

Case Statement for Flowertown Elementary Case Statement

SIC Summary

The Flowertown Elementary School (“FES”) SIC is a dynamic and engaged group of parents, teachers, and community members who have a strong commitment to improving FES in meaningful ways. The FES SIC works towards its targeted goals throughout the year and acts as a sounding board for the Administration, teachers, and PTA to offer new ideas and improvements to existing programs. It is always our goal to reach all parents and give them the support and information they need to feel empowered in their child’s education. Demographically, FES has approximately 760 “Busy Bees”. Approximately 52% of FES students receive free and reduced lunch status. Our SIC is united in the belief that our students are not defined by their lunch status or test scores. We believe they have value the moment they enter our doors.

Although the spring of 2020 presented many challenges, the commitment and dedication of our SIC did not waiver. We continued to meet virtually, approving our bylaws, and provided perspective on what our community needed during these unprecedented times. As we reflect over the 2019-2020 school year, we realize that the goals that were set in August were no longer our greatest area of concerns in meeting our students’ immediate needs with the COVID-19 school closing. Our focus shifted from simply increasing SIC membership and awareness, to providing basic needs such as food, educational supplies and support, and social emotional resources to the families and communities we serve. With that being said, we still believe that our SIC had a productive and effective year in improving our school and meeting our goals with the challenges we faced.

2019-2020 SIC Goals

At the start of the school year our SIC set goals to address areas of need based on our School Report Card Surveys and our Title 1 Parent Survey data. We identified three major areas of need on which the SIC could have a positive impact: (1) improving parent involvement and communication, (2) increase student awareness to a variety of careers and college opportunities with an emphasis on Career Paths and Technical Education (3) increasing awareness of SIC and Membership.

Goal 1: Improving Parent Involvement and Communication

Family engagement is crucial to student success, and school-parent communication can increase student achievement. When parents and families are engaged in their child’s education, everyone benefits. For this reason, improving parent involvement and communication has been a long-standing goal of the Flowertown SIC.

According to our spring Title 1 survey in 2019, only 57% of our families responded that they “communicate often” with their child’s teacher. We used this data to determine an increased need for Parent Involvement and Communication. After implementing strategies and action points stated in our SIC Goals, we saw an increase of 18% with 75% of our families responding that they “communicate often” with their child’s teacher. The number of surveys returned in 2019 was also a major concern. The SIC set out to increase the number of responses received so that we would have more usable data to determine our needs. With the efforts made by our SIC, using social media outlets and word of mouth, we had an increase of 5% of the number of parents responding.

Survey School Year	Percent of Parents responding “Communicates Often” with the teacher
2017-2018	57%
2018-2019	75%

Because of these efforts and a strong PTA partnership, FES has seen an increase in logged Volunteer Hours from 4,300 hours in 2016-2017 to 5,000 hours in 2017-2018 and 7,581 hours in 2018-2019. In the 2019-2020 school year, we reached 5,763 volunteer hours. Even though this data suggests a decrease in volunteer involvement, these hours were based on just three-fourths of the actual school year. Many parents and community members logged undocumented hours off campus after COVID-19 school closures to aid our families in receiving the resources and support needed during the quarantine.

This year, our SIC determined one area of need was for awareness of the many school celebrations, programs, and events that happen throughout the school year to increase parent support of academic initiatives and achievement. The SIC determined that, although this information is presented in our handbook and in monthly calendars and updates, the families needed an interactive platform for receiving this information. Based on the survey results, parents had a somewhat negative perspective about the culture and climate established during the 2018-2019 school year. This provided us with a PR opportunity to present the positive programs and celebrations occurring in our building. More importantly, these videos gave parents important information that they could use to assist their students with their academic needs. “Flowertown 101” became a series of interactive videos that gave families and community members an inside look at the way we do things at the Hive. Each video was posted on Facebook and received hundreds of views, reaching more parents and community members than our traditional methods of communication. SIC members supported this initiative by determining the monthly topics and sharing the videos amongst the families we serve. With these videos providing math and reading resources for parents, we feel that the positive increase in student data is a reflection of the impact the Flowertown 101 Videos had on student achievement.

Quarter	Quarter 1 (Before Videos)	Quarter 2 (After Videos) Level
Reading Data: % Meeting Grade Level	55%	60%
Math Data: % Meeting Grade Level	25%	49%

Goal 2: Increase student awareness to a variety of careers and college opportunities with an emphasis on Career Paths and Technical Education

At Flowertown Elementary School, we begin with the end in mind. Our Mission and Vision clearly establishes our efforts to prepare our students to become productive citizens that are able to meet the challenges of the future. During the 2017-2018 year, SIC chose to focus awareness on careers in the areas of Science Technology Engineering Art and Math (“STEAM”). SIC continued that goal in 2018-2019 with the introduction of the CATE program to students through its annual Career Panel for the 4th and 5th grade classes. We continued the Career Panel and it has become a tradition in our Career Education program.

Based on the increase of our Title 1 percentage for the 2019-2020 school year, we identified that many of our students have limited opportunities outside of school to explore a range of potential careers. Our science data suggested the need for relevance and exposure to STEAM. Specifically in the areas of science, math, and technical programs, we noted marginalized populations are particularly under represented. These underrepresented students are our majority at FES. Therefore we determined a need for inclusion and representation of these populations in all of our career initiatives. Our SIC adjusted our goal to include vocational and technical education. For this reason, we specifically invited high school speakers that were not enrolling in college directly after graduation. Our panel consisted of students that were slotted to attend technical training, joining the military, or going straight into a chosen career upon graduation. This year’s panel was a diverse group of male and female students from many ethnic backgrounds.

Grade Level	2019 SC PASS Data
4 th Grade Science	49% Not Met

Due to COVID-19, we did not complete the 2020 Science SC PASS. However, based on teacher data, formative science assessments, and student science report card grades, our 4th graders were projected to make huge gains in the areas of both science and math.

Another new initiative to increase student exposure to a variety of career opportunities within our community was a fifth grade student job shadowing experience. Fifty-seven fifth grade students participated in this new college and career initiative. Their school day consisted of shadowing a family member or friend in their chosen profession. Students interviewed their career host and participated in tasks that are typical for the job they were shadowing. Upon returning to campus, students provided a summary of their experience and shared their thoughts with their classmates. This activity provided our students with an authentic learning opportunity in which the students received first-hand, real world experiences. It also built a reciprocal partnership with many community members.

For our young elementary students, the notion of college and careers can seem abstract, especially for students that may be the first in their family to obtain advanced education. To make college or professional careers more tangible, our students and staff were encouraged to dress in their favorite college or career gear on the second Friday of every month. The new addition of “Future Fridays” gave students the opportunity to envision possibilities for their future, even at the earliest of stages. This also provided our faculty and staff the opportunity to discuss career paths or their college experiences with their students.

Goal 3: Increase Awareness and Membership of SIC

While increasing communication and parenting, the new Flowertown 101 videos also increased community and family awareness of the SIC and its mission. The videos highlighted all of the positive work happening in the school, while highlighting the work being done by the SIC to accomplish its goals set for the year. Using the social media platforms made the videos public for all of the community, not just families that attend FES. This shareable platform also gave our SIC members the opportunity to spread awareness of our SIC and communicate our vision and mission with their neighbors, coworkers, and friends. Each video was shared multiple times, by the school, faculty, staff, and SIC members, expanding the viewing to a wide range of audiences.

SIC continued our goal from the 2018-2019 school year and continued to offer an information table and opportunities to nominate members for SIC before the school year began at Facts and Fees and again at Parent Information Night. Information tables included SIC membership information, a Frequently Asked Questions handout, and information about the events SIC hosted or collaborated in with PTA. Additionally, SIC meetings were published in the school calendar, on the school website, and promoted on weekly email updates to parents.


SIC sponsored our 2nd annual Coffee and Characters during the FES annual Book Character Parade in October 2019. This fun event is always heavily attended by parents and extended family. SIC members hosted a free coffee table for attendees to increase awareness of SIC and open discussion about the purpose of the SIC and how parents can get involved. As parents and community members waited for the parade, they asked SIC members questions about what the SIC is and how it affects the school.

In reflecting on our past goals and addressing concerns that there were only minor changes made to them for the 2019-2020 school year, we used Title 1 Parent Survey Data to justify keeping this final goal the same. Based on the survey data, we had an increase of parent awareness and inclusion of parents in the decision making process for the school. In 2018, 35 % of our parents said they were included in the decision making process. In 2019, 56 % responded that they were included. This increase was proof that we made needed progress in this area. However, the progress was still low and we felt that we needed to continue this goal so that more parents responded that they were included on the decision making process at the school level.

School Year of Title 1 Parent Survey	Percent of parents responding that they were included in the decision making process at school
2018	35%
2019	56%

Conclusion

FES has an active and hands-on SIC that serves to provide guidance to the Administration and partners with staff and PTA to promote a positive and welcoming school environment for our students and their families. We meet monthly, analyzing survey data and student achievement scores to evaluate our effectiveness and our progress towards meeting our SIC Annual Goals. We love seeing the growth and progress of our Busy Bees and celebrate in knowing that our organization truly makes a positive impact on our school and community.


 Mallory Shattuck
 SIC Chairperson

Wednesday, December 2, 2020

Principal Carey Ball Hodge
20 King Charles Circle
Summerville, SC 29485

Dear SC – SIC Awards Committee:

As we begin wrapping up 2020, it can seem that daily life has returned to normal. Not our previous normal, but a new status quo, with new routines, hobbies, joys and struggles than before. As daily life stabilizers relative to the scramble since Covid 19, it can be easy to forget how far we have come. So much time has been dedicated to maintaining our children's academic success while equally taking care of their health and welfare. In 2019, I started my first year as principal of Flowertown Elementary School. I could have never predicted the events that would unfold and the challenges that all schools were faced with due to Covid 19. I must recognize the hard work and commitment of our School Improvement Council (SIC). Their commitment to our school is the reason our students and staff transitioned so well from a classroom-learning environment to distant learning.

Our SIC works with stakeholders and school leaders to promote the success of all students by facilitating the development, implementation, and stewardship of a shared vision of learning. Much work has been done over the past year to sustain a shared vision by soliciting input from stakeholders about what the community values and what the hopes and dreams are for our students. By connecting and communicating with stakeholders, parents, and community members, our hopes and dreams become a reality. Strong examples of connecting with our parents and stakeholders are evidenced through parent surveys, communication and volunteer logs, and personal connections. Our Title I surveys indicated that we had 53% of parents in 2018-2019 that indicated they communicated often with teachers to 75% in 2019-2020. The percent of parents attending parenting events and conferences increased 10% from 2018-2019 to 2019-2020 in spite of the building being closed due to Covid 19 in March. Additionally, parents reporting that they "feel welcomed and encouraged to volunteer" increased by 20% according to the 2019-2020 Title I survey. Our communication and volunteer documentation support this data as we increased school wide communication with parents and families by 25% according to parent-teacher communication logs. We attribute this growth to our strong partnership with our SIC and the concerted effort in continuous improvement.

Our SIC disseminates information to stakeholders that highlight successes and opportunities to get involved. Our communication agents (aka SIC) help brand our school mission and vision as they have a vested interest and shared sense of responsibility. They are intentional and strategic in communicating with stakeholders through social media, newsletters, websites, and approachability. They are present and visible in our building and school events. Our School Improvement Council's visibility and capacity increased from six events in 2018-2019 to eight in 2019-2020. This data does not include the numerous hours they volunteered after Covid 19 school closures delivering food, participating in our parades, and making sure our students have the resources they needed to be successful while learning at home. Our SIC sponsored events that are parent led and student driven. They hosted the Career Panel for the 4th and 5th grade classes that included contacting business partners and high school students to present college and career opportunities to our students, Our SIC and PTA partner together for movie nights and a school dance as they set-up, sponsor, and promote these events and solicit membership. Our SIC and PTA are two distinct groups that collaborate and form a strong network that support who we are and help drive where we are going.

Flowertown Elementary School celebrated 41 years of excellence this school year. As I am embarking on my 2nd year as principal, I can honestly attest to the commitment and excellence of our SIC. I have been an active member of various SICs for the past 15 years, and I have never been a part of one that is more dynamic and full of potential than Flowertown Elementary School's SIC. I am most proud of the foundation that has been laid by our SIC and school community as I feel certain we will continue to achieve great things together. Our theme for this year is #StayConnected, and our SIC exemplifies this sentiment. We are one team and we have one purpose-Putting Kids First! When you put children first, you can never go wrong.

Very Proud Principal,


Carey Ball Hodge