

Falling Creek Elementary Title I School-wide Program 2011-2012

Introduction

Elbert County lies on the South Carolina border and has a population of 20,500. The County is bound on three sides by five different counties: Hart, Lincoln, Madison, Oglethorpe, and Wilkes. Elbert County has an extensive history dating back to Revolutionary times when it was first a part of Wilkes County, one of the six original counties in Georgia. It has one high school, one middle school, five elementary schools, and a vocational school.

The majority of Elbert County citizens are employed in the following industries: granite, education, health and social services, agriculture, and construction. The county currently has a **14% unemployment rate (U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics 5/2011)**. The economy has not recovered and Elbert County has lost more businesses during this past year.

Falling Creek Elementary School is a Distinguished Title 1 elementary school located in the southern portion of Elbert County. Many students live in rural areas near Lake Russell and the Broad River while others live near the County Seat in Elberton. The school serves grades Pre-K through fifth grade. The school was originally built in 1958 and was at one time a first through twelfth grade school. It has been remodeled several times to house 21 homeroom classes, two computer labs, three resource classrooms, a gym, and media center.

The school's 377 student population is two percent Asian, two percent Multiracial, eight percent Hispanic, 37 percent Black, and 51 percent White. The percentage of students receiving free lunch is 57 percent and the percentage of students receiving reduced lunch is ten percent.

Along with other schools in our district Falling Creek Elementary is dedicated to the Elbert County School System's vision, mission, and beliefs:

Vision:

The Elbert County School System will create the structure and opportunities needed for all students to learn.

Mission:

The Elbert County School System will unite with the community to equip all students with the necessary skills to become academically successful and productive in a global society.

Beliefs:

Every student can learn
Learning is life-long
Being data driven
Every student is unique and valuable
Rigorous, relevant, research based curriculum
Today's schools shape tomorrow's work force

Falling Creek Elementary’s mission is:

We at Falling Creek Elementary are dedicated to creating a positive environment that encourages the development of a community of learners who exhibit:

- Independent, Motivated Thinking
- Creative Problem Solving
- Confidence and Self-Esteem
- Cooperation, Collaboration, and Citizenship
- Responsibility and Integrity
- Optimal Mental, Social, Physical, and Emotional Development

Our school motto: “Pride is the feeling that you get when you know you’ve done your very best!” clearly reflects this commitment. Everything we do centers around our mission.

1. A comprehensive needs assessment of the entire school which addresses all academic areas and other factors that may affect achievement:

Falling Creek Elementary, along with other schools in our system, use a balanced score card to assess strengths and weaknesses of the school. See the attached Balanced Scorecard for detailed academic performance by subgroup and target goals for the school year.

Falling Creek has made AYP for the 12th consecutive year and made Title I Distinguished School for the past ten years. We focus on instructional improvement and have tracked school and individual progress through the following assessments: Criterion Referenced Competency Test (CRCT) and Georgia Writing Assessment. The expectation is that each Falling Creek student will make continuous progress.

Each year our school completes a Balanced Score Card (BSC). This allows us to track students progress on standardized tests as they progress from grade to grade and also allows us to do grade comparisons, as well.

All populations of our school participated in the tests with modifications for special need students according to their individual education plans (IEP). The results of these tests will define our effectiveness in the delivery of Georgia's Performance Standards. These assessment efforts will keep teachers and parents informed concerning the school as a whole and on an individual basis. Assessment is an integral part of Falling Creek's efforts to insure that all our students receive a program of study that will allow them to meet the state's proficient and advanced levels of performance.

Teachers meet weekly in grade level teams and the faculty attends professional learning to study test data and refine teaching methods to provide the best possible opportunity for students to succeed. Analyzing data to guide instruction is essential to improving student performance. Falling Creek faculty disaggregate data by classroom, grade level and school-wide.

On the 2011/2012 administration of the CRCT grades one and two took a mock CRCT and the following percentage of students met or exceeded the standard in grades three through five:

	Reading	Math
Grade 3	85%	89%
Grade 4	86%	85%

Grade 5 90 % 88%

Data from the Spring 2011 CRCT tests indicates that in the area of third grade math we increased from 88% meeting or exceeding standards in 2010 to 89% in Spring 2011. In fourth and fifth grade math we dropped one percent from the previous year. In third and fifth grade reading we dropped two percent and in fourth grade reading we dropped one percent. We have used this data to prioritize our instruction for the 2011-2012 school year.

We will continue to utilize the least restrictive environment by using the inclusion model of instruction for special education students, provide ongoing professional development to our staff, and use a variety of best practices/strategies to meet students' needs.

Kindergarten students were assessed using the Georgia assessment G-KIDS. There is no end of the year data to report at this point. Classroom assessments are done bi-weekly.

Priorities

1. Increase the percentage of 3rd through 5th grade students meeting plus exceeding state standard in reading by 3% (87%-90%).
2. Increase the percentage of 4th grade students meeting plus exceeding state standard in math by 3% (85%-88%).
3. Increase the percentage of target population 3rd through 5th grade students meeting state standard in Math by 3% (46%-49%).
4. Falling Creek will show that "questioning strategies are used to promote higher-order thinking by demonstrating that a higher percentage of questions fall in "applying/analyzing and evaluating/creating than remembering/understanding category on Standards-Based Awareness.
5. 80% of teachers will receive training in "Teaching Conceptual Mathematics in a Standards-Based Classroom to the Elementary School Learner."

2. Schoolwide reform strategies:

1. Regular monitoring of the curricular timeline.
2. Use of **STAR Early Literacy** three times each school year to assess phonemic awareness. This ongoing process allows for instructional modification throughout the school year.
3. Benchmark testing is used to assess state standards every nine weeks in each subject area. Teacher use analyze the data to determine areas of weakness.
4. Three Universal Screening are conducted annually using I-STEOP to assess students math accuracy and fluency.
5. Three Universal Screenings are conducted annually using the STAR program to establish appropriate student reading levels in grades 1-5.
6. A Title I parent survey will be administered during the school year. The information gained from the survey will be used to determine parent satisfaction and make needed modifications in instruction.
7. Headsprout and Reading Center Programs are being used to strengthen reading fluency for students identified by **STAR Early Literacy** needing additional reinforcement.

8. FASTT Math, Orchard Gold Star, and Math Facts in a Flash are being used to strengthen math fluency.
9. A writing consultant will model lessons for teachers and provide professional development to our teachers.
10. Professional development in the areas of: Standard Based Classrooms, Common Core Georgia Performance Standards, Teaching Conceptual Mathematics in a Standards-Based Classroom to the Elementary School Learner, and Differentiated Learning.

Falling Creek students in grades K-5 receive the research based Reading Mastery Direct Instruction as the core reading program. Teachers have received training on how to use the program to the fullest potential to advance students' reading skills.

1. At-risk students receive extra support through the use of:
 - a. paraprofessionals
 - b. high school teacher cadets
 - c. volunteers
 - d. college students completing practicums in education
 - e. after school tutoring
 - f. before school tutoring
 - g. Head Sprout
 - h. Reading Center
 - i. Fastt Matt
 - j. Small group instruction
 - k. Orchard Gold Star

3. Instruction by highly qualified professional staff

Falling Creek has 25 certified teachers and 22 classified staff (18 paraprofessionals, three custodians and one secretary) that are dedicated to educating all students. Most of the staff have attained advanced degrees: Thirteen have specialist degrees and eleven have Master Degrees. Falling Creek has a highly experienced staff with the average being nineteen years experience. We are not a high-need school and have not had a problem attracting highly qualified teachers to our school, other than the field of special education. When need arises, we rely upon our district personnel department. Presently, all teachers are highly qualified.

4. Professional Development

In-service is a critical component of our school improvement efforts. We participate in several in-service classes focused on more effective use of tools and strategies, such as technology to support instruction. The in-service is provided for administrators, paraprofessionals and teachers. Activities during the 2011/2012 school year will include:

- STAR Early Literacy
- Neo2
- SEMSTracker
- Promethean Boards and Student Response Systems training will be offered to all teachers

- Common Core Georgia Performance Standards
- Teaching Conceptual Mathematics in a Standards-Based Classroom to the Elementary School Learner
- Courses offered through Northeast Georgia RESA and local educators for paraprofessionals and teachers

The Renaissance Place, Kidspiration, Writing Center, Study Island (Grades 1-5), World Book, GALILEO, Education City, Fastt Math, Orchard and keyboarding programs are available in all classrooms via the network. The faculty and staff have received training through our media specialist on how to incorporate these programs in their classroom instruction.

Use of assessment data to better guide instruction is also a major focus. The CRCT is used for third through fifth grades; first and second are given a mock CRCT; and the GKIDS is given in kindergarten to provide information on how well our school is delivering the state curriculum. Our leadership team will desegregate the data to enable teachers to implement strategies to target problem areas.

5. Parental Involvement

Falling Creek relies on its parents for support, assistance and direction. Over the last several years, we have attempted to unify the various efforts to involve parents. Several of our programs call for parent participation- School Council, Title I, and PTO. We use the school council and the PTO Executive Committee to facilitate communication with the community and with parents. The School Council will focus on improving parental involvement, student achievement and school improvement. The PTO Executive Committee will provide input into the school improvement process and work to generate financial resources to support it.

To better communicate with parents, our teachers routinely communicate with parents anytime there is an instructional problem so that necessary interventions can be made. A progress report is sent home with students in the middle of each nine-weeks reporting period. A weekly progress report is sent home with students in Kindergarten through third grades. Parent conferences are strongly encouraged through teachers making telephone calls or sending home conference requests.

The Response to Intervention Team (RTI) also offers extra support to At-Risk students. The team consists of an administrator, parent(s), and teachers. It offers strategies to help the student become successful in the classroom.

Parents and the community are invited to attend school council meetings. The school council also posts its minutes and agendas on a bulletin board in the foyer of the school.

Parents are encouraged to visit Falling Creek. We have seen growth in the number of parents who observe and participate in instructional activities. Significant numbers of parents and grandparents (we have special Grandparent days) routinely drop in for lunch at the Falling Creek cafeteria. We also host a Fall Festival, Book Fairs, PTO programs, school assemblies and other family events.

We continue to offer programs that inform parents about the instructional programs at Falling Creek, how parents can assist their child, elementary developmental milestones, testing program, and any other topics determined by the PTO and School Council. We will strive to make our parents welcome and provide community oriented activities to provide a social component to the life of our school. Elbert County also offers a Parent Resource Center with a parent Liaison.

In addition to these communication efforts, Falling Creek will continue to provide a calendar with important dates listed, a monthly (or bi-monthly) newsletter and school menu, a school marquee, progress reports (mandatory for any student whose achievement drops during a nine weeks), report cards, and informal teacher communications. Important school events will also be listed in the local newspaper, local cable station, and announced on radio.

6. Transitions

We have been fortunate in the positive relations we enjoy with the preschool programs in the community. Both private and public programs bring their children to the school for a visit in the spring of the year. We also host information meetings for parents.

Elbert County's Pre-K Program is housed at the local elementary schools. This makes these youngsters "part" of Falling Creek and allows us to involve these parents in Falling Creek's program and makes the transition to Kindergarten much easier. Pre-K teachers are also being trained in RTI.

Head Start, a Federal Program, is housed on our campus. The students share our cafeteria and our students visit as readers to their classrooms. We provide Kindergarten Orientation for Head Start, private day cares, and preschools.

Falling Creek also works closely with Elbert County Middle School to facilitate a seamless transition within the system. Our fifth grade students visit Elbert County Middle School and parents have an opportunity to visit the school as well.

7. Teacher involvement in decisions regarding use of academic assessments

1. Teachers administer the STAR Early Literacy to students in kindergarten through second grade and STAR in third through fifth grade three times a year to determine reading instruction needs. From this assessment they can address problem areas at grade level and for the individual student. An additional assessment, GKIDS, is given to kindergarten student three times a year to analyze student growth in all academic areas.
2. Grade levels meet to evaluate the curriculum map to determine what areas need to be refined to provide maximum student achievement.
3. Teachers scrutinize the CRCT test results and benchmarks to gain insight on providing individualized reading instruction to improve student achievement.
4. Informal and formal conversations
5. Open Door Policy

8. Coordinating and integration of federal, state, and local services and programs

Falling Creek has many resources at its disposal. The Title I school-wide program provides us with the greatest discretion and flexibility in the use of these resources. This school year we will:

1. EIP funds to provide reduced class size at Kindergarten through fifth grades.
2. Through Northeast Georgia RESA, we will provide in-service for our faculty and staff.
3. Use Title I funds to provide one paraprofessional per grade for second through fifth.
4. Teachers in grades K-5 have a Promethean Board in their classroom and have received training from other local teachers on how to implement the technology in the classroom to enhance instruction and increase student achievement.
5. All teachers have Elmo's and student response systems to enhance instruction.
6. The Pre-K Resource Coordinator will set up community based meetings to more effectively communicate with all our community.
7. The Falling Creek PTO will continue to fund field trips for each grade level. These trips will afford our students' educational experiences many of them would not have otherwise.
8. Title I will also provide paraprofessionals to support instruction as needed in Kindergarten through fifth grades.
9. Continue and expand the roles of the PTO Executive Committee and Falling Creek School Council in setting goals for Falling Creek and in the development of plans to achieve those goals.
10. A nutrition coordinator will provide educational nutrition programs to classrooms based on their GPS objectives in health/science.
11. The Pre-K program provides our school with an Office of School Readiness consultant and resource coordinators to assist parents with helping their children make a seamless transition from Pre-K to Kindergarten.
12. In an effort to coordinate local services, we have yearly Brain Builders programs provided by the Pilot Club, work in close conjunction with the local Department of Family and Children Services.

1. Activities to ensure that students who experience difficulty mastering standards

1. Collaborative Planning
2. Data Analysis
3. EIP, Early Intervention Program, teachers/classrooms
4. After School Tutoring
5. Title I paraprofessionals
6. RTI, Response to Intervention

2. Description of how individual student assessment results and interpretation will be provided to parents

Parents will be provided with the results of their child's performance on all of the tests. The School Council has already requested that we provide parent programs explaining the difference between norm referenced and criterion referenced tests, the rationale behind the testing program and how to interpret the score sheet.

Means of reporting:

1. Report cards each nine weeks

2. Progress reports each four and a half weeks
3. Communication with parents – student planners, weekly reports
4. Open door policy to visit classroom
5. Website
6. Newsletters
7. Parent conferences as needed

11. Provisions for the collection and disaggregation of data on the achievement and assessment results of students.

Staff at Falling Creek are trained and participate in reviewing assessments, both summative and formative, to pinpoint specific weaknesses as a grade level. Benchmark data, STAR and STAR Early Literacy, I-STEEP, CRCT, and other assessments are used. Data is tracked and progress is monitored to increase success for all students.

This data assists teachers in identifying students in need of additional support. Using Georgia's Pyramid of Intervention, teachers implement interventions and strategies through Response to Intervention (RTI). SEMSTracker is used as an electronic file for teachers to communicate with school psychologists about students who receive Tier II and Tier III interventions. Support for students include Early Intervention Support, After and Before School Tutoring, Head Sprout, Fast Math, Head Sprout, Reading Center, Orchard Gold Star, and small group instruction. Other school staff such as Speech teachers, Psychologists, Administrators, Media Specialists and others are also used to support the student.

12. Valid and Reliable Assessment

Test results from numerous assessment pieces are analyzed each year to identify specific strengths and growth areas in student performance. This information is used to direct teaching strategies and guide instruction. Sources include, CRCT, Georgia Writing Assessment for grades 3 and 5, County Benchmark Assessments, G-KIDS, student writing samples, Accelerated Reader, STAR and STAR Early Literacy, I-STEEP, and common grade level assessments to address student needs.

13. Provisions for public reporting of disaggregated data

Falling Creek insures all stakeholders have access to data by utilizing the following:

1. Newsletters
2. Parent Meetings
3. School Council
4. PTO
5. Open House
6. Main Office
7. Website
8. Powerschool
9. Marquee

14. Title I Schoolwide Plan

The Title I Schoolwide plan is developed, reviewed and revised at the beginning, middle and end of each academic year or as needed by stakeholders.

15. Developed with the involvement of the community, teachers, principal, faculty and staff, and parents

Our Title I plan was developed in conjunction with our School Improvement Plan with all stakeholders in mind. Our school council, which includes parents, business representatives, and teachers reviewed the plan and provided valuable suggestions.

16. Plan available to the LEA, parents, and the public

Our Title I Schoolwide Plan and School improvement plan is available to all stakeholders upon request. In addition, we plan to post it on our local school's website.

17. Translated and Other Documents

All literature and correspondence sent home are translated upon request in Spanish.

18. Plan is subject to the school improvement provisions of section 1116

Elbert County School System is working hard to provide programs to help all students succeed. These efforts include implementing the No Child Left Behind Act and is subject to the school improvement provisions of Section 1116. As part of our efforts to improve student achievement and implement No Child Left Behind, students may receive Supplemental Educational Services, which is free tutoring provided by State approved providers. These services will be available if any school in our district does not make Adequate Yearly Progress and is in Needs Improvement Status according to the No Child Left Behind guidelines. Only parent(s)/legal guardian(s) of students who qualify to receive free or reduced price meals may request Supplemental Educational Services.

Title 1 Parent Survey

Each year parents are requested to complete a survey about our school. The Spring 2011 survey indicated 100% that our parents agreed that teachers at Falling creek used a variety of approaches and activities to help students learn. Other areas indicated more than 95% of our parents thought we did well at communicating with parents and coordinating events. Areas concerning academic achievement were also above 95%. Our weakest area was that only 92.9% of our parents thought we encouraged families and the community to be involved with the school in a variety of ways.