



Whitfield County Schools



Five-Year
Strategic
Plan

Progress Report 2016

Acknowledgements

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Special thanks to the students, teachers, parents, and community.

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Contents

From the Superintendent.....	4
A few data points from 2016.....	5
Instruction & Assessment	6
Highly Qualified Personnel	8
Finance.....	10
Community Involvement	12
Operations.....	14
Technology	16
Whitfield County Schools	18
Board of Education.....	18

From the Superintendent

Teachers and staff in Whitfield County Schools have been working hard to meet the six goals listed in the *Whitfield County Schools Five-Year Strategic Plan*. This document is the first progress report based on the strategic plan adopted by the Board of Education in January 2015.

The *WCS Strategic Plan* is not a document that sits on the shelf. It continues to guide purposeful decisionmaking throughout the district from the classroom to the boardroom. Each goal has a set of objectives with action steps. These are built into our daily work lives.

The strategic plan is built into our culture. When planning for professional development, teachers are required to explain how their activity relates to the system strategic plan and which goals it supports.

During the first year we focused on several key indicators of the strategic plan and collected baseline data for comparison in years to come.

The six goals covered in the plan are divided among different areas of operation including:

1. Instruction & Assessment
2. Highly Qualified Personnel
3. Finance
4. Community Involvement
5. Operations
6. Technology

Details about our progress toward each of our goals are included in this progress report. Thank you for your interest in our work and for supporting Whitfield County Schools.



Strategic Planning Process



Vision, Mission, & Beliefs

Vision

We envision a valued and dynamic school district that prepares students for success in a global community.

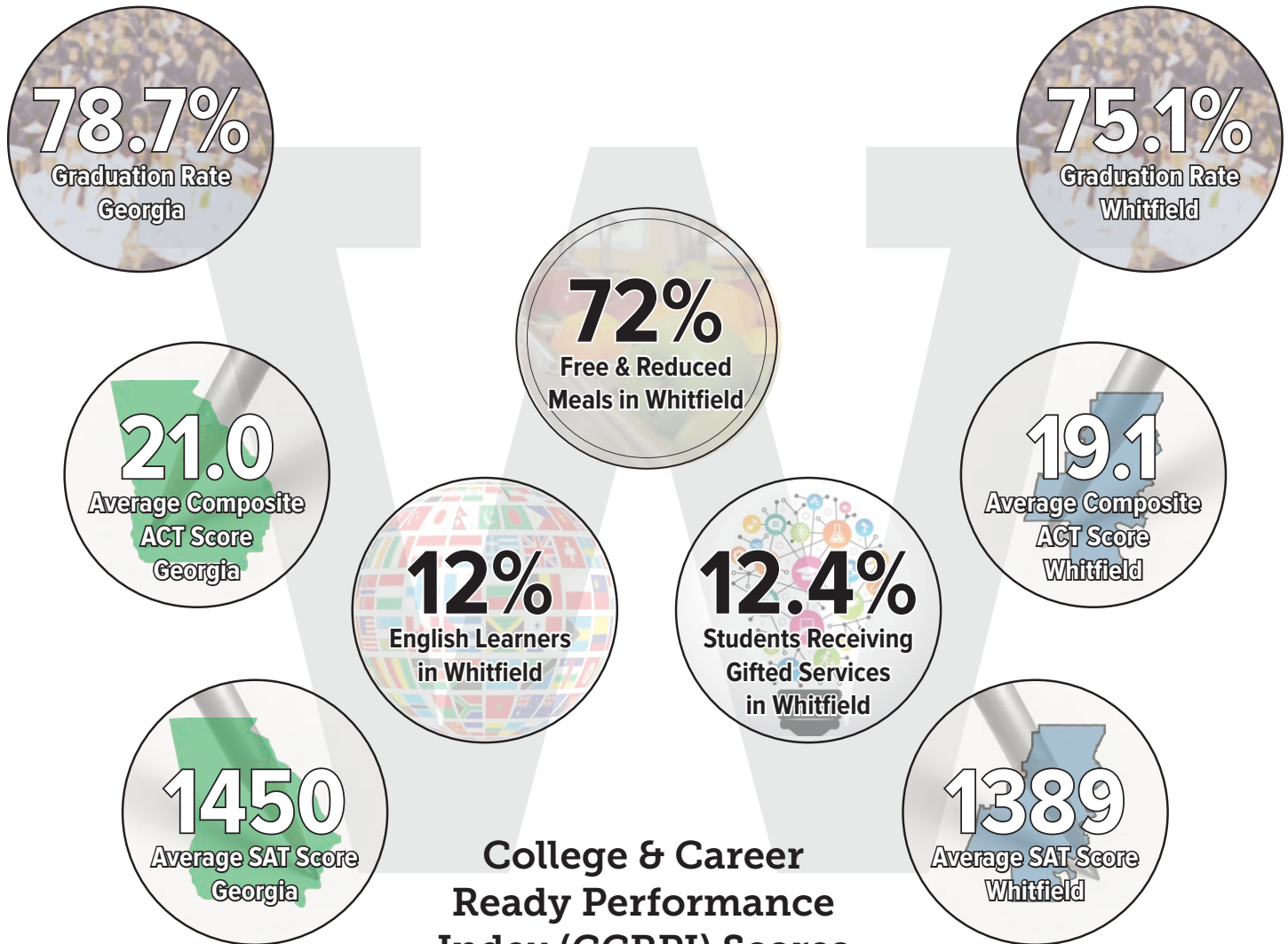
Mission

Our mission is to maximize student learning by providing challenging and engaging educational experiences in a safe and supportive environment.

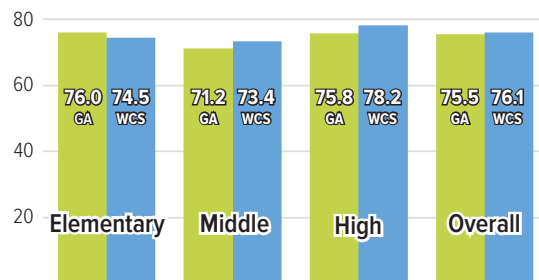
Beliefs

1. We believe the needs of students, personnel, families, and the community are best met with a unified direction.
2. We believe our purpose is to lead students to success by engaging them in challenging and meaningful work.
3. We believe teachers are leaders who design learning experiences for students.
4. We believe our personnel, families, and community members are vital to the education of our students.
5. We believe in creating and maintaining a safe, inviting, and inclusive learning environment where everyone is treated with dignity and respect.

A few data points from 2016...

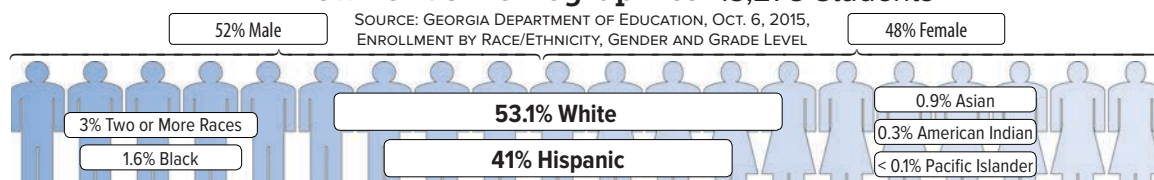


College & Career Ready Performance Index (CCRPI) Scores



Enrollment & Demographics 13,278 Students

SOURCE: GEORGIA DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION, OCT. 6, 2015,
ENROLLMENT BY RACE/ETHNICITY, GENDER AND GRADE LEVEL



1 Goal

Instruction & Assessment

Provide the educational foundation and opportunities to accelerate all students to achieve expected or high academic growth.

First-Year Focus

The Whitfield County Schools Five-Year Strategic Plan lists three objectives for Teaching and Learning, each with several action steps. We focused on three of those action steps during this first year.



Prepared 99 curriculum maps for grades K-12 in all four core content areas: math, language arts, science, & social studies

Expanded high school online academy to allow first-time course credit for students.

Google considers
Whitfield County Schools
a “power user”

Teachers and students have multiple opportunities to use Google classroom applications in all grades.

“Using Google has allowed me to reach all learners at their levels. I love the Chromebooks and the continuing improvements in education Google is making to help me educate our kids.”

—James Morrison
7th Grade Math Teacher
New Hope Middle School



88 Courses

led by GNTC instructors on the Whitfield Murray campus at the Career Academy.

“ I am proud of the cohesiveness that has been established in our district. Our direction, especially in curriculum, is focused and unified. ”

—ANONYMOUS SURVEY RESPONDENT – WCS ELEMENTARY PRINCIPAL

Action Steps

Consistent work for students in all schools

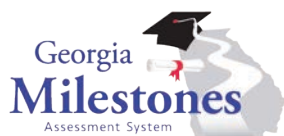
Provided collaborative work sessions for teachers & leaders to create grade level and/or course curriculum maps.

Raise the graduation rate

Trained high school staff to ensure they understood the graduation rate formulas and factors that influence CCRPI.

Analyze data to improve results

Provided collaborative training sessions to understand how to use best practices for data analysis.



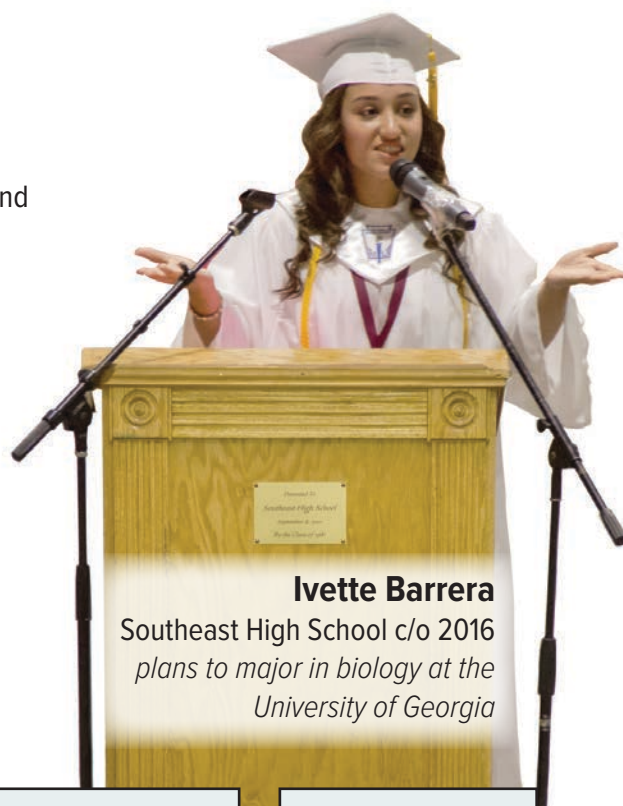
Monitoring many types of data has helped improve student achievement

The Georgia Milestones assessments show more students in grades 3–8 exceeded expectations in math last year. The same goes for high school analytic geometry. In these areas, the number of students who did not meet state standards also decreased.

College Courses in High School Classrooms

Ten College Courses
12 Sections
194 Students

14 Courses Planned for 2017



Ivette Barrera

Southeast High School c/o 2016
plans to major in biology at the University of Georgia

1,098

students enrolled in Advanced Placement or college credit courses

1,817+

combined hours of K–12 literacy training

121

advanced content courses in elementary and middle schools

636

students completed all three courses of a pathway

2 Goal

Highly Qualified Personnel

Recruit, retain, and develop highly-qualified personnel.



First-Year Focus

The Whitfield County Schools Five-Year Strategic Plan lists four objectives for Highly Qualified Personnel, each with several action steps. We focused on four of those action steps during this first year.

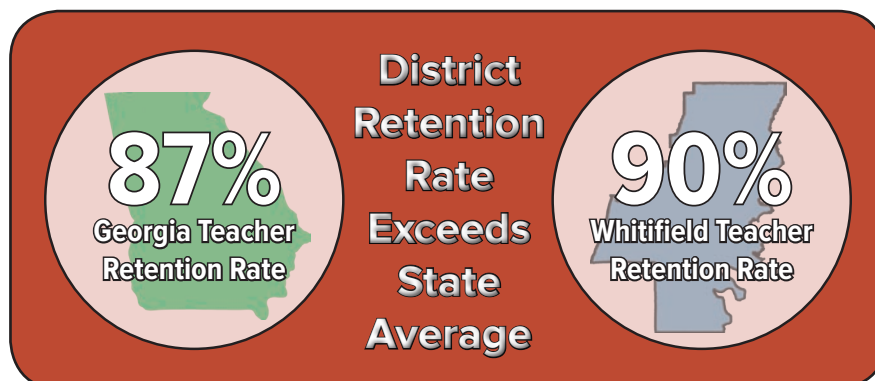


New staff members learn about Whitfield County Schools during new teacher orientation.

Hire & Support New Teachers

Whitfield County Schools gained 105 new teachers during 2016.

After their initial induction, they were paired with a mentor and met as a cohort three times during the year for additional support.



“ We strive to recruit and maintain a workforce supporting the mission of the Whitfield County Public Schools. ”

—DR. RICHARD HILL, CHIEF OFFICER OF HUMAN RESOURCES

Action Steps

Restore salaries

Restored employee salaries in 2016.

Restore work days

Returned to a full 180-day academic year for students and staff.

Collaborate with teachers and administrators

Used a variety of platforms to provide support ranging from face-to-face sessions to Google Hangouts.

Help staff use data to improve schools

Helped school staff organize and interpret data for use in the school improvement plan.



The District hosted 70 Interns from Dalton State College in 15 Whitfield County Schools

76%

of teachers have earned advanced degrees

14

years of education experience is the average for our teachers

1,636

teachers and support staff work for Whitfield County Schools

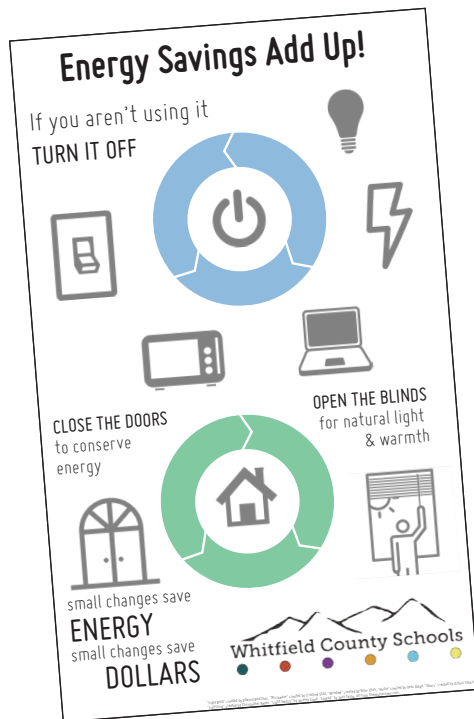
2nd

highest beginning teacher salary among 25 north Georgia school districts



Finance

Ensure fiscal stability and increase reserves through sound financial practices.



First-Year Focus

The Whitfield County Schools Five-Year Strategic Plan lists two objectives for Finance, each with several action steps. We focused on three of those action steps during this first year.

Whitfield County Schools earned 3.5 stars on its Financial Efficiency Star Rating, which is higher than the state average of 3 stars.

Good Idea!

Energy saved
by replacing gym
lights with LED
fixtures is expected
to pay for itself in
less than
two
years!

Inventory Progress

Seven of 18 Phases Complete

1. Projectors
2. ActivBoards
3. New wireless access points
4. New wireless network switches
5. Windows laptops
6. Chromebooks
7. Mobile Technology Device Carts

Remaining phases include iPads, other tablets (iPods, etc.), docking stations, printers, monitors, miscellaneous computers, other general classroom equipment, office copiers, Exceptional Student Services equipment, and specialized equipment including music rooms, broadcast equipment, etc. in elementary schools; band rooms, gym equipment, science labs, etc. in middle schools; and science labs, band rooms, auditorium/theatre equipment, athletic equipment, etc. in high schools.

“Our students have thoroughly embraced the conservation movement in our recycling efforts and that has parlayed perfectly into the energy saving efforts of the district. It has really just become ‘what we do.’”

—WCS MIDDLE SCHOOL PRINCIPAL JOE BARNETT

Action Steps

Standardize purchasing procedures

Named a procurement officer to standardize procedures.

Develop inventory process

Continued to build on districtwide inventory system.

Energy conservation

Worked to conserve even more energy through best practices and equipment upgrades.

In FY 2016, Finance collaborated with each department head to clearly define budget areas and review purchasing procedures.

Zero-Based Budgeting

a method of budgeting in which all expenses must be justified for each new school year



Storage areas are neat and easy to use since beginning a systematic review of inventory.

\$8,117

average spending per pupil in Whitfield County Schools

100%

implementation of zero-based budgeting

\$153k

savings thanks to improved purchasing process

\$4.5

million spent on utilities (water, natural gas, sewage, power)



Community Involvement

Strengthen school, family, and community partnerships.

First-Year Focus

The Whitfield County Schools Five-Year Strategic Plan lists three objectives for Community Involvement, each with several action steps. We focused on five of those action steps during this first year.



Operations staff monitor emergency operations during a fire drill at Dug Gap Elementary.

10

Schools trained in Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS)

1,040

Elementary students graduated from Whitfield County Sheriff's Office Drug Abuse Resistance Education (DARE) program

3,681

Twitter followers as of Tuesday, July 19, 2016 at twitter.com/WCSchools

9,769

Facebook Page Likes as of Tuesday, July 19, 2016, at facebook.com/WCSchools

562,975

Pageviews of the district website at www.whitfield.k12.ga.us during FY 2016



Records show at least 465 high school students visited college campuses during 2016. The Top 10 visited schools were:

- Berry College
- Dalton State
- Georgia Northwestern Technical College
- Georgia Southern
- Georgia Southwestern State
- Kennesaw State
- Shorter University
- University of Georgia
- University of North Georgia
- University of West Georgia

Teen Maze is an event at which students have the opportunity to face consequences of randomly selected life-style choices associated with risky youth behaviors in a safe and controlled environment.



Superintendent Dr. Judy Gilreath hands out diplomas during a mock graduation at Teen Maze.

“ *The English and technology classes for parents provided by my child’s school have opened up a new world to me.* ”

—ANONYMOUS SURVEY RESPONDENT – WCS ELEMENTARY PARENT

Action Steps

Welcoming environments

Sustained positive environments for students and visitors in our schools and offices.

Ready for action

Staff were prepared to respond to a variety of emergencies from inclement weather to fire and aggressive threats.

Clearly communicate with families

Provided timely, clear, and concise information.

Strengthen partnerships with colleges

Worked with local colleges to clear a smooth path from prekindergarten to careers and college graduation.

Pair families with community support

Introduced families to local resources to assist with physical, social, emotional, and academic needs.



OLWEUS BULLYING
PREVENTION PROGRAM

It's pronounced / ōl • vā • əs /

Twelve Whitfield County Schools are trained to use the Olweus Bullying Prevention Program, a comprehensive model that utilizes annual surveys, classroom curriculum, implementation resources and training.



Blackboard
connect™



205

classes attended
by parents to learn
about various topics

276k

meals served during
USDA Seamless
Summer Feeding
Program

936

elementary students
received weekend
meals from
community partners
during school year

1,839

families offered
support through
community mental
and public health
services



Operations

Provide safe and efficient facilities, maintenance, and transportation services.

First-Year Focus

The Whitfield County Schools Five-Year Strategic Plan lists three objectives for Operations, each with several action steps. We focused on six of those action steps during this first year.

100% Certified



All bus drivers are certified providers of first aid, CPR, and use of automatic external defibrillators (AEDs). They also undergo defensive driver training through the National Safety Council.



Looking Good in 2016!

Some improvements made last year include:

New Hallway Flooring

- Valley Point Elementary
- Pleasant Grove Elementary

Hallways Painted

- Westside Middle
- Cohutta Elementary
- Northwest High
- Westside Elementary

Auxiliary Gym Painted

- Northwest High

Total Renovation

- Eastside Elementary



Dug Gap Elementary Assistant Principal Scott Houston oversees a fire drill at the school.

“Our priorities are safety, efficiency, and providing excellent service to our students, staff, and visitors.”

—MIKE EWTON, ASSISTANT SUPERINTENDENT FOR OPERATIONS

Action Steps

Prioritize and schedule regular maintenance

Refined a rotating schedule of work to maintain painting and flooring in school facilities.

Survey quality of service

Reviewed customer satisfaction to ensure high-quality service.

Review contracts

Performed cost-benefit analysis of contracted services to improve the return on the taxpayers' investment.

Upgrade security

Remained vigilant about the safety of students and guests on our campuses and buses.

Upgrade communications

Upgraded radio and GPS systems.

Advanced safety training for bus drivers and monitors

Provided training that exceeds state and federal requirements.

Reviewing Contract Saves Money & Improves Service

Landscaping rotation reduced from **10–14** days to **5–7** days with a **5%** cost savings.



Brian Ramsey (at left, with school board chairman Bill Worley at right) earned 1st Place in the region and 7th in the state bus technician competition.

7.8%

rise in principals' satisfaction with custodial service since 2013

2.1

million square feet of indoor space maintained in 25 facilities

257

radios upgraded (40 handheld, 45 base units, & 172 bus radios)

\$140

million in facility needs identified in five-year facilities plan

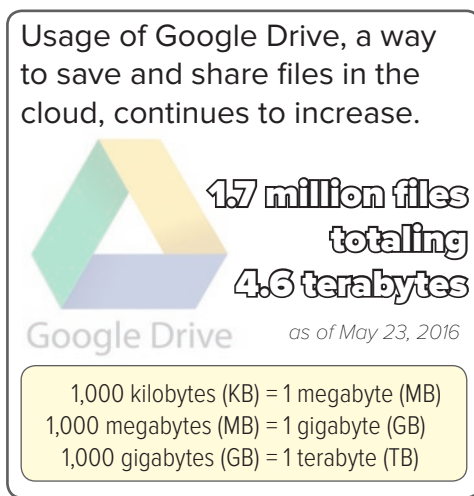


Technology

Improve student academic achievement by strengthening technology integration.

First-Year Focus

The Whitfield County Schools Five-Year Strategic Plan lists two objectives for Technology, each with several action steps. We focused on two of those action steps during this first year.

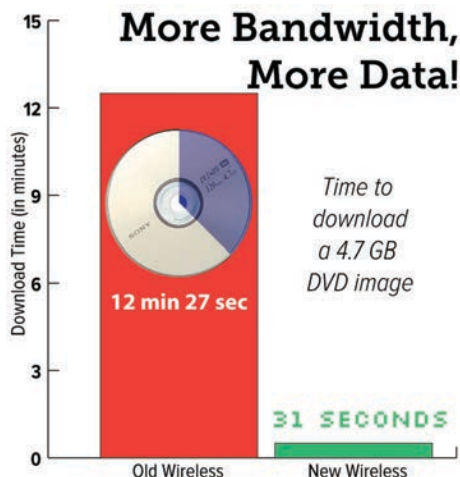


Whitfield County Schools has been called one of the **Googliest** districts in Georgia for its impressive use of Google services!



GaDOE District Technology 2016 Inventory Survey

Whitfield County Schools provides 4,147 desktop computers, 3,905 laptop computers, 1,878 tablets, and 50 servers.



Top three professional development opportunities offered to teachers and faculty by our instructional technology staff:



“Before the wireless upgrade, we could only connect five or six devices per classroom. Now, we can connect up to 70 per room.”

—TIM SHAVER, TECHNOLOGY DIRECTOR

Action Steps

Upgrade technology

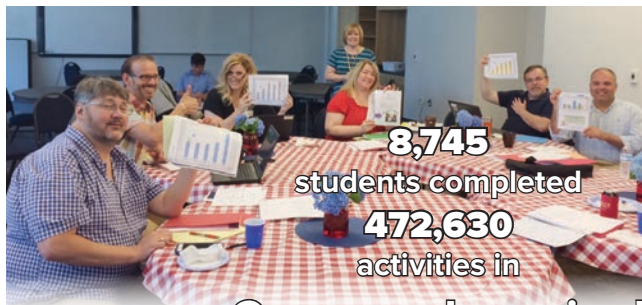
Eased the load on servers by migrating appropriate files to Google Drive. Assessed remaining needs and installed or upgraded servers to balance the load. Also improved wireless capacity allowing stable, fast connections for more devices at the same time.

More than 10,000 internet-ready devices for students!

The number of district Chromebooks increased from approximately 100 to more than 3,500 devices in one year.

Train staff to use data

Expanded professional development opportunities for services including Google Mail, Google Drive, Google Docs, and Google Contacts.



8,745
students completed
472,630
activities in
Compass Learning!

The company purpose-builds K-12 learning acceleration software for blended learning, intervention, high school, and inquiry-based personalized learning.



North Whitfield Middle School students use wireless Chromebooks during class.

High school students completed **1,944** online courses.

Edgenuity provides engaging online and blended learning education solutions that propel success for every student, empower every teacher to deliver more effective instruction, and enable schools and districts to meet their academic goals.

2,360

internet-capable
devices added
last year

49

Compass
Learning model
teachers

74

teacher
workshops led
by instructional
technology staff

300%

improvement in
Wi-Fi capacity in
Whitfield County
Schools

Whitfield County Schools

Elementary Schools

Antioch Elementary

Principal Tracie Dempsey
tracie.dempsey@wcsga.net
(706) 278-7550

Beaverdale Elementary

Principal Robb Kittle
robb.kittle@wcsga.net
(706) 275-4414

Cedar Ridge Elementary

Principal Cindy Dobbins
cindy.dobbins@wcsga.net
(706) 712-8400

Cohutta Elementary

Principal Larry Farner
larry.farner@wcsga.net
(706) 694-8812

Dawnville Elementary

Principal Sherri Travisano
sherri.travisano@wcsga.net
(706) 259-3914

Dug Gap Elementary

Principal Mandy Locke
mandy.locke@wcsga.net
(706) 226-3919

Eastside Elementary

Principal Ben Hunt
ben.hunt@wcsga.net
(706) 278-3074

New Hope Elementary

Principal Carla Maret
carla.maret@wcsga.net
(706) 673-3180

Pleasant Grove Elementary

Principal Laurie Grant
laurie.grant@wcsga.net
(706) 259-3920

Tunnel Hill Elementary

Principal Connie Kopcsak
connie.kopcsak@wcsga.net
(706) 673-4550

Valley Point Elementary

Principal Doris McLemore
doris.mclemore@wcsga.net
(706) 277-3259

Varnell Elementary

Principal Lisa Jones
lisa.jones@wcsga.net
(706) 694-3471

Westside Elementary

Principal Tami Dodd
tami.dodd@wcsga.net
(706) 673-6531

Middle Schools

Eastbrook Middle

Principal Greg Bailey
greg.bailey@wcsga.net
(706) 278-6135

New Hope Middle

Principal Stephen Vess
stephen.vess@wcsga.net
(706) 673-2295

North Whitfield Middle

Principal Andrea Bradley
andrea.bradley@wcsga.net
(706) 259-3381

Valley Point Middle

Principal Joe Barnett
joe.barnett@wcsga.net
(706) 277-9662

Westside Middle

Principal Angela Hargis
angela.hargis@wcsga.net
(706) 673-2611

High Schools

Coahulla Creek High

Principal Tracy Mardis
tracy.mardis@wcsga.net
(706) 694-4900

Crossroads Academy

Principal Donna Harris
donna.harris@wcsga.net
(706) 271-2495

Northwest Whitfield High

Principal Britt Adams
britt.adams@wcsga.net
(706) 516-2200

Northwest Georgia College and Career Academy

CEO David Moeller
david.moeller@wcsga.net
(706) 876-3600

Phoenix High School

Principal Fred Toney
fred.toney@wcsga.net
(706) 260-2206

Southeast Whitfield High

Principal Denise Pendley
denise.pendley@wcsga.net
(706) 876-7000

Board of Education

The 2016 Whitfield County Board of Education is made up of five members. Four members represent one of four voting districts. A fifth member serves at-large, representing the entire district.

Pictured, from left, are Board of Education members Rodney Lock, Chair Bill Worley, Thomas Barton, Tony Stanley, and Vice Chair Louis Fordham.



Notes



WHITFIELD COUNTY SCHOOLS

Dalton, Georgia

SINCE 1872



Instruction & Assessment

Provide the educational foundation and opportunities to accelerate all students to achieve expected or high academic growth.



Highly Qualified Personnel

Recruit, retain, and develop highly-qualified personnel.



Finance

Ensure fiscal stability and increase reserves through sound financial practices.



Community Involvement

Strengthen school, family, and community partnerships.



Operations

Provide safe and efficient facilities, maintenance, and transportation services.



Technology

Improve student academic achievement by strengthening technology integration.