



Foothills Education Charter High School

*Curriculum, Assessment,
and Instruction*
January 30, 2019



"It's Never Too Late to Be What You Might Have Been"

Dear Foothills Staff, Families, Supporters, and Friends:

The 2019 school year has gotten off to a great start, with intensive work going on continually in our sites and classrooms (most important!), and at daily, weekly, and monthly planning and review sessions.

Superintendent **Dr. Sherrie Gibney-Sherman** has set the stage for this year with these words that will motivate and inspire us, and that will help frame our efforts:

"Foothills is committed to the continuous growth and improvement of our staff, of our curriculum, and of our services. The process of educating students is dynamic, and it changes continually in response to the the needs of students, the accountability measures, and the availability of resources - financial, knowledge, and talent. We must never think we are 'done' because we are not. Foothills has developed a continuous review process to ensure that we are making the necessary adjustments to be effective. The process is not easy and not necessarily predictable.

"The curriculum and assessment review and improvement process is continuous. In 2017-2018 Foothills formed teams of teachers to revise the GradPoint EOC courses to ensure

alignment to the standards and the curriculum and to provide formative assessments to promote success. In 2018-2019, Foothills teachers are piloting these new units and giving edits to the curriculum team for review. Students are moving over to the new courses as the old courses are closed. In 2019-2020, students will have access to revised piloted courses. Teacher curriculum teams will be on board to take additional edits. Thus, the process never stops.

"One of our biggest challenges is that we can't stop and make these corrections and transfer students out of current courses. We have to keep moving and offer different whatever type of support is necessary along the way. When opportunities present themselves to move students old of the old courses, which are now closed for new enrollment, into the newly designed courses, students remain hesitant to start over - even though the revised courses are so much better. We are working student-by-student to get them to move to the newer iterations.

"A logistical challenge for all of this good work is the geographic structure of Foothills, which makes it hard for teachers to meet and collaborate. Alternative communication strategies are being used such as posting in Google Docs and hosting online Zoom meetings.

"We are proud to say that, despite any obstacles, our teacher curriculum teams are excellent, and our terrific data teams are now able to provide specific student performance feedback to the curriculum teams. Foothills is fortunate to have so many professionals willing to work hard to make our instructional program as strong as possible. We are guided by one overarching thought: our students deserve our best collective efforts."

To move us closer to meeting the challenges ahead of us, please see below two exciting new developments at Foothills, in the areas of evaluation and assessment, and dual enrollment and connection to workforce and industry.





Richard Welsh - Evaluating Foothills

Foothills is very excited to have Dr. Richard O. Welsh, assistant professor the University of Georgia's Department of Lifelong Education, Administration, and Policy. joining the team, with the goal of providing a comprehensive, statistical look at our work.

Dr. Welsh will be working to capture the "myriad impacts" of the work done at Foothills, including:

- A comprehensive longitudinal evaluation of the impact of Foothills on the short- and long-term outcomes of students
- Identifying the possible effects of Foothills beyond test scores
- Analysis of themes and patterns across all sites.

Examining achievement data, parent and student surveys, interviews, site visits, Dr. Welsh's work will focus on these research questions:

- What are the impacts of Foothills on students' achievement, behavior and attendance, and postsecondary and labor market success, and on parents' satisfaction?
- In what ways has Foothills



Welcome, Irene Munn! Dual Enrollment for Foothills

Irene Munn, former legal counsel to Lt. Governor Casey Cagel, is bringing her expertise and College and Career Academy (CCA) network to support Foothills students. Munn has worked with charter systems and college and career academies across the state of Georgia, and will now be focusing on creating dual enrollment opportunities with Technical Colleges and connecting CCA to Foothills sites so that our students can take advantages of the many courses that are available throughout the state in areas such as welding, electronics, health care, and automotive work.

Munn's areas of focus will include CTAE programs, dual enrollment, industry recruitment of students, and building student belief and self-esteem.

Morgan Foothills has already begun this

shaped student, parent, and staff experiences, and other district and neighborhood outcomes?

Regarding this evaluation, Dr. Gibney-Sherman noted that "We're making a footprint across the state, and we need a 'mirror' to reflect and capture what we've achieved so far.

partnership in their new CCA by allowing Morgan Foothills students to augment their Foothills program of study with their CCA courses.

Currently Foothills has 100 dual enrollment students. "Exciting times are ahead," says Dr. Gibney-Sherman.



Molehills...

- Congratulations to **our 15th site and newest addition to the Foothills universe in Social Circle**. They are already up and running and serving students.
- We look forward to welcoming **our 16th site, Greene County**, this August. Stay tuned.
- In Fall 2018 **Foothills was designated as a Comprehensive Support and Improvement School (CSI) and Targeted and Support School (TSI)**. This earned designation was due to our graduation rate being below the state average of 67% and our 2016-17 EOC scores being in the lowest 5% of the state. Note: Our 2017-2018 scores look very different. Dr. Gibney-Sherman, Scott Gordon, and Meloni Belk will be attending the first GaDOE Winter Instructional Leadership Conference in Macon. Topics include Data-Driven Decision Making, CCRPI, Evidence-Based Instructional Practices, and SLDS Administrative Dashboard Training. We hope that, out of these sessions, we will bring strategies to our work to make us even stronger. A very small grant will be awarded for our efforts. Stay tuned.

Staff and friends, it is my privilege to be able to share these updates with you each month. See you next month with the next installment of important news.

*Best,
Dr. Ken Sherman*

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