

CASE STUDY

FLOYD COUNTY SCHOOLS (GEORGIA)

In 2007, Dr. Lynn Plunkett was named the interim superintendent of Georgia's Floyd County school system. Soon after assuming her new role, Dr. Plunkett realized that Floyd County needed a more efficient organizational structure. "Like many school systems, we were facing some serious budget issues," says Plunkett. "We needed to reorganize. We needed a plan that would allow us to cut unnecessary spending at the central office level without making cuts in the classroom."

Dr. Plunkett understood that changes to Floyd County's educational budget would require wisdom and some tough choices. She called on Education Planners to provide a knowledgeable, objective, outside analysis of the county's current structure and to offer practical suggestions regarding how the district might reduce costs and improve administrative efficiency. "Education Planners was wonderful," Plunkett states. "Their professionals listened and made sure they clearly understood our objectives. They also met with our school board, explained in laymen's terms the purpose of what they were doing, and helped lay a foundation for the final plan's credibility."

"We conducted a full, independent audit of Floyd County's spending," says James Wilson, chief executive and founder of Education Planners. "After assessing Floyd County's expenses, we determined that the school system was spending over 5% of its budget on its front office. In comparison to most school districts, that's high." With Floyd County's goals in mind, Education Planners presented various options and made recommendations. Ultimately, the district implemented Education Planners' suggestions, cutting two obsolete administrative positions and replacing them with more relevant, cost-efficient positions.

"James did not merely explain what our options were and what decisions might best help us achieve our goals, he did a great job of helping us understand what the possible consequences of each decision might be," adds Plunkett. "His former experience as a superintendent meant that he was constantly aware of what the fall-out and possible legal ramifications of our decisions could be. He not only communicated with me and the board, he went out of his way to make sure our attorneys stayed in the loop too."

As a result of Education Planners' efforts, Floyd County completely reorganized its central office. Formerly a system reliant on a "top-down" approach to administration and leadership, Floyd County's central office has assumed a much more supportive role. Its new structure gives onsite teachers and principals greater freedom and flexibility to make decisions, while providing individual schools with adequate support to ensure that issues are addressed professionally and in accordance with state and local educational standards. "Teachers and school administrators love it," Plunkett says. "We've gotten a great deal of positive feedback from school officials who love the freedom and who appreciate the increased level of central office support."

When asked if she would recommend Education Planners to conduct an independent audit and/or help school systems develop plans for improving their operations, Dr. Plunkett responds enthusiastically. "Without a doubt!" she exclaims. "James' experience, attention to detail, and overall wisdom have proven invaluable to Floyd County, making this school year 10,000 times better! I would highly recommend him to any superintendent seeking to improve their school system's efficiency."

THE CHALLENGE:

Organizing a more efficient central office structure for Floyd County's school system that will eliminate obsolete administrative positions, reduce costs, and limit cuts at the classroom level