



Cumberland Academy
of GEORGIA

“An Exceptional School for Exceptional Students”

Long Range / Strategic Plan

January 2010



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of G E O R G I A

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Overview:

Cumberland Academy of Georgia received accreditation from GAC (Georgia Accreditation Commission) in 2007 and received its candidacy approval from SACS in 2008. We are current members and in good standing with AAIS (Atlanta Area Independent School Association.), GISA (Georgia Independent School Association), and GAPSEC (Georgia Association of Schools for Exceptional Children). Cumberland Academy of Georgia offers a full curriculum for students in 4th – 12th grades who have specific educational needs where a smaller learning environment creates a positive learning experience. We offer a low student to teacher ratio and are able to ability teach for each students unique ability to learn. We specialize in children who have been diagnosed with Asperger’s, LD, ADD and ADHD.

History:

Cumberland Academy of Georgia was founded by Matthew & Debbi Scarborough and inspired by their son, Steven in 2007. After months of searching for the right school, they decided the only choice was to open a school that catered to children who not only needed a smaller classroom size to academically challenge them, but a place where life / social skills are part of the daily curriculum. After opening with 1 student 3 short years ago, they have now grown to over 40 students and continue to have amazing growth. The students who attend Cumberland Academy of Georgia need structure and a strong academic curriculum, but also the opportunity to learn social and life skills as well as preparing the college bound student.

Cumberland Academy of Georgia has already been recognized by professionals, educators and parents as a leading innovator in the field of helping this population. We want to challenge and prepare our students for future independence and success.

The enriched curriculum offers many opportunities to explore uncharted territory. We cater to students in grades 4th – 12th and offer a challenging curriculum that includes Saxon Math, Mountain Language, interactive science courses as well as foreign language programs. We also offer courses through BYU, this gives us the opportunity to extend our teaching arm to other experts in the field and offer a vast array of curriculum options.

In addition to following the Georgia Standards, each student participates in our physical education program; we engage them in soccer, kick ball, volley ball, and most team sports. We also expose them to other activities including yoga and outdoor programs, such as, high ropes courses, team building, canoeing down the Chattahoochee, and three night camp adventures. These programs help develop self confidence and coordination along with problem solving skills, designed to elicit the appropriate social interactions necessary for success in today's society. This enables our students to become more independent.

Our technology has been an extremely useful teaching tool. We utilize Neo 2's for keyboarding, essays, quizzes and other uses in the classrooms. This enables a child who struggles with handwriting to be successful. We also offer courses in computer modeling which teaches the child how to create images, games, animation and voiceovers. We teach them how to use computers in a productive way. Power Point presentations are also a part of our curriculum. This teaches our students organization, public speaking and builds self-esteem.

Cumberland Academy of Georgia provides our students with a safe, nurturing environment where they can take pride in themselves and build a solid foundation for future endeavors.



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Mission Statement

Cumberland Academy of Georgia specializes in the needs of children with high functioning Autism, Asperger’s, LD, ADD and ADHD. The mission of the academy is to provide a safe, supportive, educational environment in partnership with faculty, staff, students and parents. The Cumberland family embraces the uniqueness of every child by challenging and inspiring them to reach their full potential. Our academic and social curriculum encourages the development of life skills essential in becoming independent and self-sufficient adults.

Philosophy

Cumberland Academy of Georgia is dedicated to the belief that faculty, staff, students, and parents are all involved in our children’s education in a responsible, nurturing, and supportive way. Each student is entitled to a safe, secure, and healthy academic environment. We strive to create a warm and inviting atmosphere, and to instill in our students a sense of self-worth. We teach beneficial life skills so that our students grow into confident, cooperative, and productive members of society.

Cumberland Academy of Georgia has developed and will continue to improve an exciting and challenging curriculum that recognizes the educational needs of each student. We respect the learning diversity of each student. This is done through cooperative learning and active hands-on techniques that are integrated into all subject areas along with co-curricular activities. This best practices curriculum infuses the creative arts as well as problem solving, social skills, critical thinking, and decision making skills. The curriculum aims to develop and enhance abilities, giving appropriate guidance with realistic expectations. The curriculum promotes helping students develop strategies to cope with anger, stress and anxiety along with motivating them to assert themselves in a positive way while respecting others. Lastly, the curriculum aims to promote awareness of self and others by developing relationship-building and communication skills.

Our faculty and staff believe that each child has strengths to develop throughout their school lives. Faculty and staff continually learn from each other; and therefore, bring to our students a model for teaching respect and acceptance of others. Faculty members model the importance of lifelong learning.

Finally, Cumberland Academy of Georgia encourages and solicits parents and community involvement through many different ways as we recognize that our students are our most valuable resource. Cumberland Academy of Georgia is committed to guiding our students to develop into the best individuals they can be.



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Committee

1. Floyd Bushey
2. Valerie Drake
3. Kathy Ellison
4. Deedra Hughes
5. Erin O’Neal
6. Joe Rollins
7. Debbi K. Scarborough
8. Matthew Scarborough
9. Laurie Thurmond

GOAL 1: MARKETING AND BRAND AWARENESS

Strategies: Develop strategies to increase awareness of our unique population, through enhanced marketing supported by our clear mission.

Objectives: Cultivate what differentiates Cumberland Academy of Georgia from other special needs schools in our market place to ultimately increase enrollment.

Action Items – Marketing:

- Continued optimization of our website through Hughes Media.
- Maintain current website to announce events and have accessible links to review school happenings.
- Update brochure and marketing materials for a more current look and review with stakeholders annually.
- Identify target audiences for marketing efforts by reviewing success and receiving input from current stakeholders.
- Regularly scheduled press and media releases on activities occurring at our school.
- Review advertising budgets annually and determine where appropriate dollars should be spent for most effective results to ensure accurate portrayal of the school.
- Develop a plan for increased and measurable media coverage.
- Update current video for ongoing presentation purposes i.e.; school fairs, fundraisers, exhibits and website.

Action Items – Brand Awareness:

- Communicate a strong mission statement.
- Develop a plan to strengthen relationships with Sandy Springs Community as well as with other independent schools.
- Update mailing lists and email addresses to include not only parents, but also alumni and all stakeholders to maintain brand awareness through newsletters and other current events at school.
- Annually review our Mission Statement with stakeholders.

Goal 2: EDUCATIONAL ENHANCEMENT

Strategies: Ensure that the existing academic programs promote scholastic excellence and stimulate intellectual curiosity throughout all levels and abilities of the school.

Keep updated on latest technologies for our unique population.

Objectives: Maintain Georgia Standards throughout subjects and raise awareness of schools academic standards.

Action Items – Curriculum:

- Ensure curriculum meets and challenges the needs of our unique population by reviewing assessments twice a school year to ensure academic growth.
- Develop a Curriculum Committee to meet regularly to address academic needs and enhancements.
- Review curriculum with Educational Consultants, Doctors, and Therapists in the community to ensure curriculum and transition goals are in line for our population.
- Maintain membership in professional organizations as a means of keeping abreast of current trends in curriculum and instruction.
- Professional development opportunities to educate faculty on current and effective curriculum and instructional practices to be scheduled regularly.
- Partner with other schools on effective curriculum and instructional practices.
- Continue and create more opportunities for students to have hands-on experience with advanced technology.
- Seek to implement new technologies within three (3) years to enhance learning process.
- Ensure that the upper school adequately prepares students for college academics and real life challenges.
- Plan a career day for the upper school.
- Continue and develop additional work / intern programs.
- Continue to promote college visits and have college representatives visit school.

- Develop programs that promote life skills such as time and financial management, study skills and interviewing skills.
- Continue to develop extracurricular programs and clubs so that every student has the opportunity to participate in at least one extracurricular activity.
- Develop a plan to increase faculty and staff involvement and support of student activities.

Goal 3: PROFESSIONAL STAFF DEVELOPMENT

Strategies: Maintain a superior faculty to successfully implement academic programs and support each student's learning process.

Objectives: Develop a plan for recruitment and retention of faculty and administration.
Maintain guidelines for teacher qualification and standards of excellence.

Action Items – Human Resources:

- Review and assess current human resources needs on an ongoing basis prior to contracts and after performance assessments.
- Develop detailed job descriptions and review annually to improve the hiring process and ensure the continued high quality of personnel.
- Review current compensation and benefit plans to determine that we are competitive with other schools, prior to contract date.
- Collaborate with other schools and organizations (AAIS, GISA, SACS, etc.) to review other schools organizational structure and utilize resources for recruiting staff.
- Attend organizations job fairs and post openings on appropriate sites for specific needs.
- Review retention rate to ensure stability and assess turnover experience.
- Continue to encourage external development of staff.
- Develop procedures to ensure our consistency of staff evaluations annually.
- Maintain professional development and continue to facilitate and increase collaboration of staff and faculty.
- As the school grows, maintain balance and growth in all areas and aspects of the schools.

Goal 4: ADMISSIONS AND COMMUNICATION

Strategies: Increase student population annually and retain current students. Our facility is able to accommodate 125 students.

Develop strategies for appropriate communication among all constituents of the school, continually increasing understanding awareness on all levels.

Objectives: Continue to educate the community about our population with a detailed plan that establishes our clear identity in our market place.

Action Items – Admissions:

- Maintain current database of all prospective family contacts on a monthly basis.
- A current database of all educational psychologists, therapists, and professionals that captures our population should be kept updated monthly with quarterly contacts.
- Regular email / mail contact to be sent to stakeholders as well as prospective families and professionals.
- Semi-annual organized lunches with experienced professionals to expose and educate them about our mission and philosophy.
- Quarterly open houses that would be attended by prospective families and professionals.
- Enhance admissions marketing materials annually.
- Weekly meetings to review inquiries and develop timeline for continued follow-up process to enable school to meet enrollment goals.
- Continue and advertise rolling admissions.
- Develop step-by-step admission process to ensure the population is one that fits into our mission and academic curriculum.
- Review advertising results to determine the most effective sources and explore new options.

Action Items – Communication:

- Develop a communication plan to ensure consistency and quality among parents, faculty, staff and the community.

- Educate parents on how to use SnapGrades for optimum communication and relayed information.
- Research other software to maintain latest technology for tracking attendance and information.
- Increase communication with students so that rules, expectations and consequences are clearly defined and understood.

Goal 5: FACILITY IMPROVEMENT

Strategies: Ensure that the campus is adequate to provide an optimal learning environment that successfully upholds Cumberland Academy of Georgia's mission.

Objectives: Assess current and future program needs of the school based on enrollment projections and curriculum.

Action Items:

- Complete and periodically update a space and facility analysis to develop a campus master plan.
- Assess campus for strategic enhancement opportunities to meet the needs of the curriculum and the overall educational experience.
- Enhance the opportunities for outdoor classroom experiences.
- Add additional security systems with the objective of ensuring the safety of students.
- Develop budgets for additional enhancements to improve campus and security.
- Parent improvement days to help maintain campus.
- Work with Pioneer Parents to schedule volunteers three times a year or on an as needed basis.
- Develop outdoor athletic area to promote more physical education.

Goal 6: FINANCIAL SUSTAINABILITY

Strategies: Ensure that there are sufficient financial resources to fund the mission of the school.

Objectives: Increase revenue through different channels in addition to tuition to be able to streamline operations and add latest technology as well as updated curriculum to classrooms.

Action Items:

- Continue to align tuition levels to be competitive obtain data annually to compare tuition.
- Develop a plan to deepen relationships with foundations and other prospective donors.
- Consider new revenue opportunities, including a school store, renting out classrooms, extra curriculum activities and summer camps.
- Continue to base annual budget on actual costs.
- Realistic projects to consider school growth.
- Establish a marketing plan for our SSO and educate companies and families on how that will benefit our school.
- Develop scholarships programs for prospective families.
- Identify potential grant writers connected to the school and establish what areas of grants to focus on.
- Hold annual fund raising events supported by the parents and community, chairs to be determined 1 year in advance.
- Students develop fundraising opportunities to help subsidize parents cost, i.e.; camps and fieldtrips.