

South Hart Elementary School

Executive Summary

Dr. J.T. Stewart, Principal

Description of the School

Describe the school's size, community/communities, location, and changes it has experienced in the last three years. Include demographic information about the students, staff, and community at large. What unique features and challenges are associated with the community/communities the school serves?

South Hart Elementary (SHES) is a Title I School that is a part of the Hart County Charter School System. South Hart opened in 2002 and serves students in Pre-K through 5th grades. South Hart Elementary is located in the Northeast region of Georgia between Athens, GA and Anderson, SC. South Hart formed in 2002 as a consolidation between Nancy Hart Elementary and Eagle Grove Elementary. The system has three elementary schools, one middle school, and one high school.

The students of South Hart Elementary are residents of Hart County, a rural community with a population of 26,785. We are situated amidst the beautiful properties of Britt Angus Farms. In 2019-2020, South Hart had 521 students, 64 percent were on free and reduced lunch. At this time, we have 50 students in Pre-K / SKIP, 79 in Kindergarten, 77 in 1st grade, 76 in 2nd grade, 76 in 3rd grade, 81 in 4th grade, and 82 in 5th grade. South Hart has 39 full-time certified teachers of which 3 are male and 36 are female. The academic staff consists of 26 general education teachers, 6 special education teachers, 1 art teacher, 1 music teacher, 1 physical education teacher, 1 media specialist, 1 ESOL teacher, 1 speech pathologist, 1 guidance counselor, and 2 administrators.

Hartwell is an ideal community for raising a family and providing them with a top notch education. Agriculture is one of the leading industries for Hartwell followed closely by manufacturing. Nestle Purina, Fabritex, Haring, RITZ, Royston LLC, Linde+Wiemann, Pharma-Tech are among the largest manufacturing companies that are located in Hart County. Approximately 15% of adults in Hartwell hold Bachelor's degrees or advanced degrees.

The SHES faculty, including our school leadership team, and school governance team consistently collaborates, plans, and sets goals to increase student achievement. Upon returning to school in August, teachers administered several assessments to students which will help

guide their instruction, and identify strengths and areas of improvement for each of their students. The assessments are: Measures of Academic Progress (MAP), MAP Fluency, Next Step, and GKids (Kindergarten). MAP will be used to guide instruction by providing reliable, real-time data, and will measure the growth of every student throughout the school year regardless of being on, above, or below grade level in the areas of Reading, Math, and ELA. MAP Fluency will be used to assess oral reading fluency, literal comprehension, and foundational skills. MAP Fluency also provides teachers with student lexile levels. The Next Step assessments provide precise data on phonics, word recognition, fluency, and comprehension to determine instructional levels and identify skills and strategies to target during guided-reading lessons. The Georgia Kindergarten Inventory of Developing Skills (GKIDS) is a year-long, performance-based assessment aligned to the state mandated content standards. This skill assessment measures student cognitive and physical development. These assessments, in addition to others, include progress monitoring tools such as: STAR Reading, Accelerated Reader (AR), Skill Inventories, and formative assessments which provide teachers with different types of data. Since these assessments will be given throughout the year, the data will be collected and analyzed through the Achievement Team process to help create an updated needs assessment of instructional strategies for students. These instructional strategies will be implemented during small group instruction and our acceleration block. The Early Intervention Program (EIP) and Multi-Tiered Support Systems (MTSS) will be used in conjunction with the assessments in order to provide assistance to students performing below grade level.

South Hart's School Governance Team contributes to school improvement through our strategic plan which is a mirror of the district plan. This team consists of parents, a business owner, teacher, and administrative representatives. Together, we collaborate regarding the plan, budget for school initiatives, and provide team members with opportunities to take ownership with a vested interest.

In addition, parents are welcome/invited to participate in the development of school improvement plans during Title I Planning Week. Teachers recruit parents for this planning week through personal invitations and a Blackboard message is sent out to invite everyone. Parents also have the opportunity to provide feedback during Title I Parent Trainings, through the Title I Parental Engagement Feedback Survey, and by contacting the principal or assistant principal. During this time, any concerns that parents may have about plans or procedures will be addressed.

School's Purpose

Provide the school's purpose statement and ancillary content such as mission, vision, values, and/or beliefs. Describe how the school embodies its purpose through its program offerings and expectations for students.

South Hart's Mission Statement which is shared by the Hart County Charter System, is to prepare all individuals to meet tomorrow's challenges, by providing quality educational opportunities today. The vision of our school and system is to be recognized for educational

excellence. In order to meet both the mission and vision of our school, we hire and retain highly qualified teachers who aspire to make sure each students' learning needs are met at their level of readiness. We have Professional Learning Communities (PLC's) for district, grade level, vertical, and horizontal collaboration, school-based learning, and independent learning where strategies and re-delivery of curriculum and pedagogical knowledge is shared with teachers. Our district instructional coaches and teacher leaders play a vital role in developing skills during professional learning. South Hart teachers and administrators also have weekly horizontal grade-level planning meetings in order to not only review data, but to also provide additional support and strategies to ensure students are successful.

South Hart Elementary students are also able to be successful by participating in school-wide enrichment programs. Students are able to enhance their skills in reading, math, art, music, and health during daily rotations to either Computer, Art, Music, or Physical Education (CAMP). Students at South Hart also participate in quarterly club days. Our clubs provide students with the opportunity to learn and participate in their own areas of interest. Just a few examples of South Hart clubs include: golf, cooking, photography, LEGO, and jewelry making.

Global learning is enriched through the rigorous instruction linked to the Georgia Standards of Excellence (GSE). The College and Career Ready Performance Index (CCRPI) implemented by the State of Georgia is also used to prepare our students for success in the global community. CCRPI prepares students for both college and career after the completion of high school. Their abilities to be highly pursued candidates in the workforce upon completing their educational endeavors, is enhanced through CCRPI requirements. Students are also provided the opportunity to take part in our annual Career Day. This serves to further emphasize the importance of career development, and it gives students a chance to explore the various careers in our area. This includes community business partnerships, farming, and manufacturing.

South Hart promotes student participation in extracurricular activities, as well as, school sponsored clubs and programs which help to create an accomplished, well-versed individual that will be prepared to enter the global market. South Hart has strong ties to the community and the amount of support for the school is apparent. Our students are involved in church youth groups, YMCA, sports, and dance. South Hart has a robotics team (Mind Twisters), that participates in state and regional competitions through the First LEGO Robotic League. As a member of this STEM team, students focus on the areas of Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math.

Notable Achievements and Areas of Improvement

Describe the school's notable achievements and areas of improvement in the last three years. Additionally, describe areas for improvement that the school is striving to achieve in the next three years.

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South Hart has a student-centered environment where students can be seen having active roles within the school. For example, 4th and 5th grade students can apply to be student leaders in the building and perform duties (e.g., helping with morning car riders, running centers/slides at water day, assisting with our Title I Parent Trainings and SOAR programs. Our SOAR programs, which are very well attended by our parents, are held quarterly for Student of the Month recognitions which are tied into the 7 Mindsets (e.g., 100% Accountable, Live to Give, We are Connected, Passion First). Students receive a 7 Mindsets lesson once a week. We also have grade levels present and show appreciation to Veterans, celebrate Black History Month, and Valentine's Day. These four Fridays each year are full of student recognition programs and celebrations. We typically start at 8:00 AM with a Title I Parent Training (e.g., technology to use at home, reader's workshop, math workshop), followed by our SOAR program at 8:30 AM, then Club Day at 9:45 AM, and PBIS celebrations around 1:00 PM. Quarterly PBIS celebrations that students can trade in their tickets to participate include: an ice cream social, a glow dance party, a basketball tournament, and water day. Our PBIS program has been highly successful, and while we have few discipline problems in our school, our number of referrals continue to decrease based on previous yearly reports provided by SWIS.

South Hart's previously mentioned Mind Twister Robotic Team has won several state and regional awards. In the 2018-2019 school year, Mind Twisters won first place for project division at a state regional competition. In that same year, the team won first place for project division at a Super Regional competition in Chattanooga, TN. In the 2019-2020 school year, Mind Twisters won first place at a state regional competition in Blairsville, GA. South Hart also hosts an annual Rocket Challenge competition each year for all Hart County students. STEM isn't just taught and defined to a single team or event. All students take part in STEM projects during semesters. Teacher knowledge is expanded and time is given to plan STEM projects throughout the school year through a Project Based Learning (PBL) course. Approximately have our staff has participated in this professional learning and the goal is for all teachers to receive the training in the future.

Since the implementation of the State College and Career Readiness Performance Index (CCRPI) in 2014, South Hart's score has drastically improved. In 2014 South Hart received a 64.9. In the years of 2015-2018 our score range was 71.4-73.0. In 2019, South Hart was extremely excited about our student achievement and work of our staff. In 2019, South Hart's CCRPI score was 79.6, the highest in the district. We have also received a five star Climate Rating by the state for the last three school years.

South Hart is proud to show inclusiveness for all cultures and parents. Stakeholders are invited to attend special events. Parents are encouraged to not only attend Open House but to also become active members of our PTO and to attend curriculum nights and conferences which will provide valuable information to them in order to help their child/children be successful. Parents and stakeholders have access to school information through school marquee, the school website, school Facebook page, and Blackboard.

South Hart's ELL program continues to provide effective English language instruction for all children who are English Language Learners. Our ESOL teacher continuously works in collaboration with the regular education teacher in order to implement effective instruction that would be beneficial in the academic success of our ELL students. For the 2019-2020 school year, there were 24 ELL students served at South Hart. Out of the 24 students served, no students exited the program based on their ACCESS for ELLs English Language Proficiency Test with a Composite Proficiency Level above 4.3. This was due to a district decision based on early school closure in March, 2020. In

2018-2019 South Hart served 22 ELL students, seven students exited the program based on their ACCESS for ELLs English Language Proficiency Test with a Composite Proficiency Level above 4.3. Across the district, our ELL population has continued to see the highest number of students exit the program. South Hart has a goal to continue providing instruction that will be utilized to see our ELL student's progress both academically in the areas of math, science, language arts, and social studies.

While our overall 2019 CCRPI score was a tremendous accomplishment, the points we received for content mastery, a part of the CCRPI formula, was the lowest. We continue to focus on effective professional development, utilizing data to impact instruction, student grouping for remediation and acceleration, and collaborative planning to close achievement gaps. Reducing the percentage of students in each grade level who qualify for EIP services (scoring below the 35th percentile on MAP) is a current area of focus. Through the previously mentioned MTSS program, and providing effective interventions for reading and math, Level 1 learners and students who qualify for EIP, receive targeted instruction.

Additional Information

Provide any additional information you would like to share with the public and community that were not prompted in the previous sections.

South Hart offers students in kindergarten through fifth grade the opportunity to be a member of the Good News Club. This is a club that has a focus on strengthening family and community relationships. Through Hart Partners, we offer onsite mentors for at-risk students. Our 5th grade students participate in the Choosing Healthily Activities and Methods Promoting Safety (CHAMPS) program over the course of a full semester each year.

We are implementing a variety of programs to increase student achievement. Each summer we offer a Bridge Program to up-coming kindergarten students who scored below average on their Kindergarten Readiness test. This is a half-day, two-week program that introduces students to literacy skills that will be focused on during the regular school year. This past summer, the program was extended to upcoming first grade students who scored below average on Math MAP benchmark assessments. This provided an excellent opportunity to remediate skills.

Kindergarten students and their parents also have the option to participate in Kindergarten Camp a week before the first day of school. This is a half-day program, over two days that provides families with a glimpse into what a typical day in kindergarten is like. It provides a wonderful opportunity for parents to ask questions and for students to get to know teachers and our school.

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Furthermore, South Hart provides students who are struggling with Tier I instruction the chance to participate in an after-school tutoring program. Certified teachers work with struggling learners to identify skill gaps and address them using research-based instructional strategies. Students also learn essential study skills that improve accountability for test preparation.

In terms of academic incentives, students are challenged each quarter to set Accelerated Reader (AR) goals to help increase reading time. We firmly believe the more students are reading; the more students will experience higher levels of achievement. All students who reach their AR goals receive a certificate award and a free book. We are excited about our new book vending machine. Students who meet their goals have the opportunity to choose a book for their home library.