staff are actively engaged in discussions that have resulted from their professional development experience

District staff can affirm their involvement in professional learning opportunities

Professional development plan

Staff are aware of the requirements for continuous learning

Staff implement effective strategies based on their professional development experience

5.4 Ensures that staff are sufficient in number to meet the vision and purpose of the school system and to meet federal and state law and regulations, if applicable:

Operational

Evidence Provided:

Budget demonstrates appropriate allocation for staffing

Class size indicates appropriate and effective support of student learning

Master schedule

Personnel policies and practices

Policies regarding NCLB highly qualified teachers

INDICATORS: Financial Resources. In fulfillment of this standard, the system:

5.5 Engages in long-range budgetary planning and annually budgets sufficient resources to support its educational programs and to implement its plans for improvement:

Operational

Evidence Provided:

Annual budget - current, forecasted, fund-equity

Consolidated Application (federal)

Facilities plan - current, future

Facilities protection documentation: insurance, amortization

Fiscal policies: use of all funding, including donations, reserves, discretionary

Infrastructure plans: short and long range

Practices that support appropriate use of allocated funds

Purchasing/replacement policies: adherence to EEO

School-level budgets

Space is adequate and appropriate to support student learning

State and Federal program budgets for targeted support

5.6 Ensures that all financial transactions are safeguarded through proper budgetary procedures and audited accounting measures:

Operational

Evidence Provided:

Audit reports

Fiscal protection plans: insurance

Organizational oversight of fiscal authority

Payroll and purchasing policies and processes

Practices that support appropriate use of fiscal resources

Secure management of all fiscal processes

INDICATORS: Physical Resources. In fulfillment of this standard, the system:

5.7 Maintains sites, facilities, services, and equipment to provide a safe, orderly, and healthy environment:

Highly Functional

Evidence Provided:

All district-wide facilities are properly maintained

Calendar of safety drills: fire, tornado, emergency crisis

District staff are involved in developing and implementing safety policies

District support staff are knowledgeable about safety policies

District-wide environment is clean and safe

Facilities maintenance reports and plans

Policies and processes regarding safety

Policies and processes related to student/staff injury

Other: Student handbooks; federal/state regulations

5.8 Establishes and implements written security and crisis management plans with appropriate training for stakeholders:

Operational

Evidence Provided:

Crisis intervention committee

Crisis intervention plan

District staff and students are knowledgeable about emergency procedures

District staff are involved in the crisis intervention team

Emergency procedures

Health support staff are available

Secure record system

Staff Handbook

Student Handbook

Wellness policy

5.9 Implements processes and plans for maintaining and improving sites, facilities, and equipment:

Operational

Evidence Provided:

Appropriate district staff affirm their knowledge of the plan for physical asset maintenance and replacement

Physical assets plan: short-term and long-range

Policies and procedures for maintaining and improving physical assets: site facilities, infrastructure, equipment, etc.

5.10 Provides technology infrastructure and equipment that is up-to-date and sufficient to accomplish the system's goals:

Highly Functional

Evidence Provided:

District staff are knowledgeable about the short and long range plans for maintenance and replacement of technology infrastructure

Policies and procedures for maintaining and improving technology infrastructure: hardware and software

Policies and procedures regarding appropriate internet access

Policies and procedures regarding the purchase of technology tools

Stakeholders are knowledgeable about policies regarding appropriate internet access

INDICATORS: Support Systems. In fulfillment of this standard, the system:

5.11 Provides and coordinates support services that meet the health, counseling, nutrition, safety, co-curricular, transportation, and special learning needs of all students:

Operational

Evidence Provided:

Alternative Education Program

District monitors instruction for special needs inclusion

District provides guidelines for classroom instruction that demonstrates variety of instructional methodologies to support all students

District provides guidelines for Response To Intervention program and is demonstrated at classroom level

IEP: committee, minutes, calendar, agenda, sign-in sheets

Individualized Development Plans

Master schedules demonstrating support for special needs

Policies and procedures that are ADA and IDEA compliant

Professional development calendar and topics

Special Needs Department/Committee

Staff affirm their use of instructional strategies that support special needs inclusion

Staffing of Counseling and Guidance programs

Stakeholders affirm their support for the district's special needs programs

Student referral policies and practices

Student referral process and procedures

Students and staff affirm their understanding of special needs populations

Teacher certification, licensure, etc. supporting special needs

5.12 Provides student support services coordinated with the school, home, and community:

Operational

Evidence Provided:

Community based programs

Curriculum for Career Preparation

District staff affirm that they receive regular training opportunities to support student behavior

Enrollment data - current status, trends

Guidance and Counseling Department/Committee

Master schedule indicates availability of career preparation

Professional development: calendar, topics

Staff assigned to career preparation programs

Stakeholders are supportive of community-based programs to support student engagement

Students are enrolled in career preparation

Students are knowledgeable about career planning programs

Focus Questions:

1. What is the school system's process for recruitment, induction, placement, development, evaluation, and retention of qualified professional and support staff across the system and its schools?

The Liberty County School District actively recruits qualified professionals throughout the year. Staff members participate in career fairs and recruitment events across the state of Georgia as well as in neighboring states. For the past two years we have sponsored our own district level recruitment fair with the most recent fair attracting nearly 150 applicants. The district promotes recruitment on the district website, TeachGeorgia, college campuses, and in printed regional and national publications. Applicants are invited to submit their credentials and information online as well as through traditional hard-copy methods.

The district website has been updated to include the complete application packet, salary schedules, and other commonly used personnel forms. Applications and resumes are screened for areas of certification and reviewed for conversion to Georgia Professional Standards Commission requirements. Based on the area of certification, the applicants' information is then forwarded to school principals. The screening process for applicants is continuously intensified to ensure proper and appropriate placement of new-hires. Administrators at the school level review certification of teachers and years of experience. Using this information, they endeavor to schedule students in classes in such a manner as to provide equity of placement, ensuring that inexperienced teachers are not given the lowest achieving students as much as possible.

New hire orientation is a complete one and one-half day process of interactive experiences that prepare individuals for their new position within the district. Numerous district leaders engage the employees in the core values of the district, familiarization, review and discussion of the Educator's Code of Ethics, emergency procedures and policy review. New employees also receive an explanation of the district's compensation methods and procedures; as well as, valuable information concerning the abundant benefits that are made available. GTEP training is conducted by the Director of Curriculum and Professional Learning.

The district also provides a local supplement based on years of experience and degree level for certified staff and for years of experience for other personnel. As a result, the local supplement serves as an incentive in retaining highly qualified personnel.

2. How does the leadership ensure that the allocation of financial resources is supportive of the school system's vision, programs, services, and its plans for continuous improvement?

The budget process for the district begins in early January. School level leaders meet with their individual staffs

and prepare budget requests. In addition, program directors and other district level departmental leaders submit their requests for review. All requests are reviewed by the district level budget committee. The committee, comprised of numerous individuals in many varying positions, reviews the requests and forwards recommendations for inclusion in the overall budget. Once a tentative budget is prepared, the Superintendent presents the recommended budget to the local board for final approval.

The majority of budgeting for federal funding and some state resources takes place within the consolidated application. District-level program directors, armed with input and data from the individual school improvement teams, collaborate to maximize federal and state resources and develop budgets that are approved by the Superintendent and then by the State program managers. Based on the information approved by the State, the district finance department inputs individual school budgets into the financial accounting system (MUNIS). After budgets are entered, school purchasing agents enter requisitions into the system. In order for the requisition to be converted into a purchase order, the requisition must garner the approval of the site administrator, as well as the approval of the applicable district-level program director. Expenditures and receipts of local resources at schools and the school activity accounts are reviewed on a monthly basis by the Finance Department. Schools are required to submit bank statements and various reports to the Accountant for review.

The school district is audited annually by the Georgia Department of Audits and Accounts. For the previous five years, the district has received an unqualified audit opinion. Independent CPA firms are also contracted to conduct performance reviews of SPLOST expenditures and extensive reviews of all school activity accounts. The Board of Education receives monthly financial reports at its work-sessions which assist in communicating the financial position of the district and compare budgeted to actual revenues and expenditures.

Liberty County School facilities are constructed to economical and functional design standards using quality materials. Facilities and grounds are maintained at a level that reflects the high priority placed on public education by the Liberty County community.

The Maintenance and Operations Department is assigned the primary responsibility for management of district facilities. Short-term facility issues are managed through a computerized maintenance management system. Averages of 315 work requests are completed each month. Landscaping needs are met by district employees providing a year-round program to keep the campuses attractive in order to make a good first impression. Long range facility needs are addressed by the State required Local Facility Plan (March 25, 2010) and a master planning process whereby existing facilities are measured against both state and local standards. New construction, remodeling and renovation are identified and prioritized for current and future budgets. This process helps provide facilities that match the needs of the educational program. Capital maintenance replacement needs are also identified, monitored, and scheduled through an expected life-cycle schedule. Roof maintenance and replacement are managed through a district-wide roof management data base. School buildings are kept to a high standard of cleanliness providing a safe and sanitary environment for teaching and learning. The district's dedicated staff of custodians is trained to use a standardized custodial program that incorporates the products, procedures, and resources necessary to meet high expectations of our students, staff, parents and community.

Each of our individual schools develops a school safety plan each year following the guidelines set forth by the Georgia Emergency Management Agency. A copy of all school plans are given to the following agencies: Georgia Emergency Management, Liberty County Emergency Management, the Liberty County Sheriff's Department, Hinesville Police Department, Hinesville Fire Department and a copy is given to the Midway Police Department for the schools located in the City of Midway.

Not only do our schools conduct the required fire drills and severe weather drills, but they also practice other items addressed in their safety plans such as an "intruder in the building" drill. Schools conduct "table-top" and live drills with the coordination of The Georgia Emergency Management Agency and local emergency personnel.

The Georgia Emergency Management Agency has provided numerous hours of technical assistance to our schools as well as conducted walkthroughs and provided workshops.

Our district is very fortunate to have a superb working relationship with local law enforcement. The Liberty County Sheriff's Department provides a full time School Resource Officer at Liberty County High School to a student population of 1,164 students. The Hinesville Police Department provides two full time School Resource Officers for the 1,844 students that attend Bradwell Institute. The School Resource Officer Program is a proactive partnership between the school system and law enforcement. The overall goal of the program is to create and maintain a safer, less threatening learning environment for students, staff and guests through the placement of the state certified law enforcement officer.

The Liberty County School System transportation department employs 145 bus drivers, 6 mechanics, 30 monitor/aides, and four clerical staff. The Transportation department runs 139 routes per day, covering approximately 5,550 miles per day for an average of 999,000 miles per year. This figure does not include sports and extracurricular activity trips that are actively supported by the department. LCSS transports between 7500 and 8000 students twice a day. In an effort to maintain a safe means of transportation for our students, drivers are subject to random drug screenings as mandated by the State of Georgia. Drivers are also required to attend an annual recertification class and monthly safety meetings. The average age of the District's bus fleet is 8.9 years and the department prides itself on running an efficient and effective operation. The fleet is maintained by six full-time mechanics and all buses undergo mandatory 20 day in-house safety inspections as well as annual state inspections.

3. How does the school system ensure, support, and monitor the provision of resource and support services that meet the needs of all students?

The Liberty County School System employs counselors at all K-12 schools across the district. In addition, graduation coaches are utilized at both high schools and all three middle schools. The graduation coaches work to identify at-risk students and then employ a variety of methods to ensure the student remains engaged and on-task to graduate.

Liberty County has 7 full-time Student Support Team (SST) System Coordinators who work with our 14 schools. The SST Coordinators screen all students in 1st through 9th grades and a selected group of students in grades 10 through 12 twice a year. The coordinators use the GRASP screeners for Reading Fluency, Reading Comprehension, Math Fluency and Standard Based Math. These results are used, along with other available data, to identify those students in need of further interventions or support.

Response to Intervention (RtI) is a program of support for and monitoring of student learning. All students are included in Tier 1. The teachers meet as grade level teams to discuss student work and progress. Differentiation is used for meeting specific student needs. Teachers are responsible for interventions for students in need of additional support. Each principal is responsible for determining the make-up of the Tier 1 teams, however, most schools employ their grade level teams. In the elementary schools, Tier 2 interventions may be provided by self-contained EIP classes, by Title I teachers meeting with small groups, or by the teacher working with small groups in the classroom. In middle and high, Tier 2 interventions are provided through tutoring, academic coaches, or teachers working with small groups in the classrooms. Each principal is responsible for determining the make-up of the RtI team for Tier 2. The SST Coordinators are available to be included on the Tier 2 team and in some of the schools the SST Coordinator is the lead member on that team. Most schools include the principal, assistant principal, curriculum coordinator, counselor(s), and interventionists in various combinations, along with the SST Coordinator. The teachers of the student are required to be a part of the team since in most cases he/she will be responsible for the interventions and progress monitoring data. If the progress monitoring data indicates the student continues to be unsuccessful with the interventions provided, referral is made to Tier 3/SST. In the high

schools and middle schools, the SST Coordinators work with an average of 7% of the student population in Tiers 2 and 3. In the elementary schools they work with an average of 10% of the student population in Tiers 2 and 3. Due to the nature and activities of the district's Pre-K program, minimal referrals are received from PreK that necessitate intervention.

Resources are used to support an alternative education program and a disciplinary intervention program. The alternative education program is provided by the private company Ombudsman Educational Services, Inc., and serves students in grades 6-12 who have been expelled from their school through tribunal or waiver process, have returned from a youth detention center, or who have experienced academic challenges and are at least two years behind their peers. The middle school students are served at a district site that was converted to house the alternative program. The high school students are served in two store-front buildings leased by Ombudsman. The school district contracts with Ombudsman and pays per-seat tuition for the services rendered. The district also contracts with the Student Transition and Recovery (S.T.A.R.) Corporation to provide behavioral interventions for students from 2nd grade through 9th grade who struggle with poor behavior that affects their achievement. These students receive support before, during, and after the school day from four instructors employed by S.T.A.R. and who work with all the schools in the district.

Liberty County School System provides financial resources for CTAE programs above and beyond the funding levels required by the Georgia Department of Education. These locally-funded resources supplement state and federal grants which enable our system to initiate, improve, expand, and/or modernize our CTAE programs. We are able to serve all students, to include special populations and non-traditional students, as they complete career pathways of their choice in high-skill, high-wage, or high-demand occupational areas. Goals and objectives of the various CTAE programs are reviewed as submitted on the Five-Year Plan for Career and Technical Education on file with GaDOE and budgeted each year in accordance with the system's annual Local Plan.

Students in Liberty County also benefit from an exciting work-based learning program. In the district, Work-Based Learning (WBL) is a structured learning experience that connects the student's career goal, classroom learning and a productive work placement. WBL provides students with opportunities for instruction not only in academics but also in occupational skills, career exploration and guidance in identifying employment and educational goals. Students have the opportunity to apply what they learn in school with on-the-job skills, enabling a smooth transition into the work force and/or education beyond high school.

The transition for students with disabilities (SWD) from high school to the next phase of their lives is different for every student. Within the Liberty County School District, a variety of activities are provided in order to help facilitate this transition for SWDs, including: completing age-appropriate transition assessments, assisting students to be self-determined, assisting students in the development of work skills, helping students find employment and/or pursue post-secondary education, and providing information and referrals to appropriate agencies.

The Liberty County School Nutrition program operates 14 school kitchens and 1 satellite meal program with 112 employees. The program serves a daily average of 8,600 lunches to approximately 85% of our students. In addition, 45 % of our students chose to eat school breakfast resulting in a daily average of 4,500 morning meals served. The School Nutrition Program offers free or reduced meals to 63% of our total student body. All 14 kitchens have a minimum of two health inspections per year and have average scores of 99%. The School Nutrition Program receives on-site coordinated reviews and school meal initiative reviews every five years and is audited annually by the Georgia Department of Audits with individual federal program compliance work performed at least once every three years.

The Liberty County School System is extremely proud of its support and use of technology across all areas of the district. The Liberty County school system network is a Metropolitan Area Network (MAN) with 57 servers and over 5,500 computers. A 1GB fiber connection is provided to each school site. All schools have wireless networks

and an Internet filter. The district remains committed to ensuring compliance with the Children's Internet Protection Act (CIPA). Teachers and students have access to almost 700 interactive whiteboards and over 400 student response systems. All of the district's teachers create and post their lesson plans using an online lesson plan manager. An in-house technology work order system provides the school system with an efficient way to report technology problems. The approximate 150 weekly work orders are completed in an expeditious manner and issues are evaluated in order to ensure the district provides the world of technology to the fingertips of all its students and staff. In the fall of 2010, the Liberty County School System received the NSBA's District Salute Award. The school system was one of only three districts in the country to receive the award for their outstanding efforts in technology integration. The district Technology Advisory Board is comprised of individuals from varying positions within the district. The technology department focuses on promoting technology integration. Teachers receive professional learning on how to integrate technology into their curriculum. Blogging, podcasting, webpage development and interactive websites are some of the training that is conducted throughout the district. Technology Teacher of the Month is another initiative that promotes technology integration. A teacher is spotlighted each month for consistently integrating technology into their classroom. The district's commitment and hard work in the area of technology are evidenced by the awarding of over \$600,000 in competitive Title IID grants to each of the three middle schools and both high schools over the last five years.

Overall Assessment:

Operational: The school system has human, material, and fiscal resources to implement a curriculum that enables students to achieve expectations for student learning, to meet special needs, and to comply with applicable regulations. The system employs and allocates staff members who are well qualified for their assignments. The system provides ongoing learning opportunities for all staff to improve their effectiveness, including both professional and support staff. The system ensures compliance with applicable local, state, and federal regulations.

Standard 6. Stakeholder Communications & Relationships

STANDARD: The system fosters effective communications and relationships with and among its stakeholders.

Impact Statement: Impact Statement: A system is successful in meeting this standard when it has the understanding, commitment, and support of stakeholders. System and school personnel seek opportunities for collaboration and shared leadership among stakeholders to help students learn and advance improvement efforts.

Indicators Rubric: Please indicate the degree to which the noted practices/processes are in place in the school system. The responses to the rubric should help the school system identify areas of strength and opportunities for improvement as well as guide and inform the school system's responses to the focus questions.

Indicators Evidence: For each Indicator, click the (Add Evidence) link to provide examples of evidence that support the rubric response.

Definitions of Indicators Rubric:

Not Evident	Little or no evidence exists
Emerging	Evidence indicates early or preliminary stages of implementation of practice
Operational	Evidence indicates practices and procedures are actively implemented
Highly Functional	Evidence indicates practices and procedures are fully integrated and effectively and consistently implemented

INDICATORS: In fulfillment of this standard, the system:

6.1 Fosters collaboration with community stakeholders to support student learning:

Highly Functional

Evidence Provided:

Agendas, minutes, calendar of parent meetings

Calendar of events that promote stakeholder involvement

District staff affirm that stakeholders are involved in many aspects of district events, activities, decisions

Internship/partnership agreements with community-based business and agencies

Parents and community members regularly volunteer time in district

Policies regarding suggestions, grievances

Stakeholder survey data

Stakeholders affirm that they are involved in many aspects of district events, activities, decisions

Other: Military personnel

6.2 Uses system-wide strategies to listen to and communicate with stakeholders:

Operational

Evidence Provided:

Calendars, agendas, minutes of parent meetings

District Improvement Committee: agendas, minutes, membership

Emails, phone answering system

Newsletters, brochures, letters, memos

Parent - Teacher conferences schedule

Policies regarding formal inclusion of stakeholder involvement

Stakeholders affirm they have variety of opportunities to be formally involved in life of district

Steering Committee meetings: agendas, minutes, membership

Web page dedicated to parents/community members

Wide variety of stakeholder communication documents/avenues

6.3 Solicits the knowledge and skills of stakeholders to enhance the work of the system:

Operational

Evidence Provided:

Advisory Committees

Calendar, agendas, minutes, committee membership

Policies regarding volunteer involvement

Schedule of volunteer activities

Stakeholder survey data

Stakeholders affirm that their suggestions and recommendations are acted upon

Stakeholders affirm that they are actively involved in providing expertise

Other: Military collaboration

6.4 Communicates the expectations for student learning and goals for improvement to all stakeholders:
Highly Functional

Evidence Provided:

Brochures, pamphlets

Newsletters about student performance

Online calendar, schedule, and news/updates

Parent -teacher conferences: calendar, procedures, participation data

Parent Handbook

Parent versions of Curriculum Pacing Guides

Parents and students are informed and involved in developing individualized learning plans for students

Parents and students are informed and involved in making course selections

Regularly published newsletters to community

Stakeholders affirm that they are knowledgeable about student learning

Student Handbook

6.5 Provides information that is meaningful and useful to stakeholders:
Highly Functional

Evidence Provided:

Parent -teacher conferences: calendar, procedures, participation data

Policies regarding reporting schedule

Report cards

Other: Parent conferences; PTO Meetings; report cards; Open Houses; public forums

Other: LCSS website; school websites

Focus Questions:

1. How does the school system's leadership ensure that the system and its schools are responsive to community expectations and stakeholder satisfaction?

The administrators and staff members within the Liberty County School System know it is imperative to establish trust and confidence among the schools and the stakeholder community. The administration uses a variety of

means for informing stakeholder groups with school and system activities, state department of education guidelines, legislative updates and federal regulations. Communication is achieved through the use of print, electronic and social media.

Liberty County web-page (www.liberty.k12.ga.us) is essential in providing general information for parents in our mobile community. Schools also have web sites with specific information for parents and other stakeholders. The Liberty County Board of Education schedules “community forums” for the discussion of specific topics and advertises the event within the community. The local newspaper, the Coastal Courier, shares education news and site achievements for the community to recognize and celebrate. School site personnel utilize technology to share homework, test dates, special events, timelines, and new contact information. This also allows for feedback from students and parents. The E-board web-page is available for the community with board member information, Georgia Department of Education news and additional links to the Georgia School Boards Association and Georgia Codes. Stakeholders have an opportunity to look at AYP information for the sites and district.

Face-to-face communication is essential since many stakeholders do not have access to technology at their homes. Site administrators encourage on-site visits, parent-teacher conferences and participation in PTO/PTA/School Council meetings and CRCT trainings. Schools hold specific activities for parent/guardian recognition such as “Donuts for Dads,” “Muffins for Moms,” Grandparents Luncheon, Military recognitions and Volunteer Appreciation Days.

System level communication within the county is a priority. A variety of activities support and enhance business and community involvements: Family Connection Collaboration, Chamber of Commerce (Leadership Liberty), Kiwanis and Rotary Clubs, Fort Stewart Forums, Job Fair, Read Across Liberty and PCAL (fingerprint and video for children). School sites have business/community partners who support the schools and enhance the educational activities for students.

Throughout the school year, input is gathered from stakeholders to look at feedback and determine perceptions and expectations for sites and system. Surveys are given out in May to be used as a planning tool and then again at the beginning of the school year (August/September) to narrow ideas and activities for enhancement.

2. What avenues are used to communicate information to stakeholders about the effectiveness of the school system and its schools, including the sharing of student performance results?

Open communication continues as a priority for the district and each site throughout the year. The use of technology facilitates this communication effort through voicemail, e-mail, parent call out program and site and system websites. The district website links stakeholders to the local board of education information, district policies and procedures, district performance results and state website for specific information. AYP results are also shared via the Coastal Courier for parents and the business community. Data walls are displayed at each site to share testing results and other information with stakeholders.

The Superintendent schedules visits with site faculties to share expectations for the day to day operation of the site. A short follow-up meeting with staff allows time for questions and clarification of topics during the visit from the Superintendent. Also, the Liberty County Board of Education members schedule tours to all of the sites and then meet with the faculty and staff for a question and answer session. Principals meet with the Superintendent and central office staff on Thursday mornings following a Tuesday board meeting. Updates are shared with site administrators for them to go back and share with their site staff.

Substitutes are screened and trained before entering schools to work with students. The orientation includes confidentiality, classroom management, routines, technology availability and communication expectations with co-workers, parents and students. Activities are available at all sites for parent/community volunteers. These range from classroom support for individual and small groups, reading and math activities, media center assistance and make-and-take activities for skill areas. The development and organization of the resource rooms make the checkout of books and materials quick and easy for the parents. Additional opportunities for stakeholder interaction include: Back to School Rally, Tutorial Programs, Conferences/Open House, Career Day, Safe Kids Day, School Council, Armed Services Family, YMCA, Math-a-Rama, Family Movie Night and Bingo for Books.

School site celebrations are for students and staff. The Teacher of the Year (TOTY) is recognized at the site and also in a "Good News" activity at a formal board meeting. Schools/staff compete for mini-grants from establishments such as Coastal EMC and Wal-Mart and are celebrated during "Good News." Students and classes are recognized as Media Fair winners during the board meeting for state and national achievements. Liberty County Schools encourage all stakeholders to become actively involved in the educational process through open communication. With the school staff members and stakeholders working together as a team, all students will receive a high quality education providing them the knowledge and skills to be successful, contributing members of a global society.

Overall Assessment:

Operational: The school system has the understanding, commitment, and support of stakeholders. System and school personnel seek opportunities for collaboration and shared leadership among stakeholders to help students learn and advance improvement efforts and can demonstrate good participation by some stakeholder groups.

Standard 7. Commitment to Continuous Improvement

STANDARD: The system establishes, implements, and monitors a continuous process of improvement that focuses on student performance.

Impact Statement: A system is successful in meeting this standard when it implements a collaborative and ongoing process for improvement that aligns the functions of the system with the expectations for student learning. Improvement efforts are sustained and the system and its schools demonstrate progress in improving student performance. New improvement efforts are informed by the results of earlier efforts through analysis of student performance, system effectiveness, and assessment of the improvement process.

Indicators Rubric: Please indicate the degree to which the noted practices/processes are in place in the school system. The responses to the rubric should help the school system identify areas of strength and opportunities for improvement as well as guide and inform the school system's responses to the focus questions.

Indicators Evidence: For each Indicator, click the (Add Evidence) link to provide examples of evidence that support the rubric response.

Definitions of Indicators Rubric:

Not Evident	Little or no evidence exists
Emerging	Evidence indicates early or preliminary stages of implementation of practice
Operational	Evidence indicates practices and procedures are actively implemented
Highly Functional	Evidence indicates practices and procedures are fully integrated and effectively and consistently implemented

INDICATORS: In fulfillment of this standard, the system:

7.1 Engages in a continuous process of improvement that articulates the vision and purpose the system is pursuing (Vision); maintains a rich and current description of students, their performance, system effectiveness, and the community (Profile); employs goals and interventions to improve student performance (Plan); and documents and uses the results to inform future improvement efforts (Results):
Operational

Evidence Provided:

Continuous Improvement Plan - district and individual schools

District staff affirm their involvement in a specific program that supports continuous improvement

District staff affirm their involvement in continuous improvement committees

Graduation and retention rates

Information/Data system

Professional Development Plan: agenda, topics

Record of student performance improvement efforts

Specific program initiatives to support continuous improvement

Stakeholder survey (satisfaction) data

State/Federal Accountability Plan

7.2 Engages stakeholders in the processes of continuous improvement:

Operational

Evidence Provided:

Calendar, agendas, minutes, sign-in sheets demonstrating stakeholder involvement in district and school improvement

District and School Improvement plan indicating membership of committees

Parent compact

Policies, procedures for district and school improvement committee work

Stakeholder survey data demonstrating stakeholder involvement in district and school improvement

Stakeholders affirm their involvement in continuous improvement process

7.3 Ensures that each school's plan for continuous improvement is aligned with the system's vision and expectations for student learning:

Operational

Evidence Provided:

Calendar, agendas, minutes of school improvement meetings

Data: student performance, stakeholder opinion are used in development of school improvement plan

District staff affirm their understanding of the impact of programs that support student learning

District staff demonstrate capacity for providing methodologies to increase student performance

Evaluation data demonstrating impact of plan and actions taken to remediate

School improvement plans demonstrate alignment with district vision, purpose

Staff, students affirm their understanding of student performance targets

Student performance targets are communicated to all stakeholders

Vision, purpose posted in district-wide facilities

7.4 Ensures that each school's plan for continuous improvement includes a focus on increasing learning for all students and closing gaps between current and expected student performance levels:

Operational

Evidence Provided:

District guidelines and professional learning provide strategies for effective instruction for closing achievement gaps

District staff affirm that they regularly use data to inform their practices

District staff affirm their involvement in evaluating the impact of instruction on student growth

District staff meetings regularly use data to inform their discussions and decisions

School improvement plans demonstrate evaluation of goals, objectives, and strategies impact on student growth

7.5 Provides research-based professional development for system and school personnel to help them achieve improvement goals:

Operational

Evidence Provided:

Continuous Improvement Plan - district and individual schools

District staff affirm their involvement in professional learning

Personnel Policies that outline staff evaluation process

Professional Development Plan: agenda, topics

7.6 Monitors and communicates the results of improvement efforts to stakeholders:

Operational

Evidence Provided:

Annual Report

District staff and stakeholders affirm the use of performance data during Parent-Teacher conferences

Information/Data system

Newsletters, brochures

Parent-Teacher conferences

Staffing assignments support monitoring and reporting of continuous improvement efforts

Stakeholders affirm receipt of district communication regarding improvement efforts

7.7 Evaluates and documents the effectiveness and impact of its continuous process of improvement :
Operational

Evidence Provided:

District and School Improvement Committee meetings: calendar, agenda, minutes, dispositions

Evaluation of effectiveness of continuous improvement plan and process

Stakeholders affirm knowledge of an evaluation of the district's improvement efforts

7.8 Allocates and protects time for planning and engaging in continuous improvement efforts system-wide:
Operational

Evidence Provided:

District and School Improvement Committee meetings:calendar, agenda, minutes, dispositions

District staff affirm that time is allocated for improvement planning, implementation, and monitoring

Policies and procedures for engaging in district-wide and individual school improvement planning, implementation, and monitoring

7.9 Provides direction and assistance to its schools and operational units to support their continuous improvement efforts:
Operational

Evidence Provided:

District and School Improvement Committee meetings:calendar, agenda, minutes, dispositions

District expectations and guidelines for all schools and departments to engage in a continuous improvement process

District staff affirm their knowledge of the district's expectations and guidelines for supporting student performance

Focus Questions:

1. Describe the process for continuous improvement used by the school system and its schools and the impact of this process on student learning and system effectiveness.

The Liberty County School System recognizes that student performance is the major component of the school improvement process. Therefore, the district uses several tools to help establish, implement, and monitor continuous school improvement. The Georgia A+ Education Act and No Child Left Behind Act have provided a framework for establishing expectations and procedures for improvement. The Georgia Performance Standards and the Georgia School Keys also establish a structure for high quality instruction through research-based practices designed to impact and improve student achievement.

As part of creating the state required Comprehensive Local Agency Implementation Plan (CLIP), the district collaborates with other stakeholders to review the vision, mission, student performance data, and professional learning needs of the district. Using this information, the district establishes measurable objectives, specific strategies, funding sources, and evaluation techniques to focus on improvement district-wide. The strategic planning process at the district and school levels serves as a foundation for the CLIP and for other improvement planning. District and school improvement plans have a common framework based on aligned visions, missions, beliefs, and programs. Plans include research-based objectives and strategies designed to address the needs of the school and district as identified through an analysis of student performance data.

All schools are accredited by the Georgia Accrediting Commission (GAC) and AdvancEd, so improvement expectations and standards of the two agencies are incorporated into the improvement plans. District and school plans are updated annually, and new plans are developed every five years. Two years after a district Quality Assurance Team Review, the district is required to submit an evaluation and report to AdvancEd addressing the recommendations/required actions that were made by the visiting team. The Liberty County School System underwent a district accreditation visit in February 2006 and submitted its two year interim report in June 2008 as required.

As the district embarked on its journey in the 2009-2010 school year of preparing for the new five year improvement plan, the strategic planning process led to discussions of using the Balanced Score Card approach to support monitoring efforts and to make the school improvement process more streamlined and transparent. During the summer and fall of 2010, a consultant from the Georgia Leadership Institute of School Improvement (GLISI) worked with district and school level personnel to create Balanced Score Cards. The goals, strategies, evaluations, and monitoring of the district's and each school's score card are aligned and focused on increasing student learning and making the district more effective. This Balanced Score Card approach will double as a monitoring tool for the district and school improvement plans.

At the district and school levels, stakeholders—including administrators, teachers, students, parents, and community members—are invited to participate in the strategic planning process. Stakeholders review the plan framework which analyzes student achievement, ensures teacher quality, and examines school climate. Stakeholders consider current research pertaining to the objectives and strategies and make recommendations for plan revisions.

The district provides guidance to the schools as they develop their individual school improvement plans. Collaboration ensures that the district and school improvement plans are aligned to maximize improvement efforts and to maintain a clear direction and focus on student achievement. Additional support is provided through phone calls, emails, leadership/administrative meetings, and school visits.

Improvement efforts are also made more effective by the district's coordination of resources. The combined work of the departments of Curriculum, Technology, Division of Exceptional Learning, Student Services, Special Program Services, Personnel, Superintendent, Finance, Maintenance and Operations, Transportation, Public Relations, and Title I provide guidance and resources to coincide with identified improvement areas and to support strategies designed to increase student performance.

The impact of school improvement efforts is measured by the change in student achievement and the accomplishment of district and school goals. Data-driven decisions made throughout the school year take into account individual and group demographics, attendance, discipline, drop-out statistics, and student achievement. Student achievement results on state tests such as the Georgia High School Graduation Tests (GHS GT), Georgia High School Graduation Writing Test (GHS GWT), End-of Course Tests (EOCT), Fifth Grade Writing Tests,

Eighth Grade Writing Tests, and the Criterion Referenced Competency Tests (CRCT) are used to evaluate the effectiveness of instruction and initiatives. Formative assessments such as teacher-made tests and district benchmark tests also provide more formative evaluations of student performance and allow adjustments for instruction throughout the school year. The state report card and AYP report of disaggregated data are presented to the board of education, published in the newspaper, and placed on data walls throughout the district. These annual assessment results yield areas of need for renewed improvement efforts annually.

2. What process is used to ensure that the improvement goals reflect student learning needs and are aligned with the vision and purpose of the school system and its schools?

The improvement goals set forth in the district's and schools' school improvement plans are based on student learning needs and are aligned with the vision and mission of the district. These needs are determined through an analysis of disaggregated student achievement data, formative assessment data, and effectiveness of curriculum/programs in improving student performance. Additionally, the areas for improvement identified on the Balanced Score Card reflect the performance areas in need of improvement based on assessment results. To ensure maximum coordination of improvement efforts, the district's and schools' school improvement plans are monitored and aligned. With the implementation of the Balanced Score Cards, the district has an additional tool for monitoring improvement in student learning and instructional effectiveness.

The district's areas identified for performance improvement are reinforced at the school level. Schools display data walls which reflect previous student performance levels and the goal for each new school year. Teacher lesson plans incorporate research-based instructional strategies to address the learning needs of all students—regular education, special education, gifted, ELL, economically disadvantaged, and at-risk. Grade level/Department chairs collaborate with teachers and work closely with the school's Curriculum Coordinator to identify student learning needs and to develop strategies to address these needs. The district's Curriculum Department, Student Services Department, and Division of Exceptional Learning personnel work closely with the schools to provide guidance in effective instructional strategies, interventions, and curriculum revisions in order to promote the district's vision and mission.

As plans are updated and revised, district and school staff members review the vision and mission statements of the district and of the school. The alignment of these statements allows schools to implement focused school improvement efforts to provide a high quality education that allows students opportunities to gain knowledge and skills to be successful, contributing members of a global society. Additional assurance of the alignment is provided through adherence to Georgia Accrediting Commission (GAC) and AdvancEd standards.

3. What process is used to ensure that system and school personnel are provided professional development and technical assistance to implement interventions and achieve improvement goals?

The Liberty County School System (LCSS) program directors and support staff—Division of Exceptional Learning, Curriculum, CTAE, Gifted Education (GATE), English Language Learners (ELL), Technology specialists, Counselors, Student Support Team (SST) Coordinators, and School Social Workers—work with other staff members under their supervision to review student data, develop improvement goals (for subgroups and staff members), and determine specific and appropriate interventions with supporting professional learning. The Directors of the Division of Exceptional Learning, CTAE, and Technology maintain improvement plans as directed by the state guidelines for each area. Professional learning for the staff members under the supervision of the system program directors follows the system guidelines for developing, approving, and reporting course completion. In addition to participating in professional learning specifically designed for these areas, the staff

members in these divisions are also encouraged to participate in local offerings that support the improvement initiatives. The enrollment status for local courses is housed in the LCSS PD Express database. The program directors maintain Individual Improvement Plans for the staff members under their supervision.

Each school in the Liberty County School System has developed a site-based, data-driven school improvement plan. The school improvement committee, led by the building principal, utilizes student performance data to develop measurable improvement goals. Interventions, with supporting professional learning grounded in best practice, are then identified for improving student performance. The site-based plan, which includes specific steps for achieving the school level goals, is updated each year as the student assessment data becomes available. Site-based school improvement plans are available in the system curriculum department and at each school. Schools also post these plans on their school websites.

For areas of critical need, teachers participating in professional learning are awarded stipends. The district pays stipends to teachers who participate in the following local courses: Math and Science Summit, various new teacher trainings, Balanced Score Card, and the endorsement programs. During the 2005-2006 school year, the district initiated an extended day for professional learning and training. Schools that chose to participate designated one afternoon per week as their professional learning time. Because staff members stay until 4:15, they are allowed to leave the other days of the week after students have departed the campus. This practice is still being followed.

Principals are encouraged to use this time for professional learning communities to examine student data and plan for improvement. Teachers are given class rosters which contain the performance data for their students, and they work to identify and prioritize instructional needs. These teachers then work to develop specific plans for instruction and differentiation. Throughout the nine weeks teachers examine student work to track progress and to monitor and adjust instruction. Information gathered from this process is also used to identify additional professional learning needs. Coaching and peer observation is encouraged as a means to extend the learning and improve teachers' skill levels. In varying degrees this practice is used at the site level. Benchmark assessment data is analyzed during collaborative Professional Learning Community (PLC) time to plan for instruction and/or remediation.

The Liberty County School System's Professional Learning Plan outlines the professional learning needed to facilitate student achievement in the system. Actions and professional learning which support student achievement goals have been identified. Like the goals, actions and intended professional learning are also updated annually. This program and the goals and identified professional learning outlined in the document further support the approved district improvement plan and Balanced Score Card.

Professional learning that is provided locally is designed to support the identified goals and is developed using the system course description format. The system needs assessment provides additional information for needed professional learning. The results of the assessment are presented to each site-based school council with requires updated and prioritized. Courses provided at the district level are designed using the course description format and are approved and managed by the Director of Professional Learning.

For training that takes place outside the district and is not supported by the Georgia Department of Education, First District RESA, or GLRS, prior approval is expected. Both school and system level training must be approved and verified to support system Comprehensive School Improvement Plan (CSIP) goals for improving student achievement. Prior approval forms are obtained from the school principal, curriculum coordinator, or division director.

The district develops and/or approves professional learning which is grounded in best practice. Course descriptions which identify competencies and state expectations for implementation and the awarding of credit are

reviewed and approved by a system director before funding is allocated for an activity. For training that occurs within the system, staff members are expected to complete ten hours of contact instruction with the trainer to earn one Professional Learning Unit (PLU). These trainings utilize approved instructors and include an implementation component in the design. The principal and other leadership team members are expected to observe staff members in the classroom to ensure the training is implemented effectively. All training sessions are evaluated and the results are reviewed. Principals/directors verify by signature that staff members whose names are submitted for credit have successfully completed the course according to the criteria stated in the course description. The forms needed for these procedures are provided by the LCSS Professional learning Policies and Procedures Manual and on the LCSS website.

The LCSS implemented MY PDC/PD (Professional Development) EXPRESS in July 2002. This management information system houses information about courses provided by the district and allows staff members to register for district level offerings. Staff members are able to download a cumulative transcript of trainings they have completed within the system. This transcript also lists courses and activities outside the system which have prior approval and have been outlined in the CSIP. PD EXPRESS is accessed through the LCSS website. This tool also provides reports on yearly course offerings by the system, activities completed outside the system, and PLUs completed by staff members.

Currently the LCSS awards PLU credit for local courses when staff members complete ten hours of direct contact with the trainer. At the site level the principals observe implementation and verify through their signatures that the staff member has successfully completed the course. Signed verification forms are submitted to the director of professional learning and the course information is entered in PD EXPRESS. Staff members who wish to appeal their course completion status/PLU credit meet first with the principal/program director. If the concern cannot be resolved to the staff member's satisfaction, the staff member may then appeal to the Director of Professional Learning.

The Liberty County Board of Education has a policy stating that all certified staff members must participate in professional learning which supports system or site-based school improvement initiatives. Paraprofessionals are also required to complete professional learning activities to remain certified. The district is able to meet these expectations through site-based, system level, or off-site fact-to-face offerings in addition to on-line opportunities such as Provenance Para-Educator Learning Network, PD360, Elluminate sessions, and Webinars.

Other types of professional learning activities are also provided as listed below:

- District initiated Teacher Mentor and Rising Stars Programs
- Collaboration with post-secondary agencies to provide district coaches for leadership development programs
- Regularly scheduled meetings between district instructional staff and school teachers and leaders
- Availability of consultants for specialized trainings
- District and school level professional development plans

4. How does the leadership ensure that the improvement plan is implemented, monitored, achieved, and communicated to stakeholders?

The district school improvement plan identifies those responsible for planning, funding, implementing, collecting data for, and evaluating improvement strategies and goals. As part of the CLIP process, these same areas are identified. Throughout the school year the district individuals responsible for monitoring the various components meet with the appropriate staff to analyze data, review strategy implementation and effectiveness, and determine

changes to be made and new areas for focus as needed. At the school level the administrators and curriculum coordinators monitor closely the instruction and performance that occurs during the year. The district further monitors achievement of the improvement goals by working with the schools to promote achievement and evaluation of the school improvement goals. Beginning in the 2011-2012 school year the district and schools will fully implement the Balanced Score Card as a tool for transparency and for monitoring progress on achieving the improvement goals.

Other strategies incorporated to ensure the improvement plan is implemented, monitored, achieved, and communicated to stakeholders include the following:

- The district improvement plan is presented to the Board of Education for review and approval. District personnel make periodic reports to the Board throughout the year and in Public Forums to provide updates on programs and initiatives being implemented to achieve the improvement goals. An annual report of disaggregated student performance data is presented to the Board and disseminated to stakeholders through school newsletters and news media.
- The Superintendent and district administrators meet regularly with principals and others to discuss relevant issues, concerns, and suggestions for moving the district forward. Principals are responsible for sharing results of discussions with their school staffs.
- School leaders, along with district department leaders, are assigned the primary responsibility of providing leadership and support for the improvement of teaching, learning, and student achievement. They monitor the implementation of student achievement goals and strategies through school and classroom visits, classroom observations, and collaborative efforts.
- Regular meetings between district instructional staff and school leaders promote a focus on results. The district uses student assessment data to analyze the effectiveness of the school improvement model and makes adjustments as necessary.
- The district leaders encourage collaboration and professional dialogues related to improved student achievement through grade/department level meetings, instructional leadership teams, and collaboration among schools.
- The district and schools communicate goals and expectations through a variety of resources: meeting agendas, newsletters, organizational meetings, websites, parent/teacher conferences, news media, presentations at civic organizations, open houses, and school/district state report cards available on the Georgia DOE website.
- District and school leaders meet frequently to discuss progress and success in meeting school and professional goals.
- District staff guide and support the development and implementation of the school Title I plans.
- School councils review and discuss school improvement plans and make annual recommendations to the Board of Education to impact growth in student achievement.

District evaluation instruments for administrators and teachers are designed to support and facilitate professional growth and student achievement. The Georgia Leadership Evaluation Instrument (GLEI) for administrators and the Georgia Teacher Evaluation Program (GTEP) for teachers are used for annual evaluations. The GTEP consists of a classroom observation tool, the Georgia Teacher Observation Instrument (GTOI), and a teacher duties and responsibilities tool, the Georgia Teacher Duties and Responsibilities Instrument (GTDRI). As part of the GTOI process, each school implements a system of documented classroom observations. Written feedback is provided for teachers and support services to improve instruction are provided as needed. State-developed evaluation instruments are used for special areas of certification such as School Social Worker, Counselor, and Media Specialist. Beginning with the 2009-2010 school year, the school district partnered with First District RESA to pilot a teacher evaluation instrument founded on research-based instructional practices and the Georgia School Keys. Other state and district approved evaluation tools are used on an as needed basis for those needing intensive assistance. District approved evaluation instruments are also used annually for all classified staff. As a result, every employee of the LCSS receives an annual evaluation as part of the improvement process.

Overall Assessment:

Operational: The school system implements a collaborative and ongoing process for improvement that aligns most functions of the system and its schools with the expectations for student learning. Improvement efforts are sustained and the system demonstrates progress in improving student performance, system and school effectiveness. New improvement efforts are informed by the results of earlier efforts through reflection and assessment of the improvement process.

QA Methods

1. What processes does the district use to monitor and document improvement?

The district school improvement plan serves as the foundation for the district's continuous improvement efforts. It defines the overall direction of the district and guides district and school priorities. The plan also serves as the basis for allocation of resources and for decision making. The LCSS requires each school to develop and annually review and update its data-driven school improvement plan that aligns with the district plan. Those school plans, along with the district plan, are evaluated regularly to determine how well the established goals are being met. That evaluation process is based on student achievement data and school-level implementation of research-based instructional strategies designed to meet the needs of a variety of student learners. Programs are reviewed to determine how well they meet the identified needs for student achievement and are revised or removed as appropriate.

A diverse range of assessment results is disaggregated annually to determine district areas for improvement. These assessments include the following: Criterion Referenced Competency Tests (CRCT), Fifth Grade Writing Test, Eighth Grade Writing Test, Georgia High School Graduation Writing Test (GHSGWT), Georgia High School Graduation Tests (GHSGT) in the areas of English, mathematics, science, and social studies, the American College Test (ACT), the Preliminary Scholastic Aptitude Test (PSAT), and the Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT). The results of these assessments are reviewed annually and used to make decisions about revisions in the district's and schools' school improvement plans to address changing needs in student achievement throughout the district. With the full implementation of the Balanced Score Card, reviewing and monitoring the data-driven achievement goals will be enhanced.

Additional monitoring occurs as part of the state required consolidated application process, the yearly review contained in the AdvancEd school improvement process, and the compliance with Georgia Accrediting Commission and federal program requirements. All of these components require reviewing and monitoring school improvement efforts at both the district and school levels which is done by the school improvement teams. Careful monitoring of all instructional processes ensures curriculum that is standards-based, aligned to school and district goals, data-driven, and focused on the academic needs of all students.

Student achievement and school improvement results are documented in a variety of ways. The results are reflected in state report cards, on the district and school websites, on data walls in the news media, in school newsletters, and in program plans.

2. How does the district provide meaningful feedback and support to its schools and across the district?

As the budget process begins, district leaders, board members, and school level representatives meet to consider

funding requests. Prior to these meetings, district and school level personnel meet to discuss achievement data, attendance rates, graduation rates, school climate, and maintenance needs. This information is used as the foundation for funding requests that are brought to the budget committee. The district leaders review the requests to determine the alignment of funding requests to the identified school improvement needs. Once this process is completed, local/state/federal funding is allocated to address student achievement and school improvement efforts.

District personnel also work closely with all schools and among departments at the district level. Meetings with principals are held twice monthly to review information relevant to instruction, planning, staff development, reporting, and assessment. Information communicated from the Georgia Department of Education in state meetings and during district board meetings is disseminated to stakeholders in a timely manner. Special meetings between district and school personnel occur frequently to address concerns, establish protocols, provide clarification and direction, and gather input. Grade/Department chair meetings are conducted at the school level and are supported by district personnel as needed. Additional support is provided to the schools through district departments and specialized personnel to enhance instruction, professional learning, and student services.

Central Office Departments, Transportation Department, and Maintenance Department personnel collaborate regularly to address district needs and to coordinate support efforts to the schools. The Superintendent conducts meetings twice monthly to meet with the leadership team and with the school administrators. Monthly meetings are conducted with central office classified staff. Other meetings are scheduled as needed and departments work collaboratively on a daily basis.

3. How does the district ensure that the AdvancED standards are met by all the schools and the district as a whole?

Systemic planning and evaluation are central to the district's quality assurance processes, and the AdvancEd standards are integrated into the procedures and expectations for school improvement. Prior to the district accreditation achieved in 2006, all schools in the Liberty County School System were accredited through Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACS/CASI) and Georgia Accrediting Commission (GAC). The processes of data analysis, goal setting, creating and implementing improvement strategies, monitoring, and evaluating were already incorporated into the routines of LCSS personnel and have continued to be a part of district expectations. With the advent of district accreditation, the district and school plans unified to provide a more focused approach to school improvement. The AdvancEd standards, along with our district and school plans, Balanced Score Cards, and Title I plans ensure that the system is continuously focused on all seven standards of quality assurance.

Schools are still responsible for evaluating their standards which support and align to the district standards. The central office leadership team is responsible for monitoring and evaluating compliance to the district standards. Each department ensures compliance with district, state, and federal regulations and guidelines.

4. How does the district regularly collect, use, and communicate results?

The district engages in the annual development of the consolidated application and an analysis of Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP). These two processes require data collection, data use, and data dissemination. Data is gathered from state report cards, AYP reports, Title I reports, benchmark assessments, surveys, the district's data warehouse Test Trax, and Power School. These data are then analyzed to determine areas needing improvement throughout the school district. The department directors and their staffs make the data available to stakeholders. Summaries of all state assessment results are distributed throughout the district in a variety of ways: reports to the Board of Education and school councils, school newsletters, data walls, open houses, Parent/Teacher Organization meetings and individual parent conferences, and news media. To facilitate effective communication, the district publishes a district testing calendar and provides many resources, reports, and data on school and district websites. The implementation of the Parent Portal, as a component of the student information system Power School, also allows parents direct access to their own student's achievement results, attendance record, and daily/weekly assignments.

Conclusion

The following focus questions reflect the school's overall analysis of its internal evaluation of the accreditation standards.

Focus Questions

As you review your responses to the standards, what major trends, themes, or areas of focus emerge that cut across the seven standards?

- Focus on student achievement
- Strategic planning that guides district instructional programs, budget, and personnel responsibilities
- System that provides strong support that enables schools to retain the most highly qualified staff
- Analysis and use of data to support operational and instructional planning
- Facilities and resources that support a quality educational program
- Comprehensive technology systems that support teaching, learning, and school operations
- System integrity that has led to voter confidence to pass two ESPLOSTs

Based on your review of these cross-cutting themes/trends and each of the seven standards, what would you consider to be your school system's greatest strengths?

- Facilities and resources that support a quality educational program
- Clear focus on student achievement
- System of fiscal responsibility resulting in a non-debt district
- Availability of professional learning opportunities
- Emphasis on instructional technology to enhance learning
- Wide range of services provided for students with disabilities
- Instructional support provided by supplemental support staff such as SST coordinators, instructional coaches, and curriculum coordinators
- Student and staff recognition programs

What would you consider to be your school system's greatest challenges?

- Mobility of student population
- Increasing the graduation rate
- Closing the achievement gap between students with disabilities and regular education students
- Increasing mathematics achievement
- Increasing science achievement
- Increasing social studies achievement
- Expanding programs to involve a wider representation of community and business stakeholders
- Increasing articulation between and among schools
- Completing construction of and opening the Career Academy
- Resulting from reduced state and federal funding for education, the district has implemented increased class size maximums, adjusted the instructional day for students by adding 15 minutes to each day but reducing the 180

calendar day for instruction, and furloughed personnel.

- Students receiving a special education diploma being counted as dropouts

How will you use the insights gained from this self-assessment to inform and enhance your quality assurance and continuous improvement efforts?

- Through the standards review process, district and school personnel recognize the importance of an aligned improvement effort. With the development of the Balanced Score Card, the district and schools have an instrument to assist in better monitoring the progress toward achieving improvement goals.
- Continued and increased attention will be given to increasing the graduation rate, reducing discipline referrals, and closing achievement gaps among subgroups.
- The district and schools will continue to collaborate on school improvement for a focused approach to increasing student achievement.
- The district will continue to assess areas of need and update plans to address the changing needs of our student population and of our schools.

Standards Assessment Report Summary

Standards & Indicators	Not Evident	Emerging	Operational	Highly Functional
1. Vision & Purpose				
1.1 Establishes a vision and purpose for the system in collaboration with its stakeholders			✓	
1.2 Communicates the system's vision and purpose to build stakeholder understanding and support			✓	
1.3 Identifies system-wide goals and measures to advance the vision			✓	
1.4 Develops and continuously maintains a profile of the system, its students, and the community			✓	
1.5 Ensures that the system's vision and purpose guide the teaching and learning process and the strategic direction of schools, departments, and services			✓	
1.6 Reviews its vision and purpose systematically and revises them when appropriate			✓	
2. Governance & Leadership				
2.1 Establishes and communicates policies and procedures that provide for the effective operation of the system				✓
2.2 Recognizes and preserves the executive, administrative, and leadership authority of the administrative head of the system			✓	
2.3 Ensures compliance with applicable local, state, and federal laws, standards, and regulations				✓
2.4 Implements policies and procedures that provide for the orientation and training of the governing board			✓	
2.5 Builds public support, secures sufficient resources, and acts as a steward of the system's resources			✓	
2.6 Maintains access to legal counsel to advise or obtain information about legal requirements and obligations				✓
2.7 Maintains adequate insurance or equivalent resources to protect its financial stability and administrative operations				✓
2.8 Provides for systematic analysis and review of student performance and school and system effectiveness			✓	
2.9 Creates and supports collaborative networks of stakeholders to support system programs			✓	
2.10 Provides direction, assistance, and resources to align, support, and enhance all parts of the system in meeting organizational and student performance goals			✓	
2.11 Provides internal and external stakeholders meaningful roles in the decision-making process that promote a culture of participation, responsibility, and ownership			✓	
2.12 Assesses and addresses community expectations and stakeholder satisfaction			✓	
2.13 Implements an evaluation system that provides for the professional growth of all personnel			✓	
3. Teaching & Learning				
3.1 Develops, articulates, and coordinates curriculum based on clearly- defined expectations for student learning, including essential knowledge and skills			✓	
3.2 Establishes expectations and supports student engagement in the learning process, including opportunities for students to explore application of higher order thinking skills and investigate new approaches to applying their learning			✓	
3.3 Ensures that system-wide curricular and instructional decisions are based on data and research at all levels			✓	
3.4 Supports instruction that is research-based and reflective of best practice			✓	
3.5 Supports a curriculum that challenges and meets the needs of each student, reflects a commitment to equity, and demonstrates an appreciation of diversity			✓	
3.6 Allocates and protects instructional time to support student learning			✓	
3.7 Maintains articulation among and between all levels of schooling to monitor student performance and ensure readiness for future schooling or employment			✓	
3.8 Supports the implementation of interventions to help students meet expectations for student learning			✓	
3.9 Maintains a system-wide climate that supports student learning			✓	
3.10 Ensures that curriculum is reviewed and revised at regular intervals			✓	
3.11 Coordinates and ensures ready access to instructional technology, information and media services, and materials needed for effective instruction			✓	
4. Documenting & Using Results				
4.1 Establishes and implements a comprehensive assessment system, aligned with the system's expectations for student learning, that yields information which is reliable, valid, and bias free				✓
4.2 Ensures that student assessment data are used to make decisions for continuous improvement of				

teaching and learning			✓	
4.3 Conducts a systematic analysis of instructional and organizational effectiveness, including support systems, and uses the results to improve student and system performance			✓	
4.4 Provides a system of communication which uses a variety of methods to report student performance and system effectiveness to all stakeholders			✓	
4.5 Uses comparison and trend data from comparable school systems to evaluate student performance and system effectiveness			✓	
4.6 Demonstrates verifiable growth in student performance that is supported by multiple sources of evidence			✓	
4.7 Maintains a secure, accurate, and complete student record system in accordance with state and federal regulations				✓
5. Resource & Support Systems				
5.1 Establishes and implements processes to recruit, employ, retain, and mentor qualified professional and support staff to fulfill assigned roles and responsibilities			✓	
5.2 Establishes and implements a process to assign professional and support staff based on system needs and staff qualifications as may be required by federal and state law and regulations (i.e., professional preparation, ability, knowledge, and experience)			✓	
5.3 Establishes and implements a process to design, evaluate, and improve professional development and ensures participation by all faculty and staff			✓	
5.4 Ensures that staff are sufficient in number to meet the vision and purpose of the school system and to meet federal and state law and regulations, if applicable			✓	
5.5 Engages in long-range budgetary planning and annually budgets sufficient resources to support its educational programs and to implement its plans for improvement			✓	
5.6 Ensures that all financial transactions are safeguarded through proper budgetary procedures and audited accounting measures			✓	
5.7 Maintains sites, facilities, services, and equipment to provide a safe, orderly, and healthy environment				✓
5.8 Establishes and implements written security and crisis management plans with appropriate training for stakeholders			✓	
5.9 Implements processes and plans for maintaining and improving sites, facilities, and equipment			✓	
5.10 Provides technology infrastructure and equipment that is up-to-date and sufficient to accomplish the system's goals				✓
5.11 Provides and coordinates support services that meet the health, counseling, nutrition, safety, co-curricular, transportation, and special learning needs of all students			✓	
5.12 Provides student support services coordinated with the school, home, and community			✓	
6. Stakeholder Communications & Relationships				
6.1 Fosters collaboration with community stakeholders to support student learning				✓
6.2 Uses system-wide strategies to listen to and communicate with stakeholders			✓	
6.3 Solicits the knowledge and skills of stakeholders to enhance the work of the system			✓	
6.4 Communicates the expectations for student learning and goals for improvement to all stakeholders				✓
6.5 Provides information that is meaningful and useful to stakeholders				✓
7. Commitment to Continuous Improvement				
7.1 Engages in a continuous process of improvement that articulates the vision and purpose the system is pursuing (Vision); maintains a rich and current description of students, their performance, system effectiveness, and the community (Profile); employs goals and interventions to improve student performance (Plan); and documents and uses the results to inform future improvement efforts (Results)			✓	
7.2 Engages stakeholders in the processes of continuous improvement			✓	
7.3 Ensures that each school's plan for continuous improvement is aligned with the system's vision and expectations for student learning			✓	
7.4 Ensures that each school's plan for continuous improvement includes a focus on increasing learning for all students and closing gaps between current and expected student performance levels			✓	
7.5 Provides research-based professional development for system and school personnel to help them achieve improvement goals			✓	
7.6 Monitors and communicates the results of improvement efforts to stakeholders			✓	
7.7 Evaluates and documents the effectiveness and impact of its continuous process of improvement			✓	
7.8 Allocates and protects time for planning and engaging in continuous improvement efforts system-wide			✓	
7.9 Provides direction and assistance to its schools and operational units to support their continuous improvement efforts			✓	