

Since 1872

Whitfield County Schools

Where Excellence is a Tradition



Standards Assessment Report AdvancED District Accreditation

For NCA CASI and SACS CASI Districts

November 9-12, 2008

Dr. Katie Brochu
Superintendent

TABLE OF CONTENTS

PREFACE

Quality Assurance Team Member Welcome Letter	iii
Quality Assurance Review Team	iv
Whitfield County Schools Board of Education Resolution	v
Whitfield County Board of Education	vi
Whitfield County Schools Administration and Operations	vii
Whitfield County Schools Directory	ix
Whitfield County Schools Enrollment and Demographic Summary ...	xiii

SECTION I: EXECUTIVE SUMMARY OF THE SCHOOL SYSTEM PROFILE

Executive Summary of School System Profile	Pages 1-23
--	------------

SECTION II: A REVIEW OF EACH STANDARD

Summary of Standards

Standard 1 – Vision and Purpose	Pages 24-32
Standard 2 – Governance and Leadership	Pages 33-40
Standard 3 – Teaching and Learning	Pages 41-48
Standard 4 – Documenting and Using Results	Pages 49-54
Standard 5 – Resources and Support Systems	Pages 55-63
Standard 6 – Stakeholder Communications & Relationships	Pages 64-67
Standard 7 – Commitment to Continuous Improvement	Pages 68-73

SECTION III: A DESCRIPTION OF SCHOOL SYSTEM'S METHODS

School System's Methods for Quality Assurance	Pages 74-77
---	-------------

SECTION IV: Online Peer-to-Peer Submission

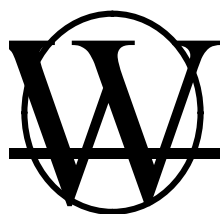
Peer-to-Peer Submission.....	Pages 78-81
------------------------------	-------------

SECTION V: CONCLUSION

Conclusion	Pages 82-85
------------------	-------------

SECTION VI: APPENDIX

Standard 1 Quality System Indicators	Pages 86-89
Standard 2 Quality System Indicators	Pages 90-92
Standard 3 Quality System Indicators	Pages 93-97
Standard 4 Quality System Indicators	Pages 98-100
Standard 5 Quality System Indicators	Pages 101-107
Standard 6 Quality System Indicators	Pages 108-109
Standard 7 Quality System Indicators	Pages 110-112



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November 9, 2008

Dear Quality Assurance Team Member:

On behalf of the Whitfield County School System, it is my pleasure to welcome you to our community. We appreciate your willingness to serve as a member of the QAR team and trust your visit will be enjoyable and productive.

We believe the district accreditation process will assist us as we continue our mission to increase student learning by providing students and staff with meaningful, challenging, and engaging educational experiences in a safe and supportive environment. As a member of the QAR team, we value your opinion and look forward to any recommendations or suggestions you may have to assist our school system in providing a quality education for students.

We believe that you will find the Whitfield County School System to be a responsive school system, valued and respected by the community, and focused on students. We recognize the important role our parents and community members play in providing encouragement and support for all students. As you travel through the community and visit our schools, we are confident you will see evidence of the pride and commitment our staff displays while serving our customers.

Again, welcome to our community and thank you for your willingness to assist the Whitfield County School System in the district accreditation process.

Sincerely,

Katie Brochu
Superintendent

**Whitfield County School System
District Accreditation Quality Assurance Review**

Sunday, November 9—Wednesday, November 12, 2008

District Name: Whitfield County School System **State:** GA
Number of Schools in District: 22
Team Members: 10

Superintendent's Name and Phone Number: Dr. Katie Brochu (706) 217-6723
System Webpage: <http://www.whitfield.k12.ga.us>
System Contact Name and Title: Dusty Brown, Assistant Superintendent
Contact's Email Address & Day Phone: dbrown@whitfield.k12.ga.us (706) 217-6714
System Complete Mailing Address: P.O. Box 2167, Dalton, GA 30722-2167

Team Members	Mailing Address (Street or PO Box)	Day Phone	Email Address
Chair: Dr. Emma Bass State Director	Arkansas NCA CASI AdvancED PO Box 719 State University, AR 72467	(888) 560-9622	ebass@astate.edu
Vice Chair: Dr. Tom Higgins Retired Principal	Cobb County Schools 4374 Walnut Creek Drive Kennesaw, GA 30152	(770) 428-2956	higgins05@bellsouth.net
Ms. Diane Kornegay Director, School Improvement, Professional Development and Assessment	School District of Clay County 23 South Green Street Green Cove Springs, FL 32043	(904) 284-6547	dkornegay@mail.clay.k12.fl.us
Ms. Rita B. McDonald Teacher/4 th grade	Elkton Elementary School 176 College Street Elkton, TN 38455	(931) 468-2285 (931) 638-0833	rbmcd@igiles.net ritamcdonald@att.net
Ms. Traci Dami Director of Federal Programs	Collier County Schools 5775 Osceola Trail Naples, FL 34109	(239) 377-0020	damitr@collier.k12.fl.us
Mr. Charles Dailey Director of Transportation	Lee County Schools 450 NW 14th Ave. Cape Coral, FL 33993	(239) 479-5614	charlesbd@leeschools.net
Dr. John Barge Director of Secondary Curriculum	Bartow County Schools 65 Gilreath Road Cartersville, GA 30120	(770) 606-5800	John.barge@bartow.k12.ga.us
Mr. Gerald Boyd School Improvement Specialist	Hall County Schools 711 Green Street NW Gainesville, GA 30501	(770) 534-1080	gerald.boyd@hallco.org
Dr. JoAnn Moss Principal	Elm Street Elementary 8 Elm St. Rome, GA 30161	(706) 232-5313	jmoss@rcs.rome.ga.us
Dr. Lisa Landrum Principal	Coosa Middle School 212 Eagle Drive NW Rome, GA 30165	(706) 236-1856	llandrum@floydboe.net

Whitfield County Schools Board of Education Resolution

A RESOLUTION OF THE BOARD OF EDUCATION OF WHITFIELD COUNTY DECLARING ITS CONTINUING SUPPORT OF THE VISION, MISSION, AND BELIEFS ADOPTED BY THE WHITFIELD COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Be it resolved that the Board of Education of Whitfield County on this date, the 6th of May of 2008, declares its continuing support of the Vision, Mission, and Beliefs adopted by the Whitfield County Public Schools. Be it further resolved that the Board of Education of Whitfield County does hereby affirm the Board's intent to pursue policies that lend its support to the system's Vision, Mission, and Beliefs.

Be it so forth resolved that the Board of Education of Whitfield County enthusiastically proclaims its support for the system's Vision, Mission and Beliefs.

Whereas the adopted vision is, "We envision a responsive school district that is focused on students and that is valued and respected by the community."

Whereas the adopted mission is, "Our mission is to increase student learning by providing students and staff with meaningful, challenging, and engaging educational experiences in a safe and supportive environment."

Whereas the adopted beliefs are;

"We believe in our school district having an innovative unified focus resulting in it being responsive to the needs of students, parents, and community at large."

"We believe that our core business is providing students with engaging, challenging, and meaningful work."

"We believe that the role of teacher is leader and designer of engaging, challenging, and meaningful learning experiences for students."

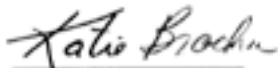
"We believe that all of our personnel, parents, and other community members are vital to the education of our students whose attention and commitment must be earned."

"We believe that all of our students, personnel, and parents deserve a safe, inviting, non-threatening learning environment where they are treated with dignity and respect."



Mr. Tim Trew, Chairman
Whitfield County Board Of Education

5-6-2008
Date



Dr. Katie Brochu, Superintendent
Whitfield County Schools

5/6/2008
Date

Whitfield County Board of Education



Front Row (L-R) – Mr. Tim Trew, Chairperson; Mr. Chuck Oliver, Vice-Chairperson
Back Row (L-R) – Mr. Gary Brock, Mr. John Thomas, and Mr. Jerry Nealey

Whitfield County Board of Education

Gary Brock
Jerry Nealey
Chuck Oliver, Vice Chairman
John Thomas
Tim Trew, Chairman

Whitfield County Schools Administration & Operations

Dr. Katie Brochu, Superintendent
_____, Executive Director - Assessment and Accountability
Dusty Brown, Assistant Superintendent – Teaching and Learning
Danny Hayes, Assistant Superintendent – Human Resources
Dr. Judy Gilreath, Assistant Superintendent – Support Services
Richard Schoen, Assistant Superintendent – Operations
Kenny Sheppard, Chief Financial Officer

Whitfield County Schools Central Office

- Sherry Moss, Receptionist
- Janie Osborn, Administrative Assistant
- **Community & Media Relations Specialist**
Eric Beavers
- **Assessment and Accountability**
Richard Schoen, Executive Director – Assessment and Accountability
Carolyn Weaver, Secretary – Assessment and Accountability
- **Teaching and Learning**
Dusty Brown, Assistant Superintendent
Robyn Baggett, Director – Teaching & Learning, North Team
Greg Bailey, Director – Teaching & Learning, South Team
Lorijo Calhoun, Director – Special Programs
Dee Goodwin, Coordinator – School Improvement, North Team
Debbie Griffin, Secretary – Program for Exceptional Children
Dr. Amy Haynes, Coordinator – School Improvement, South Team
Sarah Hoskins, Director – Program for Exceptional Children
Kathy Mashburn, Administrative Assistant – Teaching & Learning
Garry Parsons, Coordinator – Program for Exceptional Children, South Team
Kathy Reed, Coordinator – Program for Exceptional Children, North Team
Ruthie Rule, Coordinator – Program for Exceptional Children
Freida Talley, Administrative Assistant – Special Programs
Dr. Audrey Williams, Director – Curriculum Improvement
- **Human Resources**

Danny Hayes, Assistant Superintendent – Human Resources

Rhonda Yim, Director – Personnel

Ginger Stafford, Coordinator – Personnel

Beckie Newton, Coordinator – Personnel

Pattie Beason, Secretary – Professional Learning

- **Support Services**

Dr. Judy Gilreath, Assistant Superintendent – Support Services

Wanda Phillips, Director – Student Support Services

Mike Ewton, Director – Safety & Security

Jim Fugate, Director – Information Technology

Kathy Hoff, Coordinator – Instructional Technology

Linda Jones, Secretary – Support Services

Merijean Weeks, Secretary – Technology

- **Operations**

Richard Schoen, Assistant Superintendent – Operations

Iris Graham, Director – School Nutrition

Randy Jones, Director – Maintenance

Randy Cook, Director – Transportation

Brian Newton, Coordinator – Logistics

Bettye Adams, Coordinator – Transportation, North Team

Sandy Kelly, Coordinator – Transportation, South Team

- **Finance**

Kenny Sheppard, Chief Financial Officer

Sherrie Mullinax, Supervisor – Accounting

Kelly Johnson, Supervisor – Payroll

Rachel Morehead, Manager – Payroll/Benefits

Cindy Ownby, Supervisor – Accounts Payable

Whitfield County Schools Central Office

<http://www.whitfield.k12.ga.us/>

1306 S. Thornton Ave.

Dalton, GA 30720

Phone: (706) 217 – 6780 / Fax: (706) 217-6755

Elementary Schools

- **Antioch Elementary – Lisa Jones, Principal**
<http://www.whitfield.k12.ga.us/aes/>
1819 Riverbend Rd.
Dalton, GA 30721
Phone: (706) 278 – 7550 / Fax: (706) 226 – 9674
- **Beaverdale Elementary – Joe Barnett, Principal**
<http://www.whitfield.k12.ga.us/bes/>
1350 Prater's Mill Rd.
Dalton, GA 30721
Phone: (706) 275 – 4414 / Fax: (706) 259 – 2562
- **Cohutta Elementary – Allyson Millican, Principal**
<http://www.whitfield.k12.ga.us/ces/>
254 Wolfe St.
Cohutta, GA 30710
Phone: (706) 694 – 8812 / Fax: (706) 694 – 8390
- **Dawnville Elementary – Sherri Travisano, Principal**
<http://www.whitfield.k12.ga.us/des/>
1380 Dawnville Rd.
Dalton, GA 30721
Phone: (706) 259 – 3914 / Fax: (706) 259 – 7462
- **Dug Gap Elementary – Mandy Locke, Principal**
<http://www.whitfield.k12.ga.us/dge/>
2032 Dug Gap Rd.
Dalton, GA 30720
Phone: (706) 226 – 3919 / Fax: (706) 226 – 9753
- **Eastside Elementary – Ty Snyder, Principal**
<http://www.whitfield.k12.ga.us/ees/>
102 Hill Rd.
Dalton, GA 30721
Phone: (706) 278 – 3074 / Fax: (706) 226 – 9951
- **New Hope Elementary – Brinda Clayton, Principal**
<http://www.whitfield.k12.ga.us/nhe/>
1175 New Hope Rd.
Dalton, GA 30720
Phone: (706) 673 – 3180 / Fax: (706) 673 – 3182
- **Pleasant Grove Elementary – Richard Knox, Principal**

<http://www.whitfield.k12.ga.us/pge/>

2725 Cleveland Rd.

Dalton, GA 30721

Phone: (706) 259 – 3920 / Fax: (706) 259 – 6271

▪ **Tunnel Hill Elementary – Bert Coker, Principal**

<http://www.whitfield.k12.ga.us/the/>

203 East School St.

Tunnel Hill, GA 30755

Phone: (706) 673 – 4550 / Fax: (706) 673 – 4956

▪ **Valley Point Elementary – Karey Williams, Principal**

<http://www.whitfield.k12.ga.us/vpe/>

3798 S. Dixie Rd, SE

Dalton, GA 30720

Phone: (706) 277 – 3259 / Fax: (706) 277 – 7721

▪ **Varnell Elementary – Dr. Ellen Thompson, Principal**

<http://www.whitfield.k12.ga.us/ves/>

3900 Cleveland Rd.

Dalton, GA 30721

Phone: (706) 694 – 3471 / Fax: (706) 694 – 3289

▪ **Westside Elementary – Tracy Mardis, Principal**

<http://www.whitfield.k12.ga.us/wes/>

1815 Utility Rd.

Rocky Face, GA

Phone: (706) 673 – 6531 / Fax: (706) 673 – 5556

Middle Schools

- **Eastbrook Middle – Brian Satterfield, Principal**
<http://www.whitfield.k12.ga.us/ems/>
 700 Hill Rd.
 Dalton, GA 30721
 Phone: (706) 278 – 6135 / Fax: (706) 226 – 9859

- **New Hope Middle – George Kopcsak, Principal**
<http://www.whitfield.k12.ga.us/nhm/>
 1325 New Hope Rd.
 Dalton, GA 30720
 Phone: (706) 673 – 2295 / Fax: (706) 673 – 2086

- **North Whitfield Middle – Andrea Bradley, Principal**
<http://www.whitfield.k12.ga.us/nwm/>
 3264 Cleveland Rd.
 Dalton, GA 30721
 Phone: (706) 259 – 3381 / Fax: (706) 259 – 8168

- **Valley Point Middle – Britt Adams, Principal**
<http://www.whitfield.k12.ga.us/vpm/>
 3796 S. Dixie Rd., SE
 Dalton, GA 30721
 Phone: (706) 277 – 9662 / Fax: (706) 277 – 7035

- **Westside Middle – Dr. Stan Stewart, Principal**
<http://www.whitfield.k12.ga.us/wms/>
 580 LaFayette Rd., SW
 Rocky Face, GA 30740
 Phone: (706) 673 – 2611 / Fax: (706) 673 – 5349

High Schools

- **Crossroads - Lloyd Brochu, Principal**
 Fort Hill Terrace
 Dalton, GA 30720
 Phone: (706) 271 – 2495 / FAX: (706) 271 – 2496

- **Northwest Whitfield High School – Carolyn Towns, Principal**
<http://www.whitfield.k12.ga.us/nhs/>
 1651 Tunnel Hill-Varnell Road
 Tunnel Hill, Georgia 30755
 Phone: (706) 516-2200 / FAX: (706) 673-7098

- **Phoenix High School – Fred Toney, Principal**
<http://www.whitfield.k12.ga.us/phoe/>
 2818 Airport Road
 Dalton, Georgia 30721
 Phone: (706) 260-2200 / FAX: (706) 260-2200

- **Southeast Whitfield High School – Alan Long, Principal**
<http://www.whitfield.k12.ga.us/shs/>

1954 Riverbend Road
Dalton, Georgia 30721
Phone: (706) 876-7000 / FAX: (706) 278-3433

- **Whitfield Career Academy – Phillip Brown, Principal**
<http://www.whitfield.k12.ga.us/wca/>
2300 Maddox Chapel Road
Dalton, Georgia 30721
Phone: (706) 876-3600 / FAX: (706) 876-3602

Whitfield County Schools Enrollment and Demographic Summary

	Grades	AI	A	H	B	W	MR	FRL	ET
ELEMENTARY									
Antioch	PK-5	0%	0%	65%	1%	30%	4%	67%	616
Beaverdale	PK-5	0%	0%	11%	1%	83%	4%	43%	432
Cohutta	PK-5	0%	0%	7%	1%	87%	4%	52%	337
Dawnville	PK-5	0%	1%	54%	1%	40%	4%	65%	707
Dug Gap	PK-5	1%	1%	58%	2%	34%	4%	55%	517
Eastside	K-5	0%	1%	68%	3%	26%	3%	72%	593
New Hope	K-5	0%	2%	23%	2%	68%	5%	43%	622
Pleasant Grove	K-5	0%	0%	49%	1%	44%	6%	56%	616
Tunnel Hill	K-5	0%	1%	16%	1%	76%	6%	49%	359
Valley Point	K-5	0%	0%	32%	1%	61%	4%	63%	515
Varnell	K-5	0%	1%	40%	2%	52%	4%	52%	534
Westside	K-5	0%	0%	12%	2%	80%	6%	40%	556
MIDDLE									
Eastbrook	6-8	0%	1%	56%	1%	39%	3%	75%	798
New Hope	6-8	0%	1%	31%	3%	62%	4%	53%	561
North Whitfield	6-8	0%	1%	18%	2%	74%	5%	54%	622
Valley Point	6-8	0%	1%	35%	1%	60%	3%	66%	529
Westside	6-8	0%	0%	13%	2%	79%	5%	46%	556
HIGH									
Career Academy	9-12	0%	1%	33%	1%	63%	2%	60%	692
Northwest	9-12	0%	1%	15%	3%	77%	3%	37%	1822
Southeast	9-12	0%	0%	45%	2%	50%	2%	62%	1320

AI=American Indian

A=Asian

H=Hispanic

B=Black

W=White

MR=Multi-Racial

FRL=Free/Reduced Lunch

ET=Enrollment Total



Whitfield County Schools

Where Excellence is a Tradition



Section I

Executive Summary of the School System Profile

Standards Assessment Report AdvancED District Accreditation

For NCA CASI and SACS CASI Districts

<http://www.whitfield.k12.ga.us>

Executive Summary of School System Profile

Whitfield County is located in northwest Georgia at the southern end of the Appalachian Mountains. It is about 30 miles south of Chattanooga, Tennessee, and 80 miles north of Atlanta along the I-75 corridor. The county shares a northern border with Tennessee and covers nearly 290 square miles. The city of Dalton is the principle location for government and industry.

As a leading industrial center in the country, Dalton confidently proclaims itself the "Carpet Capital of the World." Crown Cotton Mill was the first large-scale manufacturing plant in north Georgia and brought economic growth to Whitfield County in the late 19th century. The Great Depression and the General Textile Strike of 1934 dealt severe blows to Crown Cotton Mill, which managed to stay in operation until 1969. Whitfield County still testifies to the strong legacy of the bedspread and carpet industries.

By the end of the twentieth century, 80 percent of the carpet produced in the United States, and more than 70 percent of the world's carpet, was produced by four companies located in Georgia, three of them—Beaulieu of America, Mohawk, and Shaw Industries—located in Whitfield County.

Immigration and Education

The Whitfield County School System was established in 1872. The system began as numerous one room school houses whose primary purpose was to educate children when they were not needed on the family farm. It evolved to the current established system comprised of 12 elementary schools, five middle schools, two traditional high schools, one Career Academy, one special purpose high school, and one alternative high school. With a student enrollment of 13,570, the Whitfield County School System is currently the twenty-sixth largest of the 180 systems in the state of Georgia and is experiencing a significant increase in student enrollment.

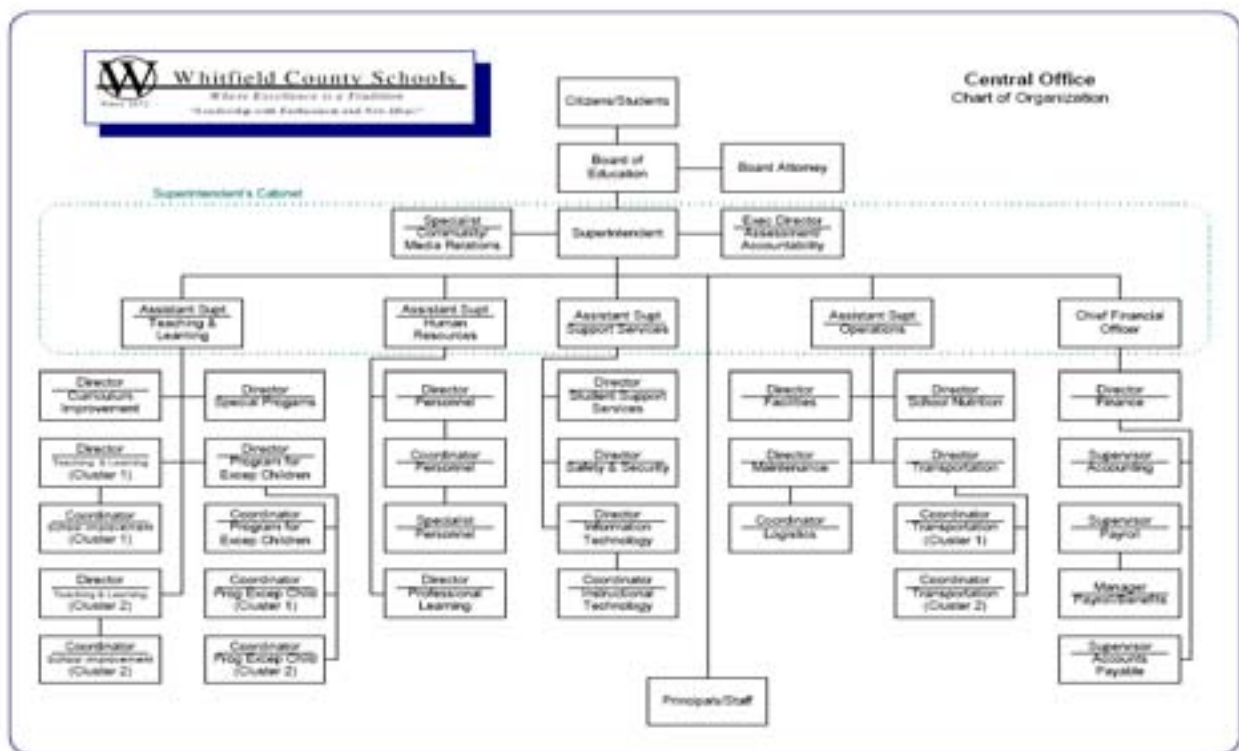
According to the 1990 census, Whitfield County had 72,462 residents (93.2 percent white, 4.0 percent African American, and 3.2 percent Hispanic). In 2006, U.S. Census estimates indicate the population in Whitfield County has grown to 92,999 (64.9 percent white, 3.8 percent black, and 29.3 percent Hispanic). The increase of Hispanic residents in the county is a consequence of the labor shortage experienced in the carpet industry during the 1990s. Hispanic immigrants moved to Whitfield County to fill the jobs in carpet manufacturing, and as a result 34 percent of the students in Whitfield County School System today are Hispanic.

In addition to the public schools, the county supports Dalton State College, a unit of the University System of Georgia. In a unique educational agreement for Northwest Georgia and perhaps the state, Whitfield County School System has agreed to host a facility for Dalton State College at its Career Academy campus. The college offers two-and four-year programs in areas ranging from education to medicine.

Central Office Structure

The current superintendent, Dr. Katie Brochu, is in her fourth year as superintendent of Whitfield County School System. Dr. Brochu indicated that one of her initial goals was to ensure an effective and efficient staff at the system level. In spring of 2006, an external consultant was contracted to analyze the school system's organizational structure. From an organizational perspective, the question was, "How should the system's central office be staffed and organized to best serve the needs of the school system and the citizens of Whitfield County?" The study was commissioned to secure an external perspective of the organizational structure, roles, relationships and responsibilities of the central office and how those might be revised to improve the quality of service to schools and other constituents.

As a result of this study, the structure was changed and is reflected in the following chart.



Central office personnel are responsible for ensuring that the adopted curriculum is appropriately implemented in each school through working effectively with principals, assistant principals, curriculum coordinators, instructional specialists, classroom teachers and others. The most important function of schools is the instruction of students through the system and state-mandated curriculum. A significant number of the central office personnel comprise the Teaching and Learning team which seeks to address the system's core business of providing engaging work for students.

System Vision, Mission, Beliefs and Goals

The Whitfield County School System's vision, mission, and beliefs were developed in 2005 by the System Design Team. This team consists of both certified and classified staff members from across the system, guides the implementation of the Schlechty framework, and provides direction to the system. The System Design Team solicited stakeholder input in the process of generating the vision and goals. The superintendent presented an initial draft to personnel at each school and requested their feedback. School board members and school councils also provided input.

Vision

We envision a responsive school district that is focused on students and that is valued and respected by the community.

Mission

Our mission is to increase student learning by providing students and staff with meaningful, challenging, and engaging educational experiences in a safe and supportive environment.

Beliefs

1. We believe in our school district having an innovative unified focus resulting in it being responsive to the needs of students, parents, and the community at large.
2. We believe our core business is providing students with engaging, challenging, and meaningful work.
3. We believe the role of teacher is leader and designer of engaging, challenging and meaningful learning experiences for students.
4. We believe all of our personnel, parents, and other community members are vital to the education of our students whose attention and commitment must be earned.
5. We believe all of our students, personnel, and parents deserve a safe, inviting, non threatening learning environment where they are treated with dignity and respect.

Goals

Developing a Focus on Students

Throughout the school system there is a clear focus on students and on the quality of the work provided to students—work that students find interesting, challenging, and satisfying and that results in students learning what is expected by schools, parents, and the community.

Patterns of Engagement

Nearly all classes are highly engaged, and when they are not, teachers make every possible effort to redesign the pattern of activity in the classroom so that more students are engaged.

Indicators of Measurement:

1. Most classrooms can accurately be characterized as highly-engaged classrooms.
2. Teachers intentionally plan the work they provide to students in ways that reflect attention to building in those qualities that show the most promise of increasing engagement.
3. When the pattern of student engagement differs from that which teachers want or expect, teachers analyze the work provided to discover what might account for the difficulty and take corrective action.
4. Teachers commonly work together to analyze the characteristics of the work they are providing students and provide each other assistance and advice regarding ways of making the work more engaging to students.

Student Achievement

Parents, teachers, the principal, and the board of education, as well as others who have a stake in the performance of the schools, are satisfied with the level and type of learning that are occurring.

Indicators of Measurement:

1. There are solid data upon which to base judgments regarding student achievement.
2. Central office personnel, parents, teachers, community leaders, and state officials are confident that they have an accurate picture of the level of student achievement.
3. In general, parents are satisfied that their children are progressing the way they believe the children should progress and are learning what they need to learn.
4. Those who receive students from this school (middle schools in the case of elementary schools, high schools in the case of middle schools, institutions of higher education and employers in the case of high schools) are satisfied that students from the school are learning what they need to learn to succeed in the receiving environment.

5. Students who have attended the school and have moved to other schools or places of work believe that they learned what they needed to learn while in attendance here and have an overall favorable judgment of the quality of their experience in the school.

Content and Substance

Teachers and administrators have a clear, consistent, and shared understanding of what students are expected to know and to be able to do at various grade levels. This understanding is consistent with such official statements of expectations as state standards and standards established by local boards. Teachers and administrators also have a reasonable assessment of student interest in the topics suggested by these expectations and standards.

Indicators of Measurement:

1. Most teachers can articulate what students under teachers' tutelage are expected to know and to be able to do.
2. Teachers are in agreement regarding what students are to be expected to know and be able to do.
3. The views teachers have about what students are able to learn are generally the same as the views of the principal.
4. The ideas, propositions, and facts that are presented or made available reflect the best understandings of experts in the field of concern and are consistent with the views and lines of argument presented by scholars in the relevant disciplines.
5. Teachers have conducted a careful review of standardized tests (local and state sponsored) to determine the content students are expected to master.
6. Teachers are generally satisfied that those things that are being tested are things that should be taught to students even if there were no testing program.
7. Teachers provide students with a wide range of activities that call on them to work with content and processes that have been identified as worth knowing and mastering.

A Safe Environment

Students and parents feel that the school, as well as each classroom, is a physically and psychologically safe place: success is expected and failure is understood as a necessary part of learning, there is mutual respect between and among faculty and students, and the fear of harm or harassment from fellow students and demeaning comments from teachers is negligible.

Indicators of Measurement:

1. As measured by such criteria as the number of discipline referrals, acts of violence, and threatening behavior, this school and each classroom in it are objectively safe environments.
2. Students and teachers feel that they are safe.
3. The faculty and the administration in this school treat each other with respect and deference. For example, conversations and discussions in the teachers' lounge and in faculty meetings are friendly and civil; they seldom reflect hostility, snide remarks, or general lack of courteous behavior.
4. Faculty members treat students with respect.
5. Students are respectful of each other, faculty members, and other adults in the school.
6. When students interact in peer evaluations, for example, the interactions are respectful, friendly, and supportive.
7. When students fail to meet standards but are making sincere efforts, the teacher and the students accept the failure as a normal part of the learning process.
8. It is expected that nearly all students will meet standards at some point, and when they fail to do so, teachers or other adults work directly with the students to diagnose the cause of the failure and correct the situation.
9. Students are provided feedback on their performance on a regular basis, not just at the time that grades are given or distributed.
10. Students have access to the resources needed (people, time, and technologies in particular) to provide optimum opportunities for success.
11. When a student, after numerous tries, fails to meet standards, faculty members work together to find new approaches to the task.

Staff Engagement

Teachers, administrators, and support staff employed by the school district are satisfied with their work and understand how their roles contribute to the system's direction.

Indicators of Measurement:

1. There are solid data upon which to base judgments regarding staff engagement and job satisfaction.
2. Most staff report a high level of job satisfaction.
3. Most staff understand their role and how their job contributes to the core business of the school district.
4. The school district intentionally implements recruitment and induction strategies consistent with the values, beliefs, mission, and vision of the school district.
5. Most staff report a high level of trust and support for innovation.

For additional information including a list of artifacts related to each goal, visit www.whitfield.k12.ga.us

Programs and Services

The Whitfield County School System serves 13,570 students from pre-kindergarten through twelfth grade. The system consists of 22 schools; 12 elementary schools (kindergarten through fifth grade), five middle schools (sixth through eighth grade), two traditional high schools (ninth through twelfth grade), one Career Academy, one special purpose high school, and one alternative high school.

Curriculum Framework

Whitfield County School System's teachers and administrators work hard to incorporate programs and services that enhance the Georgia Performance Standards (GPS) and engage students in both the content and method of delivery. We believe that our core business is providing students with engaging, challenging, and meaningful work. Students are viewed as customers whose attention and commitment must be earned. The following design qualities developed by the Schlechty Center provide guidance as teachers create experiences for students at all levels in various programs. The Design Qualities of Content are used to plan all lessons, while the Design Qualities of Choice are used selectively when they are appropriate to the topic and learners' developmental needs.

Design Qualities of Context	Design Qualities of Choice
<ul style="list-style-type: none">➤ Content & Substance➤ Organization of Knowledge➤ Clear & Compelling Product Standards➤ Protection from Adverse Consequences	<ul style="list-style-type: none">➤ Product Focus➤ Affirmation➤ Affiliation➤ Novelty & Variety➤ Choice➤ Authenticity

Student Programs and Services

The design qualities are fundamental to all services and programs offered to Whitfield County students. Descriptions of select services are as follows:

- **AIMSweb** - A scientifically based, formative assessment system that 'informs' the teaching and learning process by providing continuous student performance data and reporting improvement to parents, teachers, and administrators to enable evidence-based evaluation and data-driven instruction.
- **After School Care** - Elementary students may stay beyond school hours from 2:30 until 6:00 p.m. for a small fee. Students are assisted with their homework and also engage in recreational activities.
- **ConnectED** – This service provides the ability to strengthen relationships with parents and students by communicating using a personalized message.
- **Crossroads Academy** - This facility serves middle and high school students who have been removed from a regular classroom due to chronic discipline issues. While temporarily attending this school, students are offered the services they need to succeed academically.
- **D.A.R.E. (Drug Abuse Resistance Education)** - This program gives our students the skills needed to avoid involvement in drugs/alcohol, gangs, and violence. A police officer leads a series of classroom lessons that teach students in upper elementary grades how to resist peer pressure and live productive drug- and violence-free lives.
- **Early Head Start Program** - Whitfield County currently has three Early Head Start Programs in place with one class being at the special-needs Pre-Kindergarten Center. This class provides inclusion opportunities for Pre-Kindergarten students with disabilities.
- **Early Intervention Program (EIP)** - This program is state-funded and designed to serve students who are at risk of not reaching or maintaining academic grade-level performance in kindergarten through fifth grade. Whitfield County School System serves EIP students in all 12 elementary schools.
- **English to Speakers of Other Language (ESOL)** - Each school has an ESOL program in place through Title III funds. The goal of this program is to provide instructional support to English Language Learners (ELLs) as they balance learning new content while learning a new language. Schools use a variety of instructional models including the sheltered approach which has the dual focus of teaching English language acquisition in tandem with content area instruction. The co-teaching method is also offered when appropriate so that English Language Learners can remain in the regular education classroom and receive language support services. This allows the ELLs to experience the GPS curriculum while receiving the services they need. ELLs

participate in a Newcomer Program until they acquire the basic communication and academic language needed to be successful in content area instruction. The goal is to move students into sheltered or co-teaching environments as quickly as possible.

- **Exceptional Student Services (ESS)** - This department is responsible for overseeing all services and provisions for students with disabilities ages three to 22, as well as students who are gifted. Students with disabilities receive all services to which they are entitled under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act of 2004 (IDEA). Services are detailed through Individualized Educational Programs (IEP) for each eligible student. A Free and Appropriate Public Education is provided in the Least Restrictive Environment for each student with disabilities with more than 70% receiving special education services in the general education setting for the majority of the school day. The full continuum of services, including resource and self-contained, is also offered in order to meet the needs of individual students. Gifted students receive appropriate services in the resource setting at the elementary level with opportunities for enrichment in the general education setting. At the middle and high school levels, coursework is differentiated in order to challenge gifted learners. Advanced Placement (AP) and Georgia Virtual School courses are also offered in order to further challenge high-achieving students including those identified as gifted. The ESS department strives to support each school as they meet the challenges of providing appropriate and engaging work for exceptional students.
- **Georgia Virtual School** - Middle and high school students have the opportunity to enroll in courses not offered at their school through this online resource. Students can also use Georgia Virtual School for credit recovery. This service is offered by the Georgia Department of Education.
- **Graduation Coaches** - These staff members work in a guidance capacity to help middle and high school students understand the importance of staying in school until graduation. Graduation Coaches assist students academically in small groups or tutoring sessions. They act as liaisons between students and teachers in an effort to support instruction. They also prepare students for post secondary educational opportunities. The ultimate goal is for students to graduate from high school and become successful contributing citizens.
- **Instructional Extension Programs** - Schools identify and serve struggling students in the areas of reading and math. Instructional Extension services can occur during the school day or beyond school hours. Qualifying students receive small group and targeted instruction in addition to their regular instruction.
- **Instructional Specialists** - Several of our schools have chosen to utilize Title I to fund Instructional Specialists. These specialists assist the regular classroom teacher with instructional strategies to use with struggling students. They provide on-going professional learning opportunities for the staff at their respective schools.

- **NovaNET** - Designed for grades 6-12, NovaNET is a comprehensive, online courseware system that meets diverse student needs. This provides thousands of hours of research- and standards-based, interactive curriculum and integrated assessments. The software assesses student skills, offers individualized, diagnostic instruction, and strengthens basic skills that will provide a solid foundation for future learning. NovaNET is used at the high school level for credit recovery and is making a positive impact on the system's graduation rate.
- **Outreach Coordinators** - This is a service provided by the Family Support Council, a local umbrella agency which connects families to local services. School Outreach Coordinators are non-certified. They typically have a caseload of 20 families with elementary school students with a focus on kindergarten and first grade.
- **Parent Involvement Coordinators** - Six Parent Involvement Coordinators serve 20 schools in our system. These Parent Involvement Coordinators serve all families; however, all six are bilingual which enables them to provide strong support to Hispanic/Latino families. They lead parent workshops on various topics and develop on-going relationships with the families they serve. Enhancing communication is a major part of their role. They assist with translation of system-, school- and classroom-generated documents, parent conferences and school meetings when needed.
- **Phoenix High School** - As a special-purpose high school, Phoenix offers students a flexible schedule of day or evening classes. Phoenix serves students whose life circumstances prevent them from attending or being academically successful in a traditional high school program. The school is jointly funded and governed by the Whitfield County and Dalton Public Schools' boards of education.
- **Pre-Kindergarten** - We currently have five schools that operate a state-sponsored pre-kindergarten program. These programs help students to be better prepared for the academic and social adjustment to kindergarten. With the rapid influx of Hispanic/Latinos to WCS, an additional goal of the pre-kindergarten program is to strengthen students' English acquisition skills. In addition, a pre-kindergarten special education center is located on the campus of one of our middle schools.
- **Reading Recovery (RR)** - Currently, eight schools offer the Reading Recovery Program, with plans to expand to all 12 elementary schools. Through RR, first-grade students who are identified as at-risk for reading failure receive an additional 30 minutes of individualized instruction daily from a RR teacher.
- **Response to Intervention (RTI)** - In response to state and federal legislation, the Whitfield County School System's elementary schools have created their own Pyramid of Interventions. These pyramids are models which detail the levels of support that are available to struggling general education students. Each school's plan contains the evidence-based interventions they will utilize once students have been identified through progress monitoring. The goal is to assist students in a timely manner before they fall behind their peers in mastering the standards.

- **Standards-Based Report Cards** - All 12 elementary schools are using standards-based report cards to convey student performance to parents/guardians of kindergarten through second-grade students. Three schools have fully implemented standards-based report cards in kindergarten through fifth grade. This grading system allows parents to understand student progress on a continuum as opposed to a letter-grade system.
- **Title I** – Federal funds based on the economically disadvantaged student population are used to provide instructional support to elementary and middle school students. Each Title I school decides how Title I funds can best address the learning needs of their students through their school improvement plan. Homeless and migrant high school students also receive benefits through Title I.
- **Whitfield County Career Academy** - The Whitfield County Career Academy is a charter school with multiple career-related options such as child development, culinary arts, graphic arts, construction, automotive, computer information technology, robotics and automation. Students may attend the Career Academy full-time or choose to attend part-time with the remainder of their day scheduled at one of the traditional high schools.

Staff Programs and Services

Additionally, the following programs and services are offered to schools and their staffs:

- **Data profiles** - Members of the Teaching and Learning Team work with school leaders to create a data room at each school intended to track student performance over a three-year period. This information is updated annually by using a provided template and used to revise school improvement plans and to make informed instructional decisions.
- **Leadership Academy** - This academy is designed for individuals from across the system who want to enhance their skills as innovative leaders and designers of quality work that engages both students and staff members. Participants work to develop a deeper understanding of fundamental concepts such as the nature of engagement, the core business, and systems thinking. Each participant works to develop a personal leadership plan, explore the role of teacher as leader, create an action research project, and develop appropriate strategies for causing and sustaining change.
- **New Teacher Induction** - It is the goal of WCS to recruit and retain the best teachers available who have a commitment to developing quality work for students and view themselves as “teacher leaders.” The purpose of the on-going professional learning process is to promote a clear understanding for new employees about what the learning organization expects of them and what they can expect of the organization. New teachers are oriented to embrace the norms and values of the organization which

are based on Schlechty ideals. Additional support is provided throughout the year by offering professional learning opportunities addressing classroom needs.

- **Technology Help Desk** - This web-based tracking system enables the technology department to be responsive to the needs of schools and system employees. Staff members log in information regarding technology problems so that technology workers can address these issues in a timely fashion. The more rapid response allows technology to be functional and available for student use.

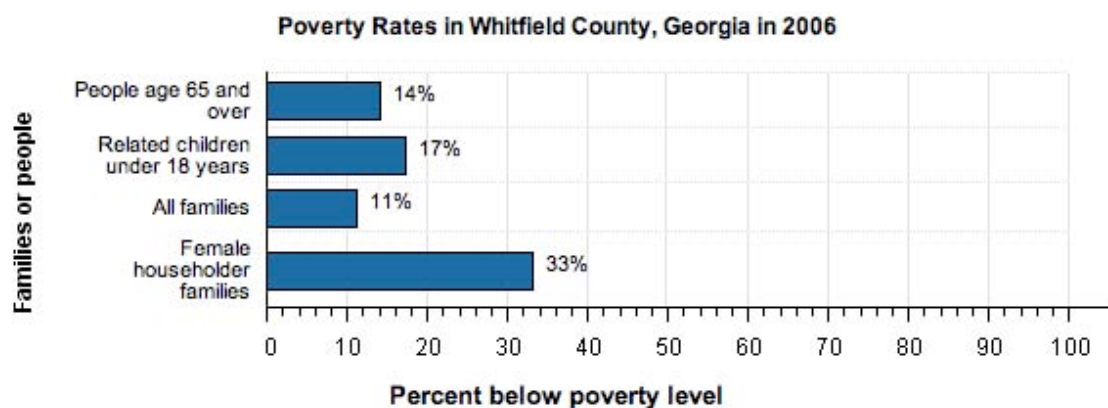
DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION

Community Characteristics

According to the U.S. Census Bureau 2006 estimate, the population breakdown of Whitfield County by ethnicity is as follows: 64.9% white, 29.35% Hispanic/Latino, 3.8% African American and 1.2% Asian. It is important to note the rapid rate at which the Hispanic/Latino subgroup increased over recent years.

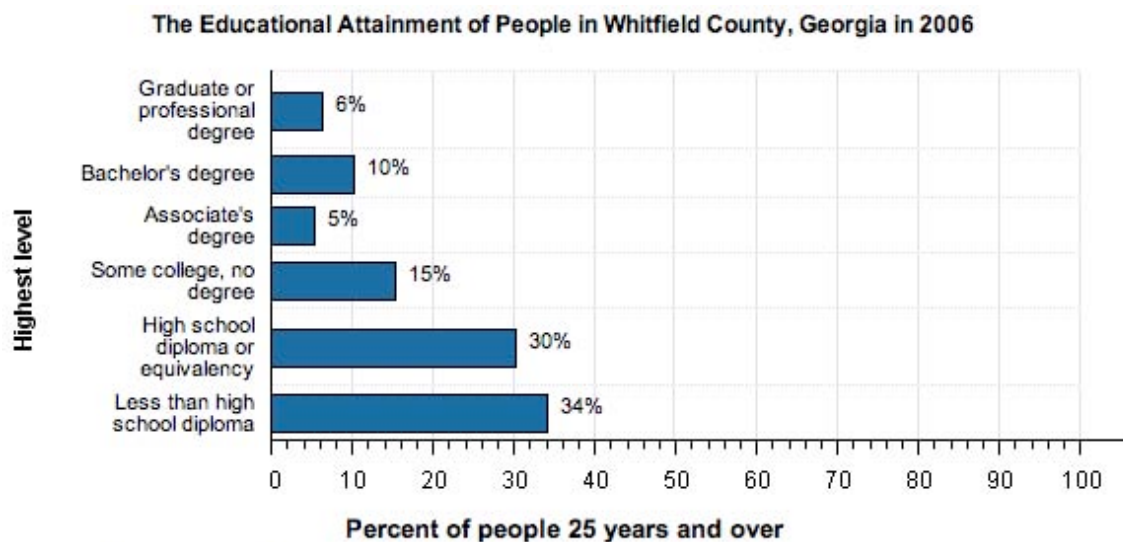
The U.S. Census Bureau estimated that in 1990, 2,321 Hispanics/Latinos resided in Whitfield County. This is in sharp contrast to the 2000 census that reported that 18,419 Hispanics/Latinos were residents. The 2006 Census estimate indicates that approximately 30% of the residents of Whitfield County are of Hispanic/Latino origin.

The table below suggests that many children in the Whitfield County area are affected by poverty. In 2006, 17% of children under the age of 18 were living below the poverty level.



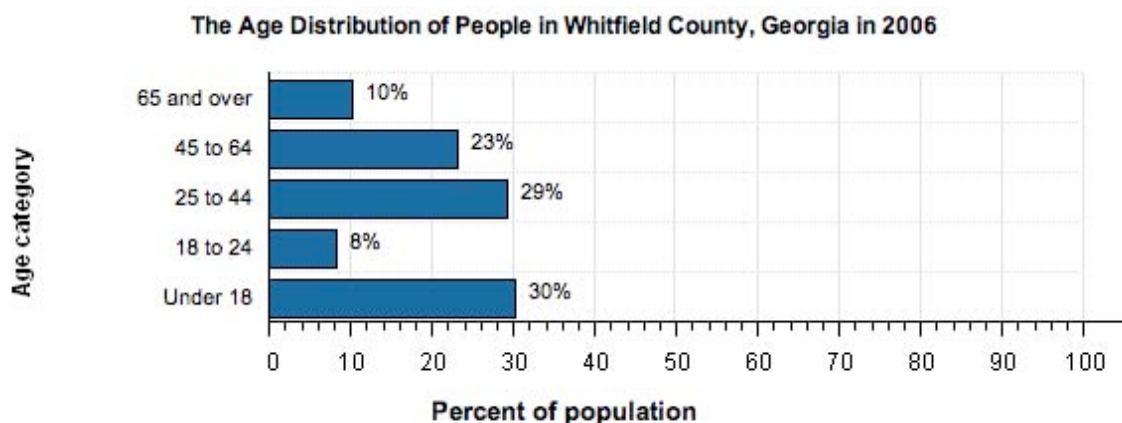
Source: American Community Survey, 2006

Increasing the graduation rate continues to be a focus in the Whitfield County School System. Refer to the chart below for data from the U.S. Census Bureau regarding the educational attainment of people in Whitfield County.



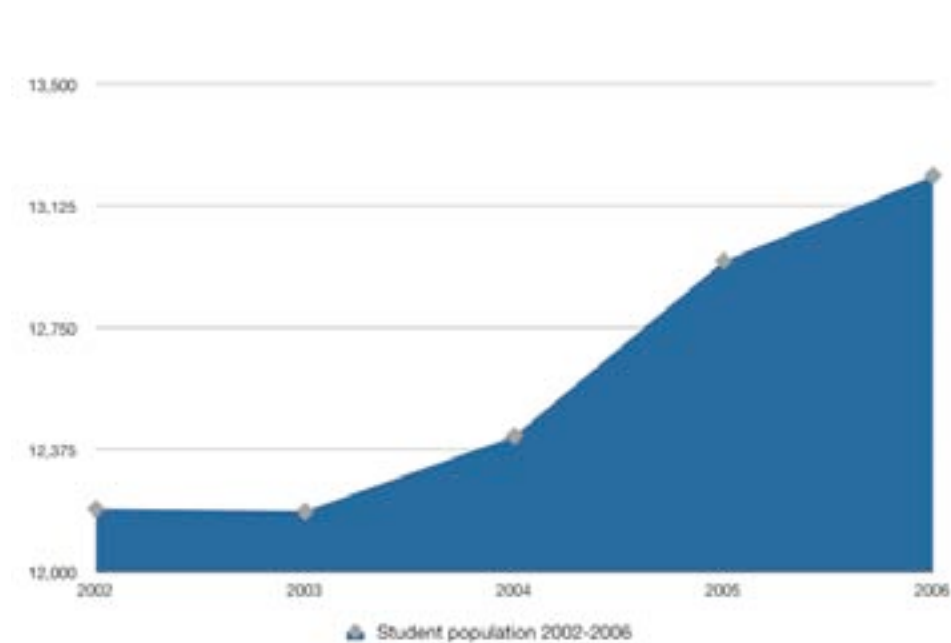
Source: American Community Survey, 2006

Census data suggests that the population of Whitfield County is primarily young. Thirty percent of the 2006 population was under 18.



Source: American Community Survey, 2006

This presents a unique challenge for our school system as we work to serve the needs of this large group. The following table provides an overview of the student population growth in the school system during a five-year period.



Additional demographic information regarding Whitfield County can be found at:

http://factfinder.census.gov/servlet/NPTable?_bm=y&-geo_id=05000US13313&-qr_name=ACS_2006_EST_G00_NP01&-ds_name=&-redoLog=false

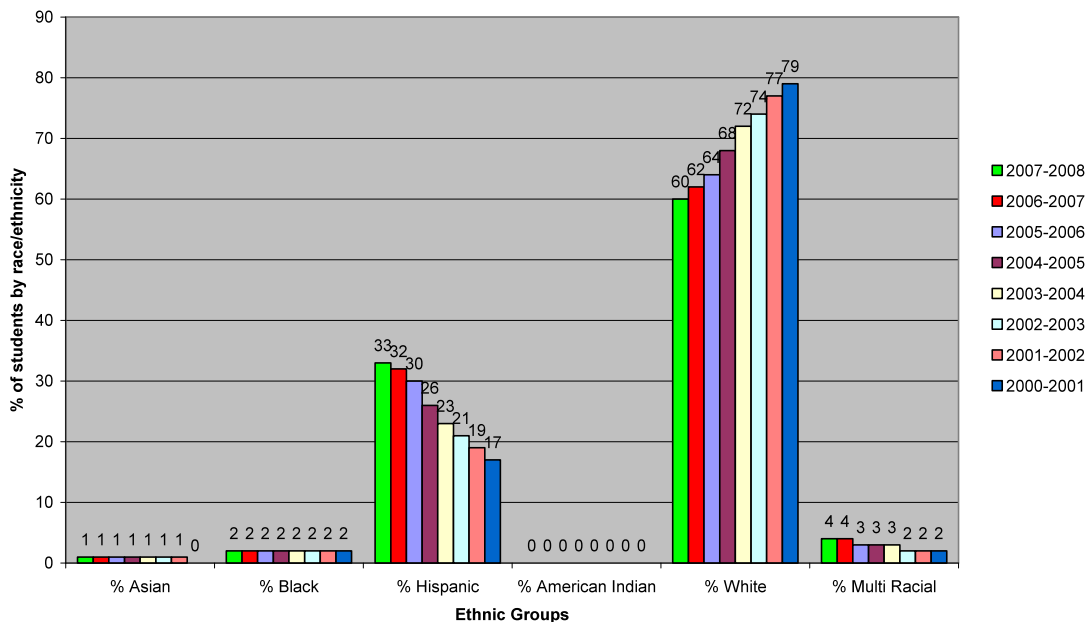
Student Characteristics

The data in the following tables represent student demographic information for the past three years including current data regarding the number of students who are attending Whitfield County Schools.

Whitfield County Schools Students by Race/Ethnicity 2005-2009

Category	2005-2006	2006-2007	2007-2008	2008-2009
	%	%	%	%
Total Students	100	100	100	100
White	64	62	60	60
African-American	2	2	2	2
Hispanic	30	32	33	34
Asian	1	1	1	1
Multi-racial	3	4	4	4
ESOL	10	11	13	13
Students with Disabilities	11	10	10	10
Economically Disadvantaged	53	56	58	58

**Whitfield County Schools Enrollment Trends
Students by Race/Ethnicity
2000-2008**



The Whitfield County School System student population consists of primarily two ethnic groups, Hispanic and White, with small percentages of Asian, Black, and Multi Racial. Over the past six years, there has been a slight decrease in the White student population while the Hispanic population has increased proportionately. Over the past three school years, the ESOL subgroup has increased by approximately 200 students per year.

**Whitfield County Schools
Mobility Rate
2003-2007**

	2003-2004		2004-2005		2005-2006		2006-2007	
Level	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%
Elementary	1245	19	1231	19	1242	18	1279	18
Middle	563	18	573	18	490	16	536	17
High	1407	37	1367	35	1487	36	1497	36

Report Information:

Mobility rates are calculated from the Student Record enrollment data for each school year. A 'mobile' student is one who enters or withdraws from school after September 1 of the school year in question.

It is important to note that mobility, most significantly at the high school level, is an issue faced by the system as evidenced by the above data. While these mobility rates have stabilized and are not increasing at the current time, a substantial number of students move during the course of the school year and experience gaps in instruction.

**Whitfield County Schools
Title I Program
2003-2009**

School Year	Number of Eligible Schools	Number of Schools Served Targeted Assistance	Number of Schools Served Schoolwide
2003-2004	9	0	9
2004-2005	10	1	9
2005-2006	12	2	10
2006-2007	15	2	13
2007-2008	17	2	15
2008-2009	17	0	17

Report Information:

The status of each Title I school is determined from the information reported in the Student Record data collection.

In 2008, 55% of Whitfield County students were in the economically disadvantaged category. For this reason, the number of schools with Title I programs has increased. Currently, all 12 elementary schools and all five middle schools are school-wide Title I programs.

MAJOR TRENDS AND ISSUES

Student Population Growth and Changing Demographics

Since 2002, the Whitfield County School System has experienced substantial growth in its overall student population as well as within specific subgroups such as English for Speakers of other Languages (ESOL) and the economically disadvantaged. Refer to the table on page 33 of this document.

The above noted growth to the overall student population has led to increased needs for additional schools, related staff and resources. Currently a fourth high school is being planned. This school will be in the northeast region of Whitfield County and is scheduled to open in 2011. An additional elementary school, which will serve students in the southeast region of the county, is also being planned and is scheduled to open fall of 2009.

Associated with this growth are needs for facilities, technology and other resources. Whitfield County voters approved a local ESPLOST in September 2006 and this funding will allow the system to address facility needs. This vote is an indicator that local taxpayers are supportive of the school system's vision/mission and its related efforts.

Technology

In response to an ever-increasing technological society, Whitfield County Schools are implementing a system-wide focus on technology that began in the summer of 2007. Each school was allocated funds in order to increase the technological resources in its building. School administrators, their leadership teams, design teams, and staffs developed a plan which would most effectively strengthen their current technological capabilities. Materials which schools have elected to purchase include--but are not limited to--desktop computers, laptops, LCD projectors, wireless networks, servers, ACTIVboards, ACTIVslates, and iPods. Related professional learning sessions are conducted to support teachers as they integrate new forms of technology into their teaching methodologies.

Whitfield County School System is exploring new ways to increase both communication and instructional opportunities through internet resources. Having educational tools in place which can be accessed beyond the four walls of the classroom offers many benefits for all students. Middle and high school students who are experiencing difficulty may review targeted skills through NovaNET and Georgia Virtual School's credit recovery programs. All students at these grade levels can take virtual classes through Georgia Virtual Schools, allowing them access to less commonly taught curricula which are not offered in our schools. These resources also allow students to continue their learning during illness or in the event of natural disasters.

SYSTEM STRENGTHS

Shared Focus

Through the leadership of the Whitfield County Board of Education and superintendent, the Whitfield County School System began four years ago working toward achieving system standards within a continuous improvement model outlined by the Schlechty Center for Leadership in School Reform. This partnership has a tremendous impact on the way the system conducts its core business of providing quality work and services for its students. A System Design Team was created with teacher, support staff, and leader representation from across the entire system. This team has worked to develop a system-wide vision and goals. Additionally, the team focuses on building capacity by creating structures for continuity and results-oriented decision making.

Numerous professional learning opportunities have also been generated in response to our partnership with the Schlechty Center. Teachers and system leaders have attended Schlechty Center conferences to learn more about the urgency to change instructional practices and how to design engaging work for students. Consultants have provided on-site training as well. This professional learning has been pervasive and consistent

throughout the system, often including personnel who serve students outside of the classroom such as transportation personnel, food service employees, clerical staff, as well as administrators. School board members have supported this initiative by attending professional learning sessions, contributing ideas, and using the Schlechty framework as a basis for decisions. WCS understands the impact that all employees have on students.

In response to initial professional learning sessions, schools and groups across the system have embarked on book studies through which they seek more information to address system vision and goals. Design teams were developed at the school-level and are working to improve the quality of work available to students.

Renewed Focus on Collaboration

With the implementation of the Georgia Performance Standards, we are experiencing new interest in collaboration. Teachers are working together in various ways within their schools while partnering with other schools across the system. The Teaching and Learning Team facilitates monthly afternoon meetings in which various grade levels meet to discuss curriculum topics and share ideas. Southeast and Northwest High School maintain a focus on high school graduation by sponsoring collaborative sessions with their feeder schools to create a sense of community and unity among students at all levels.

School groups utilize both vertical and horizontal planning with an emphasis upon the transitions that students make between elementary, middle, and high school levels. Collaboration between the Whitfield County School System and Dalton State College will ease the transition from high school to college.

During the spring of 2008, The Whitfield County School System held a “Celebration to Commitment” event. This experience gave schools across the system the opportunity to collaborate and share what their individual design teams had accomplished during the school year. Participants learned about class scheduling, engaging work, and using protocols to guide instructional conversations--are all tied to the Schlechty framework.

Teacher Induction

An additional strength of the school system is the emphasis on the recruitment and retention of qualified and dedicated teachers. The system seeks individuals who have a commitment to developing quality work for students and view themselves as “teacher leaders.” The human resources department has developed a professional learning process with the goal of promoting a clear understanding of system expectations. New teachers are oriented to embrace the norms and values of the organization which are based on Schlechty ideals.

During this intensive two-day training, inductees participate in a Working on the Work Foundations course. Topics include “Ways to Measure Engagement,” “Schlechty’s 10 Design Qualities,” “Design vs. Plan,” “Bloom’s Taxonomy,” and “Protocols to Enhance Collegiality.” Additional support is provided throughout the year by offering teachers

opportunities for networking and professional development. The following table details intended results of the Foundations training:

Intended Results:

- Understanding the relationship between engaging work for students and the desired results for schools.
- Identify and understand the characteristics of engaging work for students.
- Design an engaging learning experience for students.

Guiding Questions:

- What are the essential concepts and components of the Working on the Work framework?
- How does the Working on the Work framework provide us with a way to think about and design quality work for students?
- What does the Working on the Work framework mean for the roles of teachers, principals, and system-level leaders?

Needs

Data-driven Decision Making and Progress Monitoring

Within the Schlechty framework, one of the six critical systems that support a learning organization focuses on data collection and transmission of knowledge to stakeholders. Data and its impact on the decision-making process is an important component of this area. Schools are using various software to assist with data management; however, the lack of a common data management tool is a challenge the system is addressing.

During the 2007-2008 school year, Whitfield County Schools hired a technology consultant to assess the system's technology capacity and to assist in generating a plan for implementing needed improvements. The recommendation from the consultant was to address infrastructural needs before purchasing or subscribing to large-scale software and data assessment tools. The infrastructure is currently being addressed, and plans are to select and implement a new data management system beginning in January of 2009.

Data management programs such as AIMSweb and Measures of Academic Progress (MAP) are currently under consideration for purchase by the system to be used for tracking student performance data. Students will be assessed regularly, and the resulting formative data will allow teachers to tailor instruction to meet the current educational needs of each student. Teachers are able to intervene promptly before students have fallen significantly behind. Once intervention plans are in place, the on-going formative data determines their effectiveness so that instructional modifications can be implemented to maximize student progress.

Choice in Curricular Opportunities

- The Whitfield County School System realizes the importance of offering students multiple opportunities to obtain an education. At the middle and high school levels, Georgia Virtual School is offered to allow students to enroll in classes not available at their local school. Students take the online class at home or school with assistance provided by a supervising teacher.
- NovaNET is an additional curricular opportunity which allows students to recover credit online. Students progress at an individual pace and are assessed regularly to monitor learning progress.
- Video streaming is used to increase content development beyond the traditional classroom textbook. Several content areas are enhanced through the use of online videos.
- High school students have the opportunity to enroll in classes at their traditional high school while simultaneously taking career tech classes at the Whitfield County Career Academy.

While these opportunities allow students to learn content in nontraditional formats, the Whitfield County School System realizes the need to continue to expand its educational opportunities and choices for students. With the advancement and growth in technology, the learning style preference of students has changed. Therefore, the instructional methods and philosophy of the system must also change to meet the needs of the students. Offering students choice in curricular opportunities will remain a focus in the upcoming years.

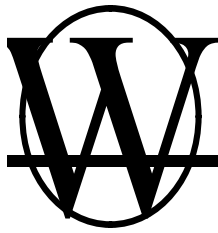
Ongoing Professional Learning

With the system focus on Schlechty Center principles, pervasive professional learning for all staff members is a continued need. Professional learning experiences consisting of conferences, workshops, collaborative discussion groups, design teams, and book studies will be offered to a wide variety of staff members. This opportunity will include representation from all departments and job descriptions. The goal is to provide a continuing induction process to ensure all staff members understand and implement the framework, as well as support the system's vision.

As new forms of technology are purchased and introduced, it is critical that professional learning address how new instructional tools will be integrated into instruction. Teachers attend workshops at the national to school levels to learn introductory information and then work collaboratively with peers to develop proficiency. It is believed that professional interaction and peer support will increase the daily use of technology in instructional experiences. When teaching digital natives, the appropriate use of technology provides additional avenues of student engagement.

With the implementation of the Georgia Performance Standards (GPS), educators from across the system are participating in professional learning in various content areas. Teachers are working collaboratively to design units that will actively engage students in the learning process. Supplemental experiences related to these standards allow participants to develop common pre/post-assessments, sequencing charts, and performance tasks. Representatives from all schools have collaborated in these efforts, resulting in more comprehensive and quality instructional tools.

In response to the rapid influx of English Language Learners (ELLs), there is an on-going need to provide training that facilitates culturally responsive teaching. Strategies which recognize how language is learned and which build upon the similarities between languages are emphasized. The goal is for ELLs to learn content knowledge and English simultaneously. ESOL teachers at all levels have been trained to use the WIDA (World-Class Instructional Design and Assessment) frameworks. Additional information regarding these frameworks may be found at: <http://www.wida.us/>. ESOL teachers work collaboratively to share this information with homeroom and content teachers as they work within the co-teaching model. In the near future, book studies and professional learning workshops will focus upon how to strengthen co-teaching instruction for both ESOL teachers and the teachers they support.



Since 1872

Whitfield County Schools

Where Excellence is a Tradition



Section II

A Review of Each Standard

Standards Assessment Report AdvancED District Accreditation

For NCA CASI and SACS CASI Districts

<http://www.whitfield.k12.ga.us>

Whitfield County Schools

District Accreditation Committees

Standard 1 - VISION AND PURPOSE

The system establishes and communicates a shared purpose and direction for improving the performance of students and the effectiveness of the system.

CHAIRPERSON:

Danny Hayes

Assistant Superintendent of Human Resources

COMMITTEE MEMBERS:

Bettye Adams

Transportation Coordinator, Whitfield County Schools

Andrea Bradley

Principal, North Whitfield Middle School

Janice Carlock

Secretary, Beaverdale Elementary School

Brinda Clayton

Principal, New Hope Elementary School

Cindy Dobbins

Assistant Principal, Valley Point Middle School

Marie Goss

Secretary, Valley Point Middle School

Richard Knox

Principal, Pleasant Grove Elementary School

Angela Hayes

Teacher, Cohutta Elementary School

Alan Long

Principal, Southeast High School

Impact Statement: A system is successful in meeting this standard when it commits to a purpose and direction that is shared system-wide. The leadership establishes expectations for student learning aligned with the system's vision that is supported by system and school personnel and external stakeholders. These expectations serve as the focus for assessing student performance and district effectiveness. The system's vision guides the allocation of time and human, material, and fiscal resources.

Indicators Rubric

Please indicate the degree to which the noted practices/processes are in place in the school system. The responses to the rubric should help the school system identify areas of strength and opportunities for improvement as well as guide and inform the school system's responses to the focus questions.

INDICATORS		Not Evident	Emerging	Operational	Highly Functional
In fulfillment of this standard, the system:					
1.1	Establishes a vision and purpose for the system in collaboration with its stakeholders				X
1.2	Communicates the system's vision and purpose to build stakeholder understanding and support			X	
1.3	Identifies system-wide goals and measures to advance the vision				X
1.4	Develops and continuously maintains a profile of the system, its students and the community			X	
1.5	Ensures that the system's vision and purpose guide the teaching and learning process and the strategic direction of school, departments, and services			X	
1.6	Reviews its vision and purpose systematically and revises them when appropriate			X	

Definitions

Not Evident

Little or no evidence exists

Emerging

Evidence indicates early or preliminary stages of implementation of practice

Operational

Evidence indicates practices and procedures are actively implemented

Highly Functional

Evidence indicates practices and procedures are fully integrated and effectively and consistently implemented.

Focus Questions

1. What is the process for establishing and building understanding of and commitment to the vision statement among the school system and its stakeholders?

The vision, mission, and beliefs that guide the Whitfield County School System were collaboratively developed through the leadership of a system-wide design team. Since their development and adoption, they remain front and center; the filter through which all system decisions are made. Decision making is routinely conducted by asking three questions. 1) Is it true to our Vision? 2) Does it align with our Beliefs? 3) Will it help us achieve our Mission? The core work of our district is to increase student learning by providing students and staff with meaningful, challenging, and engaging educational experiences in a safe and supportive environment.

Vision, Mission, and Beliefs Statement

Vision

We envision a responsive school district that is focused on students and that is valued and respected by the community.

Mission

Our mission is to increase student learning by providing students and staff with meaningful, challenging, and engaging educational experiences in a safe and supportive environment.

Beliefs

1. We believe in our school district having an innovative unified focus resulting in its being responsive to the needs of students, parents, and the community at large.
2. We believe that our core business is providing students with engaging, challenging, and meaningful work.
3. We believe that the role of teacher is leader and designer of engaging, challenging and meaningful learning experiences for students.
4. We believe that all of our personnel, parents, and other community members are vital to the education of our students whose attention and commitment must be earned.
5. We believe that all of our students, personnel, and parents deserve a safe, inviting, non-threatening learning environment where they are treated with dignity and respect.

2. What is the system's process for maintaining and using information that describes the school system, its programs, services, and schools and their performance?

While working with the Schlechty Center over the past two years, the importance of knowing “the who” when designing work has become clear to our organization. Without having a clear understanding of the customer (student, parents, and community), it is impossible to design work that meets individual needs. Whitfield County's Teaching and Learning Team has developed a data room to help identify needs of the schools and its diverse sub-groups. The Title I Coordinator has developed a system profile to help facilitate this process. This system profile identifies demographic information by schools and system, breaking it down into very specific categories. (i.e. enrollment, ethnicity, free reduced lunch, drop-out data, attendance, graduation rate, Limited English Proficiency (LEP), English to Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL), exceptional students, and gifted). Standardized testing results are also available. (Georgia High School Graduation Test (GHS GT), 5th Grade Writing Assessment, Middle Grades Writing Assessment (MGWA), Criterion-Referenced Competency Tests (CRCT), ACT scores, SAT scores, Iowa Tests of Basic Skills (ITBS), and End of Course Tests (EOCT). Much of this information has been made accessible through the Georgia Department of Education (GDOE) website. The data room concept has become effective in analyzing student data throughout our system. Many of the schools have designed their own data rooms, so staff can better identify individual student needs and design work to engage all learners.

3. How does the leadership ensure that the system's vision, purpose, and goals guide the work of the school system and its schools?

Whitfield County's membership in the Standard-Bearer Network enables leaders in the system to foster a future orientation, maintain focus and direction, and act strategically. Given a clear vision, powerful goals can be set. The vision is a template that makes it possible for school leaders to clearly articulate questions like these:

- Who are we?
- What accomplishments will make us proud?
- If we present ourselves as who we say we are and accomplish what we propose to accomplish, is there reason to believe that those who support us will value our accomplishments as much as we do?

Whitfield County School System envisions a **responsive** school system that is focused on students and that is **valued** and **respected** by the community. As we reflect on our vision, three words stand out and demand particular attention. We feel that we must be **responsive** to the needs of our customers, ensuring that we are meeting both individual and community needs. We accomplish this by setting a clear direction and purpose to communicate effectively to all stakeholders. Whitfield County School System aspires to be **valued** and **respected** by its community. This goal is accomplished by setting a clear vision and goals that are assessed on effectiveness of the district-level capacity.

Developing District-Level Capacity

Standards	Systems	Actions
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Developing shared understanding of the need for change •Developing shared beliefs and vision •Developing a focus on students and on the quality of work provided to students •Developing structures for participatory leadership •Developing structures for results-oriented decision making •Developing structures for continuity •Providing ongoing support •Fostering innovation and flexibility •Employing technology •Fostering collaboration 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Directional System •Recruitment and Induction System •Knowledge Development and Transmission System •Evaluation System •Boundary System •Power and Authority System 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Engage in strategic thinking to inform strategic planning •Support school improvement and design of quality work •Align system work based on student needs •Enhance leadership development •Implement appraisal cycles •Involve the community in meaningful ways • Utilize a decision-making process •Develop a continuity plan •Continue transformation to a learning organization •Seek district accreditation

4. What process is used to ensure that the vision and purpose of the school system remain current and aligned with the system's expectations in support of student learning and the effectiveness of the school system and its schools?

The Whitfield County School System, as a member of the Standard-Bearer Network, participates in a self-assessment design by the Schlechty Center. The two-day process centers on focusing on the future, maintaining direction and focus, and acting strategically. These are essential for our system to become a learning organization. During the process, design team members are asked to collaborate and rate the system's capacity in the areas listed below. Design team members must be able to identify evidence or provide artifacts to support their rating. After each assessment, the design team members come to a consensus and determine where to direct our energy, resources, and focus.

Focus on the Future

Developing a shared understanding of the need for change: Members of the board of education, the superintendent, central office staff, principals, teacher leaders, leaders of parent organizations, and key community leaders have a common understanding of the nature of the problems and opportunities that confront the school system and base their discussions of these issues on the common body of fact and information.

Developing shared beliefs and vision: The school system and its community develop within the local context a compelling vision of what schools can be and how schools should be related to the community—a vision capable of earning wide support in the school system and consistent with a set of well-articulated beliefs regarding the nature of schools and the school enterprise.

Maintain Direction and Focus

Developing a focus on students and on the quality of work provided to students: Throughout the school system there is a clear focus on students and on the quality of the work provided to students—work that students find interesting, challenging, and satisfying and that results in their learning what is expected by school, parents, and the community.

Developing structures for participatory leadership: The school system develops patterns of leadership and a structure of relationships such that teachers are leaders, principals are leaders of leaders, and all school system-level activity is focused on providing direction and support for schools.

Developing structures for results-oriented decision making: The school system develops a result-oriented management system and quality-focused decision-making process that are consistent with the beliefs that guide the system and that ensure that the measures of quality conform with the requirements of those who provide support to students and the schools.

Develop structures for continuity: The school system provides for stability in leadership, structure, and culture over time, including support for innovative efforts that produce desired results.

Act Strategically

Providing ongoing support: The school system provides system of training, incentives, and social and political support for those who are committed to the system's vision, mission, and beliefs widens support for the pursuit of the beliefs and vision among members of the community.

Fostering innovation and flexibility: The school system develops a policy environment and a management system that fosters flexibility and rapid response; that encourages innovative

use of time, technology, and space; that encourages novel and improved staff patterns; and that creates forms of curriculum organization that are responsive to the needs of students.

Employing Technology: The school system and community display a common understanding of the transformational nature of changes in information-processing technologies, and the school system provides all students and adults who work in the school the tools required for quality work.

Fostering collaboration: The school system encourages and supports the creation of relationships within the school system, between schools and parents, and among those agencies and groups that provide service to children and youth in order to ensure that each child has the support needed to succeed in school and in the community.

DEVELOPING DISTRICT-LEVEL CAPACITY



WORKING ON THE WORK

Systemic Properties	Design Resources	Design Qualities	Results for "Customers"
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Culture <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Beliefs - Commitments - Meanings - Values - Lore - Traditions • Structure <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Rules - Roles - Relationships 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Resource Variables <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Time - People - Space - Information • Technology <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Tools - Processes - Skills 	<p><u>Design Qualities of Context</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Content and substance • Organization of knowledge • Clear and compelling product standards • Protection from adverse consequences for initial failures <p><u>Design Qualities of Choice</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Product focus • Affirmation of performance • Affiliation • Novelty and variety • Choice • Authenticity 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • For community and society at large <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - What students learn is culturally significant and valued by the community and society at large. • For parents <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Students are happy. - Students are safe. - Students learn what parents believe they should learn. • For the school system <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Students are engaged. - Students persist with the work. - Students learn what teachers want them to learn. • For students <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Interesting work - Challenging work - Satisfying work



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Standard 2 - GOVERNANCE AND LEADERSHIP

The system provides governance and leadership that promote student performance and system effectiveness.

CHAIRPERSONS:

Robyn Baggett	Director, Teaching and Learning
Sarah Hoskins	Director, Exceptional Children

COMMITTEE MEMBERS:

Phillip Brown	Principal, Whitfield Career Academy
Darlene Cartwright	Teacher, Northwest High School
Wendy Curtis	Parent, Valley Point Elementary School
Dr. Amy Haynes	Coordinator of School Improvement
Erin Kenemer	Parent Mentor, Exceptional Children
George Kopcsak	Principal, New Hope Middle School
Janie Osborn	Administrative Assistant, Whitfield County Schools
Wanda Phillips	Director, Student Services
Ruthie Rule	Coordinator, Exceptional Children
Mike Smith	Parent, Southeast High School
Karey Williams	Principal, Valley Point Elementary School
Cathy Wilkins	Parent, Northwest High & North Whitfield Middle School

Governance and Leadership

Impact Statement: A system is successful in meeting this standard when it has leaders who are advocates for the system's vision and improvement efforts. The leaders provide direction and allocate resources to implement curricular and co-curricular programs that enable students to achieve expectations for their learning. Leaders function with clearly defined authority and responsibility and encourage collaboration and shared responsibility for system and school improvement among stakeholders. The system's policies, procedures, and organizational conditions ensure equity of learning opportunities and support for innovation.

Indicators Rubric

Please indicate the degree to which the noted practices/processes are in place in the school system. The responses to the rubric should help the school system identify areas of strength and opportunities for improvement as well as guide and inform the school system's responses to the focus questions.

INDICATORS		Not Evident	Emerging	Operational	Highly Functional
In fulfillment of this standard, the system operates under the jurisdiction of a governing authority that:					
2.1	Establishes and communicates policies and procedures that provide for the effective operation of the system			X	
2.2	Recognizes and preserves the executive, administrative, and leadership authority of the administrative head of the system				X
2.3	Ensures compliance with applicable local, state, and federal laws, standards, and regulations			X	
2.4	Implements policies and procedures that provide for the orientation and training of the governing board			X	
2.5	Builds public support, secures sufficient resources, and acts as a steward of the system's resources			X	
2.6	Maintains access to legal counsel to advise or obtain information about legal requirements and obligations			X	
2.7	Maintains adequate insurance or equivalent resources to protect its financial stability and administrative operations			X	

INDICATORS		Not Evident	Emerging	Operational	Highly Functional
In fulfillment of this standard, the system operates under the jurisdiction of a governing authority that:					
In fulfillment of this standard, the system has leadership that:					
2.8	Provides for systematic analysis and review of student performance and school and system effectiveness			X	
2.9	Creates and supports collaborative networks of stakeholders to support system programs			X	
2.10	Provides direction, assistance, and resources to align, support, and enhance all parts of the system in meeting organizational and student performance goals			X	
2.11	Provides internal and external stakeholders meaningful roles in the decision-making process that promote a culture of participation, responsibility, and ownership				X
2.12	Assesses and addresses community expectations and stakeholder satisfaction			X	
2.13	Implements an evaluation system that provides for the professional growth of all personnel			X	

Definitions

Not Evident	Little or no evidence exists
Emerging	Evidence indicates early or preliminary stages of implementation of practice
Operational	Evidence indicates practices and procedures are actively implemented
Highly Functional	Evidence indicates practices and procedures are fully integrated and effectively and consistently implemented.

Focus Questions

1. What is the process for establishing, communicating, and implementing policies and procedures for the effective operation of the system and its schools?

As required by the Georgia School Board Association (GSBA), the Whitfield County Board of Education receives a minimum of six hours of training per year regarding topics such as communications, policy, and new board member orientation. This training is provided to the Whitfield County School System by the GSBA. The GSBA also helps to keep the school system informed of policies that need to be added or amended due to changes in state and federal law. As required by the GSBA, the system maintains liability insurance

which protects board members and system employees against damages and maintains the system's financial security.

Whitfield County Board policy BBD "Board-School Superintendent Relations" states that the board of education shall perform as the legislative body of the school system. The school board permits the superintendent to serve as chief executive of the system. The superintendent is responsible directly to the board for carrying out their instructions and for enforcing policies of the state board of education, as well as both state and federal school laws. This policy also states that in actual practice, the superintendent must routinely supply evidence to board members for their use in policy making. By periodic report from the superintendent, the board is informed of policy administration. In this manner, the board exercises control over the governance of the school system. The board acts in matters relating to overall policy decisions, while the superintendent advises and recommends; after the board approves policy, the superintendent executes the policy.

The Whitfield County Board of Education has adopted board policy BCD "*Policy Adoption*" that states, "Any changes in existing policies may be referred to the superintendent in writing by any board member, employee of the board, or community member." Each year, a committee consisting of administrators, community members, parents, and students adapts several of the policies, such as Student Dress Code (JCDB) and Student Conduct (JCD). Policies and procedures are written to reflect the Whitfield County School system's vision, mission, and belief statements. All policies are written to be responsive to the needs of students, parents, and the community at large while providing our students with engaging, challenging and meaningful work in a safe environment. All policies are reviewed by legal counsel prior to submission to the board of education in order to ensure legal compliance. Proposed policies that support the vision, mission, and beliefs of the school system may be placed on the agenda and approved by the WCS Board of Education following two required public readings of the policy.

In an effort to communicate potential policy additions or changes to the community and faculty/staff, WCS Board of Education meeting agendas are sent to local newspapers and radio/television stations. Board agendas are also posted at the central office and on the system website. Concerned citizens may contact board members or the superintendent by phone, e-mail, or mail. The "Hearing of Individuals" portion of each Board of Education meeting allows citizens the opportunity to publicly voice their opinions regarding policies and procedures. Following review by legal counsel, input from concerned citizens, and two public readings of a policy, the Board of Education holds a vote. Newly approved policies, along with the existing body of policies, are posted on the system website for public viewing.

The system website is used as the primary tool for communicating procedures for the effective operation of the school system. Resources for teachers, parents, and/or community members are posted on the site, which gives them access to curriculum resource guides, online handbooks, and important system information. Procedures are also conveyed to parents and students at the school level through use of an automated

phone system (ConnectED), school websites, newsletters, parent meetings, parent/student handbooks, and conferences.

Principals and system leaders meet monthly to discuss various facets of system policies and how they are carried out in related procedures. The system's legal counsel, Mr. Sam Harben, attends at least one of these sessions annually to provide information regarding relevant legal issues and changes in the law that may impact policy. Once policies and procedures are established, all system employees work collaboratively for their effective implementation. School level administrators are instrumental in the effective implementation of system policies since they interact directly with staff members, students, and parents. They inform system-level administration when changes are needed so they can be addressed in the manner described.

2. What process does the system's leadership use to evaluate system effectiveness and its impact on student performance?

Whitfield County Schools' stakeholders are committed to continuously evaluating the system's effectiveness and its impact on student performance. Evaluation is both complex and ongoing as it revolves around the system's vision, mission, and belief statements. Leadership groups comprised of both system and school level personnel meet and analyze qualitative and quantitative data in order to make recommendations for improving student performance.

One of the main components of the system evaluation process is the monthly Key Leadership meeting led by the superintendent. In addition to the superintendent, the Key Leadership Team consists of the principals from every school and system-level personnel. These leadership meetings are designed to allow for the sharing of ideas which maximize student performance. Through open dialogue, these ideas are analyzed in relation to the vision, mission, and belief statements.

Another component of the system evaluation process is the use of the Teaching and Learning Team. One function of this team is to work with building-level leadership and design teams to analyze student test data. In 2006 and 2007, building-level leaders established data rooms at each school with the assistance of the Teaching and Learning Team. The data rooms display student test results to aid in the analysis of student progress toward performance goals. Schools analyze the data to determine student performance trends and establish school improvement plans. The school improvement plans are reviewed annually through a peer review process among schools and also by system-level personnel. The Teaching and Learning Team continually works with school leadership to provide direction, assistance and the resources needed to implement the school improvement plans and to meet system goals.

Analysis and reflection are not limited to testing data; many forms of evaluation occur at every level within the system to help promote professional growth. As required by the Georgia Department of Education, all certified staff are evaluated annually through the GTEP (Georgia Teacher Evaluation Program) using the GTOI (Georgia Teacher

Observation Instrument). School administrators are evaluated using the GLEI (Georgia Leadership Evaluation Instrument). Principals also set annual professional and personal goals then meet with the superintendent to discuss these goals and their end-of-the-year reflections. These evaluation processes are used to measure professional growth of school employees.

The superintendent, system personnel, and school administrators conduct walk-through observations at each school. Teachers complete peer observations in their own building and in other schools, then write reflections of the experience. They evaluate the learning experience and how it may enhance their own classroom instruction. Principals and school leadership teams assess professional learning needs within their schools and plan site-based professional learning workshops for their staffs on scheduled staff development days throughout the year. In addition, a system-wide analysis using a survey designed by Dr. Victoria Bernhardt was completed in the spring of 2008.

3. In what ways are stakeholders, including system and school staff, given opportunities to provide leadership and to contribute to the decision-making process?

All stakeholders are viewed as vital in the decision-making process in Whitfield County Schools. Many opportunities exist for the inclusion of teachers, students, parents, and community members in the leadership process, and they play an integral role in making decisions which affect the system. While some of these leadership positions are determined by an electoral process, other positions are filled by volunteers.

Design teams have been implemented in all schools and at the system-level. These teams may include building-level administrators, teacher leaders, classified staff and involve key stakeholders in a continuous improvement process. At the school level, these design teams focus on the culture and climate of the school as well as instructional improvement. The District Design Team, which has representation from across the system, meets three times per year to assess progress in relation to the system's vision, mission, and beliefs. In addition, the Leadership Academy, which is facilitated by a representative from the Schlechty Center, offers further opportunity for shared governance across the system. Instructional committees with system-wide representation address both vertical and horizontal planning in relation to the implementation of the Georgia Performance Standards. Numerous opportunities for instructional leadership are available at individual schools.

Many opportunities are available for parents and community members to be active in the Whitfield County School System. Each school maintains a school council as directed by Georgia law. Parents are also involved at the school level through PTA/PTO. Additionally, volunteer opportunities for parents and community members are offered at each school. Parents and community members are integral members of design teams for new schools, redistricting committees, and instructional resource adoption teams. In an effort to incorporate parents and community members in the selection of new principals, these stakeholders are now included as a part of the system's interview teams.

Students are given the opportunity to participate in a wide range of leadership roles. Many schools have established Student Design Teams or similar groups to involve students in school improvement efforts and to solicit their input regarding the culture and direction of the school. Several schools have established student councils or similar student organizations to increase their participation in the governance of the school. These types of student groups are of particular importance for new schools since student input is critical to the planning process.

4. What policies and processes are in place to ensure equity of learning opportunities and support for innovation?

The Whitfield County School System's vision, mission, and belief statements clearly establish the system's focus on learning and innovation for all students (http://www.whitfield.k12.ga.us/Vision_Mission_Beliefs.pdf). The school improvement process has focused on building structure and capacity in the system, enabling schools to provide the most meaningful learning for both teachers and students. Faculty and staff from every level within the system have attended the Schlechty Center's (<http://www.schlechtycenter.org>) Working on the Work (WOW) training workshops to develop strong leadership structures within the organization, with the focus of designing meaningful student work. Equal opportunities for student learning is provided through a structured curriculum and a variety of instructional programs. In order to meet the needs of all learners, our schools are working to implement the concepts of Response to Intervention (RTI).



Figure 1: Whitfield County School System Level Pyramid of Interventions

Local organizations such as school business partners and school PTAs/PTOs have partnered with the Whitfield County School System to help provide schools with up-to-date technology. Also, as evidence of public support for WCS, the citizens of Whitfield County passed an Education Special Purpose Local Option Sales Tax (ESPLOST), allowing \$10.3 million to be spent on instructional technology. To ensure the equity of learning opportunities and support for innovation, the school system enlisted the help of a consultant to conduct a study of each school to determine their needs and help develop a plan to bring to all students in the system the same basic technology using ESPLOST.

The Whitfield County School System and the Dalton Public Schools have shared ideas and resources to create a Leadership Academy led by associates from the Schlechty Center, for teachers. Opportunities for teacher collaboration have been provided. Monthly system-level collaborative meetings and ongoing Internet blogs provide opportunities for teachers to share lessons and ideas which promote student engagement (<http://www.wcsmath.edublogs.org>). Principals provide opportunities for teachers to meet and plan together and to collaborate with partnering schools.

Innovative use of resources including money, time, and personnel are both encouraged and supported by system-level staff. Principals work with design and leadership teams to determine needs within their buildings and use of resources provided by the system to meet those needs. For example, school leadership is given the opportunity to determine the best use of instructional funds. These funds are allocated based on a dollar amount per pupil. How these funds are utilized to meet the needs of all learners is determined at the school level.

Standard 3 – Teaching and Learning

The system provides research-based curriculum and instructional methods that facilitate achievement for all students.

CHAIRPERSON:

Dusty Brown

Assistant Superintendent, Teaching and Learning

COMMITTEE MEMBERS:

Britt Adams

Principal, Valley Point Middle School

Greg Bailey

Director, Teaching and Learning

Crystal Bryant

Teacher, Southeast Whitfield High School

Tracy Dempsey

Instructional Specialist, Eastbrook Middle School

Lynn Douglas

Parent, Beaverdale Elementary School

Dee Goodwin

Coordinator, School Improvement

Kim Gordon

Parent, Beaverdale Elementary School

Angela Hargis

Assistant Principal,
Pleasant Grove Elementary School

Lisa Jones

Principal, Antioch Elementary School

Kathy Mashburn

Secretary, Teaching and Learning

Blanca O'Conner

Business Partner, Shaw Industries, Inc.

Jill Ryerson

Teacher, North Whitfield Middle School

Impact Statement: A system is successful in meeting this standard when it implements a curriculum based on clear and measurable expectations for student learning that provides opportunities for all students to acquire requisite knowledge, skills, and attitudes. The system ensures that teachers use proven instructional practices that actively engage students in the learning process; provide opportunities for students to apply their knowledge and skills to real world situations; and give students feedback to improve their performance.

Indicators Rubric

Please indicate the degree to which the noted practices/processes are in place in the school system. The responses to the rubric should help the school system identify areas of strength and opportunities for improvement as well as guide and inform the school system's responses to the focus questions.

INDICATORS		Not Evident	Emerging	Operational	Highly Functional
In fulfillment of this standard, the system:					
3.1	Develops, articulates, and coordinates curriculum based on clearly- defined expectations for student learning, including essential knowledge and skills				X
3.2	Establishes expectations and supports student engagement in the learning process, including opportunities for students to explore application of higher order thinking skills and investigate new approaches to applying their learning			X	
3.3	Ensures that system-wide curricular and instructional decisions are based on data and research at all levels			X	
3.4	Supports instruction that is research-based and reflective of best practice			X	
3.5	Supports a curriculum that challenges and meets the needs of each student, reflects a commitment to equity, and demonstrates an appreciation of diversity			X	
3.6	Allocates and protects instructional time to support student learning			X	

INDICATORS		Not Evident	Emerging	Operational	Highly Functional
In fulfillment of this standard, the system:					
3.7	Maintains articulation among and between all levels of schooling to monitor student performance and ensure readiness for future schooling or employment			X	
3.8	Supports the implementation of interventions to help students meet expectations for student learning			X	
3.9	Maintains a system-wide climate that supports student learning			X	
3.10	Ensures that curriculum is reviewed and revised at regular intervals			X	
3.11	Coordinates and ensures ready access to instructional technology, information and media services, and materials needed for effective instruction			X	

Definitions

Not Evident	Little or no evidence exists
Emerging	Evidence indicates early or preliminary stages of implementation of practice
Operational	Evidence indicates practices and procedures are actively implemented
Highly Functional	Evidence indicates practices and procedures are fully integrated and effectively and consistently implemented.

Focus Questions

1. How does the system ensure the alignment and articulation of curriculum, instructional strategies, and assessments in support of the expectations for student learning?

The Whitfield County School System recognizes that, in order to increase student achievement, it is important to maintain a quality instructional program that is grounded in research and best practices. Teachers in Whitfield County are working diligently to implement the research-based Georgia Performance Standards (GPS) in their classrooms. They understand the importance of a curriculum that is both rigorous and relevant to their students. High expectations for all students must be required, and differentiation of instruction is critical in order for the needs of a diverse student body to be met.

All staff members in Whitfield County are being trained to use the Working on the Work (WOW) framework through the Schlechty Center. The WOW framework requires that

teachers understand how to design work that increases the level of students' engagement. Students work on performance-based tasks to demonstrate understanding of a standard. At both the system and school level, teachers are provided with many opportunities to meet together to design work using the Georgia Performance Standards as their foundation.

To facilitate the alignment of the curriculum, teachers in Whitfield County have collaborated extensively in order to create common rubrics, common assessments, performance tasks, and units. These teacher resources are available for use on the system website. A standards-based report card has been developed and is being implemented system-wide in kindergarten through second grade. System collaboration meetings are held on a monthly basis so that teachers across grade levels and content areas may have the opportunity to share instructional ideas and strategies. In grades K-12, lead teachers in the major content areas meet at regular intervals throughout the school year to discuss curriculum issues and make needed revisions.

Many schools are also scheduling collaborative planning times during school hours. Professional learning in the areas of differentiation and balanced assessments has been provided for all teachers through GPS training as well as additional system-level support. A group of instructional specialists and teacher leaders have worked together to construct pre- and post-tests aligned with the standards for each grade level in the four main content areas (language arts, math, science, and social studies). This alignment of curriculum, instruction, and assessment enables Whitfield County teachers to have a clear vision of their expectations for student learning.

The GPS outlines a rigorous and relevant curriculum for students. The WOW framework involves designing engaging work around the standard, while at the same time transitioning teachers into the role of leaders or “designers” of work. This combination of research-based curriculum and effective instructional methods of the WOW framework facilitates achievement for all Whitfield County students.

2. In what ways does the system promote and support the implementation of research-based instructional strategies, innovations, and activities that facilitate achievement for all students?

The Whitfield County School System promotes and supports the implementation of research-based instructional strategies, innovations, and activities that facilitate achievement for all students. By using the Working on the Work framework to support the Georgia Performance Standards, teachers encourage student engagement with an emphasis on higher-order thinking skills. Technology innovations and activities are promoted by the system as a means to differentiate instruction and to encourage active learning in the classroom. Additionally, the system supports data-driven interventions for students who have not met expectations.

The Georgia Performance Standards provide a rigorous curriculum from which student work is created. This designing process is based on the Working on the Work (WOW) framework which provides the system with a unified focus centered on the core business of

designing engaging, meaningful and challenging work for students. Teachers are looked upon as leaders in their classrooms as well as designers of meaningful learning experiences for their students. Whitfield County teachers focus on the “who” first, then the “what.” Students are seen as volunteers: they volunteer their attention and commitment. The system helps to advance this viewpoint by offering collaboration days throughout the year, allowing teachers to cooperate with one another in the design of student work. In addition, schools have redesigned their schedules to allow for more collaboration time within the school day. In order to further support student learning, instructional time is protected at the school level by eliminating unnecessary interruptions and maximizing daily instructional experiences. Standards-based classrooms support learning for all students through the implementation of differentiated learning strategies. Performance tasks that require deep understanding are designed for students as culminating activities to assess understanding of the standards.

Technology innovations and activities help advance instruction and encourage active learning in classrooms. The system has devoted more than \$10 million from the recent ESPLOST to equip classrooms with cutting-edge technology that facilitates 21st century learning. Appropriate training and follow-up training is being provided to assist teachers in incorporating technology into their instruction. The system, as well as all individual elementary, middle, and high schools, maintains a website. Information and educational website links are offered as resources for families. A parent portal is also available through Infinite Campus, Whitfield County’s student database system. Parents are able to monitor student attendance and performance on a daily basis. Parents may communicate with teachers through e-mail links located on school website and the parent portal.

In order to provide students with opportunities for continuous academic improvement, Whitfield County is in the process of implementing the Pyramid of Interventions. The Pyramid of Interventions creates a disciplined-tiered approach to addressing student needs. Teachers administer benchmark assessments that enable data to drive instructional decisions. The Teaching and Learning Team, along with other selected Whitfield County teachers, is developing pre- and post-assessments as means to determine individual student achievement aligned with the Georgia Performance Standards.

Reading Recovery, a one-on-one intervention program for the lowest achieving first graders, has been implemented in eight Whitfield County elementary schools during the 2008-2009 school year. Two teachers at each school are receiving intensive training in order to become Reading Recovery-certified. Children meet individually with a specially trained teacher for 30-minute daily lessons lasting 12-20 weeks. The purpose of the intensive tutoring sessions is to support rapid acceleration of each child’s literacy learning. The teachers continuously analyze student errors for evidence of how children are processing print, then design prescriptive lessons based on the analysis. Once students reach grade level, they continue to be supported in the regular classroom; and new students are moved into the program.

In order to meet diverse needs, instructional guidance and support are provided to both teachers and students. Standards-based units designed by Whitfield County educators are posted as resources on the system website. Participation in Working on the Work trainings--such as Foundations, Leadership Academy, and Coaching by Design--enable educators to model and incorporate design qualities into an instructional framework. Teachers investigate differentiation strategies and initiate tasks that promote a variety of learning styles. Student needs are recognized and addressed through the formulation of flexible instructional groups. Focus groups specify areas of weakness and provide alternative instructional practices in an effort to improve achievement. Teachers integrate modeling, usage of graphic organizers, and summarizing skills into all content areas as means of promoting student performance.

3. What processes are implemented to ensure that all staff members are well-prepared to support and implement the district's expectations for student learning?

In the Whitfield County School System, the designing of quality student work that is interesting, challenging and satisfying is paramount. The implementation of Working On the Work (WOW) initiatives is pervasive at all levels and is directly correlated to designing engaging work. Teachers have been involved in a variety of processes for unified professional learning that include book studies, focus groups, collaboration meetings and WOW sessions. The opportunities have included Coaching for Design, Design Teams, Working on the Work Conferences, Principals Academy, and Leadership Academy.

Several schools have developed collaborative efforts to implement WOW initiatives. Many teachers are in the process of using engagement surveys to better understand how their students/customers are reacting to their designed work to ensure it is interesting, challenging and satisfying. Teachers participate in professional learning opportunities to master new technologies which raise levels of engagement. Some content areas have begun the process of developing "bookless" curricula in an effort to make content more interesting. For example, the ninth grade environmental science course was developed by teachers from all three high schools using the GPS and was designed to create work which would be relevant and exciting to the students. Other content areas are beginning the process of designing engaging work thereby decreasing textbook-driven instruction. A system-wide process is available for authorized staff to write proposals for professional learning funds at the central level. The superintendent's cabinet determines which proposals will be granted based on the system's needs.

One specific system expectation is to provide a physically and psychologically safe environment for learning. Staff training on gang activity, AIDS, grief support, and physical abuse is provided as needed, fostering a safe environment for student learning. Resource officers are assigned to Whitfield County high schools to ensure the safety of students as they learn. Appropriate procedures have been established in the event of emergencies requiring lockdowns or evacuations. Emergency Preparedness Plans are maintained at each school, and staff members have received training on the proper procedures for these events. Guidelines are being developed in the event that school is closed for prolonged periods of time. Support is afforded to staff members wishing to provide student

opportunities to grow in the areas of diversity, tolerance, team-building, and leadership. An expectation of the Whitfield County School System is protection from adverse consequences from initial failures. Staff members are well prepared to give students opportunities for additional support.

Whitfield County staff members have a shared understanding of what students are expected to know according to system goals. Graduation coaches are provided at the middle and high school levels to monitor the academic performance of identified at-risk students. Coaches work together to support the transition from middle to high school as well as the transition from high school to post secondary options. Student-advisor teachers provide further assistance through advisement in grades nine through twelve.

Teachers in science, social studies, language arts, math, and foreign language have acquired--or are in the process of acquiring--GPS training and implementation measures. Teachers have created sequencing guides or frameworks which are updated yearly. They conduct collaboration meetings to discuss curriculum issues and ways to improve student learning. Teachers have developed pre- and post-tests to monitor progress of mastery of the standards by individual students, class, and system. The tests were created to reveal areas of weakness in an effort to design instruction and provide alternative learning opportunities for students. The creation of system-wide data rooms allows teachers to view compiled data for their individual school compared to the system and state. This information helps with long-term planning and design. The Pyramid of Interventions and differentiation measures ensure that staff members are clear on meeting the needs of all students.

4. How does the system ensure that all students and staff have access to comprehensive information, instructional technology, and media services?

Whitfield County provides access to comprehensive information by placing a consistent focus on both the state standards and the WOW framework. Together, they provide a clear set of expectations which establishes student learning as the key component. The WOW framework requires teachers to understand the levels of engagement and to design work that students find meaningful and challenging. The state curriculum expectation is for teachers to provide performance-based tasks, thereby enabling students to apply their knowledge and prove their understanding of the given Georgia Performance Standard. With student learning as the guiding principle, each school structures its plans for staff development, curriculum and instruction, as well as media and technology to support this comprehensive set of expectations.

The Teaching and Learning staff coordinates opportunities for teachers and administrators throughout Whitfield County Schools to collaborate and create engaging work for students. Staff development such as building-level training, book study discussion groups, school- and district-level design teams, the Leadership Academy, and off-campus workshops provide opportunities for professional growth. Professional Learning Communities are developed throughout the system. These groups meet vertically and horizontally both within the individual schools and with several other schools working to support one another.

These opportunities help to create a system-wide focus on student learning and foster collaboration throughout each school and at all levels of the organization.

The use of data allows teachers to differentiate learning opportunities for students based on their needs. Data from the CRCT and other measures are used to create data walls in each school. The information is used to study the strengths and weaknesses of each subgroup and subject area to determine necessary strategies to best meet the needs of individual children. The data wall is used by grade levels, cross-grade levels, school-level groups, school councils, and central-level groups.

Parents, students and school employees receive current information regarding school events, requirements, and needs through various methods including parent handbooks, school newsletters, local newspaper, parent conferences, daily agendas, parent information systems (such as parent portal and ConnectED), individual teacher e-mail messages, flyers, parent notes, class newsletters, and school/county websites. The Teaching and Learning staff provides comprehensive, on-going and updated information for teachers, parents and students on the Whitfield County Schools' website. The website provides a multitude of resources for curriculum, instructional technology and media.

Classroom computers are used throughout Whitfield County Schools to conduct research, generate products and demonstrate mastery of the Georgia Performance Standards. The system has established goals and is working toward providing each classroom with an instructional laptop, projectors, and interactive whiteboards. A wide array of technology is used at each level to promote student engagement and support the digital needs of students as they prepare for both the present and future. Staff technicians identify areas of need and provide assistance in the use and integration of technology. Each school has a media center which serves as the central location for curriculum and instructional resources, student resources, and technology.

Standard 4 - Documenting and Using Results

The system enacts a comprehensive assessment system that monitors and documents performance and uses these results to improve student performance and system effectiveness.

CHAIRPERSON:

Richard Schoen

Assistant Superintendent, Operations

COMMITTEE MEMBERS:

Lloyd Brochu

Principal, Crossroads Academy

Bethany Herron

Teacher, Varnell Elementary School

Connie Kopcsak

Assistant Principal, Southeast High School

Kenny Lowery

Parent/Business Partner, Westside Elementary School

Tracy Mardis

Principal, Westside Elementary School

Chris Parker

Assistant Principal, North Whitfield Middle School

Garry Parsons

Coordinator, Exceptional Children

Kathy Reed

Coordinator, Exceptional Children

Diane Sheppard

Parent, New Hope Elementary School

Carolyn Towns

Principal, Northwest High School

Christopher Woods

Teacher, Westside Middle School

Impact Statement: A school system is successful in meeting this standard when it uses a comprehensive assessment system based on clearly-defined performance measures. The assessment system is used to assess student performance on expectations for student learning, identify gaps between expectations for student learning and student performance, evaluate the effectiveness of curriculum and instruction, and determine interventions to improve student performance. The assessment system yields timely and accurate information that is meaningful and useful to system and school leaders, teachers, and other stakeholders in understanding student performance, system and school effectiveness, and the results of improvement efforts.

Indicators Rubric

Please indicate the degree to which the noted practices/processes are in place in the school system. The responses to the rubric should help the school system identify areas of strength and opportunities for improvement as well as guide and inform the school system's responses to the focus questions.

INDICATORS		Not Evident	Emerging	Operational	Highly Functional
In fulfillment of this standard, the system:					
4.1	Establishes and implements a comprehensive assessment system, aligned with the system's expectations for student learning, that yields information which is reliable, valid, and bias free			X	
4.2	Ensures that student assessment data are used to make decisions for continuous improvement of teaching and learning			X	
4.3	Conducts a systematic analysis of instructional and organizational effectiveness, including support systems, and uses the results to improve student and system performance			X	
4.4	Provides a system of communication which uses a variety of methods to report student performance and system effectiveness to all stakeholders			X	
4.5	Uses comparison and trend data from comparable school systems to evaluate student performance and system effectiveness			X	
4.6	Demonstrates verifiable growth in student performance that is supported by multiple sources of evidence			X	

INDICATORS		Not Evident	Emerging	Operational	Highly Functional
In fulfillment of this standard, the system:					
4.7	Maintains a secure, accurate, and complete student record system in accordance with state and federal regulations				X

Definitions

Not Evident	Little or no evidence exists
Emerging	Evidence indicates early or preliminary stages of implementation of practice
Operational	Evidence indicates practices and procedures are actively implemented
Highly Functional	Evidence indicates practices and procedures are fully integrated and effectively and consistently implemented.

Focus Questions

1. How is the assessment system currently used throughout the school system and its schools to guide analysis of changes in student performance?

As students move toward mastering state-mandated standards, these instruments are used to determine student strengths, areas of needed improvement, developmental progress, and achievement. The assessment instruments provide both individual, grade-level, and system-level information, allowing teachers and administrators to identify areas of need for individual students or groups of students and to design interventions based on those identified needs. The information is used to analyze student performance and determine if additional strategies, or curricular adjustments, should be used at either the school or system level.

The Whitfield County School System uses a variety of assessment instruments to track and analyze student performance. These instruments include:

- Kindergarten Readiness Test
- Georgia Kindergarten Inventory of Developing Skills (GKIDS)
- Georgia Kindergarten Assessment Program-Revised (GKAP)
- AIMSweb (Reading and Math Benchmarks)
- Criterion-Referenced Competency Test (CRCT)
- Iowa Test of Basic Skills (ITBS)
- Georgia High School Graduation Test (GHSGT)
- Preliminary Scholastic Aptitude Test (PSAT)
- Local and State Writing Exams
- Cognitive Abilities Test (CogAT)
- End-Of-Course Test (EOCT)

- Benchmarks
- Pre-and Post-Assessments
- Student Engagement Surveys
- Classroom Assessments
- Online Assessment System (OAS)
- Georgia Alternative Assessment (GAA)
- Assessing Comprehension and Communication in English State-to-State for English Language Learners (ACCESS)

Data from these assessments are disaggregated by gender, ethnicity, socio-economic status, and instructional level. The results are used for flexible grouping as well as the building of remediation and enrichment programs. The results have led instructional leaders to differentiate within their classrooms and to reshape instructional time and programs as needed.

2. What are you doing to ensure that assessment results are timely, relevant, and communicated in a way that can be used by the system, its schools, and stakeholders to aid the performance of individual students?

The Whitfield County School System implements several strategies to share assessment results. Pre/post assessments are employed in all elementary and middle schools. These assessments are designed through collaborative efforts of teachers and central office personnel. Results of these assessments can be shared among the system to determine areas of achievement and improvement needs.

AIMSweb is a scientifically-based formative assessment system that provides student performance data to parents, teachers, and administrators. An on-line calendar provides teachers and administrators with information concerning testing dates, student and school activities. Results from standardized testing, including the ITBS, writing exams, CogAT, and the CRCT, are distributed to the individual schools immediately after being received at the central office. The tiered Pyramid of Interventions in place at the elementary level provides a structure to ensure individual student achievement; implementation is beginning in the middle and high school levels as well. Each school in the system has a data room that provides disaggregated assessment information that is used by teachers and administrators to differentiate instruction for students. All schools currently use state and locally mandated testing for determining needs in remediation, grade level placement, retention, and screening for referrals related to special education and gifted services. Secure, accurate, and complete student records are maintained through the student data management system, Infinite Campus.

Several strategies are in place to communicate assessment results to parents and other system stakeholders. The Infinite Campus program provides parent portals that allow parents to monitor their children's academic progress via the Internet. Standards-based report cards provide parents an in-depth analysis of their child's performance on each standard. Standards-based report cards have been implemented system-wide in grades K-2 and three elementary schools have piloted standards-based report cards in grades K-5.

Progress reports are sent home at the middle of each grading period to provide updates on student achievement. The online calendar can be accessed for upcoming test dates. Schools have parent nights for various programs, socials, and informational meetings. Outreach workers provide parents with opportunities to learn about programs used by the school system which fosters a better understanding of the data being provided to parents. School and system annual yearly progress reports are displayed on the county website for viewing by all stakeholders. The county website also has links to each individual school's website where information on testing, student projects, and contact information can be accessed at any time.

Newsletters are sent by the school system and by individual schools to inform parents of upcoming events, test results, and programs. The school system has incorporated early dismissal days into the calendar to allow opportunities for teachers and parents to have personal conferences. Each school has a school council comprised of teacher, parent, and community business representatives that meet quarterly to discuss issues related to the school.

A phone system, ConnectED, can be utilized on a county-wide level or on an individual school level. Messages can be sent to parents by phone to relay important information. This program allows for vast coverage of all parents and staff members of the Whitfield County School System, or it can be filtered by group and sent to select groups or individuals.

The services of a community and media relations specialist have recently been added to the system to improve communications with local media outlets. This addition will allow for better distribution of information on a large scale and publicize the successes of Whitfield County Schools.

3. How are data used to understand and improve overall effectiveness of the school system and its schools?

The evaluation of student learning is crucial to the improvement process and effectiveness of the assessment system. The data gathered is used to understand and drive the decision-making process in both instructional and non-instructional areas in classrooms, schools, and the school system. Once an understanding of the effectiveness of the instruction is achieved, data is used by teachers to differentiate student instruction.

Representatives from the system assist in disaggregating data and/or offer independent help to teachers, administrators, and other school support personnel. In addition, data rooms are organized and created within each school and at the system level to offer visual support when creating lessons, discussing differentiation strategies, and seeking for ways to improve student success. At the system and school levels, collaboration meetings are held to discuss data and look for patterns, trends and areas of strengths and weaknesses. Strategies are then discussed to address specific curriculum issues.

High schools meet with their feeder elementary and middle schools to improve communication and to address vertical curricular alignment. Schools that are vertically aligned to the high schools or to their respective middle schools meet periodically to discuss scope and sequence of academic subjects. For example, teachers from elementary, middle and high schools conduct roundtable discussions using protocols to evaluate classroom products. Comparison data with similar schools and school systems are employed to identify curricular and instructional strengths and weaknesses within schools and the school system. Schools or systems demonstrating superior curricular strengths are contacted and visited if necessary. Appropriate adjustments may then be made to improve effectiveness.

School Improvement Plans indicate allocations of time and financial resources to meet the needs of teachers and monitor growth in student performance and system effectiveness. School and system leaders periodically review these plans to determine effectiveness and make changes accordingly.

The system employs the Consolidated Local Educational Agency Implementation Plan as the system's improvement plan. The plan is revised and submitted annually to the Georgia Department of Education. A cross-section of people including parents, community stakeholders, teachers, principals, and system-level administrators contribute to the development of this plan.

4. How are staff members across the system and in their schools trained to understand and use data to impact teaching and learning in the classroom?

Opportunities are made available to both school and system certified staff to learn how to interpret and use both formal and informal data. The system's teaching and learning team help each school create, maintain, and utilize data rooms. Data rooms enable teachers to identify areas where differentiation is needed.

The teaching and learning team has been available to assist teachers with data analysis. Certified staff members are encouraged to make use of the North Georgia Regional Education Service Agency's (RESA) continuing support concerning data analysis as it relates to instructional improvement.

Within the schools, grade levels and departments have been trained to create and disaggregate benchmark assessments in order to improve student success. Results from state testing--such as the CRCT, EOCT, GHSGT, and ACCESS--are analyzed and instructional changes are made to address individual domain weaknesses. Workshops are provided for teachers and administrators in recognizing, analyzing, comprehending, and utilizing data.

Through ongoing professional learning teachers are being encouraged to use data to improve the design and effectiveness of classroom lessons. The Working on the Work framework provides the structure for lesson design. Surveys are used to collect feedback from students regarding their level of engagement

Standard 5 - Resources and Support Systems

The system has the resources and services necessary to support its vision and purpose and to ensure achievement for all students.

CHAIRPERSON:

Dr. Judy Gilreath	Assistant Superintendent, Support Services
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COMMITTEE MEMBERS:

Mark Buckner	Business Partner, Mohawk Industries
Donna Clarkson	Parent, Southeast High School
Randy Cook	Director, Transportation
Suzanne Evans	Parent, New Hope Middle
Mike Ewton	Director, Safety and Security
Mandy Locke	Principal, Dug Gap Elementary School
Cheri Mahan	Assistant Principal, Westside Middle School
Kenny Sheppard	Chief Financial Officer, Whitfield County Schools
Rhonda Yim	Director, Human Resources

Impact Statement: A system is successful in meeting this standard when it has sufficient human, material, and fiscal resources to implement a curriculum that: enables students to achieve expectations for student learning, meets special needs, and complies with applicable regulations. The system employs and allocates staff well-qualified for their assignments. The system provides ongoing learning opportunities for all staff to improve their effectiveness. The system ensures compliance with applicable local, state, and federal regulations.

Indicators Rubric

Please indicate the degree to which the noted practices/processes are in place in the school system. The responses to the rubric should help the school system identify areas of strength and opportunities for improvement as well as guide and inform the school system's responses to the focus questions.

INDICATORS		Not Evident	Emerging	Operational	Highly Functional
In fulfillment of this standard, the system:					
	Human Resources				
5.1	Establishes and implements processes to recruit, employ, retain, and mentor qualified professional and support staff to fulfill assigned roles and responsibilities			X	
5.2	Establishes and implements a process to assign professional and support staff based on system needs and staff qualifications as may be required by federal and state law and regulations (i.e., professional preparation, ability, knowledge, and experience)			X	
5.3	Establishes and implements a process to design, evaluate, and improve professional development and ensures participation by all faculty and staff			X	
5.4	Ensures that staff are sufficient in number to meet the vision and purpose of the school system and to meet federal and state law and regulations, if applicable			X	

INDICATORS		Not Evident	Emerging	Operational	Highly Functional
In fulfillment of this standard, the system:					
	Financial Resources				
5.5	Engages in long-range budgetary planning and annually budgets sufficient resources to support its educational programs and to implement its plans for improvement			X	
5.6	Ensures that all financial transactions are safeguarded through proper budgetary procedures and audited accounting measures			X	
	Physical Resources				
5.7	Maintains sites, facilities, services, and equipment to provide a safe, orderly, and healthy environment.			X	
5.8	Establishes and implements written security and crisis management plans with appropriate training for stakeholders.			X	
5.9	Implements processes and plans for maintaining and improving sites, facilities, and equipment.			X	
5.10	Provides technology infrastructure and equipment that is up-to-date and sufficient to accomplish the system's goals.			X	
	Support Systems				
5.11	Provides and coordinates support services that meet the health, counseling, nutrition, safety, co-curricular, transportation, and special learning needs of all students.			X	
5.12	Provides student support services coordinated with the school, home, and community.			X	

Definitions

Not Evident

Little or no evidence exists

Emerging

Evidence indicates early or preliminary stages of implementation of practice

Operational

Evidence indicates practices and procedures are actively implemented

Highly Functional

Evidence indicates practices and procedures are fully integrated and effectively and consistently implemented.

Focus Questions

1. What is the school system's process for recruitment, induction, placement, development, evaluation, and retention of qualified professional and support staff across the system and its schools?

The Whitfield County School System believes that recruitment is the lifeblood of its organization. The goal of Whitfield County is to recruit and retain the best teachers available that have a commitment to developing quality work for students. The system wants teachers who view themselves as teacher leaders and administrators who want to be instructional leaders. For the organization to move from good to great, teachers must have a clear focus on students and on the quality of work provided for students. Teachers should design work that students find meaningful, challenging, engaging, and meets the expectations of schools, parents, and community.

Recruitment Goals:

- Have a clear directional system.
- Attract individuals that hold the same vision, mission, and beliefs of the system.
- Recruit individuals that are risk takers and want to move the organization from a bureaucratic organization to a learning organization.
- Match the applicant pool with the demographics of student body.
- Increase the applicant pool by using a web-based application process.
- Be responsive to inquiries--calls, letters, e-mails, and visits.
- Provide support for administrators as they move through the interview process.
- Identify vacancies, and advertise in a timely manner.

Retention

The way in which people are attracted, identified, and selected by an organization sends a clear signal to prospective employees about what an organization will expect of them and what they can expect of the organization. Having a clear directional system and identifying individuals that have the same beliefs goes a long way in retaining new employees. The retention process begins at the point when a prospective employee begins to seek information regarding the possibilities and conditions of employment. Recruitment plus induction will equal retention.

Induction of new employees is a process by which new employees and current employees are brought to understand and embrace the norms and values of an organization undergoing important change.

Retention Goals:

- Recruit and retain individuals that have the same beliefs as the organization.
- Place individuals in jobs in which they will experience success.
- Provide support by offering new learning experiences.
- Provide collaborative opportunities through cohorts.
- Engage them in their jobs.
- Provide leadership from both the central office and building level administration.

Mentoring and Induction

Mentoring and induction are critical to defining and building organizational culture and values. The organization believes that a strong sense of belonging is as important as building individual capacity. Whitfield County has developed and implemented a three-day training program where both experienced and inexperienced teachers receive professional learning prior to reporting to their schools. The framework is designed and focused on those critical skills that are not effectively learned in college and which are tailored to the Whitfield County School System's vision, mission, and beliefs.

Each school designs and implements its mentor program. Through this process, teachers become comfortable with their mentors and how the school operates daily. They learn the community; they network with each other and with administrators. They learn what resources are available and how to access the resources they might need. Mentors become their coaches and provide the support needed throughout the year

Mentoring and Induction Goals:

- Retention of Teachers
- Support of Teachers
- Access to Resources
- Collaboration

Professional Growth and Development

The newly integrated and expanding professional growth program is driven by an educator's self-assessment against the same criteria and competencies that drive recruitment, evaluation, and retention. These competencies are in turn tailored to the system's vision, mission, and beliefs and provide a framework for identifying, designing and delivering professional learning. The Whitfield County School system is committed to developing each teacher to the highest degree of competency. To reinforce its commitment, the system has reorganized its approach to distribute staff development funds to schools. Each school/department has the opportunity to submit application for staff development funds provided the training they are requesting has been addressed in their individual school improvement plan. The application is reviewed by Cabinet members and approved or disapproved. The primary criteria for approval is centered upon collaboration, unified system direction, and an ongoing approach to the development of staff. All

professional learning requests must be outlined in the school's improvement plan. This strategy helps to maintain a unified direction that results in continuous improvement.

Professional Growth and Development Goals:

- Professional learning of individual teachers
- Teachers viewing themselves as leaders
- Collaboration
- Professional and personal growth
- Networking (system, state, and nationally)

2. How does leadership ensure that the allocation of financial resources is supportive of the school system's vision, programs, services, and its plans for continuous improvement?

All resource allocation decisions start with an understanding of the system's vision, mission, and beliefs statement. Awareness of the system's vision, mission, and beliefs statement is evidenced throughout the system, and staff development opportunities are continuously made available to strengthen understanding and commitment to these beliefs.

The system's leadership begins the budgeting process each fall with a review of budget guidelines during a system-wide leadership meeting. These guidelines are posted on the system's website. Administrators are provided budget forms for both personnel allotments and fiscal allocations. Administrators are given as much flexibility within state and federal guidelines as possible. Personnel resource allocations are based on formulas and projected enrollments that are reviewed annually by leadership. Five-year enrollment projections take into consideration historical trends and other factors that are known to impact future enrollment fluctuations. In addition, the overall instructional, operational and administrative needs are evaluated to ensure that resources are aligned with the system's vision, mission, and beliefs.

The system encourages long-range planning with the implementation of an allocation rollover election. This process frees up current funds to be carried over for future purchases. The system also encourages planning through the request for new programs, projects, and personnel forms that are available on the system's website. These forms give leadership an opportunity to communicate and prioritize their wants and needs that are in addition to their normal budgeted allotment. This data is compiled into a summary report and presented to the Board of Education for consideration. Throughout all these processes, administrators continue to make transparent, data-driven decisions that focus on the success of the students in Whitfield County Schools.

The system's Chief Financial Officer submits an annual budget that takes into consideration enrollment trends, staffing requirements, state and federal regulations, and the needs of the community. Prior to the budget's being finalized, the Board of Education has a work session in the spring of each year to discuss the process and adoption of the budget.

The Board of Education receives tentative financial reports at the monthly board meetings that compare actual expenditures to budget for both current and prior year to date. The Chief Financial Officer keeps the community informed of budgetary procedures through such avenues as local school council meetings, advertising the tentative budget in the local newspaper, and by participating in a panel discussion on school funding with Leadership Dalton, an annual program that works with leaders from a cross-section of the community.

3. How does the school system ensure, support, and monitor the provision of resource and support services that meet the needs of all students?

The system ensures, supports, and monitors the provision of resources through a variety of reports and procedures. These reports and procedures provide a high level of accountability to all stakeholders and helps maintain the system's financial integrity.

Annual audits are conducted by an independent Certified Public Accountant (CPA) in accordance with Circular 133. As part of that audit, the Chief Financial Officer provides a management discussion and analysis that provides a more comprehensive analysis of the data within our financial statement. In addition to the annual audit, an ESPLOST agreed-upon procedures engagement is conducted annually in accordance with Georgia code section 20-2-491. This engagement involves an independent Certified Public Accounting Firm reviewing all ESPLOST revenues, expenditures, procedures, and controls. Both the audited and ESPLOST reports are posted on the system's website.

An internal audit is performed at random to ensure compliance with the accounting procedures at the school level. This internal audit is performed by finance department staff and is performed in accordance with internally developed procedures. The finance department continually reviews and modifies internal controls to ensure that all resources are properly recorded and safeguarded.

Training is an essential tool for ensuring compliance with Generally Accepted Accounting Principles (GAAP), system, state, and federal guidelines. The finance department conducts periodic bookkeeper meetings and roundtable discussions for the purpose of addressing accounting issues and possible improvements to procedures. The Accounting and Procedures Manual is continually updated and posted on the system's website as a resource and information guide.

Procedures designed to safeguard the resources of the system are important in maintaining confidence of stakeholders. The system maintains a fixed asset listing in accordance with the organization's policy that is audited and updated for additions and deletions of property and equipment. In addition to the fixed asset listing, schools are also required to maintain equipment and furnishing listings for items of small value to ensure proper controls. To dispose of approved surplus property, the system periodically conducts advertised public sales.

Educating the stakeholders of the financial processes and procedures of the system is an important goal. The system encourages and provides presentations regarding an overview

of school finances to school council meetings and to the Leadership Dalton-Whitfield workshop regarding local government. Additional resources provided on the system website include--but are not limited to--financial graphs, reports and other presentations.

4. How does the school system ensure, support, and monitor the provision of resource and support services that meet the needs of all students?

Whitfield County is currently operational in providing resource and support services for students by the following evidence:

- Twelve nurses currently serve the school system. Health Fairs are conducted within the school system. Health instruction is provided at the elementary, middle and high school levels. Physical Education is taught by highly qualified teachers. The D.A.R.E program—Drug Abuse and Resistance Education—is offered in the elementary schools. Teachers at each school are cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) certified.
- Thirty-one highly qualified counselors are employed. Five social workers are divided among the system schools. The system also provides graduation coaches at the middle and high schools, an outreach coordinator, a parent involvement coordinator, and a liaison for homeless students.
- Whitfield County's school nutrition program was the recipient of two United States Department of Agriculture Southeastern Regional Best Practice Awards in food service. Only five such awards were given to Georgia systems this year, and Whitfield County garnered two. One award was earned in the category of Customer Service, demonstrating commitment to meeting the needs of the children served. The other award was for the development of a new menu pattern for school meals. Whitfield County works with seven other school nutrition programs to develop the Food Pyramid Plan, Whitfield County was the first system to pilot the program in all schools. Whitfield County food service serves an average of 15,744 meals a day. A summer feeding program is provided throughout the county for students.
- To ensure student safety, Whitfield County requires and provides staff identification badges. The system works proactively with the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) Drug and Gang Task Forces to provide safe environments for students and staff. A phone communication system, ConnectED, can be used for system-wide or individual school notification of parents. The Live Scan Finger Print system screens prospective new hires and recertification of employees with the sex offender registry. For a non-employee to serve as a chaperone, one must first be checked against the sex offender registry.
- In providing for co-curricular needs of all students, the Teaching/Learning team works as outlined in the Whitfield County Schools Central Office organizational chart.

- In implementing the Georgia Performance Standards, the system has provided professional learning and collaboration time for teachers.
- Whitfield County meets the special learning needs of all students by providing a system special education director. Each school has an assigned psychologist. The system provides physical, occupational, and speech therapy by highly qualified personnel.
- Special instruction is provided for students who learn English as a second language, for those students who are identified as gifted, and for struggling learners through the Early Intervention Program in the elementary schools. Reading Recovery is offered in eight of the twelve elementary schools. High school students who fall behind may attain credit recovery through NovaNET. Alternative educational settings-- Phoenix, Crossroads, and Mountainbrook—are available as needed. Instructional extension opportunities are available at the elementary and middle school levels. The Pyramid of Interventions has been implemented for at-risk learners in elementary and middle school.
- Student support services are coordinated with school, home, and community by using ConnectED, a phone communication system that can be used by the system or individual schools. PTA/PTO organizations operate in all Whitfield County schools.
- The Whitfield County schools provide parent outreach coordinators and social workers. Hospital-homebound services are available for students.
- During the summer months, Whitfield County provides a service to parents, Whitfield County Kids Club, from 6:30 a.m. until 5:00 p.m. Supervised activities for elementary age students are provided at Dug Gap Elementary.
- Booster organizations provide support at the high schools. Northwest and Southeast High Schools connect with feeder schools through the Bruin Bash (NWHHS) and Riverbend Reunion (SEHS). Whitfield County Career Academy has a board of directors and an advisory group that meets once a month.
- Big Brothers/Big Sisters work with at-risk students.
- Parent nights are held at the elementary, middle, and high school levels.
- At the middle and high school levels, extracurricular activities and clubs are highly functional.
- The Whitfield County School System publishes a system newsletter in addition to the newsletters published by each school. The system employs a full-time communication and media specialist that facilitates communication.

Standard 6 – Stakeholder Communications & Relationships

The system fosters effective communications and relationships with and among its stakeholders.

CHAIRPERSON:

Lorijo Calhoun

Director, Special Programs

COMMITTEE MEMBERS:

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Teacher, Whitfield Career Academy

Tami Dodd

Assistant Principal, Tunnel Hill Elementary School

Gibardo Guerrero

Parent, Eastbrook Middle School

Dr. Beth Hayes

Counselor, Phoenix High School

Randy Jones

Director, Maintenance

Mary Ellen Kinsey

Executive Director, Whitfield Education Foundation

Robert Lively

Teacher, Crossroads Academy

Brian Satterfield

Principal, Eastbrook Middle School

April Schneller

Parent, Beaverdale Elementary School

Debbie Sosebee

Parent, Eastbrook Middle School

Freida Talley

Secretary, Special Programs

Jody Trost

Parent, New Hope Elementary School, New Hope Middle School, and Northwest High School

Carolyn Weaver

Secretary, Testing and Accountability

Impact Statement: A system is successful in meeting this standard when it has the understanding, commitment, and support of stakeholders. System and school personnel seek opportunities for collaboration and shared leadership among stakeholders to help students learn and advance improvement efforts.

Indicators Rubric

Please indicate the degree to which the noted practices/processes are in place in the school system. The responses to the rubric should help the school system identify areas of strength and opportunities for improvement as well as guide and inform the school system's responses to the focus questions.

INDICATORS		Not Evident	Emerging	Operational	Highly Functional
In fulfillment of this standard, the system:					
6.1	Fosters collaboration with community stakeholders to support student learning			X	
6.2	Uses system-wide strategies to listen to and communicate with stakeholders			X	
6.3	Solicits the knowledge and skills of stakeholders to enhance the work of the system			X	
6.4	Communicates the expectations for student learning and goals for improvement to all stakeholders				X
6.5	Provides information that is meaningful and useful to stakeholders			X	

Definitions

Not Evident	Little or no evidence exists
Emerging	Evidence indicates early or preliminary stages of implementation of practice
Operational	Evidence indicates practices and procedures are actively implemented
Highly Functional	Evidence indicates practices and procedures are fully integrated and effectively and consistently implemented.

Focus Questions

1. How does the school system's leadership ensure that the system and its schools are responsive to community expectations and stakeholder satisfaction?

Community members were included in designing the system's vision, mission, and beliefs. Board of education meetings are open to include community members' commendations and/ or concerns. Parents, staff, school council and community members are involved in

the creation and annual revision of the district- and school-level parent involvement policies. School system personnel are involved in Leadership Dalton-Whitfield and are active in speaking engagements in the community to address area concerns and needs.

Analysis of the district annual needs assessment (Bernhardt Questionnaires) and individual school Title I surveys provide valuable input from stakeholders. Participation of community members in school council meetings ensure that the system and its schools are responsive to community and stakeholder expectations and satisfaction.

Use of technology, such as parent portal for Infinite Campus and the system website, provides vital information and links to all schools in Whitfield County. ConnectED provides automated messages to parents and community members to remind them of important meetings and events. Messages are bilingual in order to communicate effectively with the Spanish-speaking population.

2. What avenues are used to communicate information to stakeholders about the effectiveness of the school system and its schools, including the sharing of student performance results?

To ensure effective communication and to foster positive relationships with and among stakeholders, the Whitfield County School System provides a wide variety of student-, parent-, and community-based activities and services.

Student learning and communication with stakeholders is supported by school outreach, social workers, parent workshops, parent volunteers, PTA/PTO meetings, school council meetings, student-produced programs, Board of Education meetings, *In Our Words* literary magazine, Big Brothers/Sisters Buddy Program, the Riverbend Reunion, Bruin Bash, media relations specialist, and graduation coaches. The Whitfield Education Foundation supports student learning by providing school grants and presenting awards for outstanding staff and student achievement.

Communication with stakeholders is supplemented with student agendas, school and system websites, school newsletters, the local newspaper, school and system report cards, student report cards, parent/teacher conferences, teacher notes and/or phone calls, e-mail communication, on-line calendars, parent portal, local and regional television/radio stations, and the system ConnectED program.

The input of stakeholders is encouraged to enhance the work of the school system; parent meetings and workshops, PTA/PTO meetings, teacher collaboration meetings, and school council meetings provide opportunities for involvement. Local and regional television/radio stations are utilized to provide information to all stakeholders.

Expectations for student learning and goals for improvement to all stakeholders are communicated by school outreach, school and system websites, parent workshops, school newsletters, PTA/PTO meetings, parent/teacher conferences, school council meetings, the media relations specialist, and graduation coaches.

The Whitfield County School System strives to provide meaningful and useful information to stakeholders through school and system websites, parent meetings, school newsletters, school and system report cards, school council, BOE meetings, *In Our Words* literary magazine, through parent involvement coordinators, and the parent portal.

Standard 7 - Commitment to Continuous Improvement

The system establishes, implements, and monitors a continuous process of improvement that focuses on student performance.

CHAIRPERSON:

Dr. Audrey Williams	Director, Curriculum Improvement
---------------------	----------------------------------

COMMITTEE MEMBERS:

Dawn Beard	Parent, New Hope Middle School
Alisa Brogdon	Parent, Southeast High School
Jason Carter	Assistant Principal, Southeast High School
Julie Christopher	Business Partner, Cohutta Elementary School
Sharon Conway	Assistant Principal, Beaverdale Elementary School
Vanessa Ellison	Instructional Specialist, New Hope Middle School
Allyson Millican	Principal, Cohutta Elementary School
Denise Pendley	Assistant Principal, Antioch Elementary School
Ty Snyder	Principal, Eastside Elementary School
Sherri Travisano	Principal, Dawnville Elementary School
Jay Williams	Vocational Director, Northwest High School

Impact Statement: A system is successful in meeting this standard when it implements a collaborative and ongoing process for improvement that aligns the functions of the system with the expectations for student learning. Improvement efforts are sustained and the system and its schools demonstrate progress in improving student performance. New improvement efforts are informed by the results of earlier efforts through analysis of student performance, system effectiveness, and assessment of the improvement process.

Indicators Rubric

Please indicate the degree to which the noted practices/processes are in place in the school system. The responses to the rubric should help the school system identify areas of strength and opportunities for improvement as well as guide and inform the school system's responses to the focus questions.

INDICATORS		Not Evident	Emerging	Operational	Highly Functional
In fulfillment of this standard, the system:					
7.1	Engages in a continuous process of improvement that articulates the vision and purpose the system is pursuing (Vision); maintains a rich and current description of students, their performance, system effectiveness, and the community (Profile); employs goals and interventions to improve student performance (Plan); and documents and uses the results to inform future improvement efforts (Results)			X	
7.2	Engages stakeholders in the processes of continuous improvement				X
7.3	Ensures that each school's plan for continuous improvement is aligned with the system's vision and expectations for student learning			X	
7.4	Ensures that each school's plan for continuous improvement includes a focus on increasing learning for all students and closing gaps between current and expected student performance levels			X	
7.5	Provides research-based professional development for system and school personnel to help them achieve improvement goals			X	
7.6	Monitors and communicates the results of improvement efforts to stakeholders			X	

INDICATORS		Not Evident	Emerging	Operational	Highly Functional
In fulfillment of this standard, the system:					
7.7	Evaluates and documents the effectiveness and impact of its continuous process of improvement			X	
7.8	Allocates and protects time for planning and engaging in continuous improvement efforts system-wide			X	
7.9	Provides direction and assistance to its schools and operational units to support their continuous improvement efforts			X	

Definitions

Not Evident	Little or no evidence exists
Emerging	Evidence indicates early or preliminary stages of implementation of practice
Operational	Evidence indicates practices and procedures are actively implemented
Highly Functional	Evidence indicates practices and procedures are fully integrated and effectively and consistently implemented

Focus Questions

1. Describe the process for continuous improvement used by the school system and its schools and the impact of this process on student learning and system effectiveness.

The foundation of the Whitfield County School System's unified vision, mission, and beliefs is the students. The core business is to increase student learning by designing and delivering meaningful, challenging, and engaging lessons on a daily basis. The mission is to create and nurture safe, supportive, and caring cultures within each school where all stakeholders are treated, and treat each other, with dignity and respect.

The leadership initiative driving the system's vision is Dr. Phillip Schlechty's Working on the Work (WOW) framework. The WOW framework has been incorporated throughout the system to build the leadership capacity of the district and school design teams and to facilitate collaborative planning efforts. The system's belief that the role of the teacher is leader and designer of engaging, challenging, and meaningful learning experiences for students is supported by the development of a Leadership Academy and the allocation of funds for extensive professional learning activities. A system improvement plan has been formulated and communicated to all stakeholders enabling each school to assemble its own strategies for sustaining comprehensive improvement in alignment with the system's

goals. Assessment results are reviewed and interpreted in great detail at both the system and school levels, providing feedback on the effectiveness of instruction and improvement efforts.

Teachers and staff are trained to perform as leaders, and administrators serve as leaders of these leaders. School and student design teams, school councils, academic nights, and business partnerships are facilitated by empowered stakeholders throughout the system. School improvement plans have been transformed from massive overviews of school rules and guidelines into streamlined road maps developed by teachers and administrators; they define how the schools do business on a daily basis. These road maps are driven by data analyses and are revisited and revised each year. Integration of the Georgia School Keys, Reading Recovery programs, Pyramid of Interventions, and collaborative planning time for teachers is prevalent throughout the system and supports comprehensive improvement efforts.

Teachers develop rigorous and engaging work for students around the 10 design qualities outlined in the Schlechty Center's WOW framework. While using this framework, teachers also assess patterns of engagement and student achievement. Engagement is monitored through engagement surveys, and student achievement is monitored by analyzing student work and providing teacher commentary for continuous improvement. The Georgia Performance Standards are incorporated in all classrooms and provide impetus for unit and lesson design protocols. Expectations for performance are consistent across the system and reflect not only rigor, but also individualized learning plans for students experiencing academic difficulty. As teachers strive for continuous improvement for all students, they use collaborative planning time to design engaging lessons using differentiation and the Pyramid of Interventions.

2. What process is used to ensure that the improvement goals reflect student learning needs and are aligned with the vision and purpose of the school system and its schools?

The core business of the Whitfield County School System is to provide students with quality, engaging work. Throughout the system, a clear focus on the work designed for students is evident--work that is meaningful, challenging, and engaging and that results in students learning what is expected by the schools, parents, and community.

All schools are aligned to the system's vision, mission, and beliefs. Each school was challenged to incorporate the system's vision, mission, and beliefs into personalized statements reflective of its individual needs. This initiative facilitated the system's development of a focused set of shared beliefs and a clear vision which allow all levels of the organization to fully understand their roles in creating an engaging environment for students and staff. Professional learning opportunities are directly related to the needs of students throughout the system.

The Teaching and Learning department provides assistance to each school in disaggregating data for data profiles that are utilized in devising individual school

improvement plans. Stakeholders are actively involved in the development, implementation, and monitoring of the school improvement plan. This working document identifies pedagogical strengths as well as areas needing improvement, and allows schools to strategically address individual student and subgroup population needs.

Connecting to the community is vital to all schools in the system. Parents and community members are critical elements in the education of students. Therefore, the system provides opportunities for parents to monitor the progress of their children through the Infinite Campus Parent Portal, allowing immediate feedback to parents about their child's academic progress. Parents are provided opportunities to become active participants in their child's education through school website, teacher blogs, and e-mail; and they are encouraged to attend parent conferences to further evaluate the progress of their child.

3. What process is used to ensure that system and school personnel are provided professional development and technical assistance to implement interventions and achieve improvement goals?

Whitfield County School System's mission is to increase student learning by providing students and staff with meaningful, challenging, and engaging educational experiences in a safe and supportive environment. This mission is driven by the belief that the role of teacher is leader and designer of engaging, challenging, and meaningful learning experiences for students. System and school leadership have concentrated professional learning efforts around Dr. Phillip Schlechty's Working On the Work framework. The WOW framework is a research-based process and tool which supports teachers' understanding how to design engaging work for their students. From a new teacher induction series which incorporates a WOW Foundations introduction to the implementation of system and school design teams, the system ensures not only a common language for all constituents, but a unified focus that creates a collaborative network of strong schools. The system is dedicated to building its capacity to sustain continuous improvement through the Leadership Academy, allocating funds for additional professional learning, clearly aligning its expectations with improvement goals, and openly articulating the system's vision, mission, and beliefs to all constituents. These efforts have provided the basis upon which all improvement initiatives are derived.

The Board of Education supported a measure to amend the 2007-2008 calendar to provide additional full-and half-day professional learning opportunities system-wide. This support, combined with the unified effort to create engaging, challenging, and meaningful learning experiences for every student, generates quality learning environments and opportunities that will sustain comprehensive improvement for the system. Research-based improvement endeavors are determined by data-driven needs identified in individual schools and holistically across the system. The Teaching and Learning team, under the advisement of the assistant superintendent for Teaching and Learning, provides not only direction and guidance with improvement efforts, but also with disaggregating and analyzing data to determine areas needing improvement. School psychologists and technology specialists are assigned to groups of schools to offer assistance with the implementation of school level Pyramid of Interventions and progress monitoring. The

system is committed to continuous improvement measures that use customized professional learning and reflection-in-action to assess and monitor all teaching and learning practices. This commitment ensures that instruction is planned and differentiated based on student needs as identified through progress monitoring and analyses of student work.

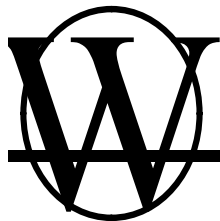
The Whitfield County School System is committed to adult learning and collaboration, improving teaching and learning practices, and incorporating research-based learning initiatives to sustain comprehensive improvement. The schools are organized to enable comprehensive learning for all students and staff. Staff meetings are professional learning sessions that support collegial conversations based on school improvement goals and student progress. Protocols are established that guide collaborative analyses of student work and enhance unit and lesson design. System-wide grade level collaborations have ensured the expectations for student mastery of the Georgia Performance Standards are equal across the system. The system's capacity to engage the talents of those who work in and support the schools to strengthen the organization will benefit students as measured by continuous improvements in their achievement.

4. How does the leadership ensure that the improvement plan is implemented, monitored, achieved, and communicated to stakeholders?

In order to ensure the implementation of the improvement plan, Whitfield County Schools has constructed a systematic, unified focus utilizing the WOW framework and emphasizing shared leadership. Through the framework and organizational structure, the system developed a vision, mission and a set of beliefs to guide each stakeholder. Resources are directed to provide the support needed through the provision of professional learning opportunities, the development of the Leadership Academy, Teaching and Learning teams, new staff induction, and opportunities for collaboration among teachers and schools.

The leadership ensures the improvement plan is monitored through a variety of data. Self-evaluation by leadership takes place using the WOW system standards rubric. The Teaching and Learning staff provide a common framework for schools to collect, disaggregate, and display student data. Feedback is given to individual schools on each school's improvement plan. Monitoring and feedback are ongoing.

Communication is a vital component of any improvement plan. The Whitfield County Schools have different avenues in place for continuous communication with stakeholders. The system website provides information on county and individual school levels. The vision, mission, and beliefs have been provided to each school for display. The induction of new staff members was designed to provide training in the system vision, mission, and beliefs. The leadership added a staff member to coordinate sharing the stories of the system and the individual schools. Communicating system-wide and individual school improvement plans and the progress made towards success is ongoing, focused, and directly related to sustaining comprehensive improvement.



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Section III

A Description of School System's Methods for Quality Assurance

Standards Assessment Report AdvancED District Accreditation

For NCA CASI and SACS CASI Districts

<http://www.whitfield.k12.ga.us>

The School System's Methods for Quality Assurance

Provide a brief description of the school system's processes for quality assurance. Please answer the following questions in the description:

1. What procedure does the system use to monitor and document improvement?

The Whitfield County School System has developed vision, mission, and beliefs statements by which all schools are aligned. A clear focus on the meaningful, challenging, and engaging work designed for students is evident throughout the system. The development of a focused set of shared beliefs and a clear vision has enabled all levels of the organization to fully understand their role in creating an engaging environment for students and staff. The System Design Team conducted interviews with a random sample of employees throughout the system to measure understanding of the vision, mission, and beliefs. System personnel periodically review and document indicators of improvement. System goals, based on sustaining comprehensive improvement, have also been developed. The system's Key Leadership Team, during monthly meetings, reviews evidence and indicators to ensure these goals reflect the vision, mission, and beliefs of the system.

A system improvement plan, as part of the consolidated application, has been formulated and communicated to all stakeholders. This enables each school to assemble its own school improvement strategies for sustaining comprehensive improvement in alignment with the system's goals. Student pre- and post-assessment results are thoroughly reviewed and interpreted at the school level, providing feedback about student performance, effectiveness of instruction, and improvement efforts. Data rooms, established in each school, enable school and system level leaders, in conjunction with the Teaching and Learning Team, to analyze disaggregated student data, identify trends, and monitor student and school performance.

2. How does the district provide meaningful feedback and support to its schools and across the district?

The foundation of the Whitfield County School System's unified vision, mission, and beliefs is the students. Our core business is to increase student learning by designing and delivering meaningful, challenging, and engaging lessons on a daily basis. The leadership initiative driving the system's vision is Dr. Phillip Schlechty's Working On the Work (WOW) framework. The superintendent has strategically incorporated the WOW principles and professional learning workshops to train key leadership personnel and to assist teachers in designing meaningful student work. The WOW framework has been integrated throughout the system to build the leadership capacity of District and School Design Teams; to establish an ongoing process of learning, implementation, and collaboration; and to sustain comprehensive improvement efforts. System Design Team members conduct comprehensive interviews in each school to document levels of staff engagement in the vision, mission, and beliefs of the system. The feedback gathered during these conversations influences professional learning endeavors, supports networking and collegial conversations throughout the system, and provides the impetus for leadership

development and recruitment efforts. Our system's belief that the role of the teacher is leader and designer of engaging, challenging, and meaningful learning experiences for students is supported by the development of a new staff induction series, an extensive Leadership Academy, and opportunities for collaboration among teachers and schools that foster common understandings of the system's focus and expectations for all employees.

School Improvement Plans have been transformed from massive overviews of school rules and guidelines into streamlined road maps developed by teachers and administrators to define how schools do business on a daily basis. These road maps are driven by data analyses and are revisited and revised each year. Stakeholders are actively involved in the development, implementation, and monitoring of the school improvement plans. Disaggregated student data analyses are coordinated by the Teaching and Learning Team, with assistance from other school and system level leaders, and comprehensive data rooms have been established in each school to facilitate a comprehensive method for monitoring student performance. Integration of the Georgia School Keys, Reading Recovery Programs, Pyramid of Interventions, benchmark testing, and collaborative planning time for teachers is prevalent throughout the school system and supports our comprehensive improvement efforts. Through system level collaborative meetings, each school's improvement plan is presented and feedback provided. This working document identifies pedagogical strengths, as well as areas needing improvement, and allows schools to strategically address individual student and subgroup population needs.

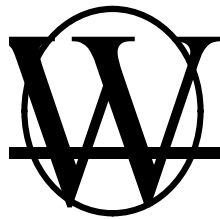
3. How does the district ensure that the AdvancED standards are met by all the schools and the district as a whole?

The focus of all improvement efforts throughout the Whitfield County School System is our students. The central office has been reorganized to provide appropriate support structures and systems to maximize student success and build the capacity of schools to achieve excellence through high standards, quality assurance, and continuous improvement. To facilitate the effective use of research and resources for student, school, and system improvement, SACS standards were aligned with the Schlechty Center's WOW school and classroom standards. Adhering to the WOW standards ensures compliance with the AdvancED standards. The Whitfield County School System has a clear vision and purpose; has effective and responsive leadership; has rigorous curricula taught through sound, research-based methods; collects, reports, and uses performance results; provides adequate resources and support for its educational programs; and values and communicates with its stakeholders. Establishing a shared vision, maintaining current school-wide profiles, assessing the implementation of interventions, and documenting student learning and school effectiveness results have affirmed the system. The needs of every child are being met and supported by a focused system committed to ensuring desired results by expecting and monitoring performance, improving teaching and learning, maximizing teachers' effectiveness, and fostering a culture of improvement by developing a learning community.

4. How does the district regularly collect, use, and communicate results?

The collection, use, and communication of results are vital to all schools in the system. Parents and community members are critical elements in the education of students; therefore, the system regularly collects and uses data and conveys results of improvement efforts. Student performance and stakeholder perception data are collected to monitor progress toward expectations. In combination with student artifacts, national, state, and locally mandated assessments provide student performance data. Results from these data are used to sustain comprehensive improvement efforts throughout the system. ConnectED and Infinite Campus surveys are administered to assess stakeholder understanding of the processes and procedures in place to ensure their children are receiving a meaningful, challenging, and engaging education.

Student progress is published through system and school annual report cards in the local media and on the system website. In addition, the Infinite Campus Parent Portal provides immediate feedback to parents about each child's academic performance. Parents and community members are afforded opportunities to become informed and active participants in the educational process. Connecting to the community and communicating progress is ongoing, focused, and directly related to sustaining comprehensive improvement.



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Section IV

Online Peer-to-Peer Submission

Standards Assessment Report AdvancED District Accreditation

For NCA CASI and SACS CASI Districts

<http://www.whitfield.k12.ga.us>



AdvancED is the parent organization of NCA CASI, SACS CASI, and NSSE

Peer-to-Peer Practice Submission Form

Demographics

Institution: *Westside Middle School*

Public/Non-public	Public	Alternate Beginning Grade	
School Type	AdvancED - Middle School	Alternate Ending Grade	
Charter School	N/A	Enrollment	590
Location Type	Rural	Gender at School	Co-Ed
Beginning Grade	6		
Ending Grade	8		

Practice

Practice ID: 1569

- 1. Name of Peer-to-Peer Practice*** Gender based classrooms
- 2. Primary Contact Name*** Stanley Stewart
- 3. School Name*** Westside Middle School
- 4. Submission Date**

5. Description of this practice: Briefly describe what you were trying to accomplish; how it was implemented; and what evidence you have that it worked.*

After reviewing research concerning differing learning styles of boys and girls, our school design team implemented gender based classrooms in order to best meet the needs of our students. We currently are gender based throughout the school with the only exceptions being in the areas of special education and gifted classrooms. This will be the fourth school year that we have been involved in gender-based classrooms. The first two were on a very limited basis with only one boys' class and one girls' class in each grade level. After examining testing data during those years, we became more progressive in the implementation. During the 07-08 school year, we were approximately 50% gender based. During that school year, we found that the gender based classrooms out performed the mixed gender classes across the board. In addition, the behavior referrals in our school were the lowest they have been during my 7 years as principal here.

6. Reason for practice: Describe the problem(s) or need(s) you addressed with this practice.*

Our desires to implement the gender based classrooms were two-fold. First of all, while we did not have major behavior problems in our school, we felt that we could improve things with gender based classrooms. Students in these classrooms are more likely to participate in discussions, participate in group settings, and feel less threatened than students in mixed-gender classrooms. Secondly, the research we were going by convinced us that we could do more academically than we were already offering. In gender based classrooms, it is easier to meet the differing students learning styles. The activities that a teacher designs for boys can and should be different than the work they design for girls.

7. Subject Area(s):*

- | | |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Not Applicable | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Social Studies/History |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Interdisciplinary | <input type="checkbox"/> Health/Physical Education |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Schoolwide | <input type="checkbox"/> World/Foreign Languages |

- ☒ English/Language Arts
- ☒ Mathematics
- ☒ Science

- ☐ Career/Technical Education
- ☐ Fine Arts
- ☐ Extracurricular

8. Grade level(s) of the students targeted for this practice. Choose all the grade levels that apply.*

- | | | |
|---|---------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Not Applicable | <input type="checkbox"/> 3 | <input type="checkbox"/> 9 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> All Students | <input type="checkbox"/> 4 | <input type="checkbox"/> 10 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> PreK | <input type="checkbox"/> 5 | <input type="checkbox"/> 11 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> K | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 6 | <input type="checkbox"/> 12 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 1 | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 7 | <input type="checkbox"/> 13 or higher |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 2 | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 8 | |

9. Group(s) of students targeted for this practice. Choose all groups that apply.*

- ☐ Not Applicable
- ☒ All Students
- ☐ Specific Ethnic Group
- ☐ Free or Reduced Lunch
- ☐ IEP or Special Education
- ☐ LEP or Limited English
- ☐ Advanced
- ☐ Other (Please Specify)

10. Group(s) of adults targeted for this practice. Choose all groups that apply.*

- | | |
|---|--|
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Not Applicable | <input type="checkbox"/> Custodial and Maintenance Staff |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Administrators and Supervisors | <input type="checkbox"/> Food Services Staff |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Classroom Teachers | <input type="checkbox"/> Security Staff |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Professional Support Staff | <input type="checkbox"/> Parents |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Aides | <input type="checkbox"/> Community Members |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Secretarial and Clerical Staff | |

11. Choose the length of time this practice was implemented.*

- ☐ Less than 1 school year
- ☒ 1 - 3 school years
- ☐ 4 - 6 school years
- ☐ More than 6 school years

12. Resources: Briefly describe the essential human, material, and financial resources needed to implement this practice.*

The implementation of gender based classrooms primarily uses the school's present structure. The primary resources involved would be finding the research to back up the practice (possibly purchasing books or DVD's for the staff) and money for staff development.

Optional: Indicate any specific material resources or tools that support this practice.

Content Id	Name	Submission Date	Status
1570	Boys and Girls Learn Differently!	09/03/2008	In Review

13. Research: Identify any research you are aware of that supports this practice.

Michael Gurian's *Boys and Girls Learn Differently!*

Ruby Payne's *Understanding Learning: Understanding the How, the Why, the What*

Gender in the Classroom by Sadker and Silber

14. Conclusion: Describe your next steps in implementing this practice.*

As long as we believe that having gender based classrooms meets the needs of our students, we will continue to implement the practice.

15. Contact Information: Please provide primary and secondary contact information so that other practitioners may contact you:

School Name: Westside Middle School **School Web Address:** <http://www.whitfield.k12.ga.us/wms/>

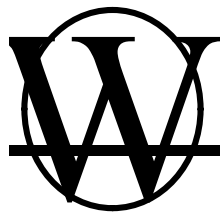
Primary Contact Information

Name* Stanley Stewart
 Phone Number* 706-673-2611
 E-mail Address* drsstewart@whitfield.k12.ga.us

Secondary Contact Information

Name* Larry Farner
 Phone Number* 706-673-2611
 E-mail Address* larry_farner@whitfield.k12.ga.us

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Section V

Conclusion

Conclusion

1. As you review your responses to the standards, what major trends, themes, or areas of focus emerge that cut across the seven standards?

A common trend that emerges across the seven standards is a strong commitment to the system's vision, mission, and beliefs. Decision-making is routinely conducted by asking three questions: (1) Is it true to our vision? (2) Does it align to our beliefs? (3) Will it help us achieve our mission? Our core business is tied to creating engaging work for students and staff so they can be successful in a safe and supportive environment.

All professional learning opportunities are tied to the vision, mission, and beliefs so that all system employees have a common and persuasive focus which directs daily work.

The system views students as volunteers; therefore, all instructional tasks must be designed with a student focus in order to increase engagement. We take a holistic approach to lesson design, considering the varying needs of learners to include cultural and linguistic factors, educational backgrounds, learning styles, and motivation.

In order to design engaging work for all learners, a system-wide initiative has centered on technology integration. The purchase of new technology through ESPLOST has transformed learning opportunities as evidenced across all seven standards.

The system's vision and mission will reach its full potential only if all stakeholders have an active voice and current understanding of system initiatives. This trend, which emerges across all seven standards, is the system's commitment to effective communication of all stakeholders. Many avenues of communication have been established to inform students, parents, and community members of student performance and system vision and beliefs. The parent portal in Infinite Campus and the ConnectED phone system allow parents to receive current student achievement information on a regular basis. School and system newsletters, as well

as the school system's website, provide timely information to both parents and the greater community.

2. Based on your review of these cross-cutting themes/trends and each of the seven standards, what would you consider to be your school system's greatest strengths?

After reviewing trends from each of the seven standards, it became evident that the Whitfield County School System has made a strong commitment to focus on the system's mission of increasing student learning by providing meaningful, challenging, and engaging experiences for students. This commitment is strengthened by our relationship as a Standard-Bearer school system with the Schlechty Center for Leadership in School Reform.

A over-arching theme permeates all professional learning opportunities. Whether it is content knowledge, teachers as leaders, or pedagogy, the core focus is to support teachers in designing engaging experiences for students. A strong culture supporting engaging work for teachers and students is further enhanced by the board of education, superintendent, and central- and school-level instructional leaders participating in professional learning. To build capacity, system-wide initiatives such as Leadership Academy, Working on the Work Conferences, System and School Design Teams, and Teacher Collaboration Meetings encourage the Whitfield County philosophy to "lead from where you are."

The Whitfield County School System has a strong teacher induction and retention program. New teachers attend a two-day collaborative session focused on the core business and vision of the system. All teachers are provided with on-going opportunities to strengthen their understanding of Whitfield County Schools' student-focused philosophy. A clear understanding of these principles encourages teachers to design work with the who (students) in mind. Teachers focus on their students' needs in order to design engaging lessons. The goal of professional learning and teacher induction is to develop strong and capable teachers who will provide engaging lessons to increase student learning.

There is a sense of urgency to incorporate, update, and procure instructional technology correlated to the vision, mission and beliefs of the Whitfield County School System. Each school has developed a prioritized list that will be used to purchase technology over time to enhance the ability of staff to design engaging work for students. Professional learning opportunities are afforded for personnel to increase their skills in technology throughout the year.

3. What would you consider to be your school system's greatest challenges?

One challenge for the Whitfield County School System is collecting and analyzing data to best meet the instructional needs of all students. The state of Georgia provides only standardized test data to measure student progress at the end of the

course or year. The inability to collect and analyze longitudinal data throughout the school year inhibits teachers from making data-driven decisions to guide instruction. A related concern involves collecting evidence beyond traditional test data to document student progress.

Our greatest curricular challenges are making appropriate instructional decisions to increase academic success for all students and assisting teachers with the transition to the Georgia Performance Standards.

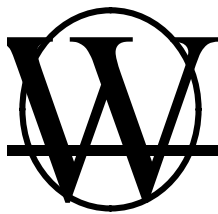
Previously in this document, teacher induction and retention were addressed as strengths of the Whitfield County School System. However, recruiting highly qualified math, science, special education, and foreign language teachers continues to be an increasing challenge.

The Whitfield County School System experienced an increase in student enrollment of 1,261 students from 2002-2008. Since 2002, one elementary, one middle, and one high school have been built to accommodate the increased student enrollment. One elementary and one high school are targeted to open within the next few years. In the same period of time, the economically disadvantaged population increased from 44.76% to 57.50%. This increase resulted in a change from seven to seventeen schools qualifying for Title I services.

4. How will you use the insights gained from this self-assessment to inform and enhance your quality assurance and continuous improvement efforts?

Whitfield County School System is currently evaluating several software vendors as a way to meet the challenges associated with data analysis. The system believes that a variety of assessments are necessary to get an accurate picture of students' academic progress. Professional learning will be needed to assist teachers in designing alternative assessments as part of their lesson design. A pervasive use of Schlechty's Coaching for Design protocols throughout the system will continue to address designing engaging work and assessments that go beyond traditional objective test measures. The correlation between the design qualities and the Georgia Performance Standards will enhance instructional practices and result in profound student learning.

To address the challenge of attracting and retaining high quality teachers, the system has made a commitment to recruit candidates from a diverse group of teacher education programs. It is important for these programs to share the Whitfield County School System belief that students are customers and teachers are designers of engaging work.



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Whitfield County Schools

Where Excellence is a Tradition



Appendix

Quality System Indicators

In fulfillment of the standard, the system:

Indicators/Evidence Sources	
Vision and Purpose	
1.1	<p>Establishes a vision and purpose for the system in collaboration with its stakeholders</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Member of Standard Bearer's Network• District design teams• School design teams• Department design teams• Facility design teams• Vision, Mission, and Beliefs• Design of key leaders meetings• Minutes from board meetings• Organizational chart• Superintendent's calendar of speaking events & content• Posting of Vision, Mission, and Beliefs throughout system• Website• The kind of work teachers design for students• The kind of work principal design for teachers• Professional learning• How time, space, and resources are used• Student engagement• Collaboration vertically and horizontally
1.2	<p>Communicates the system's vision and purpose to build stakeholder understanding and support</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Display of system Vision, Mission, and Beliefs• Re-organization of central office• School system policies and procedures are free of barriers

	<p>to collaborate and promote shared leadership.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Those who are expected to lead have control over appointment of personnel, their assignment, and evaluation; control over the allocation of resources assigned to the schools (budgets, time, and space). • Staff routinely works well together, framing problems, and designing workable solutions to them. • Parent nights • School newsletters • System website • Open house • School council • Superintendent's calendar of speaking events & content • Creed cards
1.3	<p>Identifies system-wide goals and measures to advance the vision</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Board minutes • Goals • District design team • School design teams • Student design teams • Key Leader meeting minutes • Instructional reports to the board • Decision making process • Student engagement surveys • Parent surveys • Staff interviews • Standard Bearer's Network membership • School Improvement Plans • Professional learning • Redesigning how work is done • Instructional leader meetings at school level • Grade level meeting • Recruitment & hiring • Induction process
1.4	<p>Develops and continuously maintains a profile of the system, its students, and the community</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Georgia Department of Education State Report Card • Dr. Victoria Bernhardt Questionnaire • Link to Dalton-Whitfield Chamber of Commerce • Title I Plan • Parent survey • Individual School Improvement Plans

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • GAPPS reviews • School & system data rooms
1.5	<p>Ensures that the system's vision and purpose guide the teaching and learning process and strategic direction of schools, departments, and services</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The superintendent, board, and all school system staff consistently employ a uniform decision-making framework. • The decision-making process focuses on achieving results for the system rather than on satisfying the interest of particular groups or individuals. • School system and school leaders routinely assess decisions in terms of their effectiveness in achieving intended results. • School staff and parents maintain high expectations for student academic achievement. • Teachers routinely examine measures of student engagement and persistence, as well as achievement, as a means of deterring the need to modify or redesign the work provided to students. • Teachers and students collaborate routinely in examining the results achieved relative to the quality of the work provided for, and produced by, students. • Individual School Improvement Plans • Teaching and Learning support • System-wide collaboration meetings
1.6	<p>Reviews its vision and purpose systematically and revises them when appropriate</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Capacity assessment process • System design team agendas • School design team agendas • Key leaders meetings • Board retreats • School retreats • Leadership Academy • Principal Academy & follow-up • Key leaders conference

Quality System Indicators

In fulfillment of the standard, the system:

Indicators/Evidence Sources	
Governance and Leadership	
2.1	<p>Establishes and communicates policies and procedures that provide for the effective operation of the system</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Online board policy manual • Vision, Mission, and Beliefs
2.2	<p>Recognizes and preserves the executive, administrative, and leadership authority of the administrative head of the system</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Board meeting agendas • WCS organizational chart
2.3	<p>Ensures compliance with applicable local, state, and federal laws, standards, and regulations</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Executive Director of Assessment and Accountability
2.4	<p>Implements policies and procedures that provide for the orientation and training of the governing board</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Board retreats • Attendance at board trainings • Maintains affiliation with Georgia School Board Association (GSBA)
2.5	<p>Builds public support, secures sufficient resources, and acts as a steward of the system's resources</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • FY 07 budget • ESPLOST
2.6	<p>Maintains access to legal counsel to advise or obtain information</p>

	<p>about legal requirements and obligations</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Executive Director of Assessment and Accountability • Harben and Hartley Law Firm
2.7	<p>Maintains adequate insurance or equivalent resources to protect its financial stability and administrative operations</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Documentation available upon request from Chief Financial Officer
Indicators/Evidence Sources	
Leadership	
2.8	<p>Provides for systematic analysis and review of student performance and school and system effectiveness</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Data rooms in each school • Central level data room • Minutes from key leadership meetings
2.9	<p>Creates and supports collaborative networks of stakeholders to support system programs</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Collaboration meetings • System level design team • School council agendas/minutes • PTO agendas/minutes
2.10	<p>Provides direction, assistance, and resources to align, support, and enhance all parts of the system in meeting organizational and student performance goals</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consultant report on technology • Professional learning requests to cabinet • ESPLOST
2.11	<p>Provides internal and external stakeholders meaningful roles in the decision-making process that promote a culture of participation, responsibility, and ownership</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community/parent inclusion in interview process for principals • Community/parent participation in Teacher of the Year process

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • School council agendas/minutes
2.12	<p>Assesses and addresses community expectations and stakeholder satisfaction</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Survey results – Dr. Victoria Bernhardt Questionnaire
2.13	<p>Implements an evaluation system that provides for the professional growth of all personnel</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • GTOI • Walk-through observations • Site-based professional learning

Quality System Indicators

In fulfillment of the standard, the system:

Indicators/Evidence Sources	
Teaching and Learning	
3.1	<p>Develops, articulates, and coordinates curriculum based on clearly-defined expectations for student learning, including essential knowledge and skills.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Provided GPS training and technology training• Created sequencing guides for GPS courses• Initiated coaching for design and WOW framework training• Facilitated system-wide collaboration meetings in content areas• Designed bookless 9th grade environmental science curriculum• Conducted system-wide department head meetings• Coordinated opportunities for teachers to work in groups and create performance tasks• Implementation of standards-based report cards• Constructed common assessments for grades K-5• Developed pre/post assessments in grades K-8• Conducted professional learning as requested in all curricular areas• Posted GPS standards in classrooms• Developed School Improvement Plans in all schools• Constructed data rooms in schools• Provided ongoing training for Pyramid of Interventions• Participated in Georgia Assessment of Performance on School Standards (GAPSS) Review process
3.2	<p>Establishes expectations and supports student engagement in the learning process, including opportunities for students to explore application of higher order thinking skills and investigate new approaches to applying their learning</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Implemented the Working on the Work (WOW) framework.• Provided professional learning in the use of new technology

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Facilitated professional learning training in balanced assessments • Assigned performance tasks to assess mastery of standard • Use of surveys to monitor student engagement • Provided video evidence of student learning • Promote opportunities for students to participate in system level contests and activities • Initiated Varnell Springs/Dalton State/Conasauga River Alliance • Increased online learning opportunities
3.3	<p>Ensures that system-wide curricular and instructional decisions are based on data and research at all levels</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Created data rooms to drive instruction • Encouraged flexible grouping to meet varied needs of learners • Identified focus groups to provide additional instruction as needed • Implemented Pyramid of Interventions • Organized Project Success and Freshman Academy • Analysis system-wide survey data and make appropriate instructional decisions • Disaggregate data room information to make instructional decisions • Formulate school improvement plans based on test data • Administration of system-wide questionnaires to determine system needs
3.4	<p>Supports instruction that is research-based and reflective of best practice</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Validates research-based expenditures of Title I funds • The majority of schools have been involved in GAPSS reviews in order to promote the implementation of standards-based instruction and best practices in their schools. • Coordinates GPS content training which included a focus on best practices • Building capacity to strengthen Pyramid of Interventions and Response to Intervention practices • Employ use of graphic organizers, word walls, summarizing strategies to enhance instructional practices • Required application process for system professional learning funds to ensure funds are used on research-

	based best practices
3.5	<p>Supports a curriculum that challenges and meets the needs of each student, reflects a commitment to equity, and demonstrates an appreciation of diversity</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supported a quality special education program as well as gifted programs in schools • Conducted the Monterrey Exchange Program in order for students to develop an understanding of Latino culture • Provided training for teachers in the area of differentiation • Instructed students using Georgia Performance Standards (GPS) • Implemented the Pyramid of Interventions • Integrated WOW framework and design qualities • Collaborated with the Georgia Youth and Science Technology Center (GYSTC) • Offered additional support class for new non-English speaking students • Required 24 credits to graduate (above state minimum) • Offered Chinese at the high school level
3.6	<p>Allocates and protects instructional time to support student learning</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Utilized block scheduling in order to reduce instructional time lost during transitions • Conducted professional learning in a train-the-trainer format in order to decrease the amount of teachers' time spent out of the classroom • Monitored schedules to ensure that the state required number of instructional minutes are taught daily • Protected instructional time by reducing announcements, interruptions during school hours • Evaluated special events or programs for relevance/support of Georgia Performance Standards • Provided intervention groups during the school day to maximize learning for all students

3.7	<p>Maintains articulation among and between all levels of schooling to monitor student performance and ensure readiness for future schooling or employment</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Scheduled transition meetings which allowed students from one level to visit and receive information from the next higher level (i.e., elementary to middle) • Facilitated monthly system-wide collaboration meetings in which teachers from all levels meet to discuss instruction • Increased communication among graduation coaches and counselors at all three levels in order to improve student success • Initiated “Raider Nation” and “Bruin Nation” • Coordinated Career Day events and college tours
3.8	<p>Supports the implementation of interventions to help students meet expectations for student learning</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Developed Pyramid of Interventions at each school • Conducted monthly pyramid facilitator meetings to support implementation of the Response to Intervention process • Utilized AIMSweb data to determine needed interventions • Implemented Reading Recovery in elementary schools • Coordinated Project Success for at-risk students • Offered instructional extension programs for students not meeting standards • Provided NovaNET and Georgia Virtual School online courses for credit recovery • Incorporated Freshman Academy to support the transition of students from middle to high school • Administered graduation test reviews and courses • Supported students not meeting CRCT standards through summer classes • Facilitated Buddy Program to mentor identified students
3.9	<p>Maintains a system-wide climate that supports student learning</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Established a consistent focus on student learning using the WOW framework • Trained members of the Whitfield County Board of Education on the WOW philosophy in order to support the common and consistent educational focus of the system • Created county and school design teams

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Structured the Teaching and Learning team to provide instructional support in the schools Developed strategic plans for disaster and pandemic disaster
3.10	<p>Ensures that curriculum is reviewed and revised at regular intervals</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reviewed and revised curriculum through lead teacher meetings in the four core content areas Conducted system-level curriculum meetings Revised sequencing guides Created unit pre/post assessments in all four core content Provided collaboration days to design standards-based units
3.11	<p>Coordinates and ensures ready access to instructional technology, information and media services, and materials needed for effective instruction.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Supported the implementation of technology through professional learning Promoted parent portal as a resource to monitor student progress Updated system and school websites Posted lesson and unit plans on the system website Funded ESPLOST for system technology updates Offered NovaNET and Georgia Virtual School programs Provided web-based resources for teachers Provided online card catalog which allows teachers to share resources throughout the school system Provided podcast and video streaming membership to schools Offered a variety of web-based research tutorials Trained facilitators in the use of the Georgia Online Assessment System (OAS). OAS is a web-based program which provides individual student practice for the CRCT. Developed system-wide technology help desk Purchased projection systems, ACTIVboards, and e-instruction systems

Quality System Indicators

In fulfillment of the standard, the system:

Indicators/Evidence Sources	
Documenting and Using Results	
4.1	<p>Establishes and implements a comprehensive assessment system, aligned with the system's expectations for student learning, that yields information which is reliable, valid, and bias free</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Testing calendar• Kindergarten readiness testing• Testing for reading fluency• Pre/post assessments• Aptitude testing• Alternative assessments• Engagement surveys• State and local writing exams• End-of-Course testing• Criterion-Referenced testing• Normed-Referenced testing• Georgia High School Graduation Test
4.2	<p>Ensures that student assessment data are used to make decisions for continuous improvement of teaching and learning</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Teaching and learning agendas• School-level data rooms• System data rooms• School Improvement Plans• Consolidated Local Educational Agency Implementation Plan (CLIP)• Response to Intervention• Gifted placement• Pre/post assessments
4.3	<p>Conducts systematic analysis of instructional and organizational effectiveness, including support systems, and uses the results to improve student and system performance</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• System-level design team• School design teams• System data room• School data rooms

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Engagement surveys • School leadership teams • Title I surveys
4.4	<p>Provides a system of communication which uses a variety of methods to report student performance and system effectiveness to all stakeholders</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • School report cards • Parent portal on Infinite Campus • Student report cards • Local newspaper • School councils • School parent-teacher associations • School newsletters • System newsletters • School websites • System website • ConnectED system • Individual student testing reports
4.5	<p>Uses comparison and trend data from comparable school systems to evaluate student performance and system effectiveness</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • School Comparison Data for 2006 • System Comparison Data for 2006 • School Comparison Data for 2007 • System Comparison Data for 2007 • School Comparison Data for 2008 • System Comparison Data for 2008
4.6	<p>Demonstrates verifiable growth in student performance that is supported by multiple sources of evidence</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • System AYP reports • CRCT reports • DIBELS • AIMSweb • Pre/post assessments • Individual educational plans
4.7	<p>Maintains a secure, accurate, and complete student record system in accordance with state and federal records</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Infinite Campus• Board of Education Policy JR
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Quality System Indicators

In fulfillment of the standard, the system:

Indicators/Evidence Sources	
Resources and Support Systems	
5.1	<p>Establishes and implements processes to recruit, employ, retain, and mentor qualified professional and support staff to fulfill assigned roles and responsibilities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Recruiting plan• Vision, Mission, and Beliefs• Professional learning• Induction program• Mentor programs at school level• Leadership Academy• Design teams• Benefits package
5.2	<p>Establishes and implements a process to assign professional and support staff based on system needs and staff qualifications as may be required by federal and state law and regulations (i.e., professional preparation, ability, knowledge, and experience)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Allotment formula• Allotment meetings• Highly Qualified (HIQ) report• Certified Personnel Information (CPI) report• Equity plan• Title II A plan• Whitfield County School Board Policy
5.3	<p>Establishes and implements a process to design, evaluate, and improve professional learning and ensures participation by all faculty and staff</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• School Improvement Plans• Professional learning surveys• Professional learning evaluations• Professional learning funding request• Professional learning committee meetings minutes• Re-certification process
5.4	<p>Ensures that staff are sufficient in number to meet the vision and purpose of the school system and to meet federal and state law and regulations, if applicable</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Allotment formula • CPI report
Indicators/Evidence Sources	
Financial Resources	
5.5	<p>Engages in long-range budgetary planning and annually budgets sufficient resources to support its educational programs and to implement its plans for improvement</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Annual budget • Five-year facilities plan • Five-year enrollment projections based on historical trends and known variables • Staff allotment formulas • Personnel allotments based on staffing formulas • Consolidated application for federal grants • New personnel/program and capital projects priority requests • Annual budget guide and review • Facility design team meetings with stakeholders regarding facility additions and renovations • Allocation rollover election forms for long range planning
5.6	<p>Ensures that all financial transactions are safeguarded through proper budgetary procedures and auditing accounting measures</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Annual Audit • ESPLOST Audit in accordance with Georgia Code Section 20-2-491 • Monthly financial reports to the board of education comparing actual to budget for current and prior year to date • Graph analysis of historical financial data • Compliance with Financial Management for Georgia LUAS Manual • Fixed asset listings continuously updated for additions and deletions • Financial training session for all individuals involved with bookkeeping activities • Periodic internal audits of pupil activity accounts • Presentations regarding an overview of school finances and operations to school counsels, civic organizations and Leadership Dalton-Whitfield workshops • System provides representation for the Chamber of

	Commerce Legislative Action Committee regarding legislative input.
Indicators/Evidence Sources	
Physical Resources	
5.7	<p>Maintains sites, facilities, services, and equipment to provide a safe, orderly, and healthy environment</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CPR, First Aid and Automated External Defibrillators (AED) training is offered for personnel • Automated External Defibrillators (AED) are emerging in all schools. • Automated External Defibrillators (AED) are operational in all middle and high schools. • Director of Maintenance • ESPLOST • Construction Management Firm • Facility maintenance history • 24/7 emergency call procedure in place • Control system for energy management • On-going and up-to-date training for maintenance staff • Contract custodial services • Transportation Director • Video cameras on buses • Bus radio activity is monitored. • Random drug testing of drivers • Drug testing of all new hires before employment • Monitors on Exceptional Needs buses • Bus rodeo • Evacuation drills for buses • North and south bus coordinators • Bus inventory is current • Safety on Wheels training offered K-5 • Safe and Drug Free Schools program
5.8	<p>Establishes and implements written security and crisis management plans with appropriate training for stakeholders</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • System Director of Safety & Security • Safety training & briefings are held throughout the year. • Monthly meetings and training for school safety coordinators. • School Emergency Operations Plans (EOP) updated annually • EOP training conducted at each school

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • School emergency operations plans approved by Georgia Emergency Management Agency (GEMA) • Director of Safety & Security on-call to assist with questions or issues • Constant collaboration with multiple public safety, emergency management, and social service agencies • Pandemic flu plan integrated into EOP • Professional learning on safety topics • Prevention, Mitigation, Preparedness and Recovery Plans
5.9	<p>Implements processes and plans for maintaining and improving sites, facilities, and equipment</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Capital projects budget • ESPLOST renovation plans • Electronic access control systems will serve to enhance perimeter security which directly affects student and staff safety. • Written process and preventative maintenance schedule to keep facilities maintained and repaired • Work order system • Principal maintenance allotment • Inventory control system • On-line monthly facility progress report • Site surveys with emergency management agencies • Safety checks and routine bus inspections • Post accident briefings and investigations • Student accident data analyzed for process and facility improvement recommendations
5.10	<p>Provides technology infrastructure and equipment that is up-to-date and sufficient to accomplish the system's goals</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ESPLOST renovation plans • Upgrading to CAT6 wiring continues which enables us to operate at 1GB within each renovated school • Instructional Laptops – nearing completion of installing laptops to all classrooms • 21st Century Classroom implementation includes interactive whiteboards and ceiling-mounted projectors with classroom integrated audio. • Surveillance video systems will provide visibility in school facilities for use in the event of emergencies as well as a prevention mitigation tool.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wireless access for all staff and guest access for others will be provided. • Bandwidth will be upgraded to 100MB in every school which will facilitate Podcasting, collaboration and document sharing for students, teachers and the community. • Migration to a single domain to provide local student and staff folders for anywhere/anytime access throughout the county • Migration of Food Services to a single solution and provide them with offsite data backup • Web lunch payment options are provided.
Indicators/Evidence Sources	
Support Systems	
5.11	<p>Provides and coordinates support services that meet the health, counseling, nutrition, safety, co-curricular, transportation, and special learning needs of all students</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Twelve nurses serve the school system. • Health fairs are conducted within the school system. • Health instruction at elementary, middle, and high school levels • We offer physical education to students. • Physical education teachers are highly qualified. • D.A.R.E program in elementary and middle schools • Thirty highly qualified counselors are employed by Whitfield County School System. • Five social workers divided among system schools • Homeless liaisons, graduation coaches at the middle/high school level, outreach coordinators, and parent involvement coordinators are provided. • Recipient of two United States Department of Agriculture Food Service Southeastern Regional Best Practice Awards • Customer Service Award in food service • Award for participant in development of new menu patterns for school meals • One of ten systems in Georgia to pilot the food pyramid plan in all schools • Serves an average of 15,744 meals daily • Summer feeding program provided for students • Employee/visitor identification badges required • Member of local emergency planning committee • Collaboration with multiple public safety, emergency

	<p>management, and social service agencies</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • School resource officers in high schools • Live Scan fingerprint system provides timely employment background check information. • Sex offender registry check for all chaperones • Pandemic plan • ConnectED phone system for individual school or system wide parent/staff notification • Teaching and Learning team as outlined in Whitfield County Schools Central Office organizational chart • Assigned psychologist at each school • Physical, occupational, and speech therapy offered by highly qualified staff • ESOL instruction provided • Gifted instruction for those students identified • Early Intervention Program offered in elementary schools for struggling learners • Reading Recovery offered in eight elementary schools • Credit recovery offered at the high school level • Alternative educational settings provided through Phoenix, Crossroads, and Mountainbrook students as needed • Additional instruction extension days offered at elementary and middle school levels • Pyramid of Interventions training and implementation at the elementary and middle school levels • Systematic approach to bus replacement based on state bus replacement funds • Bus fleet maintained and serviced on a strict 20-day cycle • Effective, systematic, timely response to mechanically disabled buses • Two-way radio communication on all buses • Video recording equipment on all buses • Cell phone communication on all special needs buses • Driver assistant monitors on all special needs buses • Initial certified driver training of 30 contact hours minimum for every driver • Required annual retraining for all drivers through Skills Days and Georgia Department of Education Safety Classes • Pre-employment finger printing and background checks for all drivers and monitors • Annual physicals required for all drivers • Annual evaluations on all drivers • Pre-employment, post-accident and random drug and
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	<p>alcohol screenings required for all employee drivers</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Five-State certified trainers and one state certified third-party tester on staff • Accident review committee reviews and investigates all accidents and makes recommendations for possible driver retraining. • Student safety and evacuation training conducted through Safety On Wheels program • Provide annual orientation for parents and students concerning bus rules and regulations • Administration of system wide surveys to determine number of buses and route adjustments needed
5.12	<p>Provides student support services coordinated with the school, home, and community</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ConnectED phone communication used by the system or individual schools • PTA/PTO organizations • Parent outreach coordinators • Social workers • Hospital homebound services offered • Community outreach through Bruin Bash (NWHS) and Riverbend Reunion (SEHS) • Big Brothers/Big Sister working with at-risk students • Parent nights at elementary, middle and high school levels • College visitations provided for seniors • Newsletters are sent home by all Whitfield County schools. • A system-wide newsletter is sent home to all parents. • County website is actively maintained with links to individual school websites • Community and media relations specialist

Quality System Indicators

In fulfillment of the standard, the system:

Indicators/Evidence Sources	
Stakeholders Communications and Relationships	
6.1	Fosters collaboration with community stakeholders to support student learning

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • School outreach • Social workers • Parent workshops • PTO meetings • School council meetings • Board of Education meetings • Media relations specialist • Student-produced programs • In Our Words literary magazine • Riverbend reunion/Bruin Bash • Graduation coaches • Big Brothers/Sisters Buddy program • Parent volunteers
6.2	<p>Uses system-wide strategies to listen to and communicate with stakeholders</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Student agendas • School outreach • Social workers • Parent workshops • School & system websites • School newsletters • Local newspaper • ConnectED • School & system report cards • Student report cards • PTO meetings • Parent/teacher conferences • Local and Chattanooga television/radio stations • School council meetings • Board of Education meetings • Teacher notes and/or phone calls • E-mail • Online calendars • Parent portal • Media relations specialist
6.3	<p>Solicits the knowledge and skills of stakeholders to enhance the work of the system</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parent meetings & workshops • PTO meetings • Teacher collaboration meetings • School council

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Whitfield Education Foundation grants/awards
6.4	<p>Communicates the expectations for student learning and goals for improvement to all stakeholders</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> School outreach School & system websites Parent workshops School newsletters PTO meetings Parent/teacher conferences School council meetings Board of Education meetings Media relations specialist Graduation coaches Local and Chattanooga television/radio stations
6.5	<p>Provides information that is meaningful and useful to stakeholders</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> School & system websites Parent meetings School newsletters School & system report cards School council Board of Education Meetings In Our Words literary magazine Local and Chattanooga television/radio stations Parent portal

Quality System Indicators

In fulfillment of the standard, the system:

Indicators/Evidence Sources	
Commitment to Continuous Improvement	
7.1	Engages in a continuous process of improvement that articulates the vision and purpose the system is pursuing (Vision); maintains a rich and current description of students, their performance, system effectiveness, and the community (Profile); employs goals and interventions to improve student performance (Plan); and

	<p>documents and uses the results to inform future improvement efforts (Results)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dr. Brochu's presentation of vision/mission/beliefs • Consolidated LEA Implementation Plan (CLIP) • School Improvement Plans (SIP) • Data profiles for each school/system • Pyramid of Interventions
7.2	<p>Engages stakeholders in the processes of continuous improvement</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Design teams for schools/system • Leadership Academy • School councils • Parent advisory group • Education Special Purpose Local Option Sales Tax (ESPLOST) • Two design teams for new school builds (elementary & high)
7.3	<p>Ensures that each school's plan for continuous improvement is aligned with the system's vision and expectations for student learning</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • School Vision, Mission, and Beliefs • Teaching and Learning team • School Improvement Plans (SIP) • Consolidated LEA Implementation Plan (CLIP) • Working On the Work (WOW) framework
7.4	<p>Ensures that each school's plan for continuous improvement includes a focus on increasing learning for all students and closing gaps between current and expected student performance levels</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consolidated LEA Implementation Plan (CLIP) • School Improvement Plans (SIP) • Georgia Assessment of Performance on School Standards (GAPSS) reviews • Working On the Work (WOW) framework
7.5	<p>Provides research-based professional development for system and school personnel to help them achieve improvement goals</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Working On the Work (WOW) framework • Differentiation • Response to Intervention (RTI) • Instructional innovation with technology • Instructional ACTIVboard training
7.6	<p>Monitors and communicates the results of improvement efforts to stakeholders</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • System & school websites • Report cards • ConnectED • Parent portal • Blogs • School councils • Newsletters
7.7	<p>Evaluates and documents the effectiveness and impact of its continuous process of improvement</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Five-year trends on data profiles • School Improvement Plans (SIP) • Consolidated LEA Implementation Plan (CLIP) • Annual personnel reviews • Professional learning surveys • Title I surveys
7.8	<p>Allocates and protects time for planning and engaging in continuous improvement efforts system-wide</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • System calendar • System collaborative meetings • School professional learning communities • School release days for professional learning
7.9	<p>Provides direction and assistance to its schools and operational units to support their continuous improvement efforts</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • System Vision, Mission, and Beliefs • Teaching and Learning department • Tech specialists • School psychologists

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • School Improvement Plans (SIP) • Consolidated LEA Implementation Plan (CLIP) • Professional learning funds application
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