

Principal = Ima Star

Superintendent = Icana Doitalone

IIC = Iva Goodheart

GLISI PC = Letta Mehelpu

Attended GLISI's Base Camp & Leadership Summit in Fall, 2006...no other GLISI involvement.

District Overview: Alphabet Public School District is located in a highly impoverished area of South Georgia. The district serves 1202 students in 4 schools: 2 elementary, 1 middle (ABC Middle School) and 1 high school. Alphabet County has no industry, and the one remaining manufacturing plant – the major employer and source of 50% of the district's tax base – is closing within the next few years. Many students drop out of school before completing high school to help the family make ends meet. Alphabet District's average graduation rate is 52%. Ninety-six percent (96%) of students qualify for free or reduced lunch, 19% of students are categorized as students with disabilities (SWD), 2.8% are identified as gifted, and 5% qualify for ELL services. The district qualifies for AYP in all of its subgroups: white, black, Hispanic, ELL, economically disadvantaged, and students with disabilities. Students that complete high school typically move away from this district due to a lack of job opportunities and housing. A limited budget results in insufficient funding for professional development and supporting resources. Sixty percent (60%) of the county's citizens are over the age of 65. Total enrollment within the district has been steadily declining over the past decade and the system has become less diverse due to a disproportionate decrease in the percentage of white students served.

School Overview: ABC Middle School serves 287 students in grades 6, 7, and 8. Of these students, 235 are black, 43 are white and 9 are Hispanic. 19.2% of students are classified as SWD and 1% is gifted. The last SACS parent survey revealed that 40% of the parent population completed high school; most Hispanic students are first-generation speakers of English; and 49% of students are from single parent homes.

District Directive: According to the new superintendent, who has carefully reviewed recent test scores, math scores are a primary area of concern throughout the district. Through further conversation with stakeholders – including school leaders, math teachers, students, parents and members of the community – she has formulated a preliminary list of causes for low math achievement in the district. She met with her cabinet and they reviewed the Board of Education's expectations. The cabinet advised her that the Balanced Scorecard (in place in the district for several years) sets the expectation that 90% of students in grades 2-8 will pass the CRCT in reading and math by 2011. The Superintendent met with the 4 district principals and charged each to have their leadership teams review the following data, in the aggregate as well as by subgroup: district demographics; CRCT data for reading and math, 9th grade failure rate of students in the feeder pattern; attendance; and graduation rate of students who had remained in the district for 5+ years. Based on district data from the previous year, the superintendent established a district wide goal for math improvement. Nine-week (9-week) math benchmark tests, based on GPS standards, were developed by Central Office personnel and disseminated to schools – but, many students were not passing them. Only 57% of their 8th grade economically disadvantaged students were passing the 8th grade CRCT in Math.

ABC Middle School Response: The principal of ABC Middle serves as the leader of the school's "Initial Better-Seeking Team" (I-BST) which also includes grade level chairs and other school administrators. In their first planning meeting prior to the start of this school year, she shared some information from her own analysis of data and led the team to develop improvement initiatives that were specific to their school, yet aligned with district strategic goals. Based on CRCT and benchmark data, the following goals were identified by the I-BST: increasing math achievement; decreasing the number of drop-outs; increasing the attendance rate. As the superintendent had specifically targeted math improvement, the team first focused on this area. They realized that in order for students to increase their math CRCT scores, they must pass the benchmark tests. After sharing her analysis of the data with the team, the principal identified a number of possible root causes for the low math achievement. She then asked, "What are going to be our challenges in affecting change in these areas?" The team brainstormed the following initial ideas: lack of resources; the current math curriculum is not aligned to GPS and teachers don't want to change to the new curriculum (don't want to/don't know how); teachers are implementing new math benchmark tests from district, but have not bought into the importance of them; limited time for collaboration or training; teachers don't want to collaborate and don't want to attend training; parents don't value education so the students are not motivated; and the community culture of poverty is the norm. ABC's principal is looking forward to sending her AP and selected Teacher Leaders as part of Alphabet District's second District Change Team (DCT) to attend GLISI's Base Camp and Summit training events.

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6 TH GRADE	ALL			BLACK			WHITE			SWD			ED		
	06/07	07/08	08/09	06/07	07/08	08/09	06/07	07/08	08/09	06/07	07/08	08/09	06/07	07/08	08/09
Reading	70	62	69	45	50	55	84	68	70	27	38	43	68	61	60
Math	71	72	63	55	59	60	83	81	70	25	26	43	68	70	63
Attendance	10.5	15.8	14.3	12.6	13.1	12.0	8.4	16.3	17.7	14.9	16.2	18.3	10.7	15.9	14.3
7 TH GRADE	All			Black			White			SWD			ED		
	06/07	07/08	08/09	06/07	07/08	08/09	06/07	07/08	08/09	06/07	07/08	08/09	06/07	07/08	08/09
Reading	75	66	71	62	61	65	81	72	84	31	25	23	69	65	71
Math	76	74	64	59	70	56	84	82	79	48	52	92	70	71	64
Attendance	8.6	9.4	13.3	8.1	10.0	11.2	7.9	13.2	16.5	19.5	15.6	4.1	8.9	9.8	13.3
8 TH GRADE	All			Black			White			SWD			ED		
	06/07	07/08	08/09	06/07	07/08	08/09	06/07	07/08	08/09	06/07	07/08	08/09	06/07	07/08	08/09
Reading	78	74	86	73	72	80	84	82	88	24	36	45	78	75	86
Math	63	64	54	50	55	57	62	64	54	22	28	33	63	62	57
Attendance	10.5	12.3	18.8	10.4	8.6	8.2	10.2	15.2	23.6	18.9	17.8	28.6	11.0	12.9	18.8

NOTE: Highlighting in these tables is for readability only – not for emphasis.

Supporting Data - % Indicates # of students meeting/exceeding expectations

Attendance = % of students absent more than 15 days

District Graduation Rate

	ALL	BLACK	WHITE	SWD	ED
2006-07	56.9	49.2	64.9	5.9	54.3
2007-08	54.8	52.3	56.2	Too Few Students	54.8
2008-09	52.3	56.4	43.1	42.9	52.3

Students who have been retained more than one time

	ALL	BLACK	WHITE	SWD	ED
6 th Grade	18	13	5	12	18
7 th Grade	15	12	3	8	15
8 th Grade	22	15	6	15	22