



Executive Summary

J. Harley Bonds Career Center

Greenville County Schools

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Introduction

Every school has its own story to tell. The context in which teaching and learning takes place influences the processes and procedures by which the school makes decisions around curriculum, instruction, and assessment. The context also impacts the way a school 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, and the kinds of programs and services that a school implements to support student learning.

 The purpose of the Executive Summary (ES) is to provide a school with an opportunity to describe in narrative form the strengths and challenges it encounters. By doing so, the public and members of the school community will have a more complete picture of how the school perceives itself and the process of self-reflection for continuous improvement. This summary is structured for the school to reflect on how it provides teaching and learning on a day to day basis.

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?

Founded in 1972, Foothills Vocational Center became Greenville County School's second area technical school serving eleventh and twelfth graders from Blue Ridge, Eastside, Greer, and Wade Hampton High Schools. The center was originally located at the site of the old Lincoln High School in Taylors; however, by the mid-nineties, it became increasingly obvious that the growing need to offer more innovative career and technical education classes was causing the center to outgrow the aging facilities. In August 2001, Foothills Career and Technology Center, as it was then called, was relocated to the site of the old Greer High School, thus preserving a community landmark and re-purposing an existing school building. In November of that same year, Foothills Career Center was officially renamed J. Harley Bonds Career Center in commemoration of Mr. J. Harley Bonds who served for over fifty years as a Greenville County School Board member.

In its new location as part of the J. Harley Bonds Career and Educational Resource Center, the career center occupied the first floor of the building with other district programs housed on the second and third floors. By December 2002, all career center classrooms and offices within the main building were complete and a new 40,000 square foot shop building was added. Since that time, two more renovations have occurred that have added over 8,200 square feet of classroom and shop space to the main building. The most current renovation transformed the old high school gymnasium into a 3,000 square foot welding facility with 50 welding booths. This same renovation also transformed the former media center into three health science classrooms covering over 2,400 square feet. Today, Bonds serves over 500 students per year in 14 different programs.

Bonds Career Center is located within the city limits of Greer and serves five high schools in the northeast section of Greenville County. According to data from the 2010 Census, the city has grown to a population of 25,515 within its more than 20 square mile area. This represents a 51.5% population change since 2000. Of the current population, 26.6% are between the ages of 5 and 18. Greer is also home to over 2,700 businesses and is ideally located near many major businesses in the Spartanburg and Greenville areas. Greer is one of South Carolina's fastest-growing cities and, with the addition of the new inland port in the Greer area, is in a prime location for the career and technical opportunities that the career center offers its students.

Students attending Bonds come from five feeder schools in Greenville County--Blue Ridge High School, Greer High School, Eastside High School, Riverside High School, and Wade Hampton High School. Of these schools, Blue Ridge, Greer, and Wade Hampton represent definite geographical communities. Riverside and Eastside were built in the 1970s to accommodate the influx of people moving into the area as the economy grew. Parents in the Riverside, Eastside, and Wade Hampton communities have become a powerful voice for political, economic, and educational issues in the area.

Bonds Career Center offers traditional as well as innovative career and technical education (CTE) programs to high school students from its five feeder high schools. Home-schooled teenagers are also accepted into the CTE courses. Students attend morning or afternoon classes on this campus and take classes at their home school during the other half of the school day. Morning classes begin at 9:00 a.m. and end at 11:40 a.m., while afternoon classes begin at 12:50 p.m. and end at 3:25 p.m. Math and English courses are also offered at 8:00 a.m. to accommodate students that may have trouble fitting career center classes and academic classes into their schedules. The school district provides bus transportation to and from Bonds; students may also drive or ride to the campus in student vehicles with parental permission.

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The administration and district continue to work toward offering programs using state-of-the-art technology in the classroom and the shop/lab. For example, the automotive shop is the most modern, up-to-date facility of any career center in the state. A complete computer laboratory was added so students could receive on-line instruction from the National Automotive Technicians Education Foundation (NATEF) to earn four of the eight national Automotive Service Excellence (ASE) certifications offered by NATEF. Another example is our welding facility which is the largest high school training facility in the state with 50 welding booths equipped to train students in shielded metal, gas tungsten, and gas metal arc welding.

The administration continues to work to improve our students' academic performance. In 2008, Bonds became a Southern Regional Education Board (SREB) Technology Centers That Work (TCTW) site. The focus of this initiative is to ensure the student's success at the post-secondary level through the integration of academics into the current curriculum. Information gathered from a technical assistance visit in 2010 continues to be used in campus-wide instructional planning.

The Southern Association of Colleges and Schools has accredited Bonds Career Center since 1972, and this year we will participate in the AdvancEd accreditation process along with all schools in the district. The School Report Card absolute rating continues to be excellent with a growth rating of good. The diligence of our students and staff has earned other significant recognitions as well. Bonds continues to be a Palmetto Gold Award winner and was recognized in 2006 as a Blue Ribbon Lighthouse School, one of only six career centers so honored in South Carolina. In 2012, Bonds received the TCTW Gold Improvement Award indicating that our students had increased their mean score on the High Schools That Work assessments in reading, math, and science by at least ten points from 2010 to 2012.

The staff of Bonds Career Center is composed of twenty-two instructors, one administrator, one guidance counselor, one secretary, one attendance clerk, three aides, one plant engineer, and five custodians. Bonds is also home to the instructional coach for all four career centers in Greenville County. For the 2012-2013 school year, two new instructors joined our staff. These two instructors along with the five new instructors we added last year comprise an approximate one-third percent change in our teaching staff. This staff change has created additional opportunities as well as challenges as we have all learned to work together.

Fifteen instructors are certified in their teaching area; the remaining seven teachers are in various stages of the state's alternative certification programs--DIRECT (Developing Instructional Readiness for Educators of Career and Technology) or PACE (Program of Alternative Certification for Educators). Sixteen staff members have at least a four-year degree with ten of those being advanced degrees. Years of educational experience range from first-year teachers to those with more than forty years of experience. Fifteen of our teachers have continuing contracts; the remaining seven teachers are in the first or second year of the ADEPT process. The average daily attendance for the faculty during the 2011-2012 school year was 96.6%. There are three nationally board certified teachers on the faculty. Our staff is diverse with 17 males and 19 females, 17% African-American and 83% Caucasian.

All faculty members are involved in professional organizations. We have one hundred-percent faculty membership in Future Farmers of America (FFA), Health Occupations Students of America (HOSA), and SkillsUSA to encourage students to participate in professional organizations related to their career fields. Memberships in other professional organizations by our faculty include the following: National Center for Construction Education and Research (NCCER), International Code Council, Instrument Society of America, Institute of Electrical and Electronics Engineers (IEEE), FIRST, ACTIVE (formerly the Association of Cosmetology Teachers of Vocational Education), South Carolina Association of Teacher Educators (SCATE), National Association of Agricultural Educators, ASCD (formerly the Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development), National Council of Teachers of English, International Reading Association, American Heart Association, National Association of Orthopedic Nurses, American Nursing Association, South Carolina Nursing Association, American Association of Respiratory Care, Pulmonary Hypertension Association, National Athletic Trainers Association, American Culinary Federation, National Restaurant Association, North American Council of Automotive Teachers, International Automotive Technicians Network,

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Automotive Youth Educational Systems (AYES), and American Welding Society. Additionally, Wayne Rhodes, the director of Bonds, serves as chairman for the Board of Directors of the South Carolina state chapter of SkillsUSA; Kimberly Jones, our instructional coach, and Karen Bruce, one of our Cosmetology teachers, also serve on the board as well.

In addition to becoming active members of their professional organizations, our teachers participate in various professional development opportunities throughout the year to improve their instructional delivery in the classroom. With on-going support from the instructional coach, the teachers continue to practice and refine these skills. Each year, the majority of our teachers complete more than the required minimum of 24 hours of professional development by averaging 11.6 days of professional development training. All of our teachers continue to receive training in their fields so they can offer the most up-to-date instruction and training to our students. All of our teachers have received, or are currently working on receiving, their technology proficiency.

Every staff member participates in Goals Based Evaluation. At the beginning of the school year, each member sets at least one student achievement goal and one professional goal to accomplish by the end of the school year. The director sets up individual conferences during the year to discuss progress towards meeting these goals. For the 2013-2014 school year, six of our teachers will be formally evaluated using the ADEPT evaluation tool.

Three times a year we provide informational experiences for current and prospective students and parents to meet instructors and learn about program requirements. In the fall, new and returning students and their families are invited to meet with instructors to discuss classroom expectations and career-related opportunities. At this time, School Improvement Council (SIC) elections are held. During the second semester, a New Student Information Night is held for prospective students and their parents to familiarize them with the various requirements of the different career programs offered. In addition, community supporters are invited to visit the career center during these times to learn more about the programs offered.

We enroll students from five feeder high schools in Greenville County--Blue Ridge High School, Greer High School, Eastside High School, Riverside High School, and Wade Hampton High School. These schools are located in the northeast section of the county. Over the last five years, total student enrollment from our feeder schools has been as follows: Blue Ridge High School - 686 students, Eastside High School - 257 students, Greer High School - 696 students, Riverside High School - 328 students, Wade Hampton High School - 457 students, other high schools - 7 students, and Home Schooled - 19 students.

The bulk of Bonds' enrollment comes from its three block-scheduled high schools (Blue Ridge, Greer, and Wade Hampton). Beginning in 2010, we started to see a slight decline in enrollment. Reasons for this decline have not been determined; however, we are trying new and varied recruiting methods to increase enrollment numbers. The Bonds staff works closely with each high school's guidance department to make sure students are properly enrolled and registered. Students must complete an application for admission and meet minimum attendance, grade, and discipline requirements. Teachers review applications and select students based on potential success in individual programs; our most popular programs invite students to interview for the limited number of available seats.

Over the years we have sought stability in class enrollments at maximum or near maximum class size. Some classes are limited in enrollment by their state or national credentialing agencies. For example, Automotive Technology is limited to sixteen students in each section by the National Automotive Technology Education Foundation and Cosmetology is limited to twenty students by the Cosmetology State Board. We have also expanded course offerings to offer more than one section in several areas, which has helped students at our feeder schools have fewer scheduling conflicts. In addition, information from each high school's career specialist helps our teachers and our guidance counselor continue to meet the needs and interests of the students as expressed in their Individual Graduation Plans (IGPs).

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.

MISSION: Our mission is to educate all students for lifelong participation in a diverse society.

PHILOSOPHY: At Bonds Career Center, we value our students as vital, contributing members of society. We believe that students should have the educational environment that allows them to acquire career skills needed in a global economy.

BELIEFS: We believe:

- All students can learn and no student will be left behind.
- Students learn best when they are actively engaged in a high-tech, hands-on environment.
- Students must have success-oriented opportunities.
- A student's self-esteem is enhanced by positive reinforcement and respect from the staff and their peers.
- High expectations increase student performance and motivation.
- Assessments of the learning process will provide a variety of opportunities for students to evaluate their success.
- Joint commitment from students, teachers, parents, and the community will effectively educate a student.
- A diverse curriculum with unique instructional techniques will meet the educational needs of all students and prepare them for the future.
- Interpersonal and leadership skills that enhance life-long performance are gained through active participation in club activities and community service.

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.

NOTABLE ACHIEVEMENTS

- 100% membership in student professional organizations: SkillsUSA, HOSA, and FFA
- District and State - SkillsUSA, HOSA, and FFA Winners
- National Technical Honor Society Chapter
- 2 SC SkillsUSA State Officers - President and Parliamentarian
- 100% Cosmetology State Board pass rate for three straight years
- School Report Card, Excellent Absolute Rating 2000-2012
- Palmetto Gold Award 2002-2012
- Blue Ribbon Lighthouse School
- Technology Centers that Work site (SREB)
- Early College credit through Greenville Tech available for several programs (ASSET and admissions requirements must be met)
- Honors credit offered for 3rd and 4th courses in all programs that do not receive Early College credit
- Cooperative Education and Summer Internship programs
- Project Lead the Way (PLTW) Biomedical Sciences program
- Only Mechatronics program in Greenville County Schools
- Automotive Technology Program accredited by AYES
- American Culinary Federation accreditation
- NCCER Accredited Technical Education Facility
- Only Plumbing program in a South Carolina high school
- FIRST Robotics team 3371
- FIRST Tech Challenge team

AREAS FOR IMPROVEMENT: For this renewal plan period, our school will work on specific goals in the areas of student achievement, teacher/administrator quality, and school climate. The findings for each area are as follows:

Student Achievement - 6 areas:

- Technical Skill Attainment - Currently our students out-perform state goals in the area of technical skill attainment, which is measured by the number of students enrolled in career and technology courses who score 2.0 or above on the final course grade. Our 2011-12 baseline for this goal is 93.1%. We feel that a modest goal of raising our current percentage by 0.5 percent annually is obtainable.
- Graduation Rate - Our current graduation baseline is 93.4%. Our goal is to raise this to 95.9% by 2017-18.
- Placement Rate - We have an excellent placement rate for our graduates at 97.5% which indicates that the vast majority of our students go on to seek employment, post-secondary education, or military options after graduating high school. Our goal in this area is to maintain this percentage.
- WorkKeys Participation - Currently 25% of our students participate in the WorkKeys assessments. We would like to see this percentage increase to 50% to more accurately reflect the county goals set as part of the Work Ready Community initiative.
- WorkKeys Achievement - Of our students taking the WorkKeys assessments, we currently have 75% that score at the silver or above certificate level. We would like to maintain this achievement by continuing to prepare our students for these assessments.

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-- Enrollment - Over the last couple of years, our enrollment has declined slightly. Obviously this is an area which offers much opportunity for growth. We would like to see our enrollment increase by 2% annually.

Teacher/Administrator Quality - 1 area:

-- Staff Development - In the area of staff development, we would like to increase the average number per teacher of staff development hours relevant to career and technology education topics. Currently, our teachers participate in an average of 20 hours of professional development. We would like to increase this to the district minimum of 24 hours.

School Climate - 2 areas:

-- Learning Environment - Overall, about 88% of our stakeholders are satisfied with the learning environment at our school. We would like to increase this percentage by 1% each year.

-- School Safety - The majority of our students and teachers feel safe at school with 95.2% and 93.8% indicating so; 87.5% of our parents indicate that their child feels safe at school. Obviously, we would like for everyone to feel safe at school and for these percentages to increase or at least remain constant.

Additional Information

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

No additional information.