Community-Based Education Platform—Through a shared Memorandum of Understanding (MOU), the Archway Partnership and the UGA College of Education placed an education coordinator in Hart County who specializes in connecting the College of Education to the Hart County School System. This part-time public service faculty member with expertise in K-12 education consults with Hart County school officials to uncover the needs determined by teachers and administrators and then identifies the students and faculty members who have the resources and skills to meet those needs. Through these connections, more UGA students get hands-on experience and the school system benefits from the collaboration with professors and top-level students.

Planning for Schools—Accurate demographics give local school officials the information they need to make efficient and effective decisions about the future of local schools. In Americus and Sumter County, Archway and professors from the College of Education are pursuing a project to compile demographic data and better understand students’ mobility. This data will help the school system analyze trends and make better decisions about where to locate new schools as well as what types of programs to offer for the county’s population. Students from UGA’s College of Environment and Design have also provided landscape and architectural designs for school campuses in the county.

Enhanced Community Awareness—Perception dictates reality, and in Pulaski County, many myths existed about the quality of the public school system. In order to dispel many of these myths, the Archway Professional and the local school superintendent took local civic and business leaders into the schools to highlight the quality of the facilities as well as the quality of instruction in the schools. The tour helped change many false beliefs about the school system and reaffirmed a commitment to quality schools from both local government officials and business leaders.

School System Accreditation—When the Clayton County school system lost their SACS accreditation, the Archway Partnership did not provide formal technical assistance, but did act as a neutral third party platform that helped facilitate conversations between local mayors, county commissioners and the school system as each group responded to the change. Together, the local leadership developed a strategic plan to help the school system regain its accreditation. Faculty from the UGA College of Education also provided empowerment workshops for students, while faculty from the Carl Vinson Institute of Government provided the new school board officials with professional development training.

Comprehensive Education—With a recently expanded four-year college, a new technical school, a growing public school system, and the addition of the Golden Isles Career Academy, a charter school dedicated to work-force development, Glynn County faces the perfect storm in education opportunities. Since a well-trained work-force is the key to attracting and retaining businesses, the relationship between the Golden Isles Career Academy and the Glynn County Board of Education can set the foundation that will help build a strong local workforce. Since charter schools are a relatively new phenomenon across Georgia, Archway’s role as a neutral, third-party platform has allowed it to help the Career Academy and Board of Education build and maintain the type of relationship that can serve as an example to communities across Georgia facing similar opportunities.