Executive Summary

Pinckney Elementary School
South Carolina/Fort Stewart/DODDS Cuba District

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# TABLE OF CONTENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Introduction</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Description of the School</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School's Purpose</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Notable Achievements and Areas of Improvement</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Additional Information</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
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?

Fort Jackson is located in the central midlands of South Carolina and plays a major role as an employer and consumer in the area. Fort Jackson's history reflects a tradition of excellence dating back to June 2, 1917, when a new Army Training Center was established to answer America's call for trained fighting men in World War I. Fort Jackson, as the U.S. Army's main production center for Basic Combat Training, trains 50 percent of the Army's Basic Combat Training load and 60 percent of the women entering the Army each year. The Fort Jackson Army Installation is a stable, well-populated military community. The fort includes more than 52,000 acres, with more than 100 ranges, field training sites and 1,160 buildings. Soldiers, civilians, retirees and family members make up the Fort Jackson community. More than 3,500 active duty soldiers and their 12,000 family members are assigned to the installation and make this area their home. About one third of those soldiers and families live in on-post housing. The Residential Communities Initiative and Balfour-Beatty, a private contractor, built 640 new homes and renovated 210 homes for Army families. Fort Jackson is home to the U.S. Army Soldier Support Institute, the Armed Forces Army Chaplain Center and School and the National Center for Credibility Assessment (formerly the Department of Defense Polygraph Institute). It is also home to the Army's Drill Sergeant School, which trains all Active and Reserve instructors.

Operating within the Fort Jackson Army Installation, Pinckney Elementary School is centrally located in Columbia, South Carolina and draws military students from all over the world. On average, Pinckney Elementary School enrolls approximately 335 students. The small school size creates a personalized, nurturing environment where students can flourish. Pinckney Elementary School provides a high-quality academic education for boys and girls in grades 2 through 6. The school's focus is on three educational groups: primary (Grade 2), elementary (Grades 3-5), and middle (Grade 6). Pinckney Elementary school's student body is diverse. The school population includes: 107 White, 3 Asian, 9 Pacific Islander, 77 Hispanic, and 91 African American. Currently, the school employees 32 instructional staff and 18 support staff. Pinckney Elementary school enjoys a high annual retention rate among faculty, historically above 95 percent. The faculty is a healthy combination of veteran teachers, some who have been with the school for over 25 years, and relatively new teachers.

There are unique challenges that come with the honor of serving military families. Over the past three years, the economic recession, sequestration, Battalion 187th moving to Ft. Lee, the Retention and Recruiting Unit moving to Ft. Knox and reduction in military and civilian force, has had an impact on Pinckney Elementary School. Although the Fort Jackson basic training program and drill sergeant school have buffered some of the hardship, school enrollment has been affected by mobility and school enrollment numbers. Compared to present enrollment (333 students as of 12/31/2015), only 18 students have been at Pinckney Elementary School since 2013-2014. Our student retention rate of present day, compared to the 2014-2015 school year, equals 101 and as of 12/31/2015, 333 students are current attendees. Despite these challenges, Pinckney Elementary School continues to thrive in the Fort Jackson community, enjoying a strong reputation for excellent academics for military children.
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.

Pinckney Elementary School supports the DoDEA mission statement, "Educate, Engage, and Empower each student to succeed in a dynamic world." The vision/purpose statement for our school is as follows: Preparing students to be 21st century learners through communication, collaboration, and purposeful teaching. We more commonly refer to our vision/purpose as: "Communication, Collaboration and Purposeful Teaching!"

Our school embodies its purpose through a combination of our core beliefs. We believe that all students can learn regardless of the unique challenges they have as military-connected students. They have unique talents and abilities. High academic achievement is a priority. All members of the community share responsibility for success. Continuous improvement is the key to success. Hallmarks of Pinckney Elementary School include high academic standards, self-discipline, safety, a sense of community and belonging. Teachers and staff model respect for all and an acceptance of each child's talents, abilities, and personal challenges. Educators create a safe, loving environment that encourages students to believe in their capabilities and to work toward their potential.

A variety of learning strategies and differentiated instruction are used to meet student's individual needs. With a strong core curriculum provided by the Department of Defense Education Activity (DoDEA), instruction in technology, research, Spanish, music, art, physical education, math intervention and higher order thinking skills. The student's experience is diverse and prepares them for an ever-changing world in which problem solving is not only a habit, but a way of life. Our student population represents a variety of ability levels, academically and socially, from Special Needs to Gifted Education. Pinckney Elementary School focuses on providing differentiated instruction to ensure the success of all students. Our differentiated instruction is data-driven; we assess students throughout the year and use this information to guide instruction and provide remediation or enrichment based on student needs. Faculty and staff regularly analyze individual student progress to ensure instruction is rigorous and individualized.

Pinckney Elementary School recognizes parents as primary educators of their children and they are encouraged to collaborate and communicate with teachers and administrators, as equal partners in education. With a focus on communication and collaboration, the school is sensitive to the needs of military families and provides before, during and after school, student support programs, clubs and tutoring opportunities. These programs include: School Support Team (SST), Case Study Committee (CSC), Speech, Occupational Therapy (OT), Physical Therapy (PT), School Psychologist, Special Education Support, English as a Second Language support, Inclusion services, Reading and Math Remediation/Support (Intervention), Read 180, Extended Learning Opportunities (ELO), Gifted and Talented (TAGS), Counseling services, Wednesday Walkers, Art Club, Band, STEM Club, Fitness Club, Student Council, Technology Club, Robotics, Photography Club, and International Club.

Pinckney Elementary School encourages the community to view the school as part of their extended family by offering monthly Stakeholder events, inviting parents to quarterly celebrations of honor roll recognition, and regularly inviting guest speakers / performers to share with students. Science, Technology Engineering and Math (STEM) nights as well as and Literacy, Health and Music nights encourage parents and students to see education as embedded into their everyday life. A working partnership with the Fort Jackson Garrison as well as the Military police has led to many great programs in our schools, such as the Math and Reading Prize Patrol. Another partnership that fosters authentic learning is the partnership that Pinckney Elementary School has with the Fort Jackson Commissary. The Commissary manager allows Pinckney teachers and staff to transform the grocery store into a living, authentic STEM / Math classroom. This yearly program supports all grade level students in the areas of STEM and authentic problem-solving. The Fort Jackson 282 Army Band is another vital partnership. The 282 Army Band offers band clinics and visits Pinckney Elementary School to play for students.
Pinckney Elementary School has an active Parent Teacher Organization (PTO). The teachers and staff work with the PTO in planning and hosting a wide variety of school wide and student centered events. Some of the PTO events include Scholastic Book Fair, Teacher Appreciation Week, Holiday Store, Coordination of School Pictures, Yearbook, Fall Festival, 5K run/walk and monetary support for teacher requests to supplement instruction and events.

Another noteworthy program at our school is the Principal's Coffee and Chat. The principal hosts monthly "chats" which focus on topics related to school improvement, communication and curriculum. Some topics have included: Vocabulary instruction, CCRSM, and Continuous School Improvement.

Pinckney Elementary School embraces best practices in the field of education. We believe that just like students, teachers are active learners. Pinckney's instructional day is Monday-Wednesday and Friday 7:55 AM to 2:55 PM; Thursdays from 7:55 AM to 1:40 PM. Thursdays are dedicated as an "Early Release Day", part of an initiative started during the 2010-2011 school year. Students are released at 1:40 PM on Thursday, which allows the teachers to have an extended day that is used for systemic professional development. During the 2015-2016 school year, the staff will receive professional development in areas of: Six Trait Writing, College and Career Readiness Standards in Mathematics (CCRSRM), Tier Two vocabulary instruction, Guided Reading, differentiated small group activities, data collection and interpretation, technology implementation in the classroom, and STEM activities/projects. Pinckney Elementary School is committed to ensuring the application and enhancement of the DoDEA curriculum goals and standards. Again, our vision statement, Communication, Collaboration and Purposeful Teaching, drives our programs and purpose at Pinckney Elementary School.
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.

The staff of Pinckney Elementary School strives consistently to provide the caring learning environment in support of a positive educational foundation on which future learning will build. All students have unique talents and abilities. High academic achievement is a priority. All members of the community share responsibility for success. Continuous improvement is the key to success. Over the past three years, Pinckney has put into practice a three pronged program approach to student learning. These three program areas have offered notable achievements not only in test scores but also in communication and collaboration with all stakeholders.

Our first area of notable program achievement was technology. At Pinckney Elementary School, technology is an integral part of instruction across the curriculum. Every classroom is equipped with a Smart Board, supporting software and laptop computers. These technology based tools are used by students on a regular basis to create authentic projects showcasing their learning. Some examples of student use and application of technology include student created and illustrated stories using Photo Story and Pixie, use of online databases to engage in research, and collaboration with peers through Google Apps and Schoology.

Our second area of notable program achievement falls under Science, Technology, Engineering and Math (STEM). STEM is incorporated in our lessons with an emphasis on 21st Century learning. We have a dedicated STEM team that provides support and resources to teachers and classes. We utilize a variety of instructional methods such as project-based and cooperative learning and differentiated activities with technology in the forefront to meet students' wide-range of needs. Within the STEM model, the engineering design process is used by students to create their own designs using Robotics and / or classroom materials. In the spring of every year, we hold an annual STEMposium event. This event highlights project based learning in the area of STEM. All projects are placed on display. All students enjoy guest speakers and STEM activities during the STEMposium week.

Our third area of notable program achievement is our inventiveness to be a school focused on writing. Research tells us that reading, writing and speaking are reciprocal. When we analyzed student data we found that our writing scores offered as an area for improvement. This discovery moved our staff to implement a writing block in our instructional schedule. We decided to adopt the 6 Traits writing model. We also implemented a new writing assessment to assist with progress monitoring of this critical skill.

Over the last three school years, Pinckney Elementary School has focused on two school improvement goals: (1) improving reading comprehension and (2) math problem solving. Students are familiar with our school improvement goals and have been engaged in the process of taking responsibility for their learning. Instruction is designed toward helping our students achieve the school goals through the use of math journals and guided reading instruction. Through the daily posting of objectives in classrooms and the sharing of learning objectives with students at the beginning of each lesson, all are engaged in learning with knowledge of what is expected. Objectives are written in student friendly language to encourage a deeper level of understanding. Authentic student work is displayed throughout the building and teachers provide supportive feedback to students. As a result, students are able to understand and see what is needed to produce quality work. Pinckney Elementary School proudly displays student assessment data throughout the building which reflect Beginning-Middle- and End-of-Year data showcasing our students' academic progress in meeting our goals. Analyzing data is a weekly process addressed during collaboration meetings with administrators, classroom teachers, and specialists. Classroom teachers utilize data to make instructional plans as a basis for assigning students to leveled guided reading groups, tiering students for daily intervention, and identifying students for extra assistance in reading and mathematics.

Pinckney Elementary School educational staff chose to adopt the use of guided reading and a 120 minute uninterrupted ELA block as intervention tools to assist in meeting our goal of reading comprehension. As a result, during School Years 2014-2015 in the area of Reading
on the Terra Nova Reading Subtest Grades 3-6, all grade levels showed an increase in student performance. Students have improved their math problem solving through the intervention of the use of math journals as evidenced by our 2014-2015 Terra Nova Math scores, grades 3-6. From the 2014-2015 school year, all grades increased their performance. In grades 3-6 our Math Instructional Support has also pushed into math classes in an effort to improve instruction and remediation with small group work. Improvement will continue over the next three years in the areas of reading comprehension and mathematical problem solving. By adding a strong writing component, we hope to see not only scores continue to improve in the area of Reading but also in Math problem solving. Innovative strategies and techniques are always being explored to push our students and offer rigor to our teaching. In the next three years, Pinckney Elementary School will strive to continually improve its programs to ensure that student needs are met. An emphasis on improving writing as another technique to improve reading and math problem solving will continue. We will continue to provide a strong STEM program for all our students as well as a 21st century technology platform that enables our students to be contenders in a global world. We will remain focused on data to drive instruction for the individual student. At Pinckney Elementary School, we see data as important; however, we see data NOT as the destination, but part of the journey!
Additional Information

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

Our vision: Collaboration, Communication and Purposeful Teaching, is the driving force of all activity at Pinckney Elementary School. In our effort to extend student achievement outside the walls of the school building, the school developed the Stakeholder Committee, whose primary focus is to build "bridges" between home, school and community. The committee is made up of teachers who work closely with parents, military leaders and Fort Jackson personnel, all with the hopes of providing meaningful educational experiences for military families. Since the committee's conception in 2013, the school has reaped many awards to include the Garrison Commander naming two of our yearly events (Reading and Math Prize Patrol) as a best practice for ALL army installations.

We also received the coveted, 2015 Pete Taylor Partnership of Excellence Award. This award recognizes successful partnerships and projects that ultimately benefit military-connected children. The Pete Taylor Partnership of Excellence Award was created in 2004 to recognize the work of former MCEC Chairman Lieutenant General (Ret.) Pete Taylor in assisting the highly mobile military child. The award is designed to foster the sharing of lessons learned and to recognize the long-held belief of General Taylor that "goodness starts at the local level." The Award is given in two areas: K-12 and higher education. Given annually, the K-12 award may represent a single project in which a military installation and one or more school districts participated, or it may be a summation of the entire program between a military installation and the school districts serving an installation. Award winners are selected from schools and military installations around the world by MCEC, a non-profit organization dedicated to addressing the transition and educational issues affecting the highly mobile military child. The Military Child Education Coalition presented well-deserved awards and recognition to outstanding schools, installations and individual program achievement at the 2015, 17th National Training Seminar in Washington, DC, in July of 2015.

2015-2016 Pinckney Stakeholder Events:

October 27, 2015 / 5:30-until - Math Prize Patrol
Event Description: Parents will receive a letter from the school at the beginning of October asking them to participate in math problem solving activities with their children at home. Hopefully, many students will return their "pledges" to take part in the school wide math problem solving initiative. From the pledges returned, the school principal, will draw 12 lucky names. The students selected will be surprised at their homes, greeted by a caravan of vehicles carrying teachers, the administrator, the Military Police, and hopefully the Fort Jackson Garrison Commander. The 12 lucky families will receive problem solving games authored by Van de Walle, whose research we reference in our school's Math Action Plan. You will also receive calculators, times table flashcards, a math tub which all supplies will be kept in, rulers, pencils, and a picture taken with the Pinckney Prize Patrol team.

November 19, 2015 / Festival of Trees on Display
Event Description: Artificial trees will be decorated with student work that correlates to the DoDEA Social Studies standards. All trees will be assigned a "DoDEA Standard Description / Name Tag" explaining the standard(s) covered. This student centered activity serves as an out of the box way of teaching content, which asks students to synthesize nonfiction information to create their decoration. The trees will be on display during the Thanksgiving Luncheon and throughout the month of December!

2nd Grade - "People Who Make a Difference Tree"
3rd Grade - "Continuity and Change in Communities Tree"

4th Grade - "The Regions of the United States Tree"

5th Grade - "Discovery of the Americas Tree"

6th Grade - "World History: Ancient Civilizations Tree"

November 17, 2015   5:30-7:00 - CCRSM / STEM Night

Event Description: Fall Math/STEM Night
Who: Pinckney students, parents and staff
What: Introduction to the new CCRSM standards as well as grade level activities for math and/or STEM

December 17, 2015   12:15-12:45 - Deck the Halls with Student Work and Data and 12:25-1:20 - Family Read Along

Event Description: As a school located on an Army installation whose motto is: COMMUNITES of EXCELLENCE, Pinckney wishes to make December 17, 2015 a time to Deck the Halls with Student Work and Data. We want to invite all stakeholders to walk the hallways and admire the accomplishments of our community of learners! After parents admire student work and data, we would like for them to visit their classroom and read with their student.

January 12, 2016 / 5:30-7:00 - STEM Night at the Commissary

Event Description: STEM Night at the Ft. Jackson Commissary is an after school stakeholder opportunity for 2nd-6th grade students to apply grade-appropriate problem solving skills in a real-world setting. Parental involvement is necessary, as parents and children work together, at the on post Commissary, to solve problems in all areas of Science, Technology Engineering and Math. The problems will reinforce skills acquired in the classroom. STEM problem solving packets will be available upon arrival. The Ft. Jackson Commissary manager is very excited about hosting this event for the families and students who call Fort Jackson home!

February 9, 2016 / 5:30-7:00 - STEM and Health

Event Description: The Stakeholder Committee will be working closely within the content of the DoDEA health education standards. The six standards of focus address skills that are for personal, family and community health enhancement. These standards teach essential and transferable skills that foster health efficacy. The standards in the DoDEA Health Literacy skills strand are consistent throughout all grade levels. Guest speakers will be present to talk with stakeholders about health and safety utilizing a science, technology, engineering and math, lens. Research shows that children who are healthy learn better!

March 2, 2016 / 5:30-until - Reading Prize Patrol / Dr. Seuss Birthday!

Event Description: Much like the Math Prize Patrol, the Reading Prize Patrol's main goal is to create excitement about reading, while building relationships with families and community stakeholders. This event will be implemented the same way as Math Prize Patrol - 12 families win reading supplies (books, etc.)! The day we make surprise deliveries is also Dr. Seuss birthday! Wear a birthday hat!

April 25-29, 2016 - STEMposium

Event Description: Mark your calendars now and plan to join CCP for its annual STEMposium event the week of April 25-29. This week is an exciting time at CCP! We will have several guest speakers visiting our school. We will also have fun science, technology, engineering and math activities, for all! Don't forget to visit the science fair this week to see and experience STEM, in real life!

May 26 and 27, 2016 - Pinckney's Living Museum

Event Description: DoDEA Standards for Social Studies require students to build skills, not just cover time periods. The ability to assess the importance of an individual in history, to construct a historical narrative, and to formulate historical questions are independent of time period or geographic region. Biographical study is one logical approach to building these skills, providing a manageable "topic" or "individual" to focus on and encouraging students to consider the context of place and circumstance in which the individual lived. The key is to move from reporting the facts, an activity that can be done without demonstrating any understanding, to historical inquiry (Webb's Depth of Knowledge Level 4), an activity that engages the student and brings the subject to life. To research and prepare a Living Museum, students must...
synthesize the information they learned about their subject; this can't happen unless they are actively engaged in the event. In order to select pivotal events or recreate significant circumstances in an individual's life, students must not just locate facts about the person but critically evaluate the people, places, and events to develop a powerful presentation. Deciding on a format, selecting key material, and putting it all in context require active learning and creative interpretation.