



Executive Summary

Douglas High School

Douglas County School District

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Introduction.....	1
Description of the School.....	2
School's Purpose.....	5
Notable Achievements and Areas of Improvement.....	7
Additional Information	9

Introduction

Every school has its own story to tell. The context in which teaching and learning takes place influences the processes and procedures by which the school makes decisions around curriculum, instruction, and assessment. The context also impacts the way a school stays faithful to its vision. Many factors contribute to the overall narrative such as an identification of stakeholders, a description of stakeholder engagement, the trends and issues affecting the school, and the kinds of programs and services that a school implements to support student learning.

The purpose of the Executive Summary (ES) is to provide a school with an opportunity to describe in narrative form the strengths and challenges it encounters. By doing so, the public and members of the school community will have a more complete picture of how the school perceives itself and the process of self-reflection for continuous improvement. This summary is structured for the school to reflect on how it provides teaching and learning on a day to day basis.

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?

Overview

Douglas High School, located in Minden, Nevada, is an accredited three-year high school (grades 10 through 12) with approximately 1,300 students. Our school is part of Douglas County School District, which serves just under 6,000 students. The campus is located in a rural valley in Douglas County and is the larger of two high schools in the district. The town is located 15 miles south of Carson City and 45 miles south of Reno. Primary local industries include construction, gaming, ranching, engineering, and manufacturing. The economic foundations of our community include agriculture and ranching, Bentley Agrowdynamics, the Carson Valley Inn, General Electric, the Starbucks roasting factory, and a new Walmart.

Douglas County High School was established in 1915. In 1958, Douglas High School relocated to its new building, which is now Carson Valley Middle School. In 1975, the current facility opened with a capacity for 600 students. Since that time, the facility has had a number of additions, including portable classroom buildings. With a bond passed in 2009, expansion plans are underway to accommodate a freshmen class by fall of 2015.

Community Demographics

In 2007, Douglas County was the fastest growing county per capita in Nevada. Since that time, significant changes in the state and national economics have significantly influenced the demographics and economics of our county.

As of the 2010 census, the population was 46,997, which reflects a drop from the 2009 population of 51,390. The population density was 66.2/mi².

Concerning age of residents, Douglas County in 2010 had, by percentage, fewer school-aged residents (19 years and younger) than the state or the nation, and it had a significantly higher percentage of residents 65 years or older than the state or the nation. This trend has impacted the overall enrollment of our district.

Douglas County Age Make Up in 2010

Age Ranges Douglas County % of pop. Nevada % of pop. National % of pop.

0-14	14.7	21.7	21.4
15-19	6.3	12.9	13.9
55+	35.4	11	12.4

Census data from 2010, the racial makeup of the county was 89.6% White, 0.41% Black/African American, 1.9% Native American, 1.5% Asian, 0.10% Pacific Islander, and 10.9% of the population were Hispanic/Latino of any race. Douglas High School's ethnic makeup does not mirror that of the county as a whole. Our school has a smaller percentage of White students and a larger percentage of Hispanic students.

Between 2007 and 2011, there were 19,175 households in Douglas County. Of those, approximately 73% were owner occupied and

Executive Summary

Douglas High School

approximately 12% were multi-unit occupants. The average family size was 2.4. The median income for per household was \$60,383, and the median income for individuals was \$34,723. Another significant economic factor has been the level of unemployment. Since 2009 it has been above 10%. As of December 2012, it was 11.4%. 2010 census data indicates that 8% of individuals and 5.4% of families in the county were below the poverty level. These economic factors have impacted our school and our district with declining enrollment and significant increases in our percentage of students qualifying for free and reduced lunch services.

The 2010 census showed that Douglas County residents achieved levels of education comparable with the rest of Nevada and the nation:

People 25 years of age or older with a high school degree or higher: 91.6%

People 25 years of age or older with a bachelor's degree or higher: 23.2%

Student Demographics

Douglas High School Student Ethnicity 2011-12

American Indian	3.4%	White	72.1%
Asian	1.7%	Multi-Race	4.2%
Hispanic	18%	Pacific Islander	0.1%
Black/African Am.	0.3%		

For five years, our student population has been stable in the percentage of American Indian, Asian, Black, and Pacific Islanders. Since 2007, our Hispanic population has increased six percent, and our White population has decreased almost four percent.

Concerning students participating in specialized programs, in 2011-2012, 1.2% of our students were identified as Limited English Proficient; 10.7% of students received Special Education services; and 30% of our students received Free and Reduced Lunch support. Since 2007, our percentage of students participating in our Free and Reduced Lunch program has nearly doubled, rising from 18% to the current level of 30%. Within the same period, the percentage of students receiving Special Education services has declined slightly.

Douglas High School Enrollment by Year

2009-2010: 1,380 2010-2011: 1,364 2011-2012: 1,342 2012-2013: 1,300

Since the 2008-2009 school year, Douglas High and the district have experienced declining enrollment. This has had a significant impact on staffing, budgeting, and the breadth of course offerings available to students.

An additional factor impacting the consistent opportunity for our students to learn is that our student body has a transiency rate of 22.8%.

Staff Information

This school year, Douglas High School has 64 certified teachers, one certified librarian, four counselors, one dean, four administrators, and 34 classified employees. Of the teaching staff, 42% had a bachelor's degree as their highest degree, 57% held a master's degree and 1% a doctorate. The teaching staff is comprised of 46% male and 54% female. Our staff is predominately white with two Hispanic teachers and an African-American teacher. We are fortunate to have a highly qualified and experienced staff.

Since the 2008-2009 school year, when Douglas High had 76 certified teachers, we have had to reduce our teaching staff by 12 teachers due to declining enrollment and budget constraints.

Years of Experience Teaching Staff 2012-2013

Executive Summary

Douglas High School

0-4 years: 0 1-5 years: 2 6-10 years: 16 11-15 years: 17

16-20 years: 14 21-25 years: 9 26-29 years: 4 30-35 years: 2

72% of the current staff has at least 11 years teaching experience. All teachers have at least three years of experience in Douglas County schools. All of our teachers are highly qualified and have a high level of expertise in their content areas.

Unique Characteristics and Challenges

Douglas County has continually had a fairly high level of transiency, but this has been exacerbated by an unstable economy. In the late 1990's and early 2000's, Douglas County was one of the fast growing areas in Nevada. An important shift that occurred at this time is that more retired individuals moved into the Carson Valley, and this has altered our demographics. Since that time, we have faced significant declines in enrollment as well as budget constraints which have had impacts on our program offerings. For our community, we have seen far fewer families with school aged children moving into the area, and many students and families are struggling, so we have had an increase in our Free and Reduced Lunch program as well as higher needs for weekend food programs and transition (homeless) services for students. A second unique situation that we face is that, because of lack of room at our facility, in the mid 1990's our school district moved the freshmen students from the high school to our two valley middle schools. This creates disadvantages both for the freshmen and for upper classmen who may benefit from the course offerings that freshmen currently have. We are working the next three years to design, renovate, and add to our existing facilities with the chief goal to bring the freshmen back to the high school.

Lastly, over the past five years, our school district has prioritized the development and implementation of an alternative education program for middle and high school students. The ASPIRE program has had a functional impact the past three years. Students who participate in the ASPIRE program are still enrolled at our school. They take course work and participate in community service projects, and have the opportunity to take elective and math courses at our school. Currently we have 68 students participating in this alternative program. This provides valuable opportunities for students who face credit deficiency and other graduation requirements, but this program also creates challenges in accounting for student attendance and posting of course work in Power School.

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.

Douglas High School's current mission statement was created in 2007 and has served our school well in prioritizing allocation of budgets, program offerings, instructional initiatives, and, ultimately, outcomes we expect all students to achieve. When our mission statement was developed, it aligned with our district's mission statement:

The Douglas County School District, in partnership with parents and community, will ensure that all students achieve excellence in education, character and citizenship.

Also when it was developed, our school community wanted to emphasize that our mission focuses on our students and what they should achieve both at our school and in their futures.

During the spring of 2013 and fall of 2013, our school community gave input on four possible mission statements, including our current one. After our stakeholders voted on the mission statement choices, they decided to continue with the current version: "Douglas High School students will have opportunities to achieve their potential and graduate as competent, life-long learners who will continue to grow as productive citizens."

Douglas County School District has embraced a competency-based accountability system in which students have to demonstrate levels of competency both through academic testing and through performance assessments. As a result, Douglas County has required its graduates not only to meet the state requirements for graduation but also to pass 17 additional assessments that indicate competency is a variety of content areas. Thus, the state graduation requirements combined with the additional requirements of our school district lead to the heart of our mission, "graduate as competent, life-long learners"

In addition, as state standards, and now Common Core Standards, have increased the rigor and challenges of meeting graduation for students, we have used the focus of our mission to guide decisions about placement of students in course offerings and in additional opportunities we can offer for students to learn more in order to reach the goals of competency and graduation. In the past we have modified our math course offerings to provide targeted instruction for students, and we have done the same using Measured Academic Progress (MAP) assessments to place students into science courses based upon content areas that specifically meet their learning needs. We currently offer literacy courses with Read 180, a research-based instructional model, to meet the specific needs of students who are a bit behind or struggle in their language arts abilities.

Our mission also emphasizes providing opportunities for our students. We offer and support a variety of core and elective courses in doing this. Currently, we have 11 Advanced Placement courses, a solid offering of fine arts courses, and Career and Technical Education courses in agricultural science, architecture, automotive technology, culinary arts, digital media, JROTC, and welding, with plans to add health sciences this coming school year. These offerings, in large part, reflect the values and needs of our community. We also work with Western Nevada College to provide dual credit courses for students who are ready to pursue advanced classes.

All of these courses require materials and specialized equipment. As a school and district, we work to provide focused support for these offerings. It has been increasingly difficult, however, to sustain all programs due to declining enrollment, but as a school, we continue to do all that we can to offer a wide variety of opportunities for our students.

Executive Summary

Douglas High School

At the beginning of second semester, our students, parents, and staff reviewed and revised our belief statements. The following beliefs of our stakeholders represent the foundation of our work with our students:

1. We believe that continuous growth and communication are vital for our school community.
2. We believe that student assessment within a variety of contexts is critical to determining student achievement.
3. We believe that instructional strategies reflect clear goals and high expectations, and they foster critical and independent thinking in our students.
4. We believe that students, parents, staff, and community members share responsibility for supporting a safe and rigorous educational environment.
5. We believe that respect and personal responsibility are essential for a positive and productive learning environment.
6. We believe that students should leave our school with awareness of their role in and responsibility to their community and the world.

Our school community's beliefs focus on high standards of learning for students, quality instruction by teachers, and support from other staff, parents, and community members. Our beliefs focus on what our school and community value in ensuring that each day every student has an opportunity to achieve the school's mission.

One of the strengths of our school community is that many graduates return to events and to visit, and they share how they have taken all that they have gained from their time at Douglas High to become "productive citizens."

As a school we believe in and promote our mission for our students because we must deliver on their goals and aspirations. Being a competent graduate who will seek life-long learning opportunities and be a productive citizen is what we strive to accomplish with every student each day.

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.

Douglas High School is an outstanding school that continues to work to improve and adjust to changing student needs, standards, and requirements.

Below are areas of notable achievement for our school in the past three years:

2009 US News and World Report Silver Medal High School recognition

2010 Nevada Department of Education "High Achieving School--Growth"

2008, 2009, 2010, and 2012 achieved "Adequate Yearly Progress"

School Digger.com identifies our high school in the top five in northern Nevada

Our fine arts students receive Scholastic and national award recognition, and our music program excels in competitions, including three consecutive years of our Madrigals (advanced choir) competing at state.

Our Agricultural Science students through FFA recently earned a bronze award for dairy judging and finished sixth in veterinary medicine in national competition.

Our sports programs are highly competitive. In the past three years, girls' golf won two regional championships, girls' swimming won regionals, girls' cross country won state runner-up, volleyball won a regional and state championship, and girls' soccer won two consecutive regional and state championships.

In 2011, our Army JROTC program earned Honor Unit with Distinction, the highest ranking possible.

Our school has one of the lowest Nevada higher education remediation rates in northern Nevada.

Our teachers are trained in the use of Depth of Knowledge (DOK) and have applied it to student work in order to raise levels of rigor.

In our 11 Advanced Placement courses, the number of students participating has increased each of the past three years, and our students receive passing scores at a significantly higher rate when compared with the state or global results.

Graduation rates for last three years were 87% for class of 2009, 89% for class of 2011 with 23% receiving advanced diplomas, and 86% with 24% receiving advanced diplomas.

Special education students graduate at a high rate with either a regular or Nevada state diploma. In 2011, only 0.5 of special education students received an adjusted diploma, 5% below the state results.

During the past three years, Douglas High School has worked on four improvement goals that address increasing student achievement in language arts, mathematics, and science; increasing the graduation percentage and decreasing credit deficiency and drop out percentages; teachers planning for student activities and work with DOK levels that promote appropriate rigor; and working with parents and our community to address student use of alcohol and controlled substances. An additional area of focus has been the planning and design of renovations and new construction to our school facilities with the goals of having our freshman students at our school and closing our campus safely and efficiently.

Our school has addressed these areas with the following actions/initiatives:

We have revised our language arts and math courses to address changes in state standards. With the introduction Common Core State Standards, we are making adjustments in all curricular areas. Science is working on new national standards and investigating STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics) programs.

As a school, we closely monitor seniors to ensure they are working toward their graduation requirements. We also focus on sophomores

Executive Summary

Douglas High School

to address credit and competency deficiencies. The sooner that we can get these deficiencies corrected, the more likely students will graduate with a standard diploma. We offer English credit recovery during the summer, we have night school credit recovery for English, Social Studies, and electives; and students who are significantly behind can attend our ASPIRE alternative program. In addition, we offer lunchtime tutoring for English, math, science, social studies, and special education; and we offer one period of on-line credit recovery for students who cannot attend night school. Last year, we initiated a new program to transition sophomores to our school from the middle schools. Link Crew matches volunteer juniors and seniors with incoming sophomores. They contact the students in their groups, inviting them to school events and functioning as a resource for our new students. We plan to develop this program to transition our freshman students for the fall of 2015.

Our dropout rate from the classes of 2010 and 2011 ranged from 5% to 7%. When students consider leaving without a plan to pursue further education, our counselors attempt to meet with these students and their families to discuss options. We promote the ASPIRE program and, for students as appropriate, adult education options. One challenge we face is that students leave and do not return or request records.

In the past three years we have focused on DOK levels in discussions about what administrators observe and what teachers plan for in their instruction. Although we still provide feedback on teacher actions, we discuss what DOK levels students are working at. Teachers build in more opportunities for students to write about, explain, and justify their answers. The focus is on the level of complexity in tasks and activities and not the volume of work. All teachers are trained in the concepts of DOK, and administrators monitor and discuss activities and lessons for DOK levels in student work. We are now linking the DOK concepts to our initial planning of Common Core State Standards.

Over the past two years we have seen an increase in students being in possession or under the influence of alcohol and controlled substances. We already provide support groups for students who struggle with substance abuse; however, this is a community issue. We are working with community agencies, including Douglas County Partnership of Community Resources, the Douglas County Sheriff's Department and juvenile probation, and Tahoe Youth and Family Services to address this.

Although the topic of increasing capacity of our is addressed in the next section, we note it here as it creates a number of shifts in our school's systems, culture, and physical make up. The architectural and construction firms working with our school district have taken input from school and community stakeholders. April 2014 will begin a two-year process to remodel and expand capacity for our students and staff. It is critical for our school to keep all of our improvement initiatives in mind as we plan for these changes so that our efforts move in a parallel fashion to best serve our students' current and future needs and opportunities.

Additional Information

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

This school year, continuing into the next five to ten years, will bring profound changes within our local schools, our state educational structures, and national trends in education. We discuss in this section some of the current programs and initiatives that will be crucial to our school in the next few years and some legislative and Nevada Department of Education opportunities that will impact how we focus on educating our students.

Currently, we commit significant resources to provide our Career and Technical Education courses, which benefit students in many ways. Most of our course progressions have terminal classes that result in either certification or college credit. Our Army JROTC program offers both PE and elective credit for students, but it is heavily reliant on having freshmen students involved. How we maintain our current courses while also offering opportunities for our freshmen will be a critical point of planning in the next two years.

This year, our school district was fortunate to receive funding through the Striving Readers' Grant. Douglas High received a portion of these funds, and we have used it to include Read 180 and A+ credit recovery opportunities for our students who need these programs. So far, we are encouraged by the initial results, and these initiatives are part of our overall school improvement plan. Additionally, all of our teachers received training and materials for Thinking Maps, and our core teachers learned about and are practicing aspects of High Quality Sheltered Instruction concepts. These activities have been significant this past year, and we will build upon them in the immediate future, as you will see by reviewing our school improvement plan.

We have a number of partnerships that are important to our school and valued within our community. We want to maintain these and build on other possibilities as they come available. We value our positive community support for our educational and extracurricular programs from the Carson Valley Inn, General Electric, the Minden Rotary, Western Nevada College, along with many other community organizations and resources. As a school, we appreciate these relationships and want to keep them in the forefront of opportunities for our students and staff.

In Douglas County, one of the important tools that administrators use to provide feedback to teachers about their instruction and the activities they ask students to engage in is called E-Walk. It is a web-based program that allows observers to use checklists and to provide written comments that can be sent to teachers. This allows for follow-up discussions and can also be used to give groups of teachers, such as within departments or whole school, data about instructional practices. This program has already made a difference in monitoring instruction and student work, and we believe that it will be even more valuable as we refine its use.

As previously discussed, our school district plans to bring our freshmen students back to Douglas High by the fall of 2015. This will require a great deal of planning, both for construction and renovation of our facilities and in adjusting our programming, staffing, and school culture. Between now and the fall of 2015, our school community will spend a significant amount of time and energy to work through the details of undergoing large construction projects while discussing and planning for all of the changes that will occur with at least a 30% increase in students and additions to our existing school staff. This is a major initiative that will be a focus for at least the next four years, and we plan to use this accreditation process as one method of planning for these changes.

Three significant changes are coming to all Nevada schools from recent legislation and alternations from the Nevada Department of

Executive Summary

Douglas High School

Education. These changes are causing some anxiety because they are new and not completely clear at this point how they will be implemented. The first is the adoption of the Common Core State Standards. Our school, along with our entire school district, is working to implement these standards so that students coming to us will have adequate opportunities to meet or exceed them. One of the major questions at this point is how the standards will be assessed, as this is part of the target that we need to ensure all students can be successful with. The second change, which involves teachers and administrators, is a new evaluation system. This is currently being developed at the state level, and it has generated a great deal of discussion. At this point, nothing is finalized; however, when it is, it will take some time to implement and educate all stakeholders about how it works. Third, the state of Nevada has adopted a new system for assessing how well schools meet the requirements of "No Child Left Behind." This new method of measuring student achievement and school effectiveness is called the Nevada School Performance Framework. School staffs are currently learning about this new protocol and how it will influence decisions that we make for our students and our schools. Again, there is some uncertainty because it is still unknown as to what the ratings will mean and how it will impact each school.

All of the above will bring important and significant changes that are part of the planning and decisions we will make in order to move students toward new standards within a new system of measuring their achievement. These initiatives will also determine the level of success that schools and their staffs will demonstrate. All of these initiatives will be critical to the work our school community at Douglas High will do in the next few years.