

## **TOP Cycle 2 Addendum**

### **Hamilton County High School**

Many changes have taken place within the Hamilton School District with the election of a new Superintendent in November of 2016. The new Superintendent has spent 36 years in education with experience at all levels including as a teacher, principal, District Curriculum Coordinator, Director of Instruction, and Assistant Superintendent of Teaching and Learning Services. He has experience working in the differentiated accountability process and with school turnaround. The principal of Hamilton County High School and the Assistant Principal for Curriculum have been removed from the school. Teachers who had an unsatisfactory rating based on the state VAM score for the 2015-16 school year have been removed. With the school being a middle / high school with grades 7 – 12, a new configuration within the middle grades has been established with an Assistant Principal with principal experience and a guidance counselor who has also served as an administrative assistant at a middle school have been assigned fulltime to the coordination and oversight of these two grade levels.

The district has recruited an effective administrator capable of leading the turnaround efforts at HCHS. The new principal at Hamilton County High School is Dr. Felecia Moss. Dr. Moss has a proven record of successful school improvement/school renewal efforts. As a principal in Alachua County she worked at a small rural school and built a culture of high expectations and higher level courses for all students. During her leadership, Newberry High School grew its AP options, increased the number of students taking and passing higher level and AP courses and the school was consistently a C or higher during her tenure.

Dr. Moss was trained in the Florida Continuous Improvement Model and was a participating principal with the Lastinger Center for Learning at the University of Florida, College of Education. She implemented a plan that focused on school culture as a professional learning community, data, high octane teaching and community involvement. During her tenure at Metcalfe Elementary the school's turnaround efforts propelled their school grade from an F to an A in one year. After that year, the school remained a C. Her body of work is documented in the Florida Department of Education school grades reports.

The entire school district is undergoing a major change as to how educational services will be provided in the district. Three small elementary schools who have struggled independently due to limited services have been combined into one district elementary school in a brand new state of the art facility located on the same campus site as the district's only high school and the district's central office. Resources and services can be shared by all students in the district with support from school and district level support staff only being minutes away from any classroom. With a single feeder school to the high school and a new structure in the middle grades, an organization has been established that will ensure the best prepared students possible for the high school.

As the school has continued to lag behind in test scores, a new culture is being cultivated at the high school to change the focus of the students. Hamilton County has a high poverty rate and many of the economic factors that leaves little hope for some of the students for success. A relationship has been established with our neighboring technical college in Suwannee County (RiverOak Technical College) and

the Columbia County School District's aviation academy to allow students from Hamilton County High School to attend as dual enrolled students to work toward skills and certifications that will lead to employment immediately upon graduation. A few students have used this opportunity previously but this was limited by transportation. An arrangement with the local transit system has been created the opportunity for any student to attend as transportation will be provided at no charge to the student or the district. It is felt that with students having a purpose for achieving a diploma and hope for future employment that a better effort will be given by the students as they complete their required courses and assessments for graduation. Relevance is a key concept in helping children in poverty see the purpose for educational achievement. All students upon entry into the high school will be counseled to choose a future track of university preparedness, technical or community college acceptance, becoming a member of the military, or entering the world of work. All course work will be directed at meeting their future plans leading to a new culture and vision for the high school students.