



**District Strategic
Improvement Plan
2018-2023**

**Pickens County
School District**

Pickens County, Georgia

*Welcome to
Dragon Nation!*



Welcome
Palmer High School
and its students
and staff

Pickens County School District

Pickens County, Georgia

Pickens County High School

706-253-1800

Harmony Elementary School

706-253-1840

Pickens County Junior High School

706-253-1830

Hill City Elementary School

706-253-1880

Jasper Middle School

706-253-1730

Tate Elementary School

706-253-1860

Graduation And Life Preparation For All





Table of Contents

	Page
Superintendent's Letter	6
A Look Back... Our Heritage	7
Strategic Plan with Mission,, Vision, and Beliefs	10
Opportunities/Challenges	11
Strengths/Threats	12
Issues: Learning and Growth	13
Issues: Parent and Community Engagement	14
Issues: Culture and Climate	15
Issues: Operational Excellence	17
Strategic Action Plan: Learning and Growth	19
Strategic Action Plan: Parent and Community Engagement	20
Strategic Action Plan: Culture and Climate	21
Strategic Action Plan: Operational Excellence	23
Community Engagement Survey Demographics	24
Community Engagement Survey Top Responses	25
Strategic Plan Process	27

Message from the Superintendent

Board of Education
Tucker Green, Chair
Katherine White, Vice-Chair
Sue Finley
Steve Smith
Joeta Youngblood



Dr. Carlton Wilson
Superintendent

Tony Young
Assistant Superintendent

Pickens County School District Superintendent

Dr. Carlton Wilson

drcarltonwilson@pickenscountyschools.org

706-253-1700 Fax 706-253-1705

Dear Pickens County School District Families and Prospective Members,

We are on a very exciting journey in the education and development of our children in Pickens County. On this journey, we assist students in the creation and fulfillment of their dreams. We challenge all students to perform at their highest level of ability and ensure they are equipped for success whether it is for the next grade level or post-secondary options. My goal as your superintendent is to help each student develop skills and knowledge to be successful which will open doors of opportunities for their future. I do not want any student to be told they are unprepared for their post-secondary dreams.

Our future and the future of our community rests on the success of our students and schools. I truly believe the only way to ensure high levels of success for our schools and students is with the combined efforts of our staff, parents, and students working together as equal partners. We must work together to create and maintain a climate that fosters high expectations resulting in success. Each of us plays a very important role in ensuring the brightest future for our students – *your children*. If you have any questions, concerns, or suggestions, please let me know. I look forward to working with you on our journey of excellence. Together we will accomplish great things.

Sincerely,

Dr. Carlton Wilson



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www.pickenscountyschools.org



Pickens County is a community with a rich heritage in education—from community schools in the early 1900s to the modern facilities of today. With time, much has changed. We’ve grown from one room school houses where all grades were taught together, to current times where multiple classes operate within each grade level. Our facilities today would be considered luxurious compared to the buildings that housed students *back in the day*. Pickens County School District is moving forward to meet the needs of its students in the 21st Century. *We are Pickens—Graduation and life preparation for all* is our mission.

Pre and Early 1900s

Pickens County was home to numerous community schoolhouses. Some of those schools were:

Dobson School, Hinton School, Ludville High School, McDaniel School, Salem School, Anderson School, Ball Creek School, Bethel School, Blaine School, Burnt Mountain School, Crossroads (Cox) School, Jasper Institute, Kirby Institute, Marble City School, Mount Oglethorpe School, Nelson School, Pharr School, Pickens County High School (1927), Talking Rock School, Tate High School (1915—1927 wooden building; 1928 white marble building), Weaver School, and Yellow Creek School.



1950s

Jasper Elementary School (1957-2018),
Pickens High School (1957-1998 at West Church Street),
Tate Elementary School (1957 Tate High School became Tate Elementary)

1960s

Head Start of Pickens County, First public Kindergarten class in Pickens County Schools (1967)

1980s

Pickens County Middle School (1988)

1990s

Pickens High School opens on Dragon Drive (1998), Pickens Upper Elementary (1998—to serve 4th and 5th grade students)

2000s

Hill City Elementary opens (2003), Jasper Middle School opens (2003), Harmony Elementary opens

That was then...

This is now...

2018

Jasper Elementary School closes and becomes Jasper Middle School, housing grades 4 and 5;

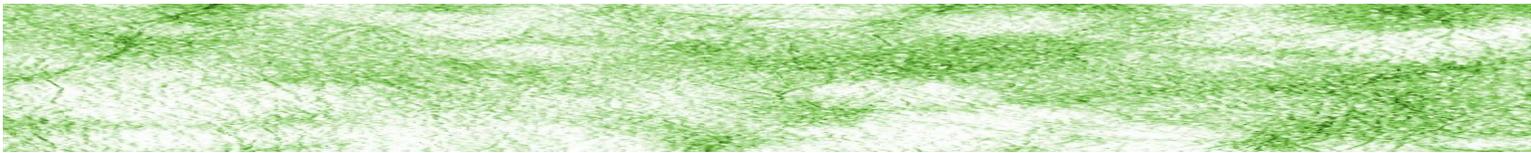
Elementary schools in the district house grades Pre-K through grade 3;

Jasper Middle School building is leased to Mountain Education Charter High School and the Georgia Public Safety Training Center/Pickens County Sheriff's Department;

Pickens County Middle School closes and becomes Pickens Junior High School and serves students in grades 7 and 8; and

Dragon's Opportunity and Virtual Academy (DOVA) opens and serves students in grades 5 through 12





**“The whole
purpose of
education is to turn
mirrors into
windows.”**

Sydney J. Harris

**“Give a man a fish
and you feed him for
a day; teach a man
to fish and you feed
him for a lifetime.”**

Maimonides

**“An investment in
knowledge pays the
best interest.”**

Benjamin Franklin

**“The beautiful thing
about learning is
that no one can take
it away from you.”**

B.B. King



Pickens County Schools

Jasper, Georgia

Vision:

Graduation And Life Preparation For All

Mission:

With high expectations, we will educate our students in a safe and fiscally responsible environment.

Strategic Plan 2018-2023

Learning and Growth

How do we prepare and inspire all learners for life preparation and graduation?

- Provide quality professional development
- Increase the percentage of students meeting and exceeding grade level Lexile's
- Increase the percentage of students scoring proficient or above on state assessments
- Increase college and career readiness

How can we encourage a higher rate of parent and community engagement in our students' education?

- Increase purposeful community partnerships
- Educate all stakeholders on opportunities for participation and availability of resources
- Utilize a variety of communication methods more effectively

Community Engagement

Culture and Climate

How do we create a safe and welcoming environment and foster growth?

- Increase attendance for students and staff
- Support social and emotional growth for all
- Develop safe, orderly, and supportive learning environments
- Ensure schools are welcoming to all stakeholders

How can we be proactive in all aspects of operations and create excellence?

- Plan and adapt for change
- Maintain and allocate financial resources responsibly
- Optimize investments in human resources to best meet the needs of the students and the district
- Increase participation in the school nutrition plans

Operational Excellence

We believe

- All children can learn.
- All educational decisions should be based on the needs and safety of the students.
- All stakeholders are accountable for student learning and will strive for continuous improvement in student achievement.
- Collaboration between students, schools, families, and community is critical to student and district success.
- Recruiting, retaining, and supporting dedicated employees is important to successful educational programs.

Opportunities

Opportunities

- Implement a higher level and effective use of technology in the classroom
- Teach to mastery and depth of understanding
- Provide support to families in helping their children to be successful in school
- Provide a virtual school opportunity to address the needs of students outside of the traditional school setting



Challenges

- Ensuring students are reading at grade level
- Ensuring students acquire foundational skills in mathematics
- Preparing all students for college or career
- Raising school and district leaders' level of expertise in their current positions

Challenges

Strengths

Strengths

- Dedicated teachers and staff
- Graduation rate of 95.7% in 2018
- Parents feel welcome in our schools and feel the schools are doing a good job of communicating
- Students feel safe in their schools
- Community support



Threats

- The impact of illicit drug use within our community and its effects on the students and their families.
- Possible cuts in funding as a result of reduced local, state, or federal resources.

Threats

Learning and Growth

Issue:

How do we create an environment that is academically high performing, accountable, and engages all learners?

Strategy 1.1: Implement a plan to increase percentage of students scoring proficient or above on state mandated assessments.

Target: Majority of students will score Proficient or Distinguished on all EOG and EOC Assessments.

Strategy 1.2: Implement a plan to increase literacy across the curriculum.

Target: Every student will be able to read on or above grade level.

Strategy 1.3: Create a plan to improve college and career readiness for all students.

Target: Students will reach or exceed required score on placement tests to enter into college level math classes or prepare to enter a career path.

Strategy 1.4: Identify areas of needed professional learning and create Professional Learning Communities to address the needs using established protocol .

Target: All staff members will receive professional learning. The professional learning will be focused on needs and implemented and with fidelity.

Parent and Community Engagement

Issue:

How do we strengthen community partnerships with our schools and district?

Strategy 1: Identify and recognize current and prospective community partnerships and encourage participation in the Community Advisory Council.

Target: Increase and strengthen purposeful partnerships with community stakeholders.

Strategy 2: Identify types of resources needed to support students and families, define opportunities for participation, and identify available resources within the school. and community. Recruit and train community volunteers.

Target: Educate all stakeholders on opportunities for participation and availability of resources

Strategy 3: Utilize a variety of communication methods effectively.

Target: Increased transparency and community involvement.

Strategy 4: Establish protocols for sharing similar information through varied methods.

Target: Increased transparency and community involvement.

Culture and Climate

Issue:

How do we create a safe environment that supports growth and encourages students to attend school ready to learn?

Strategy 1: Create and implement a plan to support social and emotional growth of all students that will include ongoing training for school counselors.

Target: The social and emotional needs of all students are met daily.

Strategy 2: Create and implement a plan to increase services offered to students and staff.

Target: Partnering with community services, the various needs of students and staff will be met.

Strategy 3: Develop safe, orderly, and supportive learning environment for students and staff.

Target: Pickens County Schools will be state leader in relationship training and development with quantifiable outcomes seen in minimal exclusionary discipline practices.

Culture and Climate

Issue:

How do we create a safe environment that supports growth and encourages students to attend school to learn?

Strategy 4: Ensure all schools are welcoming to all stakeholders.

Target: All stakeholders will feel welcome when entering a school.

Strategy 5: Create a clean, positive environment to increase overall attendance.

Target: No more than 20% of our students will miss more than 10 days of school.

Strategy 6: The district will seek to create safer schools through the use of technology and cultural training.

Target: Schools will the improve overall safety for our students.

Operational Excellence

Issue:

How do we effectively plan and adapt to change while improving our school system?

Strategy 1: Provide and maintain safe facilities for all students.

Target: Allow all students and staff to have the ability to learn and teach in a safe and productive environment.

Strategy 2: Enhance transportation plan for increased effectiveness and safety.

Target: Reduce the amount of time students are on buses and reduce or eliminate double bus routes.

Strategy 3: Assure all resources are being used for district and school goals without overspending.

Target: Maintain a fiscally responsible budget.

Strategy 4: Attract strong candidates and support employees within the district.

Target: Optimize investments in human resources to meet the needs to students and the district.



Strategic Action Plan

Learning and Growth

- Schools will provide professional learning to staff on a regular basis and allow for teacher choice based on needs.
- District will provide professional learning: Audio Enhancement, Safari Montage, Mindset, Curriculum Training, Safety Training, Leadership Training, State Mandated Training.
- PLC' s will meet regularly to address student achievement.
- PLC training for building administrators and teacher leaders.
- Implement the Fast Forward program.
- Ensure reading and writing is implemented in Science, Social Studies, and CTAE classes.
- Ensure teachers have training in reading and writing instructional strategies at the building level at administration's discretion.
- Implement personalized learning.
- Ensure implementation of RTI strategies in Math classes.
- Create Freshman Focus Class and implement curriculum prescribed by administrators.
- Adjust schedule and course sequence.
- Continue to implement the I-Ready Program with SWD population.
- Ensure implementation of RTI strategies in ELA classes.
- Increase rigor in classrooms.
- Ensure standards for the class are being taught with fidelity.
- Schedule Technical College Readiness Math 2nd semester at Pickens High School.
- Increase parent and student information regarding post secondary institution requirements.



Strategic Action Plan

Parent and Community Engagement

- Identify current community partnerships and their roles.
- Identify and recruit potential community partnerships.
- Create a Community Advisory Council made up of various community stakeholders.
- Recognize community partnerships at various school and system sponsored events/activities.
- Determine types of resources needed to support students and families, define opportunities for participation, and identify available resources within the school and community.
- Research and stay abreast of services available to students and their families. Create and publish a catalog of resources.
- Recruit and train school volunteers.
- Identify and evaluate effectiveness of district-wide communication tools through the development/administering/analyzing of a survey.
- Establish protocol for sharing the same information through the varied methods.



Strategic Action Plan

Culture and Climate

- Add a trauma counselor to the district.
- Survey students and staff regarding perception of cleanliness in the schools.
- Implementation of Mindset Training.
- District attendance initiative to be continued.
- Counselors will attend Georgia School Counselors conference.
- Counselors will attend Mindset training.
- Create community partnerships to offer additional counseling and support services.
- Install Viewpath camera systems and employ best practices usage in classrooms.
- Increase the number and efficiency of emergency preparedness drills in each school.
- All teachers will attend Mindset Culture training.
- Lessen the % of in-school suspension assignments.
- Lessen the % of out-of-school suspension assignments.
- Lessen the % of alternative school assignments.
- Periodic surveys to check perception of school visits.
- Provide customer service training for front office staff.
- Provide PL in best practices of building positive relationships with stakeholders.



Strategic Action Plan

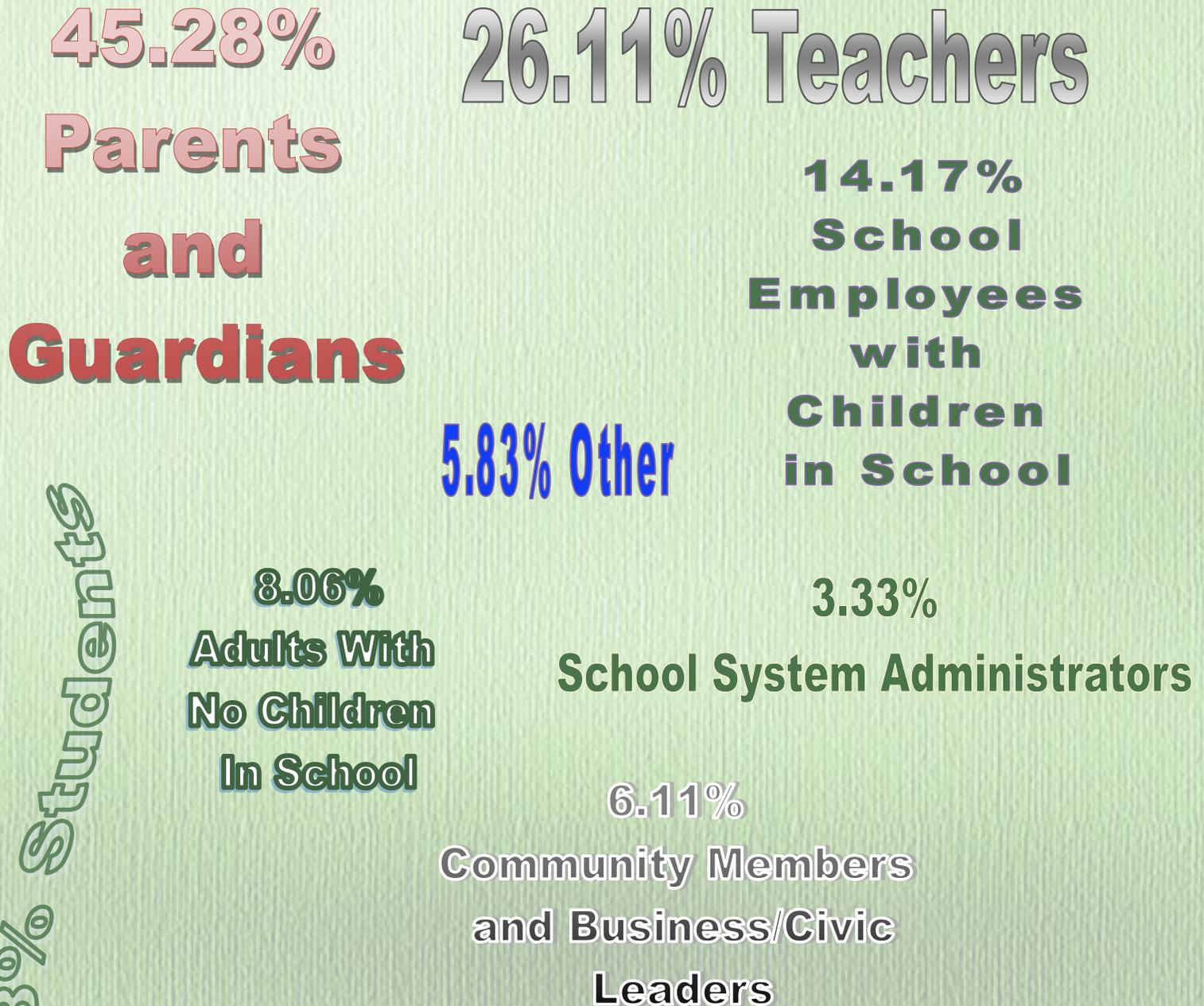
- Provide continuous training for lockdown procedures to school leaders, staff and students in the event of an active shooter.
- Increase the safety of our schools to protect our students, faculty and staff.
- Budget for and install card readers at all building to monitor people entering and exiting buildings.
- Design and renovate Pickens Schools to support a safer environment.
- Have outside entity review and give non-subjective feedback in regard to school safety on each campus.
- Enhance transportation compensation and incentives to promote an efficient operation of transportation department.
- Add GPS to all buses and obtain software that will allow real time review of routes and efficiency.
- Secure funding for updating buses with GPS and the bus garage with needed technology to track bus locations.
- Maintain transparency with budget line items.
- Assure all professional learning funds are used for school and district goals and supporting schools with technical assistance as needed.
- Optimize investments in human resources, increasing teacher leader talent.
- Increase Star Financial Efficiency Rating by addressing expenditures related to student performance.
- Strengthen pedagogy skills of all teachers.
- Plan and design needs for district to maximize resources.
- Submit applications to state or other entities as needed to support initiatives.
- Plan menus to ensure a balance between optimal nutrition and student acceptance.
- Improve the school cafeteria meals by offering a wide variety of choices and stimulate student participation through promotions, nutrition education and customer input from taste tests and focus groups.
- Monitor food safety through biannual health inspections to receive a score of 95 or above in each location.

Operational Excellence

Community Engagement Survey

Summer 2018

Demographics of survey respondents:



360 Total Respondents

Community Engagement Survey

Summer 2018

1

What do you think are the district's strengths that you want to ensure continue? (Top 5 first choice of responses)

- The focus on providing students and staff a safe learning environment. (21.55%)
- The level of quality instruction. (12.07%)
- The current class sizes. (10.92%)
- The dual Enrollment opportunities. (10.92%)
- The level of focus on student achievement (9.20%)

What do you think are the district's strengths that you want to ensure continue? (Top 5 second choice of responses)

2

- The focus on providing students and staff a safe learning environment. (15.65%)
- The Dual Enrollment opportunities. (11.01%)
- The current class sizes. (10.72%)
- The level of quality instruction. (9.57%)
- The level of focus on students achievement. (8.12%)

Community Engagement Survey

Summer 2018

3

What do you think are the needs the to improve upon?

(Top 5 first choice of responses)

- The current school calendar (12.47%)
- The methods to assess student achievement (11.08)
- The level of quality instruction (10.25%)
- The policies to recruit and retain highly qualified teachers (9.14%)
- The quality of the curriculum (8.86%)

What do you think are needs to improve upon

(Top 5 second choice of responses)

4

- The methods to assess student achievement (13.37%)
- The quality of the curriculum (12.5%)
- The policies to recruit and retain highly qualified teachers (9.3%)
- The level of parental support in the district (9.3%)
- The current school calendar (7.56%)

Community Engagement Survey

Summer 2018

5

What do you think are the top challenges faced by this school system? (Responses limited to 3 or fewer)



- The effects of poverty in the community (36.01%)
- Hiring/Keeping quality teachers and staff (34.63%)
- Getting parents involved with the school system (32.96%)
- Academics need strengthening (28.81%)
- Aging facilities (27.15%)
- Increasing student achievement (23.55%)
- Communication (21.88%)
- Raising community support for the school system (18.28%)
- Funding (for programs, facilities, etc.) (16.07%)
- Other (9.7%)
- Raising the graduation rate (3.6%)

Strategic Plan Process

April, 2018

Community Engagement Meeting—Open to all stakeholders

- ◆ Invitations sent to stakeholders across the district
- ◆ Announcements posted in the local newspaper
- ◆ Announcements posted on district and school web sites
- ◆ Robo-call sent out as a reminder of the meeting

Result: 52 attendees

May, 2018

Survey

- ◆ Issued to all stakeholders to solicit input of systems strengths, weaknesses, and challenges.
- ◆ Survey was posted on district and school web sites and shared in the local newspaper
- ◆ A robo-call was issued as a reminder about the survey.

Result: 360 people shared their thoughts

Strategic Plan Process

June, 2018

Strategic Improvement Planning Meeting—Open to all stakeholders

- ♦ Reviewed survey data
- ♦ Identified areas of focus
- ♦ Began to plan for the District Strategic Plan
- ♦ Developed Mission, Vision and Beliefs for district

Result: 37 attendees

July, 2018

Action Team Meeting

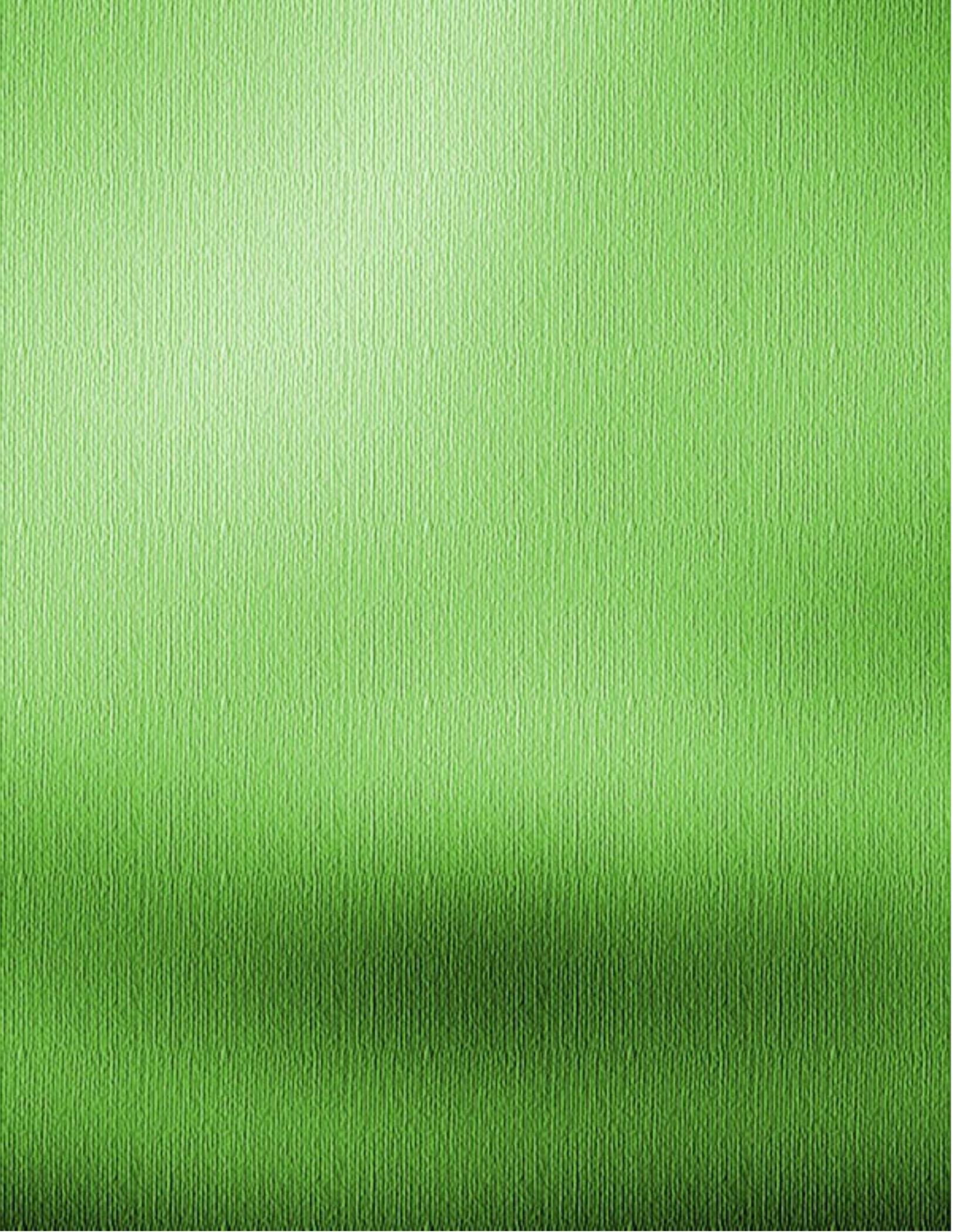
- ♦ Team of 28 educators convened for two days
- ♦ Developed an action plan for the district to address areas of needs as identified during the Planning Meeting
- ♦ Teams within the Action Team met outside of the meeting days to finalize the Action Plan

Result: Finalized Action Plan

*Thank you to all educators,
families, and community
stakeholders for your continued
support of the Pickens County
School District.*



Strategic Action Plan





Message from the Superintendent

Insert picture and letter from
Carlton

