



## **Executive Summary**

**Jones-Wheat Elementary**

**Decatur County Board of Education**

Dr. Larry J Clark, Principal  
1400 E Broughton St  
Bainbridge, GA 39817-4204

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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?**

Located in the southwest corner of Georgia, Decatur County is large in land area, rich in agriculture and history, is divided by the Flint River and has an abundance of natural resources. Decatur County has approximately 28,000 residents, with approximately 12,700 living inside the city of Bainbridge. The population of the entire county is approximately 52.5% white, 40.8% black, 5% Hispanic, and 1.7% other. The county has an agricultural base with a variety of businesses and industries. Bainbridge College is a 2-year community college in the University System of Georgia located in Bainbridge. This college has provided higher education to the residents of southwest Georgia for over 30 years.

Jones-Wheat Elementary School (JWES) is a Title-1 Distinguished School which was established in 1954. A second building was added to the site in 1970. Major renovations to existing buildings, the adding of a gymnasium, and the enclosing of an outside wing were completed in 1990. The buildings include 28 classrooms, a media center, science lab, two computer labs, conference room, teacher's lounge, copy room/office, a counselor's office, principal's office, assistant principal's office, gymnasium, and a large lunchroom/stage area. Construction will begin in the spring of 2013 on a new facility which will be built on the same grounds. All staff and students will be relocated to the former West Bainbridge Middle School site for the 2013-14 school year with plans to open the new facility fall of 2014.

Our staff for the 2012-13 school year is comprised of 60 individuals. They include a principal, an assistant principal, a lead teacher, a counselor, regular education teachers, special education teachers, an EIP teacher, a music teacher, a physical education teacher, a reading coach, a math coach, a science coach, a media specialist, paraprofessionals, lunchroom staff, office staff, and custodial staff. As of November 25, 2012, the total enrollment at Jones-Wheat Elementary was 511 students. Of that number, 58% are African American, 37% are Caucasian, 1% are Hispanic, and 3% are other.

The Free and Reduced Lunch Status has changed dramatically over the past few years. For the 2012 school year, there are 402 students who receive free or reduced priced meals which is 79% of the students enrolled. Over a period of nine years, there has been an increase of 12% in the number receiving free or reduced priced meals. This is an indication that the poverty level at JWES has increased over the years quite significantly. The reason for this increase is mainly because of the public housing projects that are located in this school zone. There are a great number of three to five bedroom housing units that are being used to accommodate large families. Once these children finish middle or high school, the families are encouraged to move to a smaller unit or move out of public housing. Once this is done, other families will move in with several children that are either school age or about to reach school age. Families that do not receive free or reduced priced meals usually have one or two children and when these children leave the middle or high school, the families continue to live in the same home. Another reason there is such a high increase in poverty level at Jones-Wheat is the economic status of the country at this time. Several industries have reduced their workforce or even closed resulting in many people losing their jobs. This has impacted many of our Jones-Wheat families.

## **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.**

The vision of Decatur County Schools and Jones-Wheat Elementary School is to provide excellence, engagement and accountability for all. Our mission is to empower all students to engage and succeed in a global society by providing rigorous and equitable opportunities, nurturing environments, sustained partnerships, college and career readiness and character development.

It is our goal at Jones-Wheat to provide a warm, caring, and nurturing environment for parents, students, and staff members. We believe stability is a major factor for the success for all individuals. Parents and community volunteers are always welcome and encouraged to visit our school to take an active part in the education of our students.

It is the goal of our faculty and staff to motivate and encourage students to become strong learners with solid foundations in all academic and social areas. JWE believes this strong foundation can be achieved through quality planning and instruction. The school places a great emphasis on Response to Intervention (RTI) as a major factor in meeting academic goals. The Pyramid of Interventions is posted in the school's conference room and is reviewed during teacher and parent meetings when needed. Teachers use the A3 educational software to document and monitor student progress. Teachers are required to submit a failing list every 4 ½ weeks to the administration.

At Jones-Wheat, we strive to increase student achievement as evidenced by standardized tests, student attendance policies, and increased parent involvement. The Infinite Campus parent portal was established last year to help provide web-based access for parents to current information about their student's performance at school. Parents have quick access to grades, attendance, behavior, and announcements from school. During the 2012-13 school year, Jones-Wheat established a Parent Resource Room located on campus for the first time. This has been a huge success at Jones-Wheat. This resource room allows parents and community volunteers their own space to help meet the needs of students. The room has a variety of manipulatives and resources that parents can check out if needed. There is a computer and printer available if parents need to research or print information off the Internet. Teachers also access this room to complete parent conferences.

The Accelerated Reader (AR) program is used at Jones-Wheat Elementary. This computer program helps teachers motivate students to read more books. Teachers require students to read a variety of fiction and nonfiction books throughout the year. Research shows that reading is a foundational skill and an important key to doing well and getting good grades in all subject areas. Accelerated Readers are proud of their accomplishments and develop a greater appreciation for reading, learning and school. Students are rewarded every nine weeks for their reading success with the AR program.

One exciting and successful project for the 2012-13 school year was to provide more Science, Technology, Engineering, and Technology (STEM) lessons within the curriculum. Second grade teachers spent a week of professional learning during the summer of 2012 working on a STEM unit. This unit fostered engineering and technological literacy among children by using a research-based, standards-driven, and classroom-tested curriculum that integrated engineering and technology concepts and skills with elementary science topics.

Students were challenged to solve problems through a hands-on engineering design challenge. Students worked in teams to apply their knowledge of science and mathematics using the STEM design principles. This STEM unit was such a success, plans have been made to incorporate more STEM units within the second grade curriculum for the 2012-13 school year and in the third grade curriculum for the 2013-14 school year.

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## **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.**

Jones-Wheat Elementary has met Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) for the past ten years. For the 2012-13 school year, Jones-Wheat will follow the Common Core Readiness Performance Index (CCRPI) which is replacing AYP for the state of Georgia. Jones-Wheat has also been recognized as a Distinguished Title 1 School for the past nine years.

Jones-Wheat Elementary employees 100% highly qualified teachers and paraprofessionals. All academic teachers at Jones-Wheat Elementary meet the criteria of the highly qualified teacher requirement. All instructional paraprofessionals meet HiQ certification requirements. Horizontal and vertical planning time is provided for subject level and grade level teachers in order that they may review test data, course maps and frameworks which support the Georgia Performance Standards. The administration at Jones-Wheat works closely with the Personnel Department in ensuring that all prospective teachers meet the criteria to be classified as Highly Qualified.

Jones-Wheat is best known for the welcoming atmosphere and open door policy. We have made many efforts to reach out to parent and community volunteers by creating a Parent Resource Room on campus. This has been a great success at Jones-Wheat. Parents are welcomed to come out and use the resources located in the Resource Room. These resources range from access to the Internet, printers, materials for making flash cards or games, and a variety of manipulatives available for checking out. Parents are also encouraged to complete the DCBOE Parent Volunteer Training Program.

Academic success is measured by a variety of ways at Jones-Wheat Elementary. Some of these include the Criterion Referenced Competency Test (CRCT) in grades three through four, Georgia Instructional Assessment (GIA) in grades one through two, and Georgia Kindergarten Inventory of Developing Skills in Kindergarten. County-wide benchmark assessments in all grades are also analyzed very closely to monitor the academic growth of students. Our staff is trained on the Statewide Longitudinal Data Systems (SLDS) which helps teachers and administrators to make informed decisions to improve student learning.

After reviewing data, it was determined that our greatest strength school-wide for the past three years was Reading. It was also determined that our school-wide greatest area of need for the 2012-13 school year was Math especially in grades 3 and 4 and Language Arts in Kindergarten and grade 2. Math and Language Arts have been the weakest areas at Jones-Wheat for the past three years.

When all the information from the resources used in our comprehensive needs assessment were compiled, Jones-Wheat's needs included the following:

1. Math: higher student achievement in grades 1 - 4, especially the students with disabilities subgroup, male subgroup, and African American subgroup
2. Language Arts: higher student achievement in grades K-4, especially within our subgroup of students with disabilities
3. Professional Learning in the areas of differentiation and gender specific teaching. Professional learning is also needed in Math and Language Arts as indicated by our test scores.
4. Special Ed. Co-Teaching/Supportive Instruction training and resources in the area of Math and Language Arts
5. Utilize more Math resources to better meet the individual needs of all students (iPASS Program)
6. Focus on providing more math and language arts intervention time for at-risk students

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School reform at Jones-Wheat is driven by data driven decision-making which is then formulated into the school improvement plan. Data received from Criterion Referenced Competence Test (CRCT), Georgia Instructional Assessment (GIA), and local benchmark assessments drives the school-wide reform decisions. As noted in our Title 1 Schoolwide Plan, JWE is striving to increase test scores in Math and Language.



## **Additional Information**

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

There are many program initiatives in place at Jones-Wheat Elementary that are working to support our beliefs and goals. These initiatives are helping to make a difference in the lives of our students. One of the biggest initiatives established is the steps to providing Response to Intervention (RTI) to meet the needs of all students. Administrators, the SST Coordinator, the lead teacher, as well as grade leaders monitor the progress of all students who are failing any subject or showing any behavior area of concerns. In order to identify students who are not making adequate progress or failing teachers and administrators review GKIDS, STAR Reading and iKnow Math results, CRCT results, 9-Week Benchmark Tests, DIBELS, teacher made tests, and all other progress monitoring tools. Teachers are also required to send the administration a list of students failing any subject every four weeks. Teachers are required to document observations, interventions and progress monitoring data on these students in A3. Each month, an assigned day is held in the computer lab with the SST coordinator and Lead Teacher allowing teachers to enter data into A3 with assistance if needed. The goal at Jones-Wheat is to identify "at-risk" students early, plan and implement interventions, and return students to Tier 1 (Standards-Based Classroom Learning) when making adequate progress.

Another instructional program offered at Jones-Wheat is the Early Intervention Program (EIP) in Kindergarten through grade four. Students in grades three and four who fail (below 800 in Reading/Math) the Criterion Referenced Competency Test (CRCT) automatically receive EIP services. Teachers in Kindergarten, grade one and grade two review teacher assessments and complete the state EIP checklist to determine who is served in the Early Intervention Program.

Teachers are provided a common planning time during the school day to discuss and plan ways for student success. All grade levels plan on Tuesday and the administration will periodically visit the grade level during this time to join the planning session. Professional learning days are also provided at the end of each month. Agendas (via Email) are provided ahead of time so staff members are aware of what professional learning will take place. Some examples of professional learning sessions for the past year include CCGPS webinars, Online Assessment System (OAS) training, Learning Village training, iLearn training, iPASS training, examining student work, analyzing surveys and data.

With constant budget cuts, funding education can often become a difficult task. Jones-Wheat Elementary strives to provide the necessary funding for creating rigorous, engaging, and hands-on lessons. Many grants have been written and awarded to the school over the past few school terms. A \$3000 grant from Dollar General was awarded to help fund the project "Reaching for Science Literacy". With this grant, over 140 science books targeting CCGPS standards in Kindergarten through Grade Four were purchased for the classrooms. A document camera and LCD projector were also purchased for the media center. A Wal-Mart grant provided funding for a flat screen television for the conference room affording the teachers the opportunity to view webinars, power points and other instructional media together as a grade level. Many Decatur County Schools Foundation grants have been awarded to Jones-Wheat. These grants have been utilized for field trips and on-campus enriching programs.