

Executive Summary

Huron ISD

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Introduction

Every agency has its own story to tell. The context in which teaching and learning takes place influences the processes and procedures by which the agency makes decisions around curriculum, instruction, and assessment. The context also impacts the way a agency 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 agency, and the kinds of programs and services that an agency implements to support student learning. The purpose of the Executive Summary (ES) is to provide an agency with an opportunity to describe in narrative form the strengths and challenges it encounters. By doing so, the public and members of the community will have a more complete picture of how the agency perceives itself and the process of self-reflection for continuous improvement. This summary is structured for the agency to reflect on how it provides teaching and learning on a day to day basis.

Description of the Agency

Describe the agency's size, community/communities, location, and changes it has experienced in the last three years. Include demographic information about the students (if applicable), staff, and community at large. What unique features and challenges are associated with the schools/systems the agency serves?

The Huron Intermediate School District (HISD) is the educational service agency in Huron County. Located in the tip of the thumb in Michigan, Huron ISD has approximately 150 employees serving and providing leadership to twelve public and four private local school districts across the 836 square mile county. This rural county has a population of approximately 32,500 which is less than 40 persons per square mile. The K-12 population in the county is approximately 3,800. Seven of our twelve public schools in Huron County have a student population of less than 300. This includes five rural K-8 school districts with a population of less than 32 students each. Huron County has experienced a steady and significant drop in overall population as well as school age population over the past 35 years. In 1977 the population of Huron County was approximately 36,000 with 7,945 students attending 19 public schools in Huron County.

The Huron ISD prides itself in the service and leadership it provides to our local schools and students. We also pride ourselves in being a good community partner with all stakeholders. These stakeholders include local school districts, institutions of higher education, local boards of education, professional associations, local foundations and agencies, businesses, and state organizations. We also are the conduit between the Michigan Department of Education and our local school districts.

Graduation rates of our county schools over the past five years average 95%, well above the state average. In the county, 14% of persons over the age of 25 have a Bachelor's degree or higher compared to the state average of 25%. Using the MEAP and MME tests the academic performance of Huron County students typically is above state average in most grades and subject areas.

The county is largely agricultural, but also has manufacturing, service industry, and retail employers. Tourism is also an important economic activity. The county has a larger proportion of Senior Citizens than the rest of the state. Per capita, the 2010 median household income for the county was \$40,200, which is considerably below the state average of \$48,669. Over 14% of the county population is living below the poverty rate. In 2011, 23% of the county's children aged 0-17 were living in poverty. Over half of all of the students in the county are eligible for free or reduced lunch.

Every department in the organization provides programs and services that support the internal and external stakeholders. Our Business Services department provides complete business services to many schools in our county including the HISD as well as two schools in Tuscola County. Our General Education Department provides a wide assortment of professional development opportunities to serve the students and teachers of Huron County through leadership, curriculum support, professional development, and student services. The Center also serves as a resource clearinghouse for educational materials and information and works to foster community involvement in the areas of mathematics and science. Although grant funds have been reduced by 80% in recent years, Huron ISD continues to support the work of the Center in order to serve the needs of local districts.

The HISD oversees the Great Start Collaborative and Parent Coalition which builds and reforms the local early childhood system. It works to ensure children's health and success in school. Early On and Project Find services are provided through the HISD.

The HISD also operates the county Great Start Readiness Program (GSRP) at our Huron Learning Center and coordinates GSRPs in

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several local districts. The Great Start Readiness Program (GSRP) is a state funded preschool program for 4-year old children who have risk factors that might make it more difficult for them to succeed in school. The state government has determined that GSRP will be available at no cost for families who have low income. There are a small number of over-income placements for children who are at-risk for educational failure.

Huron ISD coordinates, monitors and acts as fiduciary for GSRP in its service area; leads quality improvement and capacity building efforts; operates a consortium program that services children in Bad Axe, Lakers, Ubly and the Rural schools; and works in partnership with Owen-Gage, Caseville, Harbor Beach, and North Huron schools where they operate sub-recipient programs in their districts.

Our Special Education Department is unique in that we provide the Special Education Directorship for all of our local districts. In addition we provide itinerant services such as School Psychologist, Speech-Language Pathologist, Social Workers, Occupational and Physical Therapists, and Teacher Consultants to our local districts, all supported by our HISD and Federal Flow-through dollars. Additionally, all local school district Special Education costs are covered at very close to 100% through the HISD special education millage.

The Huron Intermediate School District operates the Huron Area Technical Center, a 68,000 square-foot career education facility offering eleven state-approved wage-earning career technical education programs for students from Huron County's eight high schools, adult learners, and college students. Students have the opportunity to acquire skills that prepare them for successful career entry, advancement, and/or continuing education. These skills are transferable and job specific. Primary objectives of career technical education programs are to give students:

- Specific skills needed for job-entry positions and broad transferable skills, allowing increased employment and educational flexibility.
- An awareness of the structure/future trends of high-skill, high-wage industries and required knowledge and skills for continuing education and training.
- School- and work-based learning experiences-bridging the gap between school and the world of work.

Several career/technical programs offer services to the public as part of the students' instruction, including Visions School of Cosmetology, Main Street Café, The Exchange, Auto and Power Technology Services.

The Huron Learning Center serves students in Huron County who are eligible to receive services under the categories of early childhood developmental delay, moderate to severe cognitive impairments, severe multiple impairments, autism spectrum disorders, traumatic brain injuries and severe emotional impairments. These students require specialized instruction to meet their educational needs, progress in the curriculum and achieve their individual goals. Huron Learning Center staff work with local districts and families to provide center-based programs and services to students, as determined through the Individualized Education Planning process. The Huron Learning Center does not enroll students independent of local involvement. Students who attend the Huron Learning Center are between the ages of 3 and 26.

Agency's Purpose

Provide the agency's purpose statement and ancillary content such as mission, vision, values, and/or beliefs. Describe how the agency embodies its purpose through its services, program offerings and expectations for the schools/systems served.

Established in 1967, the Huron Intermediate School District (HISD) is a regional educational agency that serves students, families, and communities in Huron County. The staff at the Huron ISD have a focus on excellence and continuous improvement. When a plan was established to seek Accreditation through AdvancED, staff embraced the process. During the 2012-2013 school year the Huron ISD employees and stakeholders participated in an update of the Strategic planning process. The resulting Strategic Plan aligns well with the AdvancED Education Service Agency Accreditation.

The mission, vision, and guiding principles of the Huron ISD listed below were established/revised through the Strategic Planning Process:

Mission: Huron Intermediate School District is dedicated to educational leadership, effective programs, and quality services in collaboration with community partners to educate all learners.

Vision: Helping Inspire Success and Dreams

Guiding Principles:

- We effectively communicate accurate information within the organization and to all of our stakeholders to enhance quality and increase collaboration
- Student Achievement is a priority as we provide leadership and guidance to help every student reach their potential
- As a service organization, we focus on innovation, efficiency, the use of research-based practices, continuous improvement, and quality leadership in response to local educational agency needs
- Accurate and meaningful achievement and process data is used to answer questions, allocate resources, and drive decisions
- We are a community of reflective, lifelong learners who are dedicated to professional development and professional growth
- We conduct ourselves with integrity and professionalism
- The safety and well-being of students and staff is a priority

We take our role in assisting schools and our community partners very seriously and know that economic times are tough, which means our support is even more needed and more important than ever before. We are a service agency that exists to serve our local school districts in the following areas:

Shared Business Services

Educational Leadership

Itinerant Services

Financial Support to Local School Districts for General Education, Special Education, and Career-Technical Education programs and services

We offer the following Career-Technical Programs at our Huron Area Technical Center:

- Automotive Technology
 - Construction/Building Technology and Electrical
 - Cosmetology
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- Information Management Systems
- Health Sciences
- Hospitality/Food Service
- Law Enforcement/Public Safety
- Marketing
- Mechanical, Architectural, Engineering and Design
- Power Technology
- Professions in Education

We host dual-enrollment courses through Mid-Michigan Community College at our Huron Area Technical Center for approximately 90 students from throughout the county.

We collaborate with community partners and provide leadership to maintain and grow these partnerships.

We operate the Huron Learning Center, which serves students with significant disabilities.

HLC Facts & Stats

The Center currently operates:

- 2 early childhood classrooms for special education students 3-6 years of age
- 3 classrooms for Moderately Cognitively Impaired students ages 6-18
- 1 classroom for students with Severe Multiple Impairments
- 1 classroom for high school age students who need support developing pre-vocational skills, employability skills, and self-determination skills
- 1 classroom for students in need of post-secondary transition services
- 1 classroom for secondary students with significant Emotional Impairments

The Center currently employs:

- 11 Highly Qualified Special Education Teachers (preschool through adult programs)
- 21 paraprofessionals assigned to programs within the center

Additional Information:

- Approximately 56% of HLC students aged 6-18 share time in their local district
- The Huron ISD supports these students through the use of assigned paraprofessionals who are employed and trained by the Huron ISD

We also will focus on our communication plan and using surveys and other instruments to gather feedback to adjust and adapt to the ever-changing educational landscape. We feel that this focus on continuous improvement will keep the Huron ISD relevant and vital to the success of education in Huron County.

Notable Achievements and Areas of Improvement

Describe the agency's notable achievements and areas of improvement in the last three years. Additionally, describe areas for improvement that the agency is striving to achieve in the next three years.

The first area to note is our award-winning staff and programs.

Recent awards were to:

Phyllis Yoder- 2013 School Nurse of the Year

Mary Motz- 2013 Advisor of the Year Skills USA

Patti Error- 2013 School Social Worker of the Year Region K

Huron Learning Center PBIS Team- 2012 MASB Award of Educational Excellence

Cathy Stinson-2013 Professional Service Award from the Michigan Association of Teachers of Children with Emotional Impairments (MATCEI), 2014 Huron County Liberty Bell Award

Ashlee Mossner-2011 Exceptional Teacher Award from the Michigan Association of Teachers of Children with Emotional Impairments (MATCEI)

Four areas of achievement to note:

1. Established Skyward as the Financial and Student Software program of all school districts in Huron County, allowing for sharing and collaboration. Paid for and coordinated all training.
2. Received a grant to construct a fiber optic network that connects all schools in Huron, Tuscola, and Sanilac counties. In addition to increased internet capability, this provides for a wide variety of potential for shared services between schools across the three-county area and throughout the state.
3. Implemented a communication plan which has improved communication through newsletters, ongoing visits to local school districts, surveys, and regular meetings of Principals, Superintendents, Curriculum Specialists, and Business Managers.
4. Through sound financial practices along with tax values being more stable in Huron County than throughout the rest of the state we have been able to maintain financial stability and continue to increase support for our local schools in difficult economic times.

Some examples of direct financial support to local schools are:

- General Education Services such as Professional Development and Testing
- Special Education Costs
- Special Education Mini-Grants
- Special Education Coordinators
- Mid-Michigan partnership
- Huron Area Technical Center Programs and Transportation
- Skyward Student and Financial Software
- Fiber Consortium dues and fees

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Areas we will focus on improving in the next three years are:

1. Communication - We will continue to refine our communication plan and focus on this area.
2. Technology - With this being ever changing we will focus on shared services and instructional technology.
3. Data Collection and Analysis - We will continue to develop processes that allow us to collect and analyze data that informs our decision making.
4. Supporting consolidation of services for locals - We will provide leadership and support locals in sharing and consolidating services.
5. Meeting the needs of students with disabilities being served in local schools - Assist local schools in providing high-quality programs and services.

Through the use of our strategic plan and our continuous improvement plan we always focus on excellence and how we can better serve our local school districts.

Additional Information

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

We are proud of the quality of our staff and their commitment to excellence and serving the students of Huron County. We have a focus on student achievement, professional development and personal improvement. With the size of Huron County our strength is the personal connections we make and the personal service that is provided to all of our local schools. Personalized service to students across the county is enhanced through regular communication with our local school districts through monthly meetings and visits to the local schools.

The HISD is committed to continuous improvement and look forward to the results of our external review. We will continue our focus on our service and leadership to the schools and students in our county.