The Strategic Direction keeps the school district focused on its core business—teaching and learning—and drives continuous improvement. It is one of the district’s foundational documents, linking the vision, mission, goals, and core beliefs to initiatives and priorities, division objectives, operational management plans, and local school plans for improvement.

Vision

Gwinnett County Public Schools will become a system of world-class schools where students acquire the knowledge and skills to be successful in college and careers.

Mission

The mission of Gwinnett County Public Schools is to pursue excellence in academic knowledge, skills, and behavior for each student, resulting in measured improvement against local, national, and world-class standards.

Strategic Goals:

Gwinnett County Public Schools will...

Goal 1: Ensure a world-class education for all students by focusing on teaching and learning the Academic Knowledge and Skills (AKS) curriculum.

Goal 2: Ensure a safe, secure, and orderly environment for all.

Goal 3: Optimize student achievement through responsible stewardship of its financial resources and the proactive pursuit of all resources necessary to meet current and future demands.

Goal 4: Recruit, employ, develop, and retain a workforce that achieves the mission and goals of the organization.

Goal 5: Support instructional and operational needs with technological systems and processes that support effective performance and desired results.

Goal 6: Provide and manage the system’s facilities and operations in an exemplary manner as determined by programmatic needs and best management practices.

Goal 7: Apply continuous quality improvement strategies and principles as the way the organization does business.

Gwinnett County Board of Education Commitments:

- Ensure our core business of teaching and learning is built on a rigorous curriculum, effective instruction, and high-value assessments
- Educate every student to world-class standards and individual potential
- Provide a safe and secure learning environment
- Optimize the school effect to have a positive impact on every child
- Govern the district fairly and openly, seeking the engagement of the many stakeholders we serve.

The Board’s Core Beliefs and Commitments can be viewed in their entirety at gcpsk12.org

Gwinnett County Board of Education

Carole C. Boyce, District I
Steven B. Knudsen, District II
Dr. Mary Kay Murphy, District III
Evertton Blair, Jr., District IV
Louise Radiolf, District V
J. Alvin Wilbanks, CEO/Superintendent

Gwinnett County Public Schools
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www.gcpsk12.org
March 2020

The Strategic Direction for 2020–2030

To prepare for the next decade, in 2019 GCPS launched a community-wide campaign to invite input on updating the Strategic Priorities. Many stakeholders were involved in crafting what is now called the Strategic Direction for 2020–2030. Two series of 12 focus groups each gathered the thoughts and ideas of parents, GCPS employees, students, and community members, and an online survey brought in thousands of responses.

Like its predecessor, the Strategic Direction for 2020–2030 consists of 10 components or “drivers” that guide our day-to-day work. Several components from the previous version remain, but stakeholders also felt GCPS should focus on some new ones moving forward. Each driver is either a school district responsibility or it can be influenced by the attitudes and actions of those within the organization.

The 10 drivers are organized into three broad categories—our people, our core business, and our pursuit of excellence. An essential element, equity, is woven throughout all 10, ensuring the district’s focus on equity continues and benefits all students. For each driver there is a clearly identified goal or desired state (shown on the “Snapshot” page inside), and a detailed list of qualities and characteristics that stakeholders feel are desirable.

The Strategic Direction for 2020–2030 will be a significant guide for the school system’s work, now and in the future. We invite you to join us as we build on what is best about Gwinnett County Public Schools today to ensure it becomes the best it can be tomorrow…a system of world-class schools.
Our Core Business...

Gwinnett County Public Schools’ core business is teaching and learning. Key to the district’s continued success is its high-quality curriculum, instruction, and assessments; its ability to provide resources to support the work of its schools; and its commitment to maintaining school climates where students thrive.

Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment

Gwinnett’s curriculum, instruction, and assessment program will:
• Be driven by the core belief that all students can learn and schools must provide them with equitable opportunities to reach their potential.
• Provide programs and learning activities that are innovative and challenging.
• Incorporate resources that connect students’ prior knowledge and experiences to the lessons in the classroom.
• Lay a foundation for learning that includes high-level literacy and communication skills; deep understanding of mathematics and its applications; and fundamental knowledge and skills in a wide range of subjects.
• Motivate students to take initiative for their learning, fostering growth and student success and preparing them to be active and engaged citizens.
• Expand student choices by offering learning options that address school structures, models, and themes, and that prepare students for postsecondary study and the workplace.
• Use engaging, research-based teaching strategies to meet each student’s unique learning needs.
• Employ a variety of information and data in order to meet each student’s unique learning needs.
• Assure safe, secure, and positive learning environments.
• Cultivate respect, empathy, and kindness throughout the learning community.
• Focus on what people have in common and build a bridge across our differences.
• Ensure that policies, procedures, and practices are implemented in a fair and equitable manner.
• Connect families with community resources that can assist with social and emotional issues and concerns that result from an impact on students’ well-being in school.
• Cultivate a culture of leadership that recognizes and builds the capacity of leaders at all levels.
• Encourage civic participation and a strong sense of community by emphasizing three areas: rights, responsibility, and respect.
• Provide a welcoming environment for all stakeholders.

School Climate

Gwinnett schools will:
• Ensure children have the support they need to succeed academically.
• Promote a culturally responsive classroom that takes into account students’ backgrounds, social experiences, prior knowledge, and learning styles.
• Maintain a safe, secure, orderly, and positive learning and working environment.
• Cultivate respect, empathy, and kindness throughout the learning community.
• Focus on what people have in common and build a bridge across our differences.
• Ensure that policies, procedures, and practices are implemented in a fair and equitable manner.
• Connect families with community resources that can assist with social and emotional issues and concerns that result from an impact on students’ well-being in school.
• Cultivate a culture of leadership that recognizes and builds the capacity of leaders at all levels.
• Encourage civic participation and a strong sense of community by emphasizing three areas: rights, responsibility, and respect.
• Provide a welcoming environment for all stakeholders.

Technology and Digital Resources

The use of technology and digital resources in GCPSS will:
• Incorporate emerging technologies into classroom instruction, making learning meaningful and relevant while preparing students to compete globally after high school.
• Equip students to navigate the digital world as conscious digital citizens, critical consumers, and responsible producers.
• Ensure employees have the technology-based knowledge, skills, training, and tools they need to be effective in their roles.
• Continuously provide educators with reliable data that generates information essential to making instructional decisions.
• Assure safe, secure, and effective use of technology and protection of the district’s data and information resources.
• Facilitate teaching and learning, enhance communication, and strengthen the link between home and school.
• Support operational and analytical excellence in the day-to-day operations of the school district.

Innovation

Gwinnett County Public Schools will:
• Engage in continuous quality improvement and innovative processes to ensure that everybody succeeds.
• Explore promising education models, technologies, and ideas that enable the school district to adapt continuously to meet future demands.
• Promote a climate that nurtures new ideas, encouraging creativity and adaptability.
• Strive for excellence and repurpose in innovation across the county.
• Take a measured approach to innovation, recognizing that even with failure comes learning opportunities.
• Prepare students for the future in an age of rapidly emerging technologies and an evolving workplace.
• Personalize the learning experience for students.
• Continually improve in all operational areas through the use of state-of-the-art design, industry best practices, innovative strategies, and conservation principles.

Operations

Gwinnett County Public Schools will:
• Ensure effective communication at all levels of the organization, reinforcing the value we place on input from internal and external stakeholders.
• Offer engagement opportunities at the school and district levels that keep students, staff, and communities informed and able to provide meaningful input.
• Reinforce that families and school staff share responsibility for maintaining effective communication between the home and the school.
• Recognize the need for words of communication in order to overcome the challenges associated with language differences and limited access to technology.
• Provide accurate, timely, and relevant information through communication vehicles that stakeholders prefer.
• Position GCPS as worthy of the public’s trust, support, and confidence by conveying a clear and compelling story of its instructional and operational success.
• Highlight the district as an advocate of community pride and a major factor in the economic vitality of the county.

Our Pursuit of Excellence...

Gwinnett County Public Schools is committed to the pursuit of excellence in all aspects of the organization. Achieving that goal requires that the district have cohesive leadership, exemplary operations, effective means of communicating with and engaging stakeholders, and a culture that embraces continuous improvement and innovation.

Governance and Leadership

Those who govern and manage the school district will:
• Establish a Board of Education that sets clear goals and communicates.
• Ensure that students, staff, and families have equitable access to school district resources and educational opportunities.
• Value organizational coherence and help all employees recognize the important connection between their work and teaching and learning.
• Lead by example, energizing others and marshaling plans that turn vision into reality.
• Promote a performance culture that insists on high standards, fully responsible for results, and continuous improvement of systems, processes, and practices.
• Identify and develop future leaders and build the capacity and future leaders.
• Educate the community about school and district needs and decisions in a transparent manner, and forge partnerships to support our school.
• Value community input in school district decisions.
• Be responsible stewards of taxpayers’ money and pursue the necessary resources to support world-class schools.

Communication

Gwinnett County Public Schools will:
• Expect effective communication at all levels of the organization, reinforcing the value we place on input from internal and external stakeholders.
• Offer engagement opportunities at the school and district levels that keep students, staff, and communities informed and able to provide meaningful input.
• Reinforce that families and school staff share responsibility for maintaining effective communication between the home and the school.
• Recognize the need for words of communication in order to overcome the challenges associated with language differences and limited access to technology.
• Provide accurate, timely, and relevant information through communication vehicles that stakeholders prefer.
• Position GCPS as worthy of the public’s trust, support, and confidence by conveying a clear and compelling story of its instructional and operational success.
• Highlight the district as an advocate of community pride and a major factor in the economic vitality of the county.

Students

Throughout their time in our schools, students will:
• Be engaged learners who reach their full potential.
• Learn to think critically, solve problems, collaborate, and communicate well.
• Develop a keen sense of curiosity and the imagination and adaptability to thrive.
• Become critical consumers and responsible producers of information.
• Take responsibility for their learning, their behavior, and the decisions they make.
• Develop as well-rounded individuals—academically, socially, and emotionally.
• Engage respectfully with people of different beliefs and backgrounds.
• Cultivate the interpersonal skills that will equip them for success as leaders and team members in a global economy.
• Develop the resilience, flexibility, and capacity for lifelong learning necessary for continuous growth throughout adulthood.
• Be good people of character—honest, trustworthy, kind, unselfish, and considerate of others.
• Contribute to the community’s quality of life through their civic involvement and service, taking pride in our school, community, and country.

Employees

Essential to GCPS’ quest to become a system of world-class schools, employees will:
• Have high expectations for students and themselves and take responsibility for the results of their work.
• Demonstrate the school district’s commitment to equity in all aspects of the organization.
• Respect cultural differences and build on the rich diversity found within our student population, workforce, and community.
• Communicate in effective and meaningful ways that foster positive relationships, enhance student learning, and encourage parental and community involvement in schools.
• Engage fairly with students, families, and all stakeholders.
• Contribute to the common-good, building a greater community through their civic involvement.

Families

A child’s first teachers, families will:
• Be actively engaged with their children and teachers to optimize learning.
• Encourage their children’s personal responsibility, regular school attendance, and a strong work ethic.
• Ensure students come to school ready to learn each day.
• Communicate regularly with teachers and the school—sharing information, concerns, and ideas—to ensure their children’s academic, social, and emotional well-being.
• Engage respectfully with people of different beliefs and backgrounds within the school community.
• Partner with the school to educate children about how personal behavior and decisions—good and bad—can affect them and the school climate.
• Provide their children early learning opportunities that prepare them with the skills needed for a strong start in kindergarten.
• Support public education, investing time to learn about the important initiatives of the school and the district.

Our People...

The success of Gwinnett County Public Schools and, ultimately, its ability to become a system of world-class schools is based on the contributions, collaboration, and progress of its people, specifically its students, families, and employees.

A Deeper Dive into GCPS’ Strategic Direction for 2020–2030

Evaluate emerging trends in teaching and learning.
Highlight the district as a source of community pride and a major factor in the economic vitality of the county.

Design, equip, and manage schools to be safe, secure, and flexible learning environments that support high-quality teaching and learning.
Ensure equity across the district in resource allocation and capital improvements.
Provide buildings, grounds, and athletic facilities that are modern, attractive, comfortable, energy-efficient, and well-maintained.
Manage the district’s financial, physical, and human resources through a transparent system that earns the public’s trust.
Maintain data quality, security, and privacy safeguards to ensure responsible custody of the information collected and stored that is essential to supporting educational and operational mission.
Provide safe, reliable, efficient, and cost-effective transportation services.
Be future-focused in planning for growth, taking into account the aesthetic, cultural, and environmental values of the community.
Continue to be a good corporate citizen as evidenced by the district’s environmental, social, and governance practices.

Identify and develop future leaders and build the capacity and future leaders.
Value community input in school district decisions.
Be responsible stewards of taxpayers’ money and pursue the necessary resources to support world-class schools.

Be driven by the core belief that all students can learn and schools must provide them with equitable opportunities to reach their potential.

Be well-informed about the district’s initiatives and direction and take pride in working for GCPS.
Be actively engaged with their children and teachers to optimize learning.
Be future-focused in planning for growth, taking into account the aesthetic, cultural, and environmental values of the community.
Be driven by the core belief that all students can learn and schools must provide them with equitable opportunities to reach their potential.
Be actively engaged with their children and teachers to optimize learning.
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