Executive Summary

Houston County Schools

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Introduction ........................................................................................................................................ 1

Description of the School System ................................................................................................... 2

System's Purpose ............................................................................................................................. 5

Notable Achievements and Areas of Improvement ......................................................................... 6

Additional Information .................................................................................................................... 9
Introduction

Every school system has its own story to tell. The context in which teaching and learning takes place influences the processes and procedures by which the school system makes decisions around curriculum, instruction, and assessment. The context also impacts the way a school system stays faithful to its vision. Many factors contribute to the overall narrative such as an identification of stakeholders, a description of stakeholder engagement, the trends and issues affecting the school system, and the kinds of programs and services that a school system implements to support student learning. The purpose of the Executive Summary (ES) is to provide a school system with an opportunity to describe in narrative form the strengths and challenges it encounters. By doing so, the public and members of the community will have a more complete picture of how the school system perceives itself and the process of self-reflection for continuous improvement. This summary is structured for the school system to reflect on how it provides teaching and learning on a day to day basis.
Description of the School System

Describe the school system'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 system serves?

The Houston County School District serves close to 28,000 students on 38 campuses. The current enrollment is 27,938 students, an increase of 328 over the 2012-2013 enrollment of 27,610. In 2011-2012, a total of 27,435 students were enrolled, which is a three-year increase of 503 students. Our growth rate slowed due to the economy, but has begun to increase. For comparison, over the 10-year period of 2002 to 2012, enrollment increased 16 percent with a total gain of 4,911 students, an average of 491 per year. From 2009 to 2012, enrollment grew 3.75 percent, an average of 274 students per year for a total of 823 students.

In 2013, approximately 1,800 students graduated from our six high schools. A total of about 1,900 students were in the classes of 2012. In 2011, approximately 1,670 students graduated from five high schools. From 2011 to 2013, the number of graduates increased by about 130 or 7.2 percent increase over the three year period. Our newest high school, Veterans High, graduated its first class in 2012.

Of our 38 Schools:
- 23 primary and elementary schools serve grades Pre-K through 5
- 8 middle schools serve grades 6 through 8
- 6 high schools serve grades nine through 12 and
- 1 alternative school serves middle and high school student.

In addition, another site - the Elberta Center - serves as a GNET satellite program for special needs students in grades K-8, as well as for credit-deficient high school students.

Other district demographics are:
- Economically disadvantaged: 53.65 percent
- Students with Disabilities: approximately 11 percent
- Enrolled in Gifted Program: approximately 14 percent
- English Language Learners: 2.8 percent (34 different languages are spoken as our students’ native language.)
- Gender: 48.45 percent female, 51.55 percent male
- Ethnicity:
  - Asian - 2.75 percent
  - American Indian - .20 percent
  - Hispanic - 7.53 percent
  - Black - 36.13 percent
  - White - 49.01 percent
  - Multiracial - 4.39 percent.

Of our 3,826 employees, 2,150 are certified, with 2,003 serving as teachers. Of our 2,150 certified staff members:
- 3 hold a teaching permit
- 592 have a bachelor's degree
- 871 a master's degree

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- a specialist degree and
- a doctorate degree.

For four consecutive years, 100 percent of Houston County teachers and paraprofessionals have been deemed Highly Qualified by the Georgia Department of Education. The most recent Georgia Department of Education Report Card, 2010-2011 (http://reportcard2011.gaosa.org/(S(2k5truu2pbe4ekmzfkfz1m5w))/k12/persfiscal.aspx?TestType=pers&ID=676:ALL), shows the following staff statistics:

- Income: administrators earn an average annual salary of $84,866
- Income: teachers earn an average annual salary of $53,967
- Gender of administrators: 60.6 percent are female and 39.3 percent are male
- Gender of teachers: 80.9 percent are female and 19.1 percent are male
- Ethnicity of all employees:
  - Asian - .033 percent
  - Native American - .033 percent
  - Hispanic - 1.36 percent
  - Black - 18.6 percent
  - White - 79 percent
  - Multiracial - .033 percent.

Houston County was incorporated May 15, 1821, as Georgia's 51st county. Georgia's sixty-fifth largest county in total area, it covers 377 square miles. Houston County is the 15th most populated county in the state of Georgia out of 159 counties. The county consists of three municipalities - Warner Robins, Perry and Centerville - and many unincorporated communities such as Bonaire, Kathleen and Elko. Perry, the county seat and geographic center of the state of Georgia, was incorporated in 1824 as Houston's first official town. Warner Robins is consistently ranked as one of the most affordable places to buy a home in the entire U.S. In addition, the diverse make-up of its population has earned Warner Robins the nickname, "The International City."

In 2012 and 2011, Houston County was named one of America's Promise Alliance's 100 Best Communities for Young People. The national awards were given to Houston in recognition of its outstanding and innovative work in addressing the high school dropout crisis and for programs and services that make it an outstanding place for youth to live, learn and grow.

According to the U.S. Census, the 2012 population is estimated at 146,136, an increase of 4.4 percent since 2010 when the population was 139,900. From the 2000 Census to 2010, the population increased by 26.3 percent. The median age is 34.5 years with persons under 18 representing 26.3 percent of the population and seniors age 65 and older representing 10.5 percent. Females represent 51.3 percent of residents. The racial makeup is: white - 65.1 percent, black - 29.2 percent, American Indian/Alaska Native - .4 percent, Asian - 2.6 percent, native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander - .2 percent, two or more races - 2.4 percent, and Hispanic - 6.2 percent. Those who speak a language other than English represent 7.6 percent of the population.

In 2011, the median household income was $55,738. The per capita income in 2011 was $25,329. Persons below the poverty level represent 12.7 percent of the population. The median home value was $134,200, with 68.1 percent owning a home. As of 2011, 87.5 percent of those 25 years of age or older had earned a high school diploma or higher, with 24.5 percent having earned a bachelor's degree or higher. A total of 18,150 veterans call Houston home. (http://quickfacts.census.gov/qfd/states/13/13153.html)

Many opportunities exist in the area of higher education. Several colleges offer advanced education opportunities in Houston County. A Middle Georgia State College campus is located in Warner Robins. The county is also home to Middle Georgia Technical College which
offers our students dual enrollment opportunities. Georgia Military College, Georgia College and State University, Embry-Riddle and Fort Valley State University also offer degrees locally.

In 2009, the labor force (employed or actively seeking work) numbered 181,486. Of this number, 165,912 were employed. (http://www.houstoncountyga.net/documents/Houston2009_000.pdf) The 2010 unemployment rate was at 7.6 percent. In 2011, Houston County's unemployment rate was about the same, at 7.8 percent, lower than the state's 8.9 percent (http://www.houstoncountyga.net/cp_workforce-demo.htm). As of July 2013, the county's rate had increased to 8.1 percent, a slight increase over three years prior when it was 7.8 percent in July 2010.

Houston County fares better than the state because it lies within one of the most impressive workforce regions of the state, with a strong mix of employers in the aerospace, healthcare, manufacturing, service, and construction sectors. Home to Robins Air Force Base (RAFB), Georgia's largest single employer has 5,841 military members and 15,285 civilians for a total workforce of 18,158. The community lives its motto EDIMGIAFAD - Every Day in Middle Georgia is Armed Forces Appreciation Day.

The total economic impact of RAFB on Georgia for fiscal year 2012 was estimated at $2.9 billion. The top base contractors are: Boeing, Northrop Grumman, Lockheed Martin and Raytheon. Outside of RAFB, the largest employers include the Houston County Board of Education, Frito Lay, Houston Healthcare Complex, Perdue Farms and Walmart. Other local businesses include Anchor Glass, CEMEX, Graphics Packaging International and Cascade Corporation.
System's Purpose

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

Our mission is to produce high-achieving students. Our vision is that our district will be world-class. Each year our Board reviews our mission, vision and beliefs. Our mission was originally created during a Board goal setting session held April 3, 2004. The vision was created in 2006. The mission and vision continue to reflect our purpose and support our focus of Teaching and Learning.

Our beliefs are:
- Safety is our number one priority.
- Failure is not an option. We do expect that all children can learn.
- We will not be satisfied until all of our schools meet or exceed the highest academic standards.
- We are committed to determining what each child needs to fulfill his potential.
- We take responsibility for learning, for both our students and ourselves.
- We are not afraid of change and will embrace change that is research-based and proven to be effective.

We also emphasize The Houston County Way which influences and creates our culture. Emphasized and embodied by past and current district leaders, The Houston County Way is:
- Strive for excellence in all that we do.
- Have a professional attitude.
- Go the extra mile.
- Base decisions on what's best for the child.
- Provide quality customer service.
- Hard work, dedication and love for children.
- Approach work every day with a positive attitude, hope, enthusiasm and compassion.
- Do things right. Do the right thing.

Our mission, vision, and beliefs are consistently communicated to all of our employees. The superintendent announces them at every Opening Session held the first day of pre-planning. Schools post them for the entire school family, to include students. Employees are given our credo cards, and the public is informed via slideshows, websites, social media such as Facebook, and the BOE TV channels broadcast in the Cox and ComSouth customer areas.

Educators and support staff members strive for excellence and help students perform at their highest ability. Our programs are tailored to all levels of students, from Pre-K to dual enrollment and from special needs to gifted and talented students. Everything that we do - from the classroom to extracurricular activities to support staff work - is in support of our purpose.
Notable Achievements and Areas of Improvement

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

The district is in the midst of implementing a 2012-2017 Education - Special Purpose Local Option Sales Tax, e-SPLOST, plan which was approved by voters on Nov. 8, 2011. Of the 9,161 votes cast, 72 percent voted in favor of the proposal. The focus is on technology, safety and security and facilities improvements. The tax is for five years or until a cap of $125 million is reached. The funds are generated by a 1-cent sales tax paid by all who shop within the county. It began in April 2012 when the previous e-SPLOST, which started in 2007, ended. Houston County voters previously approved e-SPLOST referendums in 1997, 2001 and 2005.

The priority was to bring the district's technology up to 21st century standards. Our district was falling behind in technology, but the e-SPLOST provided the funds to update hardware and software. The bulk of the technology projects were accomplished in 2012-13. Last year we ramped up our networks' infrastructures to support the vast amount of technology added to classrooms. Classrooms received: 2,400 computers, 904 Interactive Boards, 523 Projectors and 998 Document Cameras. In addition, we provided approximately 2,500 more computers to 93 labs, as well as 53 portable interactive boards and approximately 1,000 audio systems. A new Student Information System - Infinite Campus - was implemented, a vast improvement over the green-screen DOS based program which had been used for decades.

To address safety and security, 19 schools are receiving secured vestibules. As of June 2012, installation of secured school entrances, which direct visitors through the main office, began. Additional cameras and doors accessible by card installations began in June 2012.

Many facilities improvements have been completed as detailed on our website at http://www.hcbe.net/facilities/splost.aspx. Between June 2012 and October 2013, HVAC units that are 18 years or older were replaced at 16 campuses with new units that are more efficient and quieter and also offer improved indoor air quality. McConnell-Talbert Stadium was renovated this past summer. Currently 14 schools are receiving new hallway paint and flooring, with a targeted completion date of January 2014. In addition, gyms at six schools were upgraded by October 2012, with 17 more to receive gym upgrades between August 2013 and February 2015.

Two new schools are funded by the e-SPLOST. C.B. Watson Primary School opened August 2013, and Langston Road Elementary School will open come fall 2014. Houston County High School, which was built in 1991, is slated for a complete and total renovation within the next three years. Plans also include building a central bus facility as well as a sports facility consisting of a stadium and central tennis facility.

Although curb appeal is important, it's what takes place in the classroom that sets our district apart. Realtors and new residents often tell us that our district's reputation for delivering quality education is the main draw for people moving into Houston County. Consistently our test scores outperform state averages. On the Criterion-Referenced Competency Test, we routinely score better than the state average on all 30 tests, for every subject and every grade. On End-of-Course Tests, our district outscored the state on all eight EOCTs. On the 5th grade writing assessment, district wide our students scored 91 percent, 12 points more than the state average. On the 8th grade writing assessment, district wide our students scored 87 percent, and the district average for our high school writing test scores was 95 percent.

We are especially proud of our Advanced Placement (AP) program with scores that outperform national and global averages. In 2013, we scored 3.0, above the U.S. average of 2.89 and the global 2.91. In 2013, we gave 1,384 AP exams - qualifying scores saved our parents an estimated $2 million in college tuition. The AP program is set to grow substantially over the next three years with a $2.9 million grant, awarded in collaboration with RAFB, for the National Math and Science Initiative (NMSI). This grant will greatly expand our AP program at all
of our high schools and middle schools. This three-year initiative will ensure that more students are provided rigorous coursework to help them succeed in the Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics - STEM - fields as well as English. Enrollment in math, science, and English AP courses is expected to increase by 75.6 percent district-wide this year - from 890 to 1,563 students. Qualifying scores in AP courses are expected to increase by 127 percent over three years, from 419 to 952 exams with a score of three or higher.

Another exciting change this school year has to do with our gifted and talented education for our elementary children. This year our students began attending gifted education classes every school day instead of only one day a week as in the past. This provides our gifted and talented students with 180 days of higher level instruction, far more than the former model which provided about 32 days of enrichment instruction a school year. This also enables us to offer more children the opportunity to participate in gifted and talented education. We have shifted from a Resource Pull-out Model to an Advanced Content Model, the same model we have been using for our gifted and talented students in grades 6 through 12. In preparation for this expansion, approximately 110 of our teachers are in the process of earning their gifted endorsement. Our elementary GTE teachers in all 23 schools are utilizing CCGPS and Houston County curriculum and authentic project-based learning. Teachers are collaborating and using additional resources to serve the needs of these students. The end result will be that students will spend more time with highly-qualified teachers who will enrich, enhance and extend the curriculum, what we call "E cubed."

Our students are also being given more latitude in using technology to learn at school. This year we implemented Bring Your Own Device, or BYOD, which encourages students to bring their personal technology tools to school to use for learning. BYOD is a voluntary program for our teachers and students. Teachers who so choose may invite their students to bring their laptops, smartphones, tablet computers and e-readers to school. Our students' personal devices are infusing even more technology into our classrooms, complementing our smart boards, desktops, and document cameras already in use and engaging them more in classroom learning. Our students will also learn new ways to collaborate and interact with their teachers and classmates as they conduct research, solve problems, create products, and publish their work. In preparation for this initiative, we expanded our district's wireless infrastructure so that every school now has a guest BYOD wireless access point that provides filtered Internet access. We also piloted BYOD this past spring at four schools with excellent results and positive responses. BYOD will be phased in district wide over the school year, beginning with seven schools the first nine weeks.

With the new CCGPS curriculum comes new assessments not only for our students, but also for our teachers and administrators. Teacher Keys and Leader Keys are new performance assessments which are mandated by law to be used beginning the 2014-15 school year. This year, our administrators are piloting this evaluation instrument with several teachers at each school. Training was provided in August and September 2013 to our administrators. The new instrument will be used district wide next year.

Edge Academy is another initiative. This credit recover program targets our academically at risk high school students who have fallen behind at least 5 credits. Students are chosen by their home school based on academic need. Edge Academy's coursework is online, rigorous, individualized, teacher-led and mastery-based. The courses are taught by highly-qualified teachers who work individually with each student to customize instruction to help them earn the credits they need to return to their home school.

An operations change which was implemented January 2013 was the opening of a central registration site. Beginning Jan. 14, 2013, registration for all new students and students changing school zones was offered at one site with an overall goal to improve customer service. This central site helps expedite the process, ensures consistency across all 38 of our schools, and makes it more convenient for those with children in more than one school. The International Welcome Center is also located at this site, and the district's Homeless Liaison serves our homeless families at this central location.

A new benefit offered to all of our employees this year is a free gym membership with a company that offers three locations in Houston. At Opening Session, Superintendent Dr. Robin Hines encouraged all employees to take time to take care of themselves. This is a win-win
program expected to result in healthier, happier employees and lower absenteeism.

An initiative to begin at the beginning of the in 2014-2015 school year is the reorganization of three of our at-risk elementary schools which have highly mobile populations. Lindsey Elementary, Westside Elementary and Parkwood Elementary zones will become one school zone with grade configurations of PreK-1, 2-3 and 4-5. The reorganization will allow everyone in the school, from the custodians to teachers and administrators, to focus on the particular developmental needs of the ages of the children assigned to the school. This will also enable each school to narrow its focus on initiatives targeted for the needs of their specific students. Greater collaboration opportunities will be offered per grade level since more teachers will be on each grade level offering more expertise and opportunities to share ideas. Scheduling will be more flexible and thus easier to meet the needs of students with EIPs and those in special education or gifted and talented classes. The focus on the needs of the children will be streamlined for professional learning and resources for students. This new organization will also enable the schools to focus Positive Behavioral Intervention Supports toward the particular needs of the students served in the school. In addition, mobility issues between the three schools will decrease, and an after school program will be housed at one school but serve all three schools.
Additional Information

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

The district is fortunate to have an outstanding Board of Education. All seven members are very committed to the district mission, vision and beliefs. Since 2004, our Board has been deemed a Distinguished School Board by the Georgia School Boards Association, GSBA. In July 2012, GSBA announced a new awards program effective this year, and our district is now seeking Quality Board Recognition. The winners will be announced this December.

Our district wins countless state and national awards year after year. Of our 38 schools, 23 have been named Georgia Schools of Excellence for a total of 39 times. In addition, 15 elementary schools have been awarded the School Bell Award by the Georgia Association of Elementary School Principals in recognition of exemplary programs in the areas of curriculum and organizational leadership. Many of our employees and students serve at the state level. For example, four of our students were chosen to serve on State School Superintendent Dr. John Barge’s 2013-2014 Student Advisory Council. Only 50 were chosen statewide to advise Superintendent Barge on how state policies impact the classroom and to serve as the Superintendent’s ambassadors in their respective schools.

The most recent national and state awards - from 2012-2013 - are highlighted below.

- Feagin Mill Middle School Principal Dr. Jesse Davis was named Georgia’s 2013 National Distinguished Principal.

- Northside High School made the U.S. News & World Report list of the best high schools in the country and was awarded a silver medal.

- Shirley Hills Elementary won first place in the poster presenter competition at the National Youth-At-Risk Conference.

- A Perry High student won a Silver Medal from the national Scholastic Art & Writing Awards for his work titled “Bicycle.” Three Perry High students also won regional Scholastic Gold Key awards.

- Several schools won national FCCLA awards:
  - Bonaire Middle won two national Gold medals and two Silver medals, plus the National Middle School Career Connection Award
  - Bonaire Middle also won the 2013 Otis Spunkmeyer O-riginals Recipe Contest
  - Thomson Middle won Gold and Silver medals
  - Feagin Mill Middle won Gold
  - Houston County High won 3 Gold medals, with one student earning a perfect score of 100 in the Early Childhood Education STAR Event and winning $10,000 in college scholarships, and
  - a Career Academy & Warner Robins High dual enrolled student won Gold

- Lake Joy Elementary teacher Dennis Peavy was one of only eight teachers in the U.S. honored by the American Farm Bureau Foundation for exceptional efforts to encourage agricultural literacy.

- All five of our high schools were named AP STEM Schools. Four were also named AP STEM Achievement Schools: Houston County High, Northside High, Perry High and Veterans High.
- Shirley Hills Elementary was named a Reward School by the Georgia Department of Education.

- Both Miller Elementary and Morningside Elementary were presented the Family-Friendly Partnership School Award by the Georgia Department of Education.

- Lake Joy Primary and Morningside Elementary won School Bell Awards.

- Perry Primary School and Perry Middle School won awards in the Governor's Georgia SHAPE Honor Roll Program. Perry Primary won Silver medal and Perry Middle won Bronze.

- Several schools earned Industry Certification:
  - Early Childhood Education: Northside High
  - Marketing: Houston County High, Northside High and Warner Robins High
  - Business & Computer Science: Houston County Career Academy, Houston County High, Northside High, Perry High and Warner Robins High.

- Bonaire Middle and Feagin Mill Middle students won 1st place at the Georgia Science and Engineering Fair.

- Northside High won the Georgia High School Association Class AAAAA State Literary Meet competition plus three students won first-place individual awards.

- Houston County High's FFA team won first place in the Georgia State Dairy Cattle Evaluation Career Development Event.

- Perry Middle FFA were the Livestock Evaluation State Champions for the Jr. Division.

- Bonaire Middle's Beta Club won six state awards, plus their sponsor, Cynthia Davis, was elected to serve as the State Jr. Beta Club Sponsor-Elect.

- Northside High won first place for high schools in the annual Academic Bowl held at the Jimmy Carter National Historic Site in Plains, Ga.

- Mossy Creek Middle won first place for middle schools in the annual Jimmy Carter National Historic Academic Bowl.

- Thirteen of our students were selected for All-State Band from Feagin Mill Middle, Perry Middle, Houston County High, Northside High, Veterans High, and Warner Robins High.

- Eleven students from our schools were selected for All-State Chorus from Bonaire Middle, Thomson Middle, Veterans High and Warner Robins High.

- A Perry High student represented the State of Georgia in the National Poetry Out Loud contest after winning first place in the state competition.

- Northside High won the State One-Act competition for AAAAA schools. This was Northside High's seventeenth State Championship in the one-act competition since 1978.
-Our Houston County Sharks won three GHSA/AAASP Varsity State Wheelchair Championships - Handball, Basketball and Football. The team has now won eight state championships since the team began competing in 2008!

-Houston County High won the AAAAA State Cheerleading Championship

-Veterans High won the AAAA State Cheerleading Championship.

-Mossy Creek Middle and Warner Robins High students won first place in the "Digging Peanuts in Plains" postcard contest and were presented the awards by President Jimmy Carter.

-Eli Walker, a Houston County Career Academy and Middle Georgia Technical College dual enrollment teacher, was awarded the Dual Enrollment Instructor of the Year for the state of Georgia.

-Bonaire Middle's Alice Mullis won the Georgia Association of Teachers of Family and Consumer Sciences (GATFACS) Outstanding Teacher in Community Service Award

-Two Northside Elementary teachers were designated 2013 Georgia Master Teachers, recognizing them among the state's best teachers. Two of only 58 teachers named state-wide in 2013, Houston County currently has 34 Georgia Master Teachers.

-Huntington Middle School Principal Dr. Gwendolyn Taylor was selected as the Second Vice President of the Georgia Association of Secondary School Principals

-Our Community Relations Department won seven top state awards of five Gold awards and two "best of the best." Most recently, the Georgia School Nutrition Association awarded the 2013 Media Award to our Community Relations Director who was named the winner from 19 statewide nominees.

-Our School Nutrition Program won a southeast region USDA award and two state awards.

-Teaching & Learning won the Georgia Economics Program of Excellence award from the Georgia Council on Economic Education.

-Human Resources won a State Gold Award for our Recruitment Processes & Materials.

-Cindy Flesher is the President of the Georgia Association of Educational Leaders.

-Dr. Mark Scott is serving as President-Elect of the Georgia Association of School Personnel Administrators.

-Dr. Amy Fouse is president-elect of the Georgia Curriculum and Instructional Supervisors.