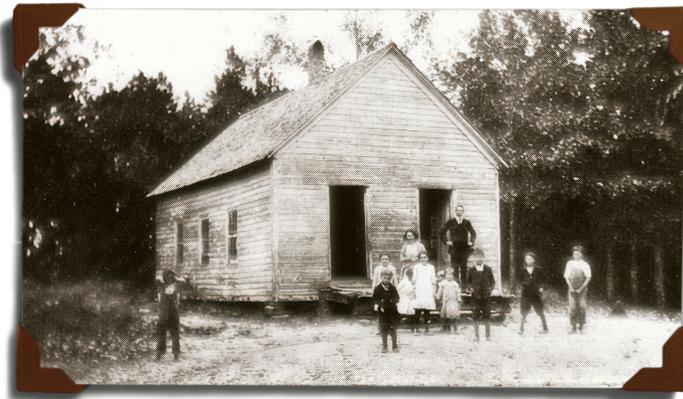


# History of

## White Oak Elementary School

White Oak Elementary School has a long history in Gwinnett, tracing its name back more than 100 years. However, today's facility has an interesting history in itself in that it actually opened its doors a year early housing Lanier Middle School 6th grade students for the 2008–09 school year before the school officially opened as an elementary school for the 2009–10 school year. The school opened as part of the Lanier Cluster which relieved the fast-growing North Gwinnett Cluster. The facility shares a campus with Lanier Middle School at the corner of Suwanee Dam and Buford Dam roads.

There is a historical reference to a one-room school located at corner of Suwanee Dam and Buford Dam roads in early 1900s. Just over 100 years before today's school opened, a one-room schoolhouse once stood nestled onto the land it shared with a grove of white oaks. Typical to the times, 20 students, divided into three grade levels, were taught by one teacher. Miss Ali Vincent, who later married Mr. Chadwick, was one such



teacher at White Oak School. White Oak was one of a very few public schools available to the residents in the extreme northwest corner of Gwinnett County, which was a booming farming community in the early 1900s. Back then, school schedules revolved around farmers and their need to have children home to plant, tend, and harvest crops.

### FAST FACTS

Address: 6442 Suwanee Dam Road  
Sugar Hill, GA 30518

The following have served as principals of White Oak Elementary School:

2009–Present Jean Loethen-Payne

School Colors: Chocolate Brown and Light Blue

School Mascot: Owls



The children who attended this school received an education that provided the basis for their own success, as well as a foundation for their children and grandchildren to build upon. Today, the personal success of many of their descendents is a tribute to the education provided by White Oak School, which operated from about 1900 to the late 1920s. The community, now known as Sugar Hill, is still home to some former students. The foundation of the original school still exists near the intersection of Suwanee Dam and Buford Dam roads, adjacent to the new school site.

Today, much has changed in the area surrounding White Oak Elementary School. What hasn't changed is a commitment to an education that produces life-long learners. The faculty of White Oak is dedicated to our students, their families, and this community as we focus on teaching and learning with an emphasis on student learning. It is our hope that 100 years from now we, too, will have contributed to the success of our students and their descendents.

White Oak Elementary has achieved many honors in its relatively short history since the new facility opened in 2009. The school held its official dedication ceremony on October 18, 2009. This was the first of many celebrations of learning that the school would celebrate, including:

- In April of 2016, White Oak Elementary was recognized by Georgia Department of Education Superintendent Richard Woods as the first GCPs STEM-certified elementary school.
- In 2015, the Lanier Cluster received the district's Innovation and Transformation grant to support their Performance-Based Learning and STEM efforts.
- Thanks to the efforts of the school's Environmental Education Committee, the Green Education Foundation recognized White Oak as a spotlight school for its Green In-Action Award.
- The PE department, and Ms. Warnock's class, won a \$10,000 grant from the NFL Play60 Program. White Oak plans to enhance our playground area by building a new track with this grant money.
- The school was a Bronze Award Winner in the 2011 Single Statewide Accountability System (SSAS) Award for Outstanding Student Achievement. White Oak Elementary School was one of only 58 elementary schools in the state of Georgia to receive this award.
- White Oak also was recognized at the 4th Annual Green Difference Awards, held in Boston on May 4, 2012. Each year, green schools of Massachusetts celebrate the efforts of other local schools for their leadership in environmental awareness and actions. Green Schools is a nonprofit organization whose mission is to create greener and healthier learning environments through education and awareness.

For more info, visit [www.projectgreenschools.org](http://www.projectgreenschools.org).

- 2011–12 Pace Award Winner - School of the Year. Clean Air Campaign. Click here to see image of award acceptance.
- 2013–14 White Oak Elementary received special mention in the University of Georgia's Environmental Newsletter. This article highlighted the great work that our students have been doing in our school garden with the help of master gardeners, like Winnie White. Click here to see the article, which includes a video showing our students gardening.
- Counseling department honored with the 2014 RAMP Award. (Recognized ASCA Model Program)

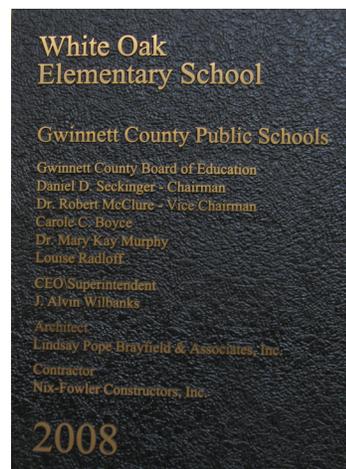
## WHITE OAK MISSION STATEMENT

The mission of the staff of White Oak Elementary is to facilitate a safe and supportive environment where excellence in learning for all children results in students who are thinkers, learners and leaders.

## WHITE OAK BELIEF STATEMENT

The White Oak School Community believes:

- Student learning is the primary focus for the school.
- Decisions are made based on what's best for student learning.
- Students learn in different ways and should be provided with a variety of instructional approaches to support their learning.
- Students learn best when they are actively engaged in the learning process.
- Exceptional students (e.g., special education, limited English proficiency, and gifted, etc.) require special services and resources.
- A safe and physically comfortable environment promotes student learning.
- Teachers, administrators, parents, and the community share the responsibility for advancing the school's mission.
- The commitment to continuous improvement is imperative if our school is going to enable students to become confident, self-directed, lifelong learners.



*Grateful acknowledgment to the Pugh family for providing the memories of the original White Oak School.*