

Phase III: Executive Summary for Schools-Simons Middle School

Phase III: Executive Summary for Schools

Simons Middle School
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Phase III: Executive Summary for Schools

Executive Summary

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?

Simons Middle School is located in a small rural community in Eastern Kentucky. The school building is located on the west side of Flemingsburg, which is the seat of Fleming County. The community in which Simons Middle School is located is very supportive of the school system and some parents are heavily involved in school programs with their children. Most families who live and work in Fleming County live in poverty or are considered to be lower middle class. Simons Middle School is the former high school which was built by the Works Progress Association. The school originally opened in 1941 as Fleming County High School. In the 1970s a new high school was constructed on the outskirts of the city. As a result the school now known as Simons Middle School was transitioned from Fleming County High School to Fleming County Middle School. Several years later in 1985 the school was renamed for Joe Allen Simons, who was the principal at Fleming County Middle School for several years. Mr. Simons was a great man and a great administrator, after his passing in 1985 the school was renamed for him. While the school building is aesthetically pleasing, it does have several barriers to perfectly serving students and staff. The school has sixteen classrooms, the majority of which are small and are not well equipped for advanced technology or new innovative systems. The school also includes a library, gymnasium, music room, art room, cafeteria, auditorium, several small offices, and two dated computer labs. The school has undergone several renovations in the last twenty years, including major renovations in 1996 and in 2013. The latest renovation in 2013 was much needed as an HVAC system was installed for the majority of classrooms. The school also received new windows, doors, classroom flooring and lighting, new guttering, and other much needed necessities. In addition to physical renovations, the school staff and culture has changed dramatically in the last few years. In 2014 Simons Middle School hired a new principal which helped to dramatically improve the culture of the school and the moral of the staff. The Simons Middle School student body is made up of approximately 340 students. The student body includes both 7th and 8th grade students which come from four county elementary schools. Approximately 68% of students at SMS receive free or reduced lunch and 18% of the student population has been identified as having a disability. While there has been little change in the cultural or socioeconomic background of students in the last few years, there has been some change in the number of students at SMS. The student population at Simons Middle had been slowly increasing over the last few years, but now we are seeing a steady decline in the amount of students in grades 7 and 8. Simons Middle operates with a team concept. Each student belongs to one of the four instructional teams which each have four content teachers (math, science, language arts, and social Studies) as well as a member from the Unified Arts Department. Unified Arts teachers rotate each semester or every nine weeks to a different team as they have the students that belong to that team. The team concept allows teachers to offer students support as the teams are considered to be "families" within the building. Teachers have planning time by content area to focus on content during PLC meetings, team meetings occur each week after student dismissal. Each time annually designs its own mission statement and unique name to identify itself as part of Simons Middle School. This year the four teams are the: Green Monkeys, Red Jaguars, Silver Snakes, and Blue Barracudas. There are 16 content teachers who work at Simons Middle School. Other staff members include a visual art teacher, a health and physical education teacher, a part time band director, a part time choir director, a library media specialist, three collaborative special education teachers, one multiple severe disability teacher, one guidance counselor, one assistant principal, and one principal. Teachers at SMS have 11 average years of teaching experience and nearly 50% of the teachers have a master's degree or

higher. Only one teacher in the building has National Board Certification, but district programs to produce more NBCT are in place and several teachers from the building are beginning the certification process. The community that Simons Middle School serves is a rural blue collar community that has a significant amount of families who live in poverty. As a result many students have families who do not have educational experiences beyond high school, which is a barrier to helping students and families understand the importance of their educational experience and future. Furthermore, breaking the cycle of generational poverty can be difficult as it has been engrained in some families in the area as the norm. Due to the amount of poverty in Fleming County, communication with parents also suffers as many do not have access to modern technology infrastructures. Other challenges include the lack of parental involvement within our school. While this is an area of continuous improvement for our school, it is increasingly difficult to get parents involved due to the idea that Simons Middle School is somewhat of a “stepping stone” to the next level (Fleming County High School). Once students reach SMS their parents do get involved with in their extracurricular activities such as sports, but parents seem to be less involved in the educational process.

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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 statement for Simons Middle School is “to become a school of distinction.” This vision is directly aligned to the district vision which is “to become a district of distinction.” The vision statement requires all stakeholders in the district to go above and beyond proficiency which is a core belief at Simons Middle School and throughout the entire system. The vision was created by district administration and trickled down to all schools in the system. The mission statement for Simons Middle School is “Teaching and guiding today’s learners into tomorrow’s leaders.” This mission statement was produced by the school’s leadership team and adopted at the beginning of the 2015-2016 school year. The Leadership Team that designed the mission statement for SMS had staff representation from all content areas and grade levels. The mission statement provides a true picture of the beliefs of students and staff members at Simons Middle School. The goal for students and staff is preparation for the next level. Teachers and staff work diligently to help prepare students for high school and beyond, which is the message and goal relayed to the student body. Ultimately, the staff and administration want to continue to provide a high quality curriculum, but also strive to provide STEAM opportunities to students that will prepare them for the global society in which they live. The Leadership Team also developed a slogan for students based on what the group thought it meant to display leadership qualities and good citizenship. This slogan is known as the Cougar Promise, it was adopted prior to the 2015-2016 school year and aligns with the behavior incentive program, the slogan is “Learn Daily, Laugh Often, Lead Respectfully, Live Responsibly.” Students who exhibit these qualities are rewarded with Cougar Pride Cards by their teachers. Cougar Pride Cards can be redeemed for a special treat during lunch and come with several carbon copies that students can take home and share with their parents. Simons Middle School has been working the last few years to offer courses that will not only help students succeed while a student at SMS, but also help to prepare them for the next level. Some courses that students can choose to take while a student at Simons Middle School include: Robotics, Gateway to Technology, Agriculture Education, Student Technology Leadership Program, Advanced Art, Band, Choir, Advanced Physical Education, Drama, and Algebra 1. Students who are who are behind in reading and math are placed in intervention classes at the time other students take elective course offerings. The leadership team has been replaced this year with An Innovation Team that is working to develop a graduate profile as well as give a voice

to all stakeholders about the educational process. Our goal for the next few years is to completely redesign the learning experience of students and ensure that not only are students developed as learners but also as leaders and citizens.

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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.

Simons Middle School has enjoyed great success this year and the previous year due to significant improvement on all areas of the KPREP Assessment. Students performed well enough on the KPREP Assessment for the 2015-2016 school year to make the school a Distinguished School. Simons Middle School students decreased the number of novice students in every tested area. The test scores for last year showed an increase in the number of Distinguished Students in all areas, including a huge jump for students to Proficiency in writing as compared with the previous year. The previous year SMS scored high enough on state assessments to be considered by the previous standards as a School of Distinction. Novice numbers were greatly reduced in all areas, but writing was identified as an area for growth and has been made a priority throughout the building. Looking forward to the next three years Simons Middle School is dedicated to the process of continuous improvement. Some long term goals include increasing parental involvement, decreasing the number of novice students in all areas among all students especially students in the non-duplicated GAP Group, and moving into a school that offers an individualized curriculum for students. In the future it is our goal to revamp the educational process at SMS by becoming a school that utilizes Project Based Learning to challenge students and ensure they receive a high-quality 21st century, global education.

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Additional Information

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

Simons Middle School offers students in our school a high-quality education where students are not simply a number or a score. Teachers and staff at Simons Middle School care about the well-being of every student and will do whatever it takes to ensure ALL students succeed. Our school welcomes parents and the community to help us bring a high quality education to students.

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ATTACHMENT SUMMARY

Attachment Name	Description	Item(s)
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