





## Introduction

After Hurricane Katrina damaged schools and displaced students in 2005, Cisco

To identify information about each district in regards to the status of the 21S project, EDC | CCT researchers engaged in the following activities, described in detail below: (a) document searches and reviews, (b) district recruitment, (c) instrument development, (d) district interviews, (e) information organization and synthesis, and (f) data analysis and reporting.

***Document search and review.***



Since Cisco left the region four years ago, the majority of the 21S Initiative districts have improved on key 21st-century education goals in the areas of vision, leadership, technology, school climate, and learning. As a result, most district leaders believe that

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**Moss Point School District.** The district has had **limited success in leveraging the momentum** of the Cisco 21S Initiative in the past four years, due to **state regulatory challenges** and **changes in leadership**. With guidance from its school board and a new superintendent, the district has shifted its focus to supporting the whole child by increasing accountability,

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Petal

Lamar

Harrison

Hattiesburg

JPPSS

Forrest County

Moss Point

FCAHS

# Petal School District

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of tablets in the district has gone from zero in 2009 to 85 units today. There is 100% wireless coverage in all schools, with 300–500 devices connected on any given day. The



The district sends a few teachers to the Mississippi Educational Computing Association conference each year, but the annual Technology Summit, which was initiated under 21S, is the principle vehicle for technology-related teacher professional development at Petal. Teachers and administrators from across the district attend the Summit to explore new technology in a hands-on learning environment

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With a good deal of support from the community, student participation in extra-cur-



**Test scores<sup>2</sup>.** Student test scores were examined for both Petal District and the state to identify changes over time. Test scores throughout the district have increased, though to varying degrees across grade levels and subjects. Administrators attribute the impressive gains to the district's shift from a focus on teaching to a focus on learning and to the work of the PLCs.

**Language Arts MCT<sup>3</sup>.** In 2011–2012, Petal County students





# Lamar County School District

Lamar County School District (LCSD) is dispersed across a large geographical area, making communication a critical priority for district leaders. The district has fully embraced the Common Core standards and is preparing for the related changes in curriculum and assessment. Professional Learning Communities continue to play a key

total student population, 71% were white, 23% were African-American, and 2% Hispanic. Native Americans and Asians made up the remaining percentage. The free and reduced-price lunch population, as of 2010–2011, was 49.8%.

- There also have been shifts in the number of teachers employed by the district, with the number increasing from 554 in 2005–2006 to about 750 in 2012–2013.

## Vision and Leadership

### *Key findings*

- Communication is a priority in a geographically dispersed district.
- The district is deeply committed to the Professional Learning Communities model.
- The Lamar County Education Foundation raises resources to support the public schools.

all the teachers in one place, we can just connect around the district in a matter of minutes ... .”

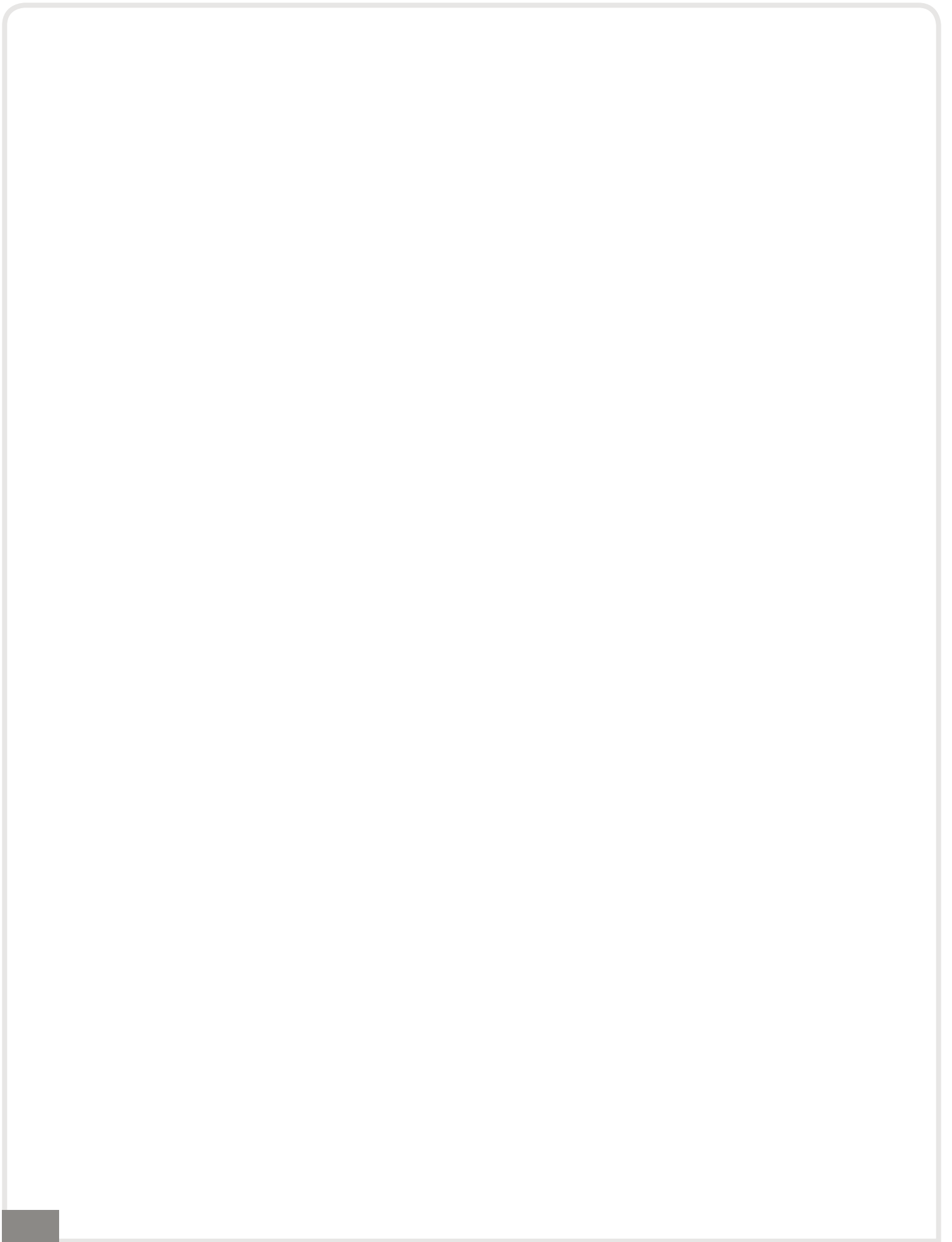
The Lamar County Education Foundation, which raises funds for the public schools, has helped to scale up and sustain the technology across the district and to develop new partnerships. According to the superintendent, “Partnerships have played a vital role in meeting [the district’s] vision. ... Some businesses chipped in and paid for whole classrooms.” The district leadership continues to seek new technology partners.

## Technology

### *Infrastructure and access*

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greater interaction and formative assessment on a weekly or daily basis. The district



**SATP.** Lamar County School District students made gains in one of the four SATP subject tests, English, between 2007–2008 and 2011–2012. There was a 3-point gain in the percentage of students receiving a passing score in English. There was no change in Algebra I. While there were decreases in LCSD County scores in Biology I and History between 2007–2008 and 2011–2012, these changes were smaller than those experienced across the state during the same period. LCSD students also outperformed students across the state in all four sub-

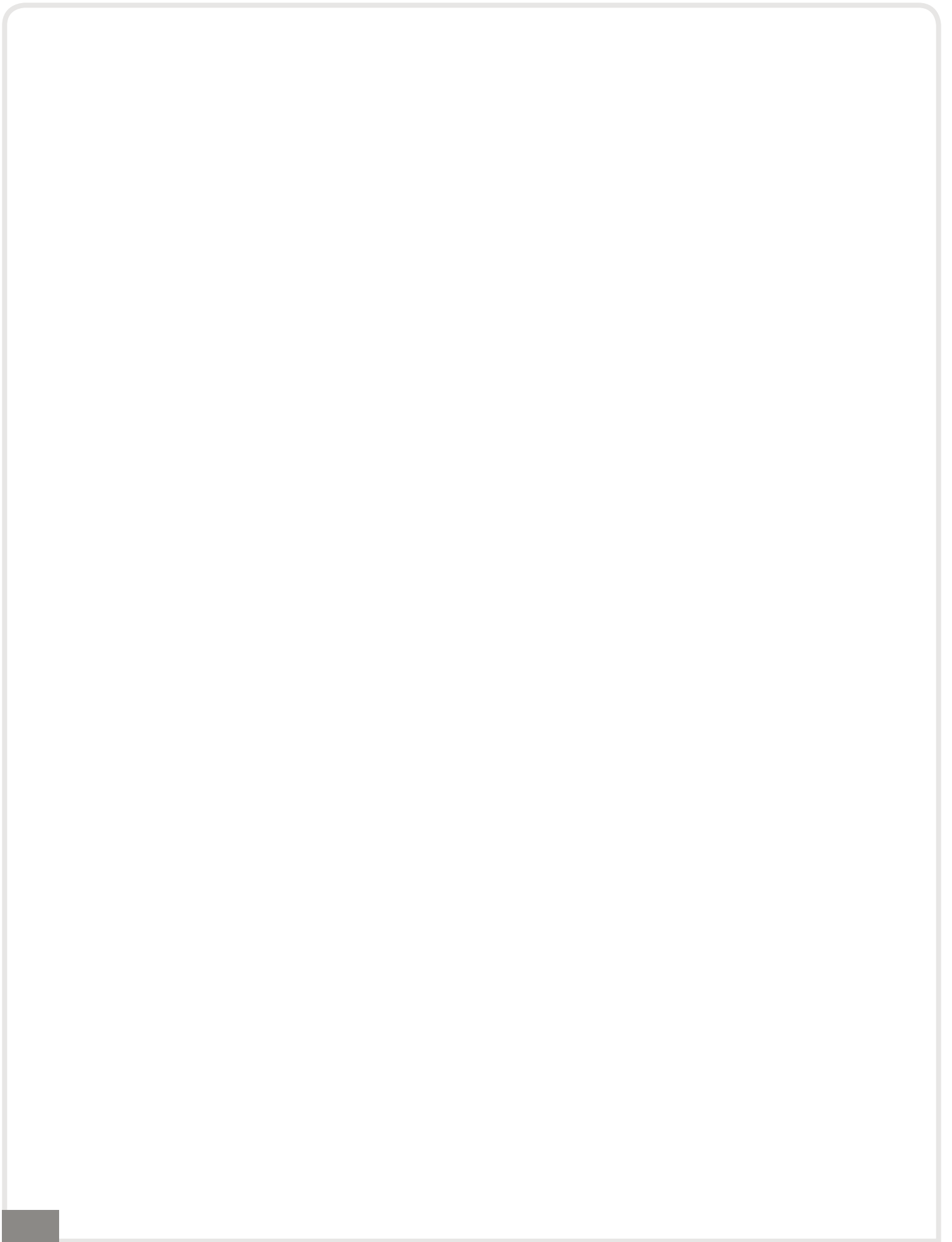
# Harrison County School District

The Harrison County School District (HCSD) has leveraged the resources provided by the Cisco 21S Initiative to promote technology integration across the district. Technology is a critical tool in the district's efforts to implement formative assessments and other data-based decision-making as teachers transition to a more student-centered approach. Though teachers do not participate in formal Professional Learning









fessional development and district-wide interventions. Principals are being trained to use iPads to conduct teacher evaluations. Next year the district plans on purchasing the Compass Learning software that automatically tells students what skills to work on

**Mathematics MCT2.** Between 2007–2008 and 2011–2012, there were also increases in the percentage of students performing above on the mathematics MCT2



which are supposed to assist in determining students' achievement levels aligned with the Common Core, identifying the skills that students need to improve, and suggesting actual lessons for students

- j Increase access to end-user tools (e.g., laptops) for students, especially for those



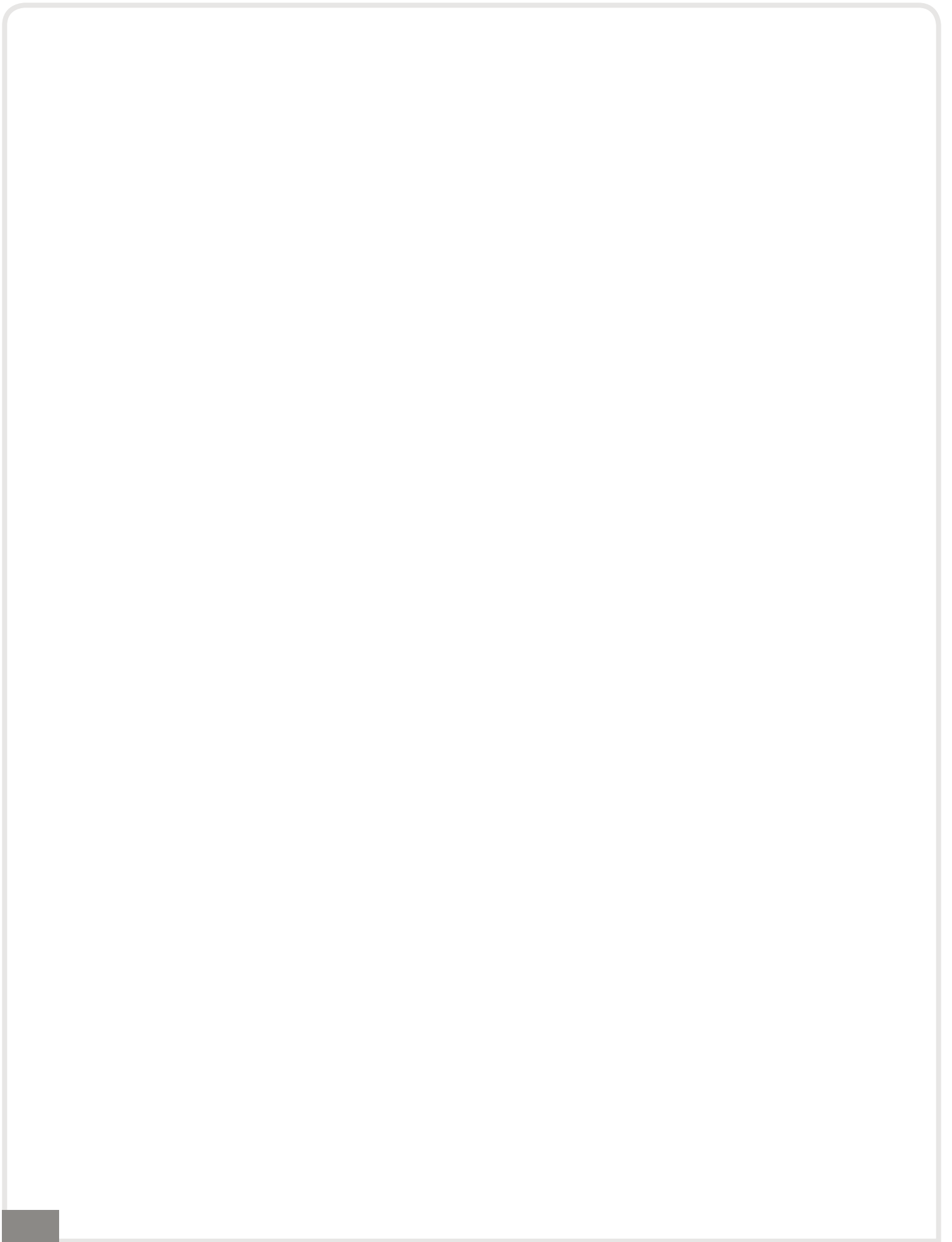


diligent infrastructure updates, thoughtful software procurement, and careful budgeting. Technology has become so integral to teaching and learning in the district that the technology vision has been incorporated into the education vision. Administrators credit the Cisco 21S Initiative for helping move the district more quickly down a path it was already on, and some refer to Cisco's role as akin to "throwing gasoline on a fire." "We were already getting to where we needed to go, but Cisco gave us what we needed to make it go a lot faster. So we were able to get things in place a lot faster than what we normally would have."

**Technology infrastructure and access.** According to the district, the technology infrastructure is holding up very well. The percentage of schools with access to the Internet has increased from 91% in 2009 to 100% today. The wired infrastructure is running well, though the system needs to be updated to support more mobile devices—initially considered a "convenience technology," the wireless network has become a "capacity technology." By committing resources to maintaining the technology infrastructure, Hattiesburg has been able to upgrade software, hardware, and communications systems, including the IP phones that were acquired during the Cisco 21S Initiative. They also updated the LAN infrastructure in 14 of the 19 schools during the initiative.

Parents' use of technology has increased, as well: The number of parents with Active Parent accounts doubled from 756 in 2009 to 1,563 in 2012. Similarly, the number of overall hits on the district website has increased 25-fold, from 20,225 in 2008–2009 to 523,816 in 2011–2012.

***Technology use and integration.*** District leaders say they have made an unwavering commitment to integrating technology into the curriculum, and emphasize that they



together across grade levels, subject areas, and schools to discuss issues that affect

**Mathematics MCT2:** Hattiesburg 7th- and 8th-grade students outperformed students across the state in 2011–2012, while statewide 3rd-, 4th-, 5th-, and 6th-grade students outperformed those in Hattiesburg County. Between 2007–2008 and 2011–2012, there also were increases in the percentage of students proficient or above on the Mathematics MCT2 in all of the six grades tested. Again, the largest increase was for 7th graders, where the percentage of students proficient or above increased by 30 points.

**SATP:** Between 2007–2008 and 2011–2012, Hattiesburg County students saw gains in two of the four SATP subject tests, English and Algebra I. There was a 15-point gain in the percentage of students receiving a passing score in English and a 6-point gain in the percentage of students receiving a passing score in Algebra I. Further, Hattiesburg students slightly outperformed students across the state in Algebra I in 2011–2012.





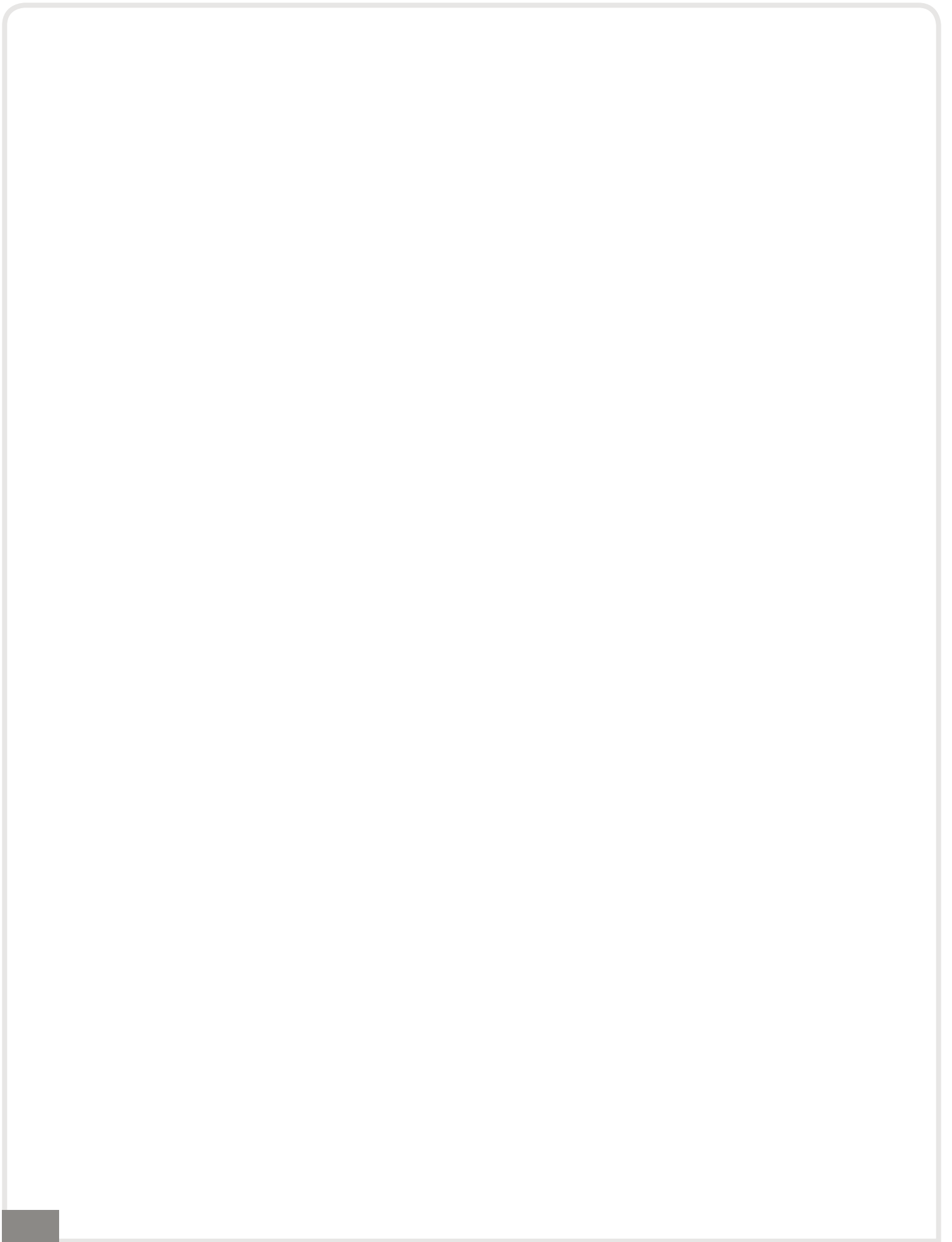
# Jefferson Parish Public School System

Over the past 18 months, the Jefferson Parish Public School System (JPPSS) has



- Providing individualized learning to low-performing students
- Focusing on 3rd-grade students to prevent future low graduation rates
- Addressing the 40% over-aged student population in middle schools
- Training and hiring high-quality general and bilingual teachers
- Creating strong alternative routes to licensure and bilingual certification

Because of the increase in the number of charter schools, school district leadership feels that families currently have more educational choices than they did in 2008.



## Climate

- Changes in personnel at all levels, from the school board to the classrooms, have increased tension and anxiety throughout JPPSS.
- The district leadership is transforming the culture from an adult-centered to a student-centered culture.
- JPPSS is endeavoring to combat the overall climate of the community by providing students with a safe, healthy, positive learning environment.

The leadership acknowledges that the teaching faculty is operating with increased anxiety because of the vast personnel changes, but also attributes the somber climate to the new educator evaluation system as well as the Common Core implemen-





JPPSS plans to reorganize and upgrade classroom physical layouts to improve old buildings and accommodate blended learning. They will dismantle current technology labs and move the technology into the classroom to support teaching and learning.

**Professional development.** JPPSS is in the process of providing professional development to aspiring principals through an academy funded by the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation. Currently, they plan to select people within the school district who are [prepared] individuals to assume any vacancy that takes place at the end of next year." In addition, JPPSS administrators are conducting targeted recruitment of quality teachers, including ELL teachers, who are graduating from local higher education institutions. They plan to start hiring them in April.

**Test scores.**<sup>1</sup> Making strides in student achievement is a central goal for JPPSS in the next four years. The leadership also is aware of the challenges associated with the



**ACT.** JPPSS students experienced an increase in average ACT scores between 2005–2006 and 2010–2011, going up by .5 points. In 2010–2011, students across the state outperformed JPPSS students by 1.3 points.

## Next Steps



## Vision

### *Key findings*

- The district's revised education vision takes a global perspective, looks to challenge and inspire students, and includes technology integration.
- FCSD recently established Professional Learning Communities

change, adjust, and improve instruction, not only in the classroom, but for future PD for teachers.”

Currently, all of the schools have at least one computer lab, and most have two;



teachers on the interactive whiteboards, voting systems, slates (for use with the interactive whiteboards), and other hardware and software. FCSD hopes to hire an instruc-



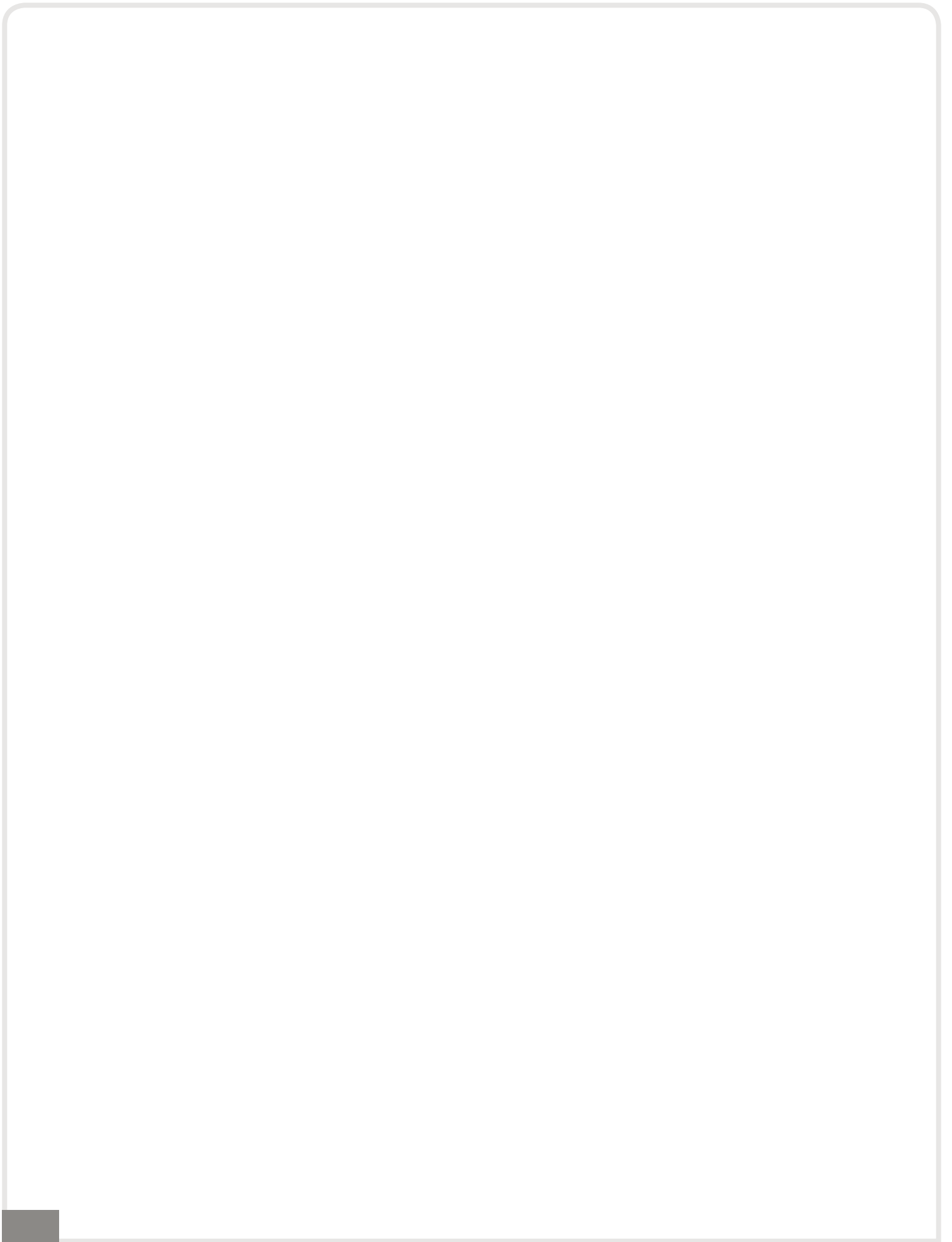
classrooms while providing implementation support across grade levels. FCSD has fully



I. Moreover, in 2011–2012, FCSD outperformed Mississippi state in English, Algebra I, and History. While there were decreases in FCSD scores in Biology I and History between 2007–2008 and 2011–2012, these changes were similar to those experienced across the state.

**ACT:** Forrest County School District experienced a decrease in average ACT scores between 2005–2006













Stakeholder input is actively solicited through multiple venues, including student advisory groups, social media, and online surveys for parents and teachers. To further increase parental and community involvement and demonstrate district commitment to the community, the district provides free breakfast to students, car-seat checks to all community members, and monthly visits to community organizations. The district's carpentry department will build the Moss Point city haunted house in the fall. Further,



**SATP<sup>3</sup>**

A higher percentage of high school students are passing their English and

# Forrest County Agricultural High School (FCAHS)

*NOTE: Forrest County Agricultural High School was available for an interview; as a result, this update is based on discussions with other members of the school's leadership team.*

Forrest County Agricultural High School is a district in and of itself. Progress since the end of the Cisco 21S initiative has been slow, due to frequent leadership changes, teacher retirements, and an aging technology infrastructure.

## Community Background

Forrest County Agricultural High School (FCAHS) is located in Brooklyn, a small rural town in southern Mississippi. It is located within Forrest County School District; however, FCAHS itself functions as a fully autonomous school and district unit. Out of a population of 75,842, Forrest County is 61% white and 36% African-American. Hispanics make up approximately 4% of the population, while Native Americans and Asians make up the remaining percentage. The county's per capita income is \$34,448 (FCAHS website).

## Vision and Leadership

### *Key findings*

75% of respondents welcomed a new superintendent in 2012–2013.

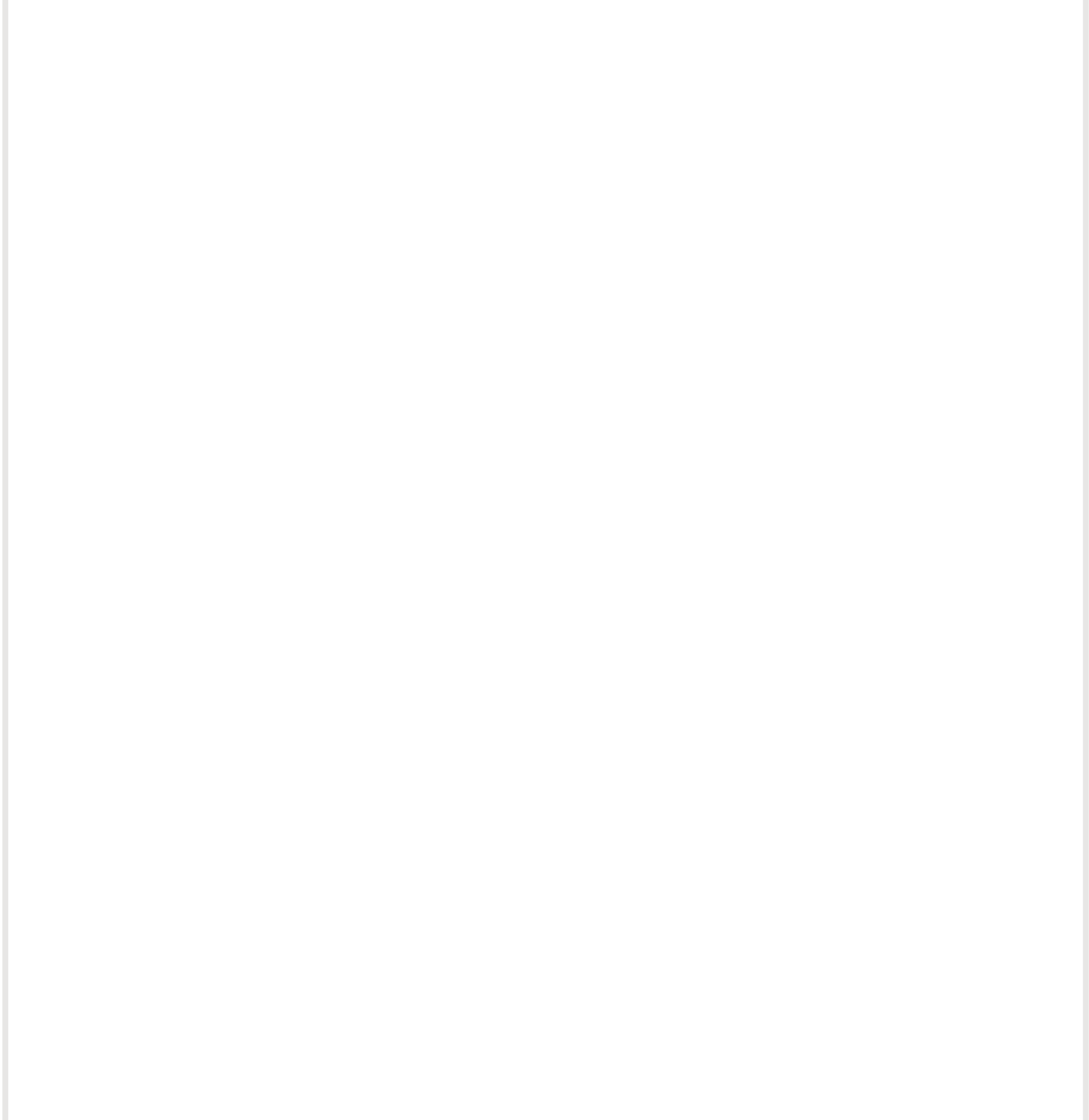




***Use and integration.*** Despite the challenges since the end of the Cisco 21S Initiative,







dance, graduation, and suspension rates. Family outreach and engagement remains both an area of strength and a place for growth for most districts.

*Learning.*



# **APPENDIX A: Cisco 21S Follow-Up Interview Protocol**

## **Introduction**

Mississippi and Louisiana are revamping their long-rim priorities to improve student pri

your district. We know that these are very broad topic areas, and we hope that thiras,



of these key technology investments? What has been most successful and why, and what has been most challenging and why?

Topics	2008-09	Now
Infrastructure		
Tools		
Technical Support		



