



Strategic Priorities for 2010–2020

Introduction

Gwinnett County Public Schools is known to be a high-performing school district that provides a quality and effective education for every student. To sustain our record of success we must continuously review where we are and envision what the organization must be in the future if we are to be successful in educating and preparing our students for the demands of the 21st century. That is why we spent the past year-and-a-half asking ourselves and our stakeholders, “What should Gwinnett County Public Schools be like in the next decade?”

The *Strategic Priorities for 2010-2020* outline the qualities and characteristics our employees and stakeholders believe are desirable for 10 major components of the school district. Each component is either a direct responsibility of the district or can be influenced by the attitudes and actions of those within the organization. We believe that pursuing these attributes will move us closer to realizing our vision of being a system of world-class schools.

Our success depends upon the support of the people employed by the district and those served by it. The Strategic Priorities will play a significant role in guiding the school district’s work—now and 5 to 10 years forward—and will encourage all stakeholders to do their part in helping the district realize its vision.

Students

As engaged learners, our students will reach their full learning potential. They will be critical thinkers, creative problem-solvers, and effective communicators. What they experience as Gwinnett students will encourage their growth as curious, analytical, imaginative, and adaptable learners. They will take responsibility for their own learning, achievement, and behavior, making the most of opportunities in Gwinnett schools. Students will demonstrate high levels of character, taking pride in their school, community, and country. They will understand that America’s greatness is built upon three things... our form of government—a representative democracy; how we do business—our free-enterprise system; and how we educate our people—our system of public education. They will develop leadership and teamwork skills, preparing to be successful American citizens who function effectively in a global economy. Students will graduate with the knowledge, skills, and expertise to succeed in college, work, and life in the 21st century.

Employees

Gwinnett County Public Schools’ employees—teachers, administrators, and support personnel— will be committed to high expectations for student learning and will take responsibility for the results achieved. They will be caring, dedicated professionals who embrace lifelong learning, continuous improvement, and professional growth. Their effective use of data and information will improve teaching and learning and their own job performance. Employees will exhibit the highest ethical standards and will expect the same from their co-workers, students, and the school district.

Staff will work collaboratively across grade levels and across divisions to benefit students and the organization. They will be champions for all children and passionate advocates for strong public schools, believing public education is essential to America’s prosperity. School district employees will respect the differences and build on the rich diversity

found within our student body, our workforce, and our community. All employees will recognize how their daily work makes a difference in the lives of students and has a positive impact on the future of Gwinnett County, our state, and our nation. Employees who perform at high levels will be rewarded and recognized for their contributions to the district's success.

Parents and Guardians

As partners with the school, parents/guardians of Gwinnett students will support their children's education. They will be engaged with their children and teachers to optimize teaching and learning at school and in the home. They will reinforce high expectations for learning and behavior and will share accountability for their children's success at school. Families will encourage personal responsibility, regular attendance, and a strong work ethic. They will routinely communicate with teachers and the school, sharing information, concerns, and ideas. Parents and guardians will be well-informed about their school's direction and initiatives, as well as those of the district. As a result, they will exhibit high levels of support for their schools and confidence in Gwinnett County Public Schools as a school system of choice.

Governance and Leadership

Beginning with the School Board and superintendent governance team, leaders at all levels in Gwinnett County Public Schools will be passionate about the district's vision, mission, and goals. They will embrace the Board's core beliefs and commitments and act accordingly in making decisions that affect students. Leaders will focus on results, particularly as they relate to students, and will value accountability. They will lead by example, energize others, and execute plans that turn vision into reality. Those who govern and those who lead will continually improve their own performance and increase the capacity of those with whom they work. They will promote a performance culture that helps others see how their work contributes to teaching and learning. They will encourage flexibility and innovation while setting high standards for their work and exhibit integrity and ethical behavior at all times. Leaders will ensure organizational coherence so that all aspects of the district support teaching and learning.

Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment

Gwinnett County Public Schools' core business is teaching and learning with an emphasis on learning. Curriculum, instruction, and assessments will be rigorous, integrated, and aligned. Innovative and challenging learning activities will be student-centered and designed for collaboration and flexibility. Proven, research-based Quality-Plus Teaching Strategies and appropriate technology will be used to engage students and to tailor instruction for different learners and learning styles. In meeting the needs of *all* students, schools will accelerate instruction not only for students who excel but also for those who are academically behind. Reading, writing, and mathematics— the foundations of learning— will be integrated into all content areas including languages, arts, sciences, and technology. In addition, Gwinnett's curriculum will emphasize development of media, technology and information-processing skills. A variety of assessments that are appropriate, timely, and ongoing will be employed as essential tools for measuring academic progress, evaluating performance, and guiding instruction. Teachers will use data to improve instruction and to increase academic achievement for each student. Continuous improvements in curriculum, instruction, and assessment will help students develop the skills required for success in a changing, competitive, global environment.

Facilities and Operations

The school system will look beyond today's classroom to provide learning environments for tomorrow's students, including alternative, non-traditional, and specialized academic programs. Schools will be designed, organized, and managed to allow the flexibility needed to serve students best. Our facilities will have the infrastructure and technological resources to advance teaching and learning. We will employ best practices in operations management, ensuring that buildings, grounds, and athletic facilities are safe, secure, attractive, energy-efficient, and well-maintained. Additionally, the school system will provide safe, reliable, efficient, and cost-effective transportation services. Using state-of-the-art design and construction techniques, innovative operational strategies, and conservation principles, we will continually improve our facilities and operations.

Financial Stewardship

The school district will be a responsible steward of taxpayers' money while providing the necessary resources to support world-class teaching and learning. We will continue to manage our financial resources through a transparent management system that meets or exceeds the highest standards in accounting and financial reporting. As a result, confidence will be high among citizens, financial institutions, and the agencies that regulate the district's fiscal operations. Budget decisions will be made with a long-term perspective to help ensure the district has adequate funds to meet both current and future needs. We will wisely use our limited financial resources while also pursuing additional sources of revenue. The school system will employ proven business practices and procedures at all times to ensure it meets the public's highest standards for accountability, integrity, and trust.

Information Management and Technology

Technology will permeate the education of Gwinnett's learners. Digital tools will expand the walls of the classroom, fostering collaboration and nurturing creativity and innovation in students and teachers. Appropriate technological tools and resources that are part of students' everyday, media-rich lives will be incorporated into the school day, making learning real and relevant to a student population that has never known a world without sophisticated technology. The district will provide a robust online environment to meet the evolving needs of students and staff and will promote safe, responsible use of technology. Employees will have the technology-based knowledge, skills, training, and tools they need to be effective in their jobs. Innovative technology will facilitate teaching and learning, enhance communication, strengthen the link between school and home, and ensure operational and analytical excellence in the day-to-day operations of the school system.

Communication

The school district will promote open, honest, reliable, two-way communication that builds trust and confidence within the school community. We will share accurate, timely, and relevant information with stakeholders through appropriate communication vehicles. We will be committed to public engagement so that students, parents, staff, and community members will be well informed and able to provide meaningful input regarding district issues. The school district will overcome communication challenges such as those associated with growth, language differences, and access to technology. Communication will promote and reinforce the school system's reputation, conveying a clear and compelling story of our instructional and operational success. Effective communication will be everyone's responsibility.

Public Image and Community Pride

The school system will be a source of community pride and a major factor in the economic vitality of the county. The public will regard Gwinnett County Public Schools as the school system of choice, worthy of support and confidence. The district will attract new residents and employers, as well as new employees, with its reputation as a system of world-class schools. The school system will earn the trust of taxpayers through effective management of its financial, physical, and human resources. Our schools belong to the public. Therefore, the entire community has a stake in our success and will be supportive of our schools and the district. Good schools build good communities, and good communities sustain good schools. Gwinnett schools will benefit from a wide variety of business and community-based partnerships. In turn, our employees and students will contribute to the county's quality of life through their involvement in the community.

Conclusion

The *Strategic Priorities for 2010–2020* help form the foundation for the school district's strategic direction. They lead us to set goals that move us closer to realizing our vision of becoming a system of world-class schools. They drive continuous improvement in the district so that it is the learning organization it must be to succeed in a changing and competitive world. They keep us focused on our core business – teaching and learning – so we prepare today's students to take their place as tomorrow's leaders and successful citizens in the 21st century. Most importantly, the Strategic Priorities help ensure Gwinnett County Public Schools will do its part in building a better, stronger Gwinnett County... one whose citizens value public education and the rich heritage and culture of America.