

**2020 Application
GOVERNANCE TEAM OF THE YEAR**

Please complete all sections of this application form, save the file and email to mwhite@gsba.com by 5:00 p.m. on Friday, July 31, 2020.

School District: Fayette County Public Schools

Governance Team Chair/President: Scott Hollowell

Superintendent: Joseph C. Barrow, Jr., Ed.D.

Person Submitting Application

Name: Joseph C. Barrow, Jr., Ed.D.

Title: Superintendent

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Phone: 770-460-3535

District Enrollment Size is Small (1-3,000) _____ | Medium (3,001-10,000) _____ | Large (>10,000) X

X Our district is eligible based on CCRPI score for 2019.

Governance Teams qualify if they meet the following criteria:

Minimum of 75.9 or better on 2019 CCRPI score.

Please verify that you meet ALL additional criteria to be considered for this award:

(place an "x" before each true statement.

 All of our Governance Team members have met the minimum state training requirements for the past three years (FY'17, FY'18 & FY'19).

 X Our Governance Team has had no issues with any accrediting agency for the past three years (FY'17, FY'18 & FY'19).

 X Our Governance Team approved the application for this award at the Board of Education meeting held on 2/3/2020.

Rating criteria:

Governance Team applications will be rated on rubrics that have been developed to align with the seven components of the Georgia Vision Project plus an additional component on communications and messaging.

Teaching and Learning Resources

I. [Teaching and Learning Resources](#)

11. Comprehensive Data Systems 5.2 & 5.3): A comprehensive system for collecting, storing and analyzing data is an essential part of the school district’s decision-making process. Relevant and accurate information is utilized for good decision-making. Comprehensive data systems allow school and district staff to track system budgets effectively, support formative and summative student assessment to personalize instruction, and connect student learning and teacher professional development. Relevant and accurate information is an essential part of communication with students and educators inside the school and the stakeholders in the community.

12. Safety & Security: Systems are in place to provide safe environments for all students, staff and stakeholders (e.g., district/building access, stairs/elevators, fire safety, mechanical systems, custodial supplies and equipment, labs, shops, restrooms, health services, athletic facilities and playgrounds, corridors, interior doors, security and surveillance systems, food service and commons areas), as directed by Governance Team policy. The effectiveness of practices to provide a safe and secure environment and the implementation of an up-to-date crisis/emergency management plan periodically is reviewed by the Governance Team. The Governance Team supports plans that proactively seek improvements in creating a safe and secure environment based upon standards and research. There is evidence of improvement in creating safe environments for all students, staff and stakeholders’ [purpose](#)

13. Technology: The district technology plan provides up-to-date technology and adequate infrastructure to effectively support instruction, assessment and district administrative functions and is approved and periodically reviewed by the Governance Team. The Governance Team supports plans that proactively seek ways to improve district technology. There is evidence of improvement in technology and infrastructure to support instruction, assessment and the administrative functions of the district.

On pages 5-7, please respond to the three application questions for Teaching & Learning Resources.

11. Comprehensive Data System – Please respond to the three application questions that relate to this area.

1. Describe what occurred that is outstanding in the criteria area. Address all areas listed in criteria description.

In Fayette County Public Schools, a practicing quality organization, data is central to decision-making. The Governance Team ensures that critical data systems are in place, and that the applications and reporting tools that provide actionable information are developed which focus on student data to drive personalized instruction for individual students, subgroups, teachers, courses, schools, and the district.

2. Describe how specific Governance Team practices achieved or contributed to the outstanding accomplishment for the criteria area. Describe the Team's role and/or actions leading to the accomplishment.

The Governance Team maintains a focus on the district's strategic goals, and annually allots the financial resources to achieve them. Systems are set up to enable staff to turn the data gathered into actionable information that can have a positive impact on each student's learning and the district's overall performance. To that end the Governance Team has provided support of implementing the following:

- RTI processes at the elementary level are data driven.
- Use of data from digital learning platforms (STAR, RI, Dreambox) are used to personalize learning.
- Benchmark testing in place for ELA and math at elementary, middle, and high schools are used to support student learning.
- Benchmark data, Milestones data, and other assessment data are available through the student information system, Infinite Campus.
- Use of an LMS to support anytime/anywhere access to teaching and learning resources.
- Transition to a standards-based reporting system in the elementary grades.
- The Governance Team approved the implementation of a new student information system that allows for secure online registration of students, easy transfer across schools, robust reporting, and response-to-intervention monitoring.
- It encourages more personalized learning for students through the use of technology, and led the Governance Team to authorize the use of "digital learning days" as an alternative to "snow make-up days."
- School leaders access the system use the State Longitudinal Data System to develop their goals and measure progress.
- District-level, departmental, and school budgets are easily accessed and tracked through Tyler Munus.
- Implementation of Schoology for virtual learning during the COVID pandemic.

2. How so you know it worked? Describe the evidence that demonstrates the Governance Team's practices were effective in meeting the criteria area.

Using data from the various tools and resources provided by the Governance Team, schools are able to intervene earlier to help students. This has contributed to one of the top system graduation rates in Georgia.

- Increased student achievement on Milestones
- Increased CCRPI scores
- High levels of student growth in ELA and math as indicated in SLDS growth model.
- Implementation and use of Schoology
- 97% of our students used virtual learning during the end of year closure.

12. Safety & Security – Please respond to the three application questions that relate to this area.

1. Describe what occurred that is outstanding in the criteria areas. Address all areas listed in criteria description.

The Board's Core Beliefs and Commitments and the district's strategic goals for SY 2020-2024, state FCPS' intent to provide a safe, secure, orderly learning environment for all. The Governance Team employs systems, processes, a District Safety Committee, and best practices designed to ensure this goal is met – in the design and construction of schools and facilities, the operation of its transportation fleet, the maintenance of buildings and campuses, the protection of students and staff, and the prudent use of fiscal resources. The Governance Team along with all teachers have received training through the counseling and student services departments. Ensuring students and staff are safe is foremost in the minds of Board members, the Superintendent, and district and school leaders

2. Describe how specific Governance Team practices achieved or contributed to the outstanding accomplishment for the criteria area. Describe the Team's role and/or actions leading to the accomplishment.

- FCPS works closely with national, state, and local law enforcement and safety personnel to ensure emergency preparedness. The district's Safe Schools Plan, mandated in Board Policy JGF, includes guidance on incidents including injuries, illnesses, natural disasters, bomb threats, and civil disturbances. Schools develop and update their safety plans annually specific to their campuses and train staff on implementation. Drills and communication procedures must be part of the plans. The Governance Team authorized the installation of "visitor management systems" and 911 "call buttons" in all schools.
- Governance Team policies and procedures call for adherence to industry standards and best practices in all operation areas. Recently we reconstructed every school's entry foyer for safety and security. Every construction project is reviewed for compliance with local, state, and federal building codes. There is a comprehensive preventive maintenance schedule for all facilities. Protocols dictate the acceptable use and disposal of chemicals and potentially hazardous materials. FCPS buses meet all state and national safety specifications and are inspected monthly. Drivers perform pre-and post- trip inspections, must pass an annual proficiency test, and are randomly tested for drugs and alcohol. All drivers are certified in cardiopulmonary resuscitation and first aid. They instruct students on bus evacuations monthly and conduct drill twice a year.
- Approved a Memo of Understanding with all the police departments located in Fayette County which was approved by both the Board of Education and the different municipal police departments. Quarterly meetings are held to increase collaboration.
- Approved gun safes for the SROs in our schools.

3. How do you know it worked? Describe the evidence that demonstrates the Governance Team's practices were effective in meeting the criteria area.

The Governance Team's expectations that SROs take a proactive approach to safety based on trusting relationships with students, is commended by law enforcement and community. Most importantly, annual stakeholder surveys and CCRPI feedback indicate students, parents, and staff feel safe in FCPS schools. Our Substance Use Prevention and Education Resources program has had no second offenders in the last two years. Darkness to Light is a required training which provides actions our faculty and staff can take to prevent, recognize and react responsibly to child sexual abuse. The GT has spent over \$3.5 million on safety and security related capitol projects.

13. Technology – Please respond to the three application questions that relate to this area.

1. **Describe what occurred that is outstanding in the criteria area. Address all areas listed in criteria description.**

A FCPS strategic goal is to “Support instructional and operational needs with technological systems and processes that support effective performance and desired results.” Technology is an integral part of the strategic plan process. Consistent with this goal, a comprehensive technology plan to support academics and operations was instituted and is updated regularly. Thanks to voters’ support of FCPS three education SPLOST referenda, the Governance Team has been able to fund the technology resources needed to ensure that staff in school and district offices have the information they need to do their jobs. At the same time, the Governance Team demands constant vigilance regarding data quality and security in order to protect all district-held information on students and personnel

2. **Describe how specific Governance Team practices achieved or contributed to the outstanding accomplishment for the criteria area. Describe the Team’s role and/or actions leading to the accomplishment.**

- In each E-SPLOST – funded capital program, the Governance team earmarked financial support for significant amount of technology. As a result, a number of innovative instructional solutions have been implemented in FCPS. A few examples are:
 - Digital Learning
 - Robust network (wired and wireless) The GT spent over \$200,000 on hot spots during the pandemic.
 - Security and safety enhancements and upgrades
 - Connected Classroom Initiative 1:1 Chromebooks for 2nd - 12th grades which cost over \$9 million.
 - Interactive panels in all instructional spaces
 - Teacher laptops, document cameras, enhanced wireless audio system
 - Digital Learning team working closely with all schools to increase digital tools integration and modeling of innovative teaching practices.
 - Funding for Student Information System, Infinite Campus

3. **How do you know it worked? Describe the evidence that demonstrates the Governance Team’s practices were effective in meeting the criteria area.**

Feedback from school and administrative departments is solicited to determine if a solution is providing the intended results. Additionally, automated monitoring systems provide up-to-date information pertaining to system status, usage, and effectiveness. Increased access to technology resources for all staff and students

- High levels of engagement through digital tools and platforms
 - LMS, curriculum content, virtual connections, innovative lesson delivery resources
- 2018 AdvancED review report rated the following as meeting expectations:
 - Systemic integration of digital resources
 - Access to information, resources, and material
 - Tech task force to ensure equity and accessibility for all students. 97% of our students were active in virtual learning during the school closures in the spring.

Governance Leadership & Accountability

II. Governance, Leadership and Accountability

II1. Strategic Plan (7.1): Long-term strategic planning occurs every few years. Strategic planning meets state requirements and includes an aligned vision, mission, goals and strategies focused on continuous school improvement as directed by Governance Team policy. The strategic plan includes Governance Team governance goals and strategies. Annual Governance Team review of the implementation of the strategic plan allows for any adjustments needed to provide continuous school improvement and respond to specific critical needs. The Governance Team's strategic planning and the implementation of the district strategic plan have led to school improvement.

II2. Accountability (7.1 & 7.4): A comprehensive system of district accountability focus in on student performance is established and monitored. Reports on student learning, growth and progress are reviewed and clearly communicated with stakeholders. The Governance Team annually reviews the effectiveness of a comprehensive, student-focused accountability system in reporting, reviewing and communicating student performance data throughout the year. Data-driven decision making has led to measurable school and student improvement.

II3. Governance Team Member Ethics & Ethical Behavior (7.4): Governance Team members engage in ethical behavior as directed by district policy. Collaborative relationships among Governance Team member and between the Governance Team and superintendent facilitate a focus on student learning, district improvement, and effective governance.

On pages 10-12, please respond to the three application questions for Governance, Leadership & Accountability.

II.1 Strategic Planning – Please respond to the three application questions that relate to this area.

1. Describe what occurred that is outstanding in the criteria area. Address all areas listed in criteria description.

In FCPS, strategic planning occurs on an ongoing basis. It emanates from the strategic direction of the school district and community stakeholders set forth by the Governance Team and manifested in the foundational documents of the organization. All stakeholders in Fayette County Schools are unified with a clear purpose and direction. The District's Strategic Plan supports achieving our vision and that is not just for our students, but for the Governance Team, staff and community. These foundational documents consist of the Board's Core Beliefs and Commitments; the vision, mission, and strategic goals of the school district; the Strategic Priorities; the multi-year Strategic Initiatives and Priorities of the Superintendent that are updated each fiscal year, and the operational management plans developed by the heads of the organizational divisions, teachers, and community stakeholders for each fiscal year. Progress on meeting the dictates of the strategic direction of the Model of Achievement and Accountability is captured in the district's Key Performance Indicators and in related reports to the Governance Team during monthly meetings of the Board.

2. Describe how specific Governance Team practices achieved or contributed to the outstanding accomplishment for the criteria area. Describe the Team's role and/or actions leading to the accomplishment.

As part of its strategic planning process the Fayette County Board of Education sets forth in policy its commitment that communicate the Board's priorities and progress to the public. Our primary customer is the individual student; the student is at the center of everything we do. The GT works collaboratively with customers such as staff, parents, /families, citizens, and businesses, to support students. The priorities are measured each year with the Model of Achievement and analyzed over time for improvement trends or areas of concern. The Governance Team ensures that the Superintendent maintains and regularly updates the strategic plan and ensures that it is accessible to district stakeholders, both internal and external. Proposed changes to the strategic plan are subject to Board approval. Identified areas for improvement become part of the Superintendent's initiatives and are reflected in the yearly division objective and operational plans crafted by each organizational division. Plans are tied to the district's vision, mission, and goals. Collectively, these elements ensure there is coherence and alignment between the strategic plan and the day-to-day operations of the school district.

3. How do you know it worked? Describe the evidence that demonstrates the Governance Team's practices were effective in meeting the criteria area.

- PBIS implementation in all schools
- Increased pathway completion
- Increased course offerings and enrollment in Advanced Placement program.
- Increased partnerships with post-secondary institutions, business, and industry
- Increased participation in dual enrollment
- Defined FCS culture by creating a shared vision and beliefs statement
- Evolved the Portrait of a Graduate and Portrait of a Leader.

II.2 Accountability – Please respond to the three application questions that relate to this area.

1. Describe what occurred that is outstanding in the criteria area. Address all areas listed in criteria description.

The Governance Team receives reports for state accountability assessments as assessment data becomes available. Additionally, the Governance Team receives yearly reports on AP assessments, the SAT, and the ACT. Data are distributed through the EBoard Site. Furthermore, the Governance Team receives information on CCRPI indicators such as graduation rate and literacy components (related to our System Strategic Plan). Additionally, through our Department of Public Relations, data are communicated to our stakeholders via our district website, press releases, and other publications. School data are communicated through Local School Council's, Parent Teacher Organizations (PTO's), Infinite Campus Email blasts, and school newsletters. In addition to Student Learning data, the focus on Victoria Bernhardt's *Multiple Measures* has also increased the system and school focus on Perception data, Demographic data, and School Process data. Each high school feeder pattern works together to develop a presentation for the Governance Team. The presentations allow the Governance Team to gain a complete picture of each school feeder pattern.

2. Describe how specific Governance Team practices achieved or contributed to the outstanding accomplishment for the criteria area. Describe the Team's role and/or actions leading to the accomplishment.

- The Governance Team's established policies that hold both the district and schools accountable for student's achievement results.
- District and school performance data is reviewed by the Governance Team at monthly Board work sessions, which are open to the public and the news media.
- The COVID-19 pandemic re-entry planning team involved the governance team and all community stakeholders.

3. How do you know it worked? Describe the evidence that demonstrates the Governance Team's practices were effective in meeting the criteria area.

- The scores from the FCPS continue to improve on the CCRPI, Georgia Milestones scores, national assessment scores, such as Iowa and PSAT, Georgia Star Ratings for School Climate and Financial Efficiency.
- Additional support allocated to schools with greater needs
- Allocating funds to provide instructional coaches at the elementary level.
- Approval of PBIS/RTI Coordinator position and PBIS/RTI Coach position
- CCRPI overall district score of 87.3
- Successful implementation of many strategic plan initiatives
 - Implementation of Connected Classroom
 - Increased pathway completion
 - Increased course offerings and enrollment in Advanced Placement program.
 - Increased partnerships with post-secondary institutions, business, and industry
 - Increased participation in dual enrollment
 - High rates of teacher retention
 - Implementation of Schoology
 - A multifaceted re-entry plan has been developed and supported by the majority of the Fayette County community.

II.3 Governance Team Member Ethics & Ethical Behavior – Please respond to the three application questions that relate to this area.

1. Describe what occurred that is outstanding in the criteria area. Address all areas listed in criteria description.

The Governance Team of the Fayette County Board of Education and Superintendent has been a model of governance effectiveness. We have worked collaboratively with the staff, parents, businesses, community organizations, and citizens to build advocacy for the school system.

2. Describe how specific Governance Team practices achieved or contributed to the outstanding accomplishment for the criteria area. Describe the Team's role and/ or actions leading to the accomplishment.

- Governance Team members adopted in policy clear standards of ethical performance and professional integrity. The policies include BBD – Board – School Superintendent Relations, BH – Board Members Code of Ethics, BHA – Board Member Conflict of Interest, and BHB – Board Member and Superintendent Nepotism.
- Refrain from using the board position for personal or partisan gain.
- Key contributors to the Strategic Plan
- A robust “Board-Superintendent Team Development and Training Program” has been in place when annual training for Governance Teams was mandated in a new state law. Through the program Fayette’s Governance Team has engaged in deep and relevant learning around key education issues that impact public schools at the local, state, and national level.
- Each member of the Governance Team is committed to being a person of high moral character and undeniable personal integrity, as evidenced by their words and behavior, both when functioning as a Board and when living their daily lives. They accept that as Board members they are a reflection on the brand of Fayette County Public Schools, positively or negatively, and they strive to always represent the district and themselves in the best possible light.
- Board members are responsible to the community but refrain from micromanaging, and delegate authority for the administration of the school system to the superintendent.

3. How do you know it worked? Describe the evidence that demonstrates the Governance Team's practices were effective in meeting the criteria area.

- Governance Team members consistently abide by the standards of ethical performance and professional integrity as specified in Board Policies BBD – Board – School Superintendent Relations, BH- Board Members Code of Ethics, BHA – Board Member Conflict of Interest, and BHB – Board Member and CEO/Superintendent Nepotism. There have been no instances of misbehavior – alleged or actual – by the current Board members or the Superintendent over the two decades-plus that they have served as the Governance Team for GCPS.
- All requirements for annual Board training mandated by the Georgia Board of Education are met every year by the member of the Governance Team, individually and collectively.
- Meetings and GT actions are communicated on the district website, and social media accounts.

Human & Organizational Capital

III. Human and Organizational Capital

III1. Recruitment, Hiring & Retention (6.1): There is evidence of Governance Team policy regarding criteria for employment decisions. Objective measures guide the recruitment, selection and assignment of administrators, teachers and staff and are periodically reviewed and discussed by the Governance Team in collaboration with the superintendent. Multiple recruitment, hiring and retention resources are used to expand the pool of qualified candidates and result in effective employment decisions.

III2. Growth-Oriented Culture & Professional Growth (6.2, 6.3 & 6.4): A climate of collaboration and continued learning provides support for all educators. Performance-based evaluation for the superintendent and professional staff ensure educator performance that results in improved district performance, instructional programming, instructional and student performance as directed by Governance Team policy. Governance Team reviews evidence that the implementation of the performance-based evaluation process for the superintendent and professional staff includes on-going, timely, targeted and meaningful feedback and leads to improvement in educator performance, instructional programming and student achievement. There is evidence of improvement in administration, instruction and student performance.

On pages 15-16, please respond to the three application questions for Human Organizational Capital.

III.1. Recruitment, hiring & Retention – Please respond to the three application questions that relate to this area.

1. Describe what occurred that is outstanding in the criteria area. Address all areas listed in criteria description.

Consistent with its strategic goal to recruit, employ, develop, and retain a workforce that achieves the mission and goals of the organization, the Governance Team operates a comprehensive program of human resource development and talent management. The district provides a competitive compensation and benefits package to its employees, which includes competitive base salaries. A key retention strategy of the district is the investment in human capital. Opportunities for teachers to transition from the classroom to entry-level leadership roles, and for assistant principals to become principals, allow the district to increase retention among high-performing personnel.

2. Describe how specific Governance Team practices achieved or contributed to the outstanding accomplishment for the criteria area. Describe the Team's role and/or actions leading to the accomplishment.

- The Governance Team enhances the benefits package offered to employees by providing basic life insurance, and funding towards health and dental insurance, to off-set the cost to employees.
- Approximately 89% of the budget goes to salaries and benefits.
- The Governance Team demonstrates its commitment to teacher and leader development through its use of mentors for all induction teachers and new administrators as well as an Administrative Institute for aspiring leaders.
- The district has a long-standing commitment to fair hiring practices
- District job fairs lead to the effective recruitment, hiring, and retention of a high-quality work force. A Teacher Recruitment and Selection Guide provides strategies for the successful hiring of candidates.
- The district continues to leverage performance evaluations and feedback to increase retention. As a result of effective training, leaders increase their effectiveness in providing authentic feedback to teachers that improves their practice. Teachers have the tools needed to experience success, feel satisfied in the job, and increase student achievement.

3. How do you know it worked? Describe the evidence that demonstrates the Governance Team's practices were effective in meeting the criteria area.

- Over 95% of benefits-eligible employees participate in one or more of the benefit programs offered by the school district.
- The competitive salary package approved by the Governance Team is evident in the fact that, when compared to other surrounding districts, FCPS ranks at or near the top for teacher compensation.
- 100% of teacher are highly qualified
- A district level committee has been in place for two years to focus on the development and expansion of minority staff.

III2. Growth-Oriented Culture & Professional Growth – Please respond to the three application questions that relate to this area.

1. Describe what occurred that is outstanding in the criteria area. Address all areas listed in criteria description.

- An ongoing Strategic Initiative of the Superintendent’s Office focuses on Professional Learning and Leadership Development. The Governance Team is committed to a Leadership Development Program for new and veteran leaders.
- All certified staff engage in position specific professional development, including administrators.
- Teachers also engage in professional learning communities supported by their building leaders and instructional coaches.
- Professional learning days embedded within the school calendar.
- Each year the district sends administrators and teacher leaders to participate in GLISL Cohorts, that focus on school and district initiatives

2. Describe how specific Governance Team practices achieved or contributed to the outstanding accomplishment for the criteria area. Describe the Team’s role and/or actions leading to the accomplishment.

- Staff development is a priority within the district, and all employees engage in relevant learning opportunities.
- District staff development courses are vetted prior to delivery to ensure alignment to district priorities and initiatives as well as schools aligning local staff development with their Local School Plan goals.
- Ongoing, differentiated professional development support educators in implementing professional goals specific to their work. Additionally, all new teachers participate in year-long induction experiences that begin with the New Teacher Orientation. This initial staff development is designed to introduce new hires to the FCPS performance culture and expectations.
- The Governance team sets expectations for collaboration and continuous learning to support educator growth. The board evaluates the Superintendent based on both student achievement and district progress on strategic goals, priorities, and initiatives.
- Smaller class sizes than comparable districts
- Allocation of funds to support the hiring of instructional coaches, the purchase of professional learning platforms such as Nearpod and Hoonuit

3. How do you know it worked? Describe the evidence that demonstrates the Governance Team’s practices were effective in meeting the criteria.

- Survey results indicate that the induction professional learning sessions were beneficial and engaging.
- Overall teacher retention rate is above 90%
- Increased number of teachers with gifted endorsement, contributing to increases in FTE funding.
- Retention for induction level teachers is above 90%
- Artifacts and evidence of progress towards professional learning goals are maintained within the certified staff’s electronic evaluation platform.
 - In 2018, 100% of administrators evaluated by LKES receive summative scores of Level III or IV.
 - In 2018, 99% of teachers evaluated by TKES received summative scores of Level III or IV

Teaching and Learning Assessment

IV. Teaching, Learning and Assessment

IV1. Current comprehensive curriculum (4.3): A current, comprehensive curriculum is externally aligned with Georgia standards approved by the State Governance Team of Education and internally aligned within and across grade levels and all subject areas in every school. Current Governance Team policies support a systematic review, evaluation and revision curriculum that includes input from all stakeholder groups. The Governance Team periodically reviews the curriculum for its alignment, delivery, improvement and effectiveness. There is evidence of implementation of Governance-Team-approved curriculum in all classrooms.

IV2. Strong instructional leadership and effective instruction (4.1, 4.2, & 4.3): Instructional leadership and instructional practices are based on evidence from a body of high-quality research and high expectations for all students. The Governance Team periodically reviews instructional leadership and instruction for effectiveness and impact on student performance and supports plans that proactively seek improved instructional leadership and effective instruction. There is evidence that improvement in instructional leadership and instruction has led to increased student performance.

IV3. Balanced and comprehensive system of student assessment (4.4): An effective comprehensive assessment system (e.g. formative, benchmark and summative assessments) measure progress toward subject mastery and student goals in all curricular areas. Ongoing formative and benchmark assessments guide instructional practice, including individual remedial and enrichment requirements. Student performance data are communicated in ways that are clear and meaningful for all stakeholders. The Governance Team periodically reviews the effectiveness of the student assessment system and the clarity of the communication of student performance data. The Governance Team support plans that proactively seek improved assessment practices for instruction and student performance. Assessment practices have led to improvement in instruction and student performance.

On pages 19-21, please respond to the three-application question for Teaching, Learning & Assessment.

IV1. Current comprehensive curriculum – please respond to the three application questions that relate to this area.

1. Describe what occurred that is outstanding in the criteria area. Address all areas listed in criteria description.

To ensure that the FCPS' curriculum remains rigorous and relevant year after year, the Department for Student Achievement convenes cyclical to review and update the curriculum. The committee includes all stakeholders – community members, teachers, local school administrators, and district leaders. Current and proposed programs and curriculum are reviewed, evaluated, revised, and recommended for adoption by the Board prior to implementation. Proposed courses are aligned with current Georgia grade level standards/courses or with those proposed to the Georgia Department of Education prior to the committee's meeting each year.

- After implementing common assessments, the teachers review data and illicit student feedback to revise assessments as needed and ensure that all students receive a rigorous and relevant curriculum.
- Curriculum is vertically aligned across grade levels and subjects
- Individual schools and the district articulate strengths, identify learning gaps, identify actions to address gaps, identify specific steps to improve teaching and learning practices, reflect and secure resources and provide evidence of data-driven decision that lead to improvement
- Due to COVID-19 pandemic, additional curriculum compacting, scope and sequency has begun and will continue.

2. Describe how specific Governance Team practices achieved or contributed to the outstanding accomplishment for the criteria area. Describe the Team's role and/or actions leading to the accomplishment.

The GT is an integral part of developing the district's Strategic Plan that guides the work of the school system and the yearly revisions.

- All content standards shall be approved by the Board.
- Funding for instructional materials in all programs and for additional staff to implement the programs
- Governance team sets high expectations for student achievement
- Supports ongoing, research-based professional development to for teachers.
- The GT actively participates in meetings to discuss and plan for curricular areas including all core academic, CTAE, fine arts, world languages, health and PE.
- New curriculum initiatives are presented to the Board at their monthly meetings.

3. How do you know it worked? Describe the evidence that demonstrates the Governance Team's practices were effective in meeting the criteria area.

- The FCS Continuous Improvement Process
- Professional Learning Communities and K-12 Vertical Teams
- Milestones ELA EOC results
- The Fayette County math scores consistently perform above the state average across standardized assessments.
- Fayette County Schools receive yearly recognition for instructional achievement from the DOE. (P-K)
- The implementation of cull-time virtual instruction.

IV2. Strong instructional leadership and effective instruction – Please respond to the three application questions that relate to this area.

1. Describe what occurred that is outstanding in the criteria area. Address all areas listed in criteria description.

The Governance Team has established in policy its theory of action to maintain and improve a district in which high-performing schools educate all children to high standards; eliminate the achievement gap; provide a quality instructional program that includes a rigorous curriculum, effective teaching, and ongoing assessment; and ensure that all students are taught in a safe and secure learning environment. Teachers receive professional development targeted at research-based best practices.

2. Describe how specific Governance Team practices achieved or contributed to the outstanding accomplishment for the criteria area. Describe the Team's role and/or actions leading to the accomplishment.

It is the Governance Team's intent that FCPS set standards by Board policy or management directive for all important goals and processes. Where higher standards will promote excellence, the district's standards will exceed federal and state requirements.

- The theory of action articulated in Board policy states that central office staff must accept responsibility for directly supporting and managing the district's core business, teaching and learning, within flexible parameters that balance accountability with empowerment, according to the needs and performance of individual schools. This theory of action provides a framework to align the system's vision, mission, goals, strategic plan, policies, budgets, and administrative actions. It builds on the Board's beliefs about how children learn; the conditions that best promote learning; the quality and rigor of Fayette's curriculum; and the policies, management systems, and culture that best promote the commitment and high performance of adults.
- Building on academic content and performance standards, FCPS maintains a comprehensive instructional management system. Essential elements include a rigorous and aligned district curriculum, professional development around the curriculum, a robust student information management system, formative and summative assessments, and high-quality instructional practices supported by carefully calibrated and appropriate interventions and extensions-by child, by teacher, by subject, and by school.
- It is the expectation of the Governance Team that all FCPS teachers use the district's research-based teaching strategies as the foundation for proven effective instruction.
- The Board sets high expectations for both creativity and excellence as outlined in The Portrait of a Graduate and students are presented with skills and knowledgebase to pursue careers.
- Approved the Leadership Academy to develop our district's leaders.

3. How do you know it worked? Describe the evidence that demonstrates the Governance Team's practices were effective in meeting the criteria area.

- FCPS continues to perform above the state and/or national averages on standardized tests administered to student and to be a recognized leader in student performance.
- Teacher survey data reviewing professional learning
- Goal-setting based on feedback and survey data
- Assessment results from schools and state
- The development of the Leadership Academy and additional staff when needed.

IV3. Balanced and comprehensive system of student assessment – Please respond to the three application questions that relate to this area.

1. Describe what occurred that is outstanding in the criteria area. Address all areas listed in criteria description.

The Governance Team supports a comprehensive balanced assessment system to ensure meaningful, actionable data is available to all stakeholders to make instructional and programmatic decisions for student and schools. The assessment system includes district-developed formative and summative assessments, as well as state and national standardized assessments. Data from district assessment drives instruction in the schools and provides a benchmark to determine students' progress towards mastery of the standards, which has led to improvement in instruction and student performance. Summary data is prepared and provided to the Governance Team for review on a regular basis to make determinations in support of curriculum resources, program determinations, professional learning, and funding decisions.

- Progress monitoring of effectiveness of interventions
- Yearly review of assessment data (Milestones, AP, SAT, ACT) by the Governance Team
- Expanded opportunities for AP courses in science
- Opportunity for middle school students to receive high school credit in coursework

2. Describe how specific Governance Team practices achieved or contributed to the outstanding accomplishment for the criteria area. Describe the Team's role and/or actions leading to the accomplishment.

The Governance Team has supported and approve the funding for the following:

- An assessment platform for the disaggregation of student data at the teacher, school and district level
- Funding for digital benchmark assessment systems
- Funding for professional learning that support effective assessment practices
- Funding for the development of common assessments
- Support for implementation of standards-based grading and reporting at the elementary level
- Support for Advanced Placement teacher training
-

3. How do you know it worked? Describe the evidence that demonstrates the Governance Team's practices were effective in meeting the criteria. Evidence of effectiveness of the programs supported and funded by the Governance Team are as follows:

- Consistent administration of benchmark assessments and use of resulting data to differentiate instruction
- Use of common assessments and data analysis
- Data from ThinkCERCA shows improvement in literacy when implemented with fidelity
- AP enrollment grew by over 140 students with the change to the AP Potential measure.
- High achievement in science AP exams
- EOC scores in Biology, EOC scores of middle school students taking Physical Science in grade 8.

Climate, Culture & Stakeholder Engagement

V. Climate, Culture and Stakeholder Engagement

V1. Positive School Climate (8.1, 8.2 & 8.4): A positive school climate is created, shared and implemented among all stakeholders as indicated in Governance Team policies. Ongoing communication with all stakeholders and community involvement informs and supports the implementation of the district vision, mission and goals as outlined in the school district strategic plan. The Governance Team periodically reviews data and feedback on the effectiveness in creating a positive school climate and support plans that proactively seek improvement of school climate, communication and engagement. There is evidence of a positive school climate, on-going communication and broad participation in school life of all stakeholders.

V2. Culture of Learning, Culture of Innovation & Collaboration (8.3, 8.5, 8.6 & 8.7): A culture of learning and innovation support practices that establish an environment where success and continuous learning for students and staff are expected, identified and implemented. Collaborative relationships among all stakeholder support effectively working and learning together. Data and feedback are periodically reviewed by the Governance Team on the effectiveness of practices to implement a culture of learning; an environment of support continuous learning for students and staff; and collaborative relationships among all stakeholders. The governance Team supports plans that proactively seek improvements in creating a culture of learning. There is evidence of continuous improvement in the creation of a culture of learning and engagement for all stakeholders.

V3. Schools as Community Centers: The Governance Team leads the school district in raising the profile of their schools and the district within the community by developing and maintaining partnerships with organizations with a compatible vision for student success. These partnerships may include, but are not limited to parent/family organizations, civic groups, business and industry, faith-based organizations, and other groups or organizations in the community. Effective, sustainable partnerships provide benefits to both school/district and partner through reciprocal services and/or resources. The Governance Team promotes regular, open communication between the district and its partners.

On pages 24-26, please respond to the three applications questions for Climate, Culture and Engagement.

V1. Positive School Climate – Please respond to the three application questions that relate to this area.

1. Describe what occurred that is outstanding in the criteria. Address all areas listed in criteria description.

In its Core Beliefs and Commitments, the Board expresses the Governance Team’s pledge to “govern the district fairly and openly, seeking the engagement of the many stakeholders we serve.” This commitment requires ongoing, two-way communication, active engagement of the public, and a genuine desire to involve the citizenry – the “owners” of the public schools – in the work of those schools. The Governance team does an exemplary job of meeting these requirements.

2. Describe how specific Governance Team practices achieved or contributed to the outstanding accomplishment for the criteria area. Describe the Team’s role and/or actions leading to the accomplishment.

- Funds allocated for ongoing professional development to promote school climate
- District-wide PBIS implementation with a District Coordinator and coaching positions as well as ongoing professional development.
- Visibility within schools to demonstrate support of board & district initiatives
- Increase the number of counselors to reduce counselor to student ratio
- Collaborative efforts to ensure wraparound services with school counselors, nurses, social workers, school psychologists, discipline and safety department, PBIS/RTI, as the Children at Risk in Education (CARE) team.
- The GT provides staff allocation funds, but school leaders can decide best how to use the funds based on the needs of their school and community.
- At each monthly meeting, we recognized employees of the month.

3. How do you know it worked? Describe the evidence that demonstrates the Governance Team’s practices were effective in meeting the criteria area.

- FCPS continues to score well on the CCRPI Climate Star Ratings, at the school and district levels, and local perception surveys indicate clearly that stakeholder satisfaction with the schools and the district generally is high, with attention given to areas where improvement are warranted.
- Increase in CCRPI School Climate Ratings where 22 out of 24 schools receive a five star rating and the other two received a four star rating.
- Increase in PBIS End of Year Recognitions
- 96% retention rate of school counselors
- Increase number of teachers with RTI endorsement
- School staff attend monthly meetings to review progress with PBIS and school climate strategies.

V2. Culture of Learning, Culture of Innovation & Collaboration – Please respond to the three application questions that relate to this area.

1. Describe what occurred that is outstanding in the criteria area. Address all areas listed in criteria description.

FCPS core business is teaching and learning. It's a mantra well-known by everyone who works in the organization and is a strong testament to the culture of learning ingrained throughout FCPS. The constancy of purpose this shared mission provides had contribute immeasurably to the success of the organization over the years.

- Members of the Governance Team initiated and supported a yearlong learning and collaborative process to research and develop a Portrait of a Graduate (POAG) to articulate key characteristics needed for success by all graduates of Fayette County schools.
- Another example of learning, innovation, and collaboration is the Community of Creativity initiative
- Fayette County has also partnered with the Georgia Film Academy and Southern Crescent Technical College to offer the following dual enrolled film classes to high school students which began in August 2018
- We have worked with SCTC to have our health science teachers awarded adjunct status

2. Describe how specific Governance Team practices achieved or contributed to the outstanding accomplishment for the criteria area. Describe the Team's role and/or actions leading to the accomplishment.

- The Governance Team meets periodically with senior Leadership for the purpose of shared learning, strategic planning, and district collaboration. The sessions meet State mandates for annual Board training and allow the Board and senior leaders to have meaningful discussions around the district's strategic direction.

3. How do you know it worked? Describe the evidence that demonstrates the Governance Team's practices were effective in meeting the criteria area.

- The Portrait of a Graduate and the district strategic plan have now been aligned, and school improvement plans now detail how individual schools will focus on student learning and achievement related to those key characteristics.
- Since FY14 Fayette County has seen a 48% increase in Career and Technical Education pathway offerings. Going from 14 CTE pathways in FY 14 to 27 CTE pathways in FY20.
- The number of students earning industry recognized credentials (*i.e. a Technical College Certificate or industry credential such as a CNA, CCMA, etc.*) continues to exceed the state's average.
- Strengthen partnerships with Southern Crescent Technical College can be evidenced through the expanding pathway options for students and increased number of students served.

V3. Schools as Community Centers – Please respond to the three application questions that relate to this area.

1. **Describe what occurred that is outstanding in the criteria area. Address all areas listed in criteria description.**

The FCBOE is committed to working with its stakeholders to create a warm and welcoming community for its citizens. It has partnered with the Fayette County Recreation Department, created a Community Schools Department to offer educational classes and it has partnered with the local law enforcement agencies in order to be proactive against gangs and gun violence. The board hosts a luncheon annually with its state politicians to inform them of educational needs at the state level. Quarterly meetings are held with local mayors, city and county administrators so that goals may be determined and worked on for the benefit of the community. The Governance Team recognizes the need for coordination across these partnerships to optimize student opportunities and to make FCBOE resources available for the good of its citizens. The Board Chair and Superintendent are active participants in the Chamber of Commerce collaborative.

2. **Describe how specific Governance Team practices achieved or contributed to the outstanding accomplishment of the criteria areas. Describe the Team's role and/or actions leading to the accomplishment.**

Our Partners in Education Program has grown and The Governance Team supports district partnerships that include the following:

- Business Community – Involves business representation in advising district decision-making through the Superintendent
- General Public – Welcomes citizen attendance at monthly and special Board meetings
- Statewide Education Organizations – Participate in state-wide organization including Georgia School Boards Association, Georgia School Superintendents' Association.
- Our schools and district host routine parent and community forums such as monthly School Council meetings, Federal Programs Connection Forums twice a year, Title I Connection Forums quarterly, Family School Partnership Forums twice a year and routine Partners in Education connections.
- Chamber of Commerce - Maintains active membership in the Fayette County Chamber of Commerce and all of our schools are members of the Chamber of Commerce
- Superintendent delivers the State of the School System address yearly at a Fayette County Chamber of Commerce meeting; and he participates as a leading member on the Chamber leadership board.
- PTA/PTSA - Actively supports membership in and communication with PTA at the local and state levels.
- Law Enforcement/District Attorney - Meet quarterly with the District Attorney and law enforcement leaders to ensure safe schools/community for its students and citizens.
- Partnership with the Woodruff Arts Center, the High Museum of Art, the Atlanta Symphony Hall and the Alliance Theatre.

3. **How do you know it worked? Describe the evidence that demonstrates the Governance Team's practices were effective in meeting the criteria.**

- Perhaps most-telling is the district's success at the polls, with voters, approving three successive SPLOST referenda. Citizens' repeated approval of this tax speaks to the Governance Team's stewardship of resources, value to the community at large, and excellence in educating the students of Fayette County.
- CCRPI Climate Star rating system where 22 out of 24 schools received a five star rating.

School Finance

VI. School Finance

VI1. Budget Alignment (9.3): The annual budget is aligned with the school district strategic plan, goals and objectives. Budget are continually reviewed for alignment to the strategic plan and effectiveness in meeting the goals and objectives of the plan. Data is used to track effectiveness of meeting the plan's goals and objectives and to revise current and future budgets.

VI2. Resource Management (9.3 & 9.6): Monitoring of the effectiveness of programs, initiatives and activities guides decisions to continue, enhance or end programs. The governance Team regularly reviews the cost-effectiveness of programs, initiatives and activities through staff reports including student performance data and analysis of current district progress in achieving the school district strategic plan goals and objectives. There is evidence of improvement in the cost-effectiveness of programs, initiatives, and activities in sustaining and improving the educational function of the district as outline din the strategic plan.

VI3. Financial Accountability (9.6): There is demonstrated accuracy of standard accounting practices, auditing procedures and financial reporting as directed by state and federal regulations as directed by Governance Team policy and reflected in the current version of the Financial Management for Georgia LUAS manual. A fraud-prevention system and competitive-bidding process are directed by Governance Team policy. There is evidence of reviewing financial reports and future financial forecasting based upon current and prior data form district and audit reports for improved practices.

On pages 29-31, please respond to the three application questions for School Finance.

VI1. Budget Alignment – Please respond to the three application questions that relate to this area.

1. Describe what occurred that is outstanding in the criteria area. Address all areas listed in criteria description.

The Governance Team prides itself on having an excellent reputation for fiscal stewardship over many years, and it works diligently to maintain the sterling reputation. Regardless of the economic situation in the state or county, the Board annually adopts a budget that is balanced; is directly tied to the vision, mission, and strategic goals of the district; preserves the board policy DCL that sets a target for a fund balance reserve at 10% but no less than 5% of budget revenues. The necessary fund balance for ensuring fiscal responsibility in succeeding years, and involves a budget-adoption process that seeks internal and external input before action is taken. The school systems credit rating from Moody's has been steadily at Aa2 which is considered high investment grade in the Prime - 1 category. The Board spends 68% of our budget on instruction.

2. Describe how specific Governance Team practices achieved or contributed to the outstanding accomplishment for the criteria area. Describe the Team's role and/or actions leading to the accomplishment.

- The Governance Team provides a process for stakeholder review of and input on the proposed budget that is transparent and helps ensure that stakeholder priorities are taken into consideration.
- The Governance Team provided funds for an automated budget development process that facilitates the evaluation and prioritization of all budget "improvement" requests submitted by the divisions.
- Each month, the Governance Team reviews a "Budget Dashboard" that shows the status of actual expenditures versus those budgeted, allowing the team to continuously monitor the alignment of spending with the budget plan. Board approval is required for monthly budget amendments to ensure continued alignment.
- Policies adopted by the Board related to accounting practices, auditing procedures, and financial reporting solidify the Governance team's commitment to financial stewardship (e.g. Policy DC – Annual Operating Budget; Policy DCL – Fund Balance; Policy DG – Depository of Funds; Policy DI – Accounting and Reporting; Policy DJE – Purchasing).
- The school district has implemented a resource allocation model as a basis for allocating staff and funds to schools. The allocation model considers grade level, enrollment, and other factors to allot teachers, administrators, para pros, and other staff.

3. How do you know it worked? Describe the evidence that demonstrates the Governance Team's practices were effective in meeting the criteria area.

The District has earned the Government Finance Officers Association's "Certificate of Achievement for Excellence in Financial Reporting" since fiscal year 2006. Fayette is only one of twelve Georgia school districts earning this recognition. The School District has earned the Association of School Business Officials' "Certificate of Excellence in Financial Reporting" since fiscal year 2011. All bond and splost referendums have passed since 1992

VI2. Resource management – Please respond to the three application questions that relate to this area.

1. **Describe what occurred that is outstanding in the criteria area. Address all areas listed in criteria description.**

Effectiveness in the allocation and use of resources is an ongoing focus of the Governance Team as part of its business oversight and financial stewardship responsibilities. In addition to optimizing the district's all-important human resources, the Governance Team ensures that its tangible assets (facilities, vehicles, property, equipment, technology, instructional resources, furnishings, etc.) are acquired, allotted, and maintained to support the strategic direction of the organization. All programs and initiatives are routinely evaluated in terms of the outcomes achieved. Cost-effectiveness and return on investment are key factors in decisions regarding resource acquisition, allocation, and management throughout FCPS.

- Budget process includes critical review of instructional programs, instructional materials, professional learning to insure return on investment
- Enhanced and improved facilities to provide equitable resources throughout the district based on Board approved five-year facilities plan

2. **Describe how specific Governance Team practices achieved or contributed to the outstanding accomplishment for the criteria areas. Describe the Team's role and /or actions leading to the accomplishment.**

- At the monthly Board work sessions division heads report on academic or operational initiatives undertaken in the district, sharing the outcomes achieved and the associate costs, if applicable.
- The Governance Team demonstrates fiduciary responsibility in the oversight of district administered benefit programs – dental insurance, vision insurance, and short-term disability
- The Governance Team is diligent about ensuring the prudent use of tax dollars provided by citizens through the E-SPLOST. District staff carefully review E-SPLOST – funded projects and ensures purchases are in keeping with voter approved ballot language and procurement best practices
- A core belief of the FCPS Board of Education is that technology can be an instructional strategic differentiator when properly applied.
- Providing additional support to schools with greater challenges
- One to one devices for grades 2 through 12

3. **How do you know it worked? Describe the evidence that demonstrates the Governance Team's practices were effective in meeting the criteria area.**

- Data review of the LMS and digital learning platforms for usage and effectiveness
- 89% of budget invested in human resources in the form of salaries and benefits

Facility improvements

- FCHS auditorium, band room, renovations and science labs
- Enhanced security including secured vestibules at all levels, security cameras, access control, panic buttons, SRO equipment storage, etc.
- Renovation of LEC to consolidate central office functions for improved collaboration and use of facilities.
- Turf fields at high schools to provide better access for all sports and other extracurricular activities.

VI3. Financial Accountability – Please respond to the three application questions that relate to this area.

1. Describe what occurred that is outstanding in the criteria area. Address all areas listed in criteria description.

Financial stewardship is responsibility the Governance Team holds sacred and, and as a result, it focuses all appropriate attention and resources on doing an exemplary job overseeing the financial operation of the school district. Long-range strategic forecasting is utilized by the governance Team in making all financial decisions, from adopting annual operations budgets to maximizing its fiscal assets to developing capital improvement plans to meet the district's needs for classrooms and technology resources for intuition and administrative functions.

2. Describe how specific Governance Team practices achieved or contributed to the outstanding accomplishment for the criteria area. Describe the Team's role and/or actions leading to the accomplishment.

- The Board has adopted financial policies which are periodically reviewed and revised as necessary.
- Accounting procedures are reviewed annually and revised as necessary to provide effective internal controls over financial assets and the recording and reporting of financial transactions.
- The Board has adopted Policy DJE: Purchasing which outlines competitive bidding processes and standards of conduct to be followed in purchasing decisions.
- Finance and purchasing staff attend continuing professional education classes to ensure understanding of accounting, auditing and financial reporting standards and practices.
- The District disseminates "Fraud, Waste, Abuse and Corruption Administrative Procedures" annually to all staff
- The Chief Financial Officer provides monthly financial reports to the Board each month to keep it informed of the financial status of the School District in a timely manner.

3. How do you know it worked? Describe the evidence that demonstrates the Governance Team's practices were effective in meeting the criteria area.

- The School District has prepared a Comprehensive Annual Financial Report since fiscal year 2006. For each of these years, the District has received an unqualified, or "clean" audit opinion.
- The District has earned the Government Finance Officers Association's "Certificate of Achievement for Excellence in Financial Reporting" for each of the last thirteen (13) years (since fiscal year 2006). Fayette is only one of twelve Georgia school districts earning this recognition.
- The School District has earned the Association of School Business Official's "Certificate of Excellence in Financial Reporting" for each of the last eight years (since fiscal year 2011).
- For the last five fiscal years, the School District has had no findings or questioned costs related to Federal award programs audited under the Single Audit Act.
- The School District has received "clean" audit opinions for each of the SPLOST Performance Audits since inception in fiscal year 2011.
- The School District credit rating from Moody's is Aa2 which is consider high investment grade in Prime-1 range of investments.
 - In the State of Georgia, only four school systems have a higher Moody's credit rating than the Fayette County School District.

Communication and Messaging

VII. Communications and Messaging

VII1. Communications Planning (District and BOE Plan)

A district communications plan is in place and contains a clear vision, purpose, goals, research and analysis of the community (internal and external audiences), timelines, communications channels, spokespersons, and information to be communicated. An aligned Governance Team communications plan is also in place to support the work of the Governance Team. The Governance Team communications plan includes the following components: identified goals; a designated spokesperson; strategies to ensure a single, unified voice on issues; and procedures for how the Governance Team will communicate with each other and the superintendent. Both communications plans are aligned to the Governance Team's Goals outlined in the strategic plan. In addition, a Governance Team Advocacy Plan includes a process to advocate for public education other community, legislators, businesses, parents and all vested stakeholders.

VII2. Messaging, Branding & Story Telling

The Governance Team has an established brand for visual recognition and marketing. The Governance Team effectively communicates its vision and goals for the district. A plan for communicating the positive stories of the district's identify, impact, and purpose is in place. Advocacy for public education in embedded into the Governance Team's messaging and storytelling and communicates the Governance Team's policies, procedures, and impacts of state law, legislation, and the State Governance Team rules.

VII3. Communications Evaluation

Performance measures for the objectives and strategies of the district and Governance Team's Communications Plans have been established and are annually reviewed for effectiveness and alignment to the district strategic plan. There is clear evidence of effective collaboration among the community leadership (legislators, city councils, county commission, chambers of commerce, etc.), the district and the Governance Team.

On pages 34-36, please respond to the three application questions for Communications and Messaging.

VIII.1. Communications Planning – Please respond to the three application questions that relate to this area.

1. Describe what occurred that is outstanding in the criteria area. Address all areas listed in criteria description.

Building strong relationships with stakeholders is the foundation for a successful school system. The Fayette County Public School System's Governance Team understands that honest, transparent and consistent communication is the key to building these relationships. The Governance Team ensures that the community stays informed about decisions that ultimately impact every resident of the county, and that a strong two-way communication system is in place so that stakeholders have venues in which to voice their concerns and opinions. Live streaming and virtual meeting were fully implemented in 2020.

2. Describe how specific Governance Team practices achieved or contributed to the outstanding accomplishment for the criteria area. Describe the Team's role and/or actions leading to the accomplishment.

To help FCPS achieve its vision of becoming a system of world-class schools, the Governance Team's communication exhibits the world-class characteristics expected from schools, including a shared vision of success and focus on communication with internal and external audiences. That maintaining open, two-way communication with stakeholders is essential for building relationships

- In today's highly visual, digital and mobile world, a multitude of methods must be used to effectively communicate with stakeholders.
- The school system's vision, mission and belief statements are well communicated both internally and externally using a variety of communication platforms
- The Board of education members and superintendent regularly meet with internal and external stakeholders by accepting invitations to speaking events, town halls, and question and answer sessions.
- After moving into a new board of education facility, the Governance Team approved the purchase of an upgraded audio and visual system with the capability to live stream board of education meetings for those who cannot attend.
- Podcasts of all meetings are recorded and archived on the school system's website.

3. How do you know it worked? Describe the evidence that demonstrates the Governance Team's practices were effective in meeting the criteria area.

It is always important to measure results to understand where objectives were achieved. By evaluating both how well the objective was carried out and how well it worked, changes can be made for improvement and the communications plan will become more effective each time it is implemented. In talking with stakeholders, many are aware of the school system's vision, mission and beliefs, and they have stated that they help to promote them through their communication circles. In regards to social media engagement (Facebook, Instagram, Twitter), the school system saw a 95.9 percent increase in engagement in 2018-2019 (the first year the school system had consistent social media presence) compared to the 2017-2018 school year. Podcast users have also given positive comments on the upgraded audio quality citing that the podcasts are easier to understand compared to those before the audio system upgrade.

VII2. Messaging, Branding & Story Telling – Please respond to the three application questions that relate to this area.

1. **Describe what occurred that is outstanding in the criteria area. Address all areas listed in criteria description.**

Fayette County Public Schools has a strong, distinctive, positive brand for providing quality educational experiences for all students. Although Fayette's brand is strong, in this environment of school choice school systems cannot afford to rest on their laurels. The Governance Team understands that constant evaluation of its programs, and making changes and adjustments as necessary, are vital to retaining the school system's brand. School systems must connect and engage with parents on a deeper level than seen before in order to be successful at recruiting families and students. The Governance Team ensures that messages about changes and adjustments are told in meaningful and engaging ways through brand storytelling, a cohesive narrative that weaves together the facts and emotions that the Fayette County Public School System's brand evokes. In addition to giving parents (the customers) reasons why they should choose Fayette County Public Schools, the Governance Team is mindful to share the story behind the brand consistently across all communication platforms.

2. **Describe how specific Governance Team practices achieved or contributed to the outstanding accomplishment for the criteria area. Describe the Team's role and/or actions leading to the accomplishment.**

- The boards' Beliefs and commitments are key to the Governance Team's messaging and branding efforts. Becoming a system of world-class schools begins with believing – in the power of education, the potential of children, and the impact of the school.
- Programs that have been added to facilitate customized, personalized learning include: connected classrooms, flexible furniture, film production courses, Community for Creativity Program, film production courses, STEM programs, and career pathways.
- Consistent messaging across a variety of platforms has been used by the Governance Team to communicate the school system's shift from a traditional educational system delivering excellence in education to a creative learning environment where education is customized for each student, resulting in education excellence for all students.
- Graduation Rate is the third-highest in the state as well as the highest graduation rate for students with disabilities in the state when compared to systems of similar size and highest in the metro Atlanta.
- Second highest SAT mean score in the Georgia
- Ranked in the top 6% in the nation on Niche's 2020 Best Schools Ranked and U.S. News and World Report ranked all five high schools in the top 19 percent in the nation on the 2020 Best High Schools list.

3. **How do you know it worked? Describe the evidence that demonstrates the Governance Team's practices were effective in meeting the criteria area.**

The board's Beliefs and Commitments are well known throughout FCPS. The district's key messages promote these principals and are used throughout the organization. The Governance Team repeatedly shares and talks about its Beliefs and Commitments, further enhancing the brand and extending the key messages.

VII3. Communications Evaluation – Please respond to the three application questions that relate to this area.

1. Describe what occurred that is outstanding in the criteria area. Address all areas listed in criteria description.

Evaluation is a key to communication and is built into the district’s communication plans. In addition, the Superintendent’s evaluation focuses on communication objectives of the Governance Team. As part of this evaluation, evidence pieces are presented for the Board’s review that show the district’s effectiveness in meeting these objectives and in advancing FCPS’ strategic direction. The work to achieve many of these communication objectives cannot be done in isolation.

2. Describe how specific Governance Team practices achieved or contributed to the outstanding accomplishment of the criteria area. Describe the Team’s role and/or actions leading to the accomplishment.

Since communication goals and expectations are woven throughout the Governance Team’s Core Beliefs and Commitments, as well as in the district’s Strategic Plan, it is important to evaluate and to ensure that this communication is effective and aligned to the overall strategic direction. This type of evaluation is ongoing and takes many forms.

- Evaluation is a part of major district communication plans.
- Feedback opportunities are built into key district initiatives and updates are provided to the Governance Team.
- Annually, the Superintendent updates his Strategic Initiatives and Priorities. The Strategic Initiatives and Priorities are the current version and are the basis for the Superintendent’s evaluation. One of the priorities has been and continues to be Communication and Civic Engagement. As part of the evaluation process, the Governance Team reviews evidence pieces to support and evaluate the effectiveness of the district in these areas. Examples of the goals for the Communication and Civic Engagement priority are;
 - Effectively communicate major initiatives among internal and external audiences, sharing clear, concise, and compelling messages.
 - Reinforce accountability and stewardship messages by communicating activity related to and oversight of the Building Program
 - Seek input and feedback from external and internal audiences on major decisions before the Board and Superintendent through processes that provide all stakeholders with information needed to develop informed feedback and clearly specify the channels for submitting that feedback.
 - Use technology resources to expand engagement and communication in a secure and strategic manner

3. How do you know it worked? Describe the evidence that demonstrates the Governance Team’s practices were effective in meeting the criteria area.

Feedback and input gathered through qualitative and quantitative evaluation, as well as successful rollouts of key district initiatives, are primary indicators of success. In regards to social media engagement, all channels have increased in engagement following a three-year spread from 2017-2020: Facebook, 15% increase; Twitter, 35% increase; Instagram 527% increase; and YouTube, 727% increase.

Early Learning & Student Success

VIII. Early Learning and Student Success

VIII1. Collaboration with local childcare providers and preschools (3.1, 3.2, 3.4 & 3.6): The Governance Team establishes and maintains partnerships with public and private sector groups that serve young children to ensure that children and their families receive the quality and quantity of services necessary to prepare them or success in school life.

VIII2. Curriculum and Assessment for Early Learners (3.5): The governance Tam ensures that a curriculum exists for Pre-K through 3rd grade that allows for alignment of standards and assessment both within and across these grade levels. The curriculum promotes learning and development in each of the following areas: social, emotional, physical, language and cognitive skills. The Governance Team annually monitors the effectiveness of the curriculum and instruction for early learners.

VIII3. Instruction for Early Learners (3.5): The Governance Team ensures that instruction for children in grades Pre-K through 3rd grade is developmentally, culturally and linguistically appropriate. The Governance Team annually monitors the effectiveness of the instructional program for early learners.

On pages 39-41, please respond to the three application questions for Early Learning & Student Success.

VIII1. Collaboration with local childcare providers and preschools – Please respond to their application questions that relate to this area.

1. Describe what occurred that is outstanding in the criteria area. Address all areas listed in criteria description.

Recognizing the importance of preparing children at an early age to be ready to learn when they begin formal Kindergarten, FCPS established the Preschool Intervention & Diagnostic Team. The school district has limited ability to meet the pre-K needs of Fayette’s children, due to current demands on resources, facilities, and funding. Therefore, the department is charged with addressing the growing needs for preschool by serving as the district’s liaison among external partners, including licensed early learning centers. The Preschool Intervention & Diagnostic Team works with daycare facilities, Head Start, and private preschool programs (churches, Montessori, etc.) to provide developmental screenings, observations, and early intervention recommendations to parents and teachers, as well as evaluations to consider eligibility for special education and related services, when needed. The Preschool Intervention & Diagnostic Team provides free community training for facilities on topics such as: childhood development, preschool best practices, behavior and social-emotional skills, interventions and strategies, and transitioning to kindergarten.

2. Describe how specific Governance Team practices achieved or contributed to the outstanding accomplishment for the criteria area. Describe the Team’s role and/or actions leading to the accomplishment.

- The governance Team supported the creation of the Preschool Intervention & Diagnostic Team in order to support those in the community who are directly responsible for the teaching of preschool children.
- The Governance Team established and sustains an environment in which the Preschool Intervention & Diagnostic Team has the flexibility to communicate with licensed early learning centers on an as-needed basis.
- Through the aforementioned partnerships and activities, the school district focuses on communicating its expectation for school readiness. Licensed early learning centers receive relevant information that they are encouraged to share with the families they serve.
- The Governance Team also authorized FCPS’ Department of Special Educational Psychological Services to serve as a resource for early learning centers that request training in specialized instruction.

3. How do you know it worked? Describe the evidence that demonstrates the Governance Team’s practices were effective in meeting the criteria area.

The support of the Governance Team for the Preschool Intervention & Diagnostic Team conversation has led to new ideas and partnerships between licensed early learning centers, and community organizations and businesses. This has led to increased partnerships and an increase in special needs student achievement.

VIII2. Curriculum and Assessment for Early Learners – Please respond to the three application questions that relate to this area.

1. Describe what occurred that is outstanding in the criteria area. Address all areas listed in criteria description.

Fayette County is able to provide 14 Pre-K programs. There are waiting lists at all our locations. The use of a Bright From the Start approved curriculum is used in all our Pre-K programs.

- The K - 3 (K-5) ELA curriculum is externally aligned with the Georgia Standards of Excellence approved by the State Department.
- Standards are vertically aligned internally across grade levels. Additionally, a common language for establishing the teaching point (focus/learning target) is provided in a K-3 (K-5) alignment that builds vertically
- An assessment timeline is provided K-3 (K-5) that provides common assessments, both formative and summative. Each grade level's common assessments provide data for foundational skills, reading comprehension/vocabulary, and writing/language.
- Foundational skills are emphasized in grades K-2.
- Adopted textbooks and resources are evaluated based on alignment with the Georgia Standards of Excellence. Additionally, the anchor texts used in core instruction were selected to be culturally relevant to all students. Lessons intentionally build content knowledge and vocabulary.
- A curriculum team of teachers and leaders meets three times per year to review the curriculum and make minor adjustments to calibrate K-3 (K-5) alignment.
- The use of DIBELS Next provides predictive measures so that teachers can provide the necessary support for pushing each student to proficiency by the end of the year.

2. Describe how specific Governance team practices achieved or contributed to the outstanding accomplishment for the criteria area. Describe the Team's role and/or actions leading to the accomplishment.

- A Yearly progress update is provided to the Governance Team in which they have the opportunity to hear about the program successes as well as proposed plan for the upcoming year.
- Last school year, our school system moved from traditional report cards to standards-based report cards for grades K and 1. This school year, grades 2 and 3 are also using standards-based report cards to communicate students' progress. This movement has brought a more heightened focus on the importance of students' learning progressions as they relate to the standards for their grade level.
- Approval and support of Pre-K classrooms.
- Contributing to the salary of all 14 Lead Teachers and Assistant Teachers so that they earn a teacher's/paraprofessional salary just like all other teachers/paras. This is well above the salary given from Bright From the Start.

3. How so you know it worked? Describe the evidence that demonstrates the Governance Team's practices were effective in meeting the criteria area.

- Extensive waiting lists for our Pre-K programs year after year.
- Work Sampling Online data indicates our BFTS PreK students make significant growth each year in their Georgia Early Learning and Development Standards.

VIII3. Instruction for Early Learnings – Please respond to the three application questions that relate to this area.

1. Describe what occurred that is outstanding in the criteria area. Address all areas listed in criteria description.

- We continue to expand our Bright from the Start Pre-K Programs within our elementary schools as a result of large waiting lists for entry into our existing Pre-K classrooms. Within the past 12 months we have expanded from 12 classrooms to 14 classrooms across the district. All of our programs are quality rated and receive very high reviews from both parents and BFTS staff.
- FCBOE provides an integrated preschool program called SPROUT (Successful Preschoolers Reaching Opportunities Uniquely and Together). SPROUT provides an inclusive learning environment for preschool-age children with and without disabilities.

2. Describe how specific Governance Team practices achieved or contributed to the outstanding accomplishment for the criteria area. Describe the Team's role and/or actions leaning to the accomplishment.

- The Governance Team has ensured that there are no barriers to improving instructional practices in pre-K through 3rd grade education. Funding is consistently provided for instructional materials, professional development, personnel, and technology to enhance teaching and learning in early years.
- The FCBOE supplements (beyond the base of the grant salary scale) the salary of BFTS Pre-K teachers and paraprofessionals to ensure we are able to hire and retain highly effective teaching staff.
- The curriculum and teaching strategies employed in our schools are developmentally, culturally and linguistically appropriate and are aligned to the Georgia Early Learning and Development Standards and Georgia Standards of Excellence.
- Support for the SPROUT program.
- The GT ensures that HR uses allotments to meet student needs.
- The GT encourages collaboration, and the district and school leaders continuously monitor and support the improvement of instructional practices to endure student success. The results are presented to the board at their monthly meetings.

3. How do you know it worked? Describe the evidence that demonstrates the Governance Team's practices were effective in meeting the criteria area.

- Work Sampling Online data indicates our BFTS PreK students make significant growth each year in their Georgia Early Learning and Development Standards.
- Increased collaboration between schools, providers, and community partnerships
- Increase in participation in professional development offering and participation
- Recognition from the GADOE for district and Title I schools