

STRATEGIC PLAN FOR FLORENCE CITY SCHOOLS

July, 2016

System Brand

5-Star Service

Vision

Aspiring to be number 1 in Alabama and among the top in the nation

Mission:

Empower students to explore, create, challenge, innovate and lead

Core Beliefs

- We believe learning is the primary purpose for everything we do as a school district.
- We believe all students, teachers and administrators can grow, succeed, and reach their full potential by being engaged in the learning process.
- We believe our school district's relationships with students' families and community partners are crucial to our success.
- We believe our school district must use innovative approaches to meet the needs of our diverse population.
- We believe in a classroom culture in which students feel safe to learn.

Theme

ENGAGE

Strengths, Challenges, and Opportunities

Strengths:

- Of the 378 certified employees in Florence City Schools (FCS), **71%** of all teachers hold Master's degrees or higher.
- The grade structure (K-4, 5-6, 7-8, 9, 10-12) is developmentally appropriate for students.
- The district is AdvancEd accredited.
- All students in grades K-12 participate in the FCS 1:1 Technology Initiative. Every student in K-2 is provided an iPad and every student in grades 3-12 is provided a Chromebook. Every school provides a Media Center with additional technologies and access to both digital and traditional resources.
- All administrators and teachers have been issued an iPad and a laptop.
- The district has **two** ACCESS (i.e., distance learning) laboratories for receiving and offering real-time courses.
- The Career and Technical Education Department offers over **65** courses in 22 fields.
- FCS was 1 of 2 out of 138 districts in Alabama approved by the State Board of Education to implement an Innovative Schools Initiative – IS2.

- Research-based best practices (e.g., Alabama Best Practices Center, A+ College Ready, NMSI, LTF, SREB-MDC, WIDA CLIMBS, AMSTI, ARI) are incorporated in the curriculum.
- Twenty-first century technology is pervasive in classrooms across the district and is a model for the state.
- Local support of Florence City Schools accounts for **44%** of the district's budget.
- The high school curriculum is expansive, offering a wide range of courses (**283** total courses, including **65** Career Tech, **20** AP, **four** foreign languages).
- The district has won the national "What Parents Want "award for the past **20** years.
- IMPACT 80 provides an avenue for FCS teachers and administrators to acquire advanced degrees at the University of North Alabama for 1/3 of the cost.
- The district's NGA graduation rate has increased from 73% in 2012 to 95% in 2016 (second consecutive year at 95%).
- Student enrollment has increased every year since 2008.
- Through programs such as RESCUE, TOPS, SPAN, and 12 For Life, the needs of the non-traditional student are met.
- The *12 For Life* program is the only one of its kind in the state.
- Ten different languages are spoken in the homes of students in Florence City Schools.
- FCS participates in **14** different interscholastic sports that encompass **63** competitive teams.
- FCS provides extensive co-curricular offerings.
- The FHS class of 2016 was awarded **\$14.1** million in scholarship dollars.
- The FCS Fine Arts program produces state, national, and international award-winning students – over 500 in the 2015-16 school year.
- FCS is considered a desirable place to teach as evidenced by an average of **200** applicants per position vacancy and low teacher turnover.
- Comprehensive health and social services (e.g., nurses, on-campus mental health therapists, homeless counselor, social workers, graduation coach) provide assistance to students and their parents.
- There are successful on-going partnerships with post- secondary institutions, community agencies/service clubs, and city government.
- Each K-12 school has a full-time School Resource Officer.
- Florence City Schools has Florence Virtual School (grades 7-12) as an option for students.
- The following are just a few of the significant accomplishments achieved during the 2015-16 school year:
 - Maintained graduation rate of 95% for the second consecutive year
 - Decreased number of dropouts from 22 in 2013 to 14 in 2015

- Graduated 50 seniors from the 12 For Life Program
- Noted by Niche 2016 National School Rankings for academic excellence – Florence City Schools ranked in the top 8% in Alabama; Forest Hills (4%), Harlan (4%) and Weeden (3%); Hibbett Middle School ranked in the top 9% in Alabama; Florence Middle School ranked in the top 8% in the state; and Florence High School ranked in the top 3% of all high schools in Alabama
- Increased Dual Enrollment for college courses through UNA by 27%
- A total of 680 graduate courses have been taken thus far for college credit through the IMPACT 80 initiative
- Completed the first year of a new partnership between FCS and UNA called UNA First 30 whereby rising 11th grade students in 2015-2016 will complete their entire first year of college by the time they graduate from Florence High School in May, 2017, for a total cost of \$1,560. The second cohort will begin in fall, 2016.
- Named by Niche as a 2015 *Best Places to Teach* in Alabama district.
- Conducted 1,521 classroom walkthroughs.
- Increased percentage of students meeting growth targets in every grade level 2-11.
- Increased WorkKeys silver level or above to 73.8%.
- Increased CCR percentage from 83% to 93%.
- Average 2015 ACT composite score by system (PARCA) – FCS; 23rd of 136 districts. One of only three in the top 36 with a poverty percentage of greater than 55%.

CHALLENGES:

- There were 42,395 days of student absences in 2015-2016.
- There is an achievement gap as evidenced by subgroup assessment data.
- Continuous efforts are needed to ensure high morale among employees.
- Low parent/guardian participation is a challenge in some schools and school-related activities.
- FCS is in phase three of CCRS and Quality Core implementation.
- Implementing the new state assessment and accountability system requires careful planning and analysis.
- Infusing the 1-1 technology initiative into our instructional culture to positively impact student engagement and achievement must involve all personnel at every level.
- Effective use of data based on learning gains and growth requires the development of skills in the area of statistical analysis.
- Because of the mobility of families, graduating students in the required 4-year cohort must be kept at the forefront.

- Keeping public informational systems (e.g., school websites, iNow Parent Portal, social media) current is critical.
- Positive relationships must be maintained throughout the community by all district employees.
- School safety is an on-going challenge.
- The implementation of extended learning opportunities through “flipped classrooms” and blended learning environments is on-going.
- Continuing to provide an adequate number of facilities to house the current student population as well as planning for the additional growth projected due to the expanded curriculum offered by FCS is an ever-present issue.

Opportunities:

- There are large segments of highly supportive parents (e.g., Boosters, PTO’s, etc.).
- The school district is expanding meaningful partnerships with businesses/non-profits.
- SchoolCast, websites, Facebook, Twitter, Yapp, Edmodo, iNow, etc. provide opportunities for better school/home/community communication.
- Distance learning through ACCESS and computer-based instruction through Apex software continue to provide new opportunities for students outside existing curriculum.
- Dual enrollment is available through local colleges and the local university.
- The FCS Education Foundation, now self-supporting, provides financial support for creative classroom endeavors (more than \$100,000 over the past three years).
- The district coordinates with Florence City Parks and Recreation to better use both school and city facilities.
- The concept of teaming in grades 5-6 is developmentally appropriate for the students in these grades as a transition to secondary education.
- The Florence Academy of Fine Arts (FAFA) began officially in 2013; providing opportunities for students to earn a major in the exciting field of Fine Arts.
- CCRS and Quality Core instruction in grades K-12 increases rigor and relevance.
- The state’s requirement of an enhanced 4-year plan for high school students will create a student path to be college- and/or career-ready and provide an effective approach for educators to monitor student progress to graduation.
- The Florence Virtual School for students in grades 9-12 began in the 2013-2014 school year and expanded to grades 7-8 in 2015-16, offering a plethora of web-based courses taught by FCS staff members. Maymester and Summer Virtual provide increased opportunities for students.
- Beginning with ninth graders in the 2013-2014 school year, students have the choice of earning one or more of these Diploma Distinctions:

Academic Honors, Advanced Placement, UNA First 30, Career/Technical Education, and Athletics.

- Through the Pathways initiative in grades 7 and 8, the needs of at-risk students are addressed to ensure success in high school.

State Priorities

Alabama's 2020 Learners
Alabama's 2020 Support Systems
Alabama's 2020 Schools/Systems
Alabama's 2020 Professionals

Florence City Schools' Goals and Strategies

The following goals support the district's mission:

Goal 1 – To maintain a safe and healthy environment in well-maintained facilities

Strategies

- Maintain clean facilities and grounds.
- Continue to update and implement all school safety plans via Virtual Alabama annually.
- Continue to assess facilities annually, including outdoor play areas, and to identify/resolve potential safety issues.
- Develop health plans for students as needed.
- Continue to monitor energy via Maintenance Department.
- Enhance positive school climates and continue implementation of Positive Behavior Supports (PBS).
- Strengthen school-home connections.
- Maintain collaborative efforts with both local and state court systems and community agencies.
- Retain School Resource Officers (SRO's) in all schools.
- Proactively address bullying and harassment concerns.
- Address digital citizenship for employees and students.
- Retain mental health professionals from Riverbend Mental Health Center in all schools.
- Continue using SchoolCast service as needed.
- Update the Internet Acceptable Use Policy annually.
- Continue the maintenance cycle for repairing and painting buildings.
- Continue violence-prevention and drug-prevention education.
- Conduct building safety checks and emergency drills regularly.
- Maintain staff members focused on truancy prevention.
- Continue implementation of electronically secured entrances with visual and auditory verification.

- Maintain signage on all campuses to designate them as weapons-free, tobacco-free, and drug-free.

Key Performance Indicators

- Annual facility assessment results
- Fire Marshal walk-through reports
- Scheduled and unscheduled safety drill reports including, but not limited to, monthly fire drills, biannual tornado drills, and annual Code Red lockdown drills.
- EPA assessment results (periodic IAQ and tri-annual asbestos results)
- Bus evacuation drill results
- SchoolCast reports
- Student absentee rates from illness and accident reports
- Student Incident Reports (SIR)
- School safety manual monitoring notes
- CIPA compliance documentation
- Lightspeed Internet student filtering reports
- Emergency Management Agency (EMA) communication drill results
- Nurses' treatment logs and health plan outcomes
- Energy usage reports
- Records of playground and building accident reports
- Court support with Early Warning and tough stance on truancy
- Court support with identifying students under supervision (as needed)

Goal 2 – To exceed the requirements of the State Legislature and the ALSDE's new measures of success

Strategies

- Use Scantron's Global Scholar and NMSI/A+ College Ready as the primary data sources for the four (4) data days in the 2016-17 school year.
- PD Days – Deepen student engagement in and ownership for their learning through more intentional planning for and use of learning targets, questioning, formative assessment and formative feedback
- Implement systems for prevention of learning problems and for intervention (e.g., Response to Instruction [RTI], Compass Learning, Voyager, IXL).
- Engage the family and community in the learning process.
- Focus intentionally on student engagement as a key to improving student achievement.
- Promote enrollment in Honors classes in grades 5-10 in order to build capacity so that students enroll in and master AP classes.
- Promote enrollment in AP classes and require AP examinations for all students enrolled in these courses (paid for by FCS).

- Identify and pursue awards of excellence at the state and national levels.
- Continue to maintain and improve upon the number of students who graduate and are college and career ready.
- Expand use of the collaborative model whereby teachers work together effectively.
- Evaluate effectiveness of instructional programs through the ACIP, revising as necessary.
- Continue the practice of credit recovery in grades 9-12.
- Update curriculum alignment and pacing quarterly.
- Expand opportunities for credit advancement in grades 9-12.
- Expand the scope of credentialing for all CTE programs so completers and graduates possess ready-to-work certifications and skills as they enter post-secondary institutions or the workforce in a global market.
- Analyze student achievement data to identify learning gains for all students in grades K-12.
- Monitor student academic progress through data meetings in grades K – 12 and use data to drive instruction.
- Utilize Scantron's Achievement Series for benchmark testing.
- Implement reward systems for good behavior, grades and attendance.
- Utilize the skills of the graduation coach to reach at-risk students.
- Continue home visits by staff members to improve attendance.
- Assess, quarterly, attainment of College- and/or Career-Ready Status.
- Continue to express the importance of school attendance to parents and community.
- Identify ways to meet and exceed all components of the Alabama A-F School Accountability System.
- Implement Power Reading and Power Mathematics in grades 7-12 to increase proficiency.
- Develop a 4-year plan of study for each student by the end of grade 8, with an intense focus on high school graduation.
- Implement common planning time by grade level/subject area/team/department, with a focus on student work, engagement and learning.
- Communicate the relevance of assessment data to students and other stakeholders.
- Establish/continue after-school opportunities for tutoring students in their academic deficiencies.
- Use Canvas as the district LMS as our platform for learning and communication.
- Follow the established grading policy for the 2016-17 school year.

Key Performance Indicators

- Standards-based Scantron Achievement/Performance Series Data
- *Individual English Learner Plans* (IELP)
- Graduation rate/CCR

- NMSE/A+ College-Ready data
- Data Notebooks
- Quantity and quality of student awards
- RTI data
- Student/Staff survey data
- iNow and Kelly Services attendance data

Goal 3 – To intentionally engage all students in learning that is authentic and transformative

Guiding Principles

- Embrace best practices for teaching and learning.
- Be intentional in what we do and why.
- Maintain a shared understanding of engaged learning.
- Differentiate instruction to meet the needs of every learner.
- Build a school culture in which teachers guide students in making connections to previous and future learning while taking ownership of their own learning.
- Assess student learning in a variety of ways allowing students to demonstrate authentic application of skills and knowledge learning.

Goal 4 – To access all available resources, both human and financial, for continuous improvement and targeted growth

Strategies

- Recruit and retain highly qualified teachers and leaders from diverse backgrounds and experiences.
- Build sustainable leadership capacity among teachers and administrators.
- Access grants, scholarships and other revenues from private and public sources.
- Partner with businesses and non-profits (e.g., Southwire Manufacturing Company, Alabama Chanin, YMCA, Riverbend Mental Health Center, FCS Education Foundation, Florence Kiwanis Club, Children’s Policy Council, City of Florence, University of North Alabama, Eliza Coffee Memorial Hospital, Samford University, American College for the Building Arts Consortium, NWSCC, First Metro Bank).
- Create an ACIP at each school via AdvancEd eProve that coincides with the district’s Strategic Plan, Plan 2020 and Local Indicator.
- Nurture collaborative relationships with State Legislators and county/city officials for both state funding and laws related to K-12 education.

- Provide high-quality, embedded, relevant professional development for staff members.
- Analyze data from assessments in grades K-12 to determine learning gains and make necessary adjustments in instruction based on student needs.
- Utilize the RTI process and use the results to differentiate instruction.
- Utilize the inclusion/clustering model for special education to close the achievement gap.
- Provide standards-based instruction and strategic teaching practices to increase student engagement.
- Monitor the 4-year plans annually for students in grades 9-12 to ensure CCRS indicators are met.
- Actively engage students in state, regional and national competitions.
- Increase involvement of all stakeholders by taking the schools' message into the community and listening carefully to the feedback.
- Increase communication and opportunities for feedback with all stakeholders via a variety of methods.

Key Performance Indicators

- New-teacher retention rates
- Dollar amount spent per pupil
- Number of participants in national, state, local, and embedded professional development activities
- Number of National Board Certified teachers
- Amounts of grants and donations awarded
- Evaluation of professional development activities
- Capital planning projects updates
- Monthly and annual financial updates
- Percentage of teachers highly qualified
- State monitoring review results
- Minutes/announcements from partnership meetings with businesses and non-profits
- Financial commitment for Academic Leaders and Instructional Partners.