

Welcome to Gwinnett County Public Schools



Gwinnett County Public Schools

**International
Newcomer
Center**

International Newcomer Center
495 Maltbie Street
Lawrenceville, GA 30046
Phone: 678-985-5200

WELCOME



Welcome to Gwinnett County Public Schools (GCPS). If you and your family are new to the United States or Georgia, you probably have questions about our schools. The Newcomer's Guide will give you important information about the Gwinnett County Public School system. A strong partnership between parents, teachers and school administrators helps promote the academic success of students.

Your partnership, participation and presence are needed. An understanding of the policies, procedures and expectations of the school district will help you support your child's success in the classroom, with homework and beyond. English Language Learners may be eligible for additional support in the English Learners (EL) program at their school. The EL program is an instructional program that assists students in learning English. EL students receive instruction based on English proficiency standards that help students develop proficient language skills in listening, speaking, reading and writing.

International Newcomer Center

Gwinnett County Public Schools, Georgia's largest school system, serves more than 180,000 students from pre-Kindergarten through high school. The school system's quest to become a system of world-class schools has not gone unnoticed by the international community. Many international families have moved to Gwinnett because of its outstanding schools and diverse communities. With this in mind, the International Newcomer Center was established to support international students and their families.

The International Newcomer Center (INC) welcomes new middle and high school students (grades 6-12) whose first language is not English or who have attended high school in another country. The goal of the INC is to help these students make a smooth transition into Gwinnett schools. The center assesses language and math skills, recommends placement, creates a student profile, evaluates school transcripts, and advises students on course selection. The INC also provides information on graduation requirements, available school programs, and community resources.

Your child may have many adjustments to his new school and new teachers. Make every effort to stay in communication with your child's teachers and school administrators. Participate in parent workshops and school events that provide training for parents in understanding how to better support your child's academic success. Interpreters are available to assist parents who do not speak English during conferences, academic meetings and school events.

SCHOOL ORGANIZATION

The Gwinnett County Board of Education and Superintendent serve as the governance team for the school district. The Board consists of five members, each of whom represents a different geographic district. The school board makes decisions about budget, personnel, instructional programs, facilities and student activities in the district. For example, the school board decides if the district needs to build new schools.

School Board meetings are typically held on the third Thursday of every month at 7 p.m. in pre-announced locations throughout the county. All meetings, except executive sessions, are open to the public and the news media.

The schools in our district are organized in the following manner:

Elementary School – grades Kindergarten through 5th

All children who are 5 years old by September 1 are eligible to begin kindergarten. Students who are 6 years old by September 1 are eligible for 1st grade.

- Students usually have one main teacher
- Children have regular recess – a break from studies, usually outside on the playground if the weather permits
- Monday through Friday
- Some schools follow a schedule of 8:15 am – 2:45 pm while others follow a slightly later schedule of 8:50 am – 3:20 pm based on bus availability

Subjects of Study

- Reading, Language Arts, Math, Science and Social Studies make up the core classes which are offered on a daily basis.
- Specials or Connections – every school offers Art, Music and Physical Education. Other classes are offered, the options vary by school. These classes are offered on a rotational basis.

Middle School – grades 6th through 8th

- Students usually have 6-8 classes with different teachers in multiple classrooms
- Recess is not offered in Middle School
- Monday through Friday 9:20 – 4:00

Subjects of Study

- Reading, Language Arts, Math, Science and Social Studies make up the core classes which are offered on a daily basis.
- Specials or Connections – every school offers Art, Chorus, Orchestra, Band, Physical Education and Health. Other classes are offered, the options vary by school. Some classes have year-long duration, and others rotate each semester

High School – grades 9 (Freshman), 10 (Sophomore) 11 (Junior), 12 (Senior)

- Students take required and elective courses to satisfy graduation requirements
- Some courses have different levels of difficulty
- Monday through Friday 7:00am or 7:24am depending on school, all end at 2:10pm
- Subjects of study vary by school. See following page for 4-year graduation plan.

All children between the ages of 6 and 16 are required by state law to attend school

Grading Scale

For Elementary Schools, student performance is graded by means of an A, B, C, D, and U in relationship to the AKS for each class.

In Middle and High Schools, number grades are given for each course on a scale from zero to a hundred.

A	An average of 90 and above in a course indicates excellent progress.
B	An average of 80-89 in a course indicates above average progress.
C	An average of 74-79 in a course indicates average progress.
D	An average of 70-73 in a course indicates minimum acceptable progress.
U	An average of 69 or below in a course indicates failure of acceptable progress
P	Pass
Audit	No credit

HIGH SCHOOL INFORMATION

Graduation (Diploma) Requirements Course Requirements Units Required/Area of Study

4 Units of English/Language Arts

4 Units of Mathematics

4 Units of Science: Biology, Chemistry, Physics + one additional

(The fourth Science unit may be used to meet both the Science and elective requirement.)

3 Units of Social Studies: World History, US History, Economics/US Gov't.

3 Units of Career/Technical/Agricultural Education and/or Modern Language/ Latin and/or Fine Arts

1 Unit of Health and Physical Education

4 Units of electives

Total Units or Credits 23

Students are **required** to pass the High School Gateway, as well as core classes requiring a State End of Course Assessment, in order to earn a regular high school diploma.

High School Reports

Teachers give students progress reports in all six subjects at the end of the 6th and 12th week of each semester. Students take these progress reports to their parents. These progress reports tell parents of the progress their student is making toward the final semester grade. The final report card grade is given at the end of the eighteen-week semester.

For senior students who are candidates for graduation the counselor will meet with the student before the end of the first semester of the senior year. An "Application for Graduation" letter will be completed and sent to the parents. This tells the student and the parents the student's progress or lack of progress toward graduation. Also, at least six weeks before the graduation date, parents of senior students will be told if the student might fail. The information will be sent in the 12th week progress report. If a student begins to fail in a class after the 12th week report, the teacher must notify the parents.

It is important for teachers and parents to communicate to ensure students' educational achievement. Teacher-parent conferences may be requested at any time by teachers or parents. You may call the school or write a note if you wish to meet with your student's teachers. You have the right, by law, to receive free interpretation services. If you need the services of an interpreter please contact the administration at your child's school.

Student Parking

Students are permitted to park on school premises as a matter of privilege, not of right. Students must obtain a parking permit to park in the student parking lot. Students must learn and follow the school's rules for student parking.

SCHOOL PERSONNEL

School Administrators – Administrators do not teach students. They are in charge of their schools and staff.

Principal - Responsible for leading and implementing a cohesive educational program specific for the grade levels in assigned school. Directs all the activities of the school.

Assistant Principal - Assists the Principal in leading and implementing a cohesive educational program specific for the grade levels assigned. Answers questions from parents about grades or school programs. Helps to solve student problems.

Teacher - Instructs students. Communicates with parents about the student's achievement. There are many kinds of teachers in the school.

- **Classroom teachers** – In grades K-5 they are general education teachers. Students usually stay with their classroom teacher for the majority of the school day. In Middle School and High School, teachers are subject specific and only teach one class at a time.
- **Homeroom teachers** - In middle schools, students meet with their homeroom teacher for 10 to 15 minutes to hear announcements and get information about the school day.

Other Teachers

- **English Language (EL)** - The EL teacher provides English language instruction and support to students who qualify for the program.
- **Special Education** - Teaches students with special needs.
- **Gifted** - The gifted teacher teaches classes with more challenging work for those students who qualify for the program.
- **Specials/Connections/Electives (Music, Art, P.E., etc.)** - Teach their subject area according to which classes the school has to offer.
- **Media Specialist** - Teaches about technology and the Media Center and helps students borrow books and materials

Support Staff help the administrators and teachers do their work. The following are Support Staff positions in the school:

Counselor - Helps students with school and family problems. Students or parents may schedule appointments with the counselor. If needed, counselors may refer parents to community agencies for help. High school counselors offer academic and career counseling.

Clerk – Depending on the size and the needs of the school there may be more than one clerk in a school office. The clerk duties vary, but they generally help students enroll, answer questions about the school calendar, manage school office records, answer the telephone and greet parents, help children and teachers, check in visitors.

Clinic Worker - Gives out medicine provided by parents during school hours and helps students who become sick or injured during the day. The clinic worker in the majority of schools is **not** a nurse.

Other staff members in a school - registrar, custodians, cafeteria workers, principal's secretary and bookkeeper – Everyone who works in a school has the same purpose, to support the students' learning by the duties assigned to them.

STUDENT REGISTRATION

DOCUMENTS LISTED BELOW ARE NEEDED TO ENROLL YOUR CHILD*

1. Proof of residence: a current utility bill (gas, water or electric) **WITH** one of the following documents: a current lease, a non-contingent sales contract, current rental agreement, most recent income tax return, current paycheck stub, current Medicaid card, current residential property tax statement or bill, current warranty or quick claim deed, current home purchase agreement, or current homeowner's insurance policy.

*If you live with someone else: pick up a Gwinnett County residency affidavit from the school's office **before registration**. You will need to bring the completed notarized affidavit **and** the lease **and** a current utility bill of the person with whom you are living.

2. Original birth certificate (a certified copy is also accepted) or passport

3. Current Immunization certificate on the Georgia Form 3231
MUST have 2 varicella shots OR documentation of having chicken pox

4. Vision, Hearing, Dental and Nutrition certificate on Georgia Form 3300

5. Your child's social security card is preferred, but is optional

6. Parent MUST show a photo ID

The Gwinnett County Public School System uses an easy-to-use, secure registration system that allows you to complete many required forms online. The link to online registration is located on the main GCPS website as well as on each school's own website.

ASSESSMENTS UPON REGISTRATION

Student Assessments Used to Determine Eligibility for EL:

The WIDA Screener- will be given to students entering the district: whose first or home language is other than English; have exited EL or the language acquisition program of another U. S. state and do not provide evidence of successful academic achievement (English Language Arts scores of 80% or higher).

The WIDA Screener has 3 main purposes:

1. To identify students who may be candidates for the EL program.
2. To determine the academic English language proficiency level of students new to a school or to the U.S. school system in order to provide appropriate levels and amounts of instructional services.
3. To accurately assign students identified as ELs to one of the 3 tiers of the ACCESS for ELs test given annually to determine students' level of English proficiency.

The acronym **ACCESS** stands for **Assessing Comprehension and Communication in English State to State**. It is the English proficiency test given annually in the winter to all EL students in Georgia. The test is based on English proficiency standards to determine a student's level of English ability in the areas of Listening, Speaking, Reading and Writing. Parents receive a report of test results in the spring.

Elementary School students are assessed at the local school.

Middle School and High School students are assessed at the International Newcomer's Center. These students are also given a math assessment, to provide information concerning the students' math skills.

PROGRAMS

SCHOOL CURRICULUM AND EL

Students must complete required coursework and tests with passing grades or scores before being eligible for promotion to the next grade or for high school graduation. For middle and high school students, the school counselor will help you and your child plan an appropriate schedule. Counselors can also provide information on course descriptions, graduation requirements and information on resources available for your student. Support for English language acquisition is provided through the EL program. The amount of support provided for your child is determined by his WIDA or ACCESS for EL scores which indicate his/her level of English proficiency.

Modifications

If the student is an English learner, it may be necessary for instruction to be modified for the student's level of English proficiency. If the teacher is modifying the instruction in one or more subjects to help the student achieve, the report card grade will have a coded comment with one of the following messages:

“AKS Modified due to EL” or “AKS Modified due to LEP”

In some cases, the student may miss a class while receiving EL instruction. In that situation, the report card will show the following message for the subject missed: *“Unable to assess due to EL.”*

Special Education

The **Department of Special Education and Psychological Services** supports the Individual Educational Programs of students ages three through twenty-one years of age who are eligible for special education and related services within the district. The special education services are provided on a continuum from the least restrictive to more restrictive environments and are contingent upon the educational needs of the student. The department provides a full array of assessment and special education interventions for students requiring such services. The Department works collaboratively with students, schools, families, and the community to increase student achievement and to promote post-secondary success for all students with disabilities.

Gifted Education

Gifted education programs provide academic challenges by extending GCPS' AKS. The gifted program is called FOCUS at the elementary school level, PROBE at the middle school level, and is referred to as gifted education and QUEST in high school. Students participating in the program in grades K-5 may receive instruction in resource, cluster and/or advanced content classes.

Early Intervention Program (EIP)

Early Intervention Program (EIP) is a state-funded program at all elementary schools designed to serve students in grades kindergarten through five who are at risk of not reaching or maintaining academic grade level expectations in Reading and/or Math. EIP provides additional instructional resources to help those students who are performing below grade level obtain the necessary academic skills to reach grade level performance in the shortest time possible.

OTHER IMPORTANT INFORMATION

Parent Conferences/Early Release Days

It is important for teachers and parents to communicate to ensure students' educational achievement. If you have questions at any time, please write a note or call the school to schedule an appointment.

Twice a year (fall and spring) elementary and middle schools have special days for parent conferences. On these days, students leave school 2 ½ hours earlier than usual. (See *Early Release Days* on GCPS Calendar.) The purpose of the conference is to review the student's overall progress in school. You have the right by law to receive free interpretation services. If you need the services of an interpreter, please contact the administration at your child's school.

Medications

If a student needs to take medicine during the school day, the parent/legal guardian must complete the *Administration of Medication Request Form*, which you may get from the clinic worker at the school. All medicine must be brought to school by the parent, in the original pharmacy bottle. Students are not allowed to carry prescription or over-the-counter medication at any time.

Emergency Drills

Gwinnett County schools practice safety drills. In a *FIRE DRILL* students learn how to walk out of the school building quietly and quickly with their teacher. Students return to class when the fire drill is finished. Georgia sometimes has tornadoes (rain storms with strong winds). In a *TORNADO DRILL* students learn where to go in the building and how to protect themselves by kneeling on the floor and covering their heads.

Field Trips or Class Trips

Sometimes students go on a class trip related to their academic learning. Teachers send home a permission form for parents to sign. If a parent does not want the child to go on the trip, the child will stay at school with a teacher. There may be a fee for the trip. **If you cannot pay the fee, tell the teacher.** The school may be able to make special arrangements. On the day of the trip, students ride together on a bus and return to school after the trip. Field trip fees can be paid through My Payments Plus.

School Calendar

The **GCPS Calendar** lists school days and school holidays. Most holidays are for all Gwinnett County Public Schools. Please give careful attention to the starting and ending times of the school day, the dates of meetings, and the days when school is closed.

Buses

Gwinnett County Public Schools buses provide free transportation to and from school. Your child's school can tell you the bus number, the location and the times for pick-up and drop-off. For safety reasons, all rules must be strictly followed.

Car Parking

If a car is parked in the bus lane or a "no parking" zone, the car will be towed or the driver will be given a parking ticket.

School Supplies

Your child will need pencils and writing paper. Some teachers ask students to bring special items. The teacher will give a list of supplies needed. The school may request a voluntary payment or donation for a special program or supplies. If you cannot provide school supplies for your child, please inform the school counselor.

Cafeteria

Gwinnett County Public Schools School Nutrition Program serves breakfast and lunch to the students and staff members at all of our schools. Meals are available for purchase by sending money to the school directly or via *MyPaymentsPlus*, which allows you to go online and manage your student's meal account. Meals are offered free and at a reduced price to qualifying students as well as at a reasonable price for paying students. Students also have the option to pack a lunch from home and eat it in the cafeteria with their classmates.

Tardiness/Late to school

Students should not be late for school. They should always be on time. If students are late for school, the teacher will mark them tardy. You will need to come into the office to check in your child if he is late.

If you are taking your child out of school during the day before school is over for a doctor or dentist visit, please write and send a note to the teacher in the morning with this information:

- Reason why you are taking the child out of school
- Time you will take child out of school
- Name of person picking up child if he or she is not a parent or guardian.

Please report to the school office when you pick up your child. **Every time** a child is checked out from school, it is necessary to show a picture ID. Students must attend school for at least the equivalent of half the school day in order to be counted present for that day.

Attendance/Absent From School:

It is important that children attend school on a daily basis. However, we do not want you to send you child to school if they are sick. If your child is sick keep him at home (fever of 101 degrees, vomiting, diarrhea, pink eye or sore throat with fever).

When your child returns from an absence, you must send a note explaining the reason your child was absent from school. Please include the following items on your note:

- Child's name and grade
- Teacher's name
- The reason why your child was absent, and the dates of absence
- Your name and phone number

According to Georgia State Law, students will be excused from school with a written note accompanying a parent signature for the following reasons:

1. Personal illness
2. Illness or death of an immediate family member
3. Observance of a religious holiday
4. A court order/mandated attendance by a government agency
5. Attendance impossible or hazardous to student health or safety

The counselor will refer students with 10 unexcused absences to a Student Attendance Review Committee (SARC) meeting and parents will be invited to attend. The school social worker will also be invited to attend this meeting. At this meeting, an official referral to the school social worker may be made.

Gwinnett County Public Schools Attendance Protocol

The Georgia Department of Education Student Attendance Rule defines **any child subject to compulsory attendance who during the school calendar year has more than 5 unexcused absences as truant**. Compulsory attendance is required for children ages 6 – 16. Regular school attendance helps develop good habits that will carry over in life. Good attendance correlates very strongly with improved grades in school. School attendance is the responsibility of both parents and students.

Homework and Grades

Encourage your child to complete the homework and do their best. Tell your child that it is important to participate in classroom activities, and complete assignments on time. Four times a year, students receive a report card which they will bring home for you to see. Schools require a parent to sign the report card envelope and have the student return it to school. Grades are based on class work, homework, class participation and tests. You also have online access to your student's grades by checking the Parent Portal. Your student's *e-class* has textbooks online and teachers usually post their assignments and important dates there. Parents should regularly check the parent portal and *e-class*.

Dress Code

It is important to dress appropriately for the weather. Be sure that coats, hats and gloves are marked with your child's name. All schools have rules about the types of clothes that students will not be permitted to wear, so please read the dress code section of the student/parent handbook.

Communication from School

If the school sends notes or letters to the parents, it is very important that you know what they say. Sometimes it may be about a meeting or to notify you about different events. Other times, the letters need to be signed by a parent and returned to the school. You should contact your child's school if you do not understand a note or letter sent home by the school or your child's teacher. Elementary Schools usually communicate via weekly folders. Middle and High Schools post assignments, announcements and other important information mostly online (student portal and mobile apps) so please make sure you sign up for those.

School Visits

Every time you visit a school you should report to the school office to sign-in and receive a nametag upon your arrival. Schools have an "Open House" where parents have a chance to visit the school and talk to the teacher at the beginning of the school year. There are also different times during the school year when schools schedule events for you to attend such as curriculum nights, parent teacher conferences, and math, literacy and ESOL nights, etc.

Inclement Weather

Sometimes it is necessary to dismiss school early or cancel all classes due to inclement weather. The radio or the television station will make an announcement when school is closed because of the weather. If there is any change on a regular schedule due to inclement weather, it will be posted in the GCPS website. **Do not call the school with questions about the weather**, as they do not get any information ahead of time.

Discipline

Gwinnett County Public Schools has established rules and standards concerning student conduct. These rules are distributed to students and parents at the beginning of the school year or at the same time the student is enrolled. If you have any questions about these rules, contact your school.

Moving

If you move during the school year, you need to let the school know your new address and phone number. Even if you move within the same city, your child may have to change schools or bus routes.

If you move to another county or state, you must go to the school in person to fill out withdrawal paperwork for your student. They will send your child's school records to the new school.

GCPS Contact Information

Gwinnett County Public Schools

Main Phone Number: 678-301-6000

Or got to <http://publish.gwinnett.k12.ga.us/gcps/home/public/about/content/phone-directory>

International Newcomer Center

495 Maltbie Street, Lawrenceville, GA 30046

678- 985-5200

Transportation Department

770-338-4800 -- Regular Ed. Transportation Customer Service

770-513-6881 -- Special Needs Transportation Customer Service

ADULT EDUCATION

Buford Human Services Center

2755 Sawnee Avenue • Buford, GA 30518
678-225-5360 • onestopbuford@gwinnettcounty.com
English as a Second Language (ESL) Beginner Level • FREE!

Norcross Human Services Center

5030 Georgia Belle Court • Norcross, GA 30093
678-225-5400 • onestopnorcross@gwinnettcounty.com
English Literacy and Civics Classes • FREE!

Centerville Community Center

3025 Bethany Church Road • Snellville, GA 30039
678-277-0228 • onestopcenterville@gwinnettcounty.com
English as a Second Language (ESL) Beginner Level • FREE!

COMMUNITY PROVIDERS

Emergency: 911

Hospitals

Gwinnett Medical Center–Lawrenceville
1000 Medical Center Boulevard
Lawrenceville, GA 30046
Phone: 678-312-1000

Gwinnett Medical Center–Duluth
3620 Howell Ferry Road
Duluth, GA 30096
Phone: 678-312-6800

Children’s Healthcare of Atlanta
Phone: 404-205-5437

Good Samaritan Health Center
5949 Buford Hwy.
Norcross, GA 30071
Telephone: 678-280-6630

Good Samaritan Health Center
4864 Jimmy Carter Blvd.
Norcross, GA 30093
Telephone: 770-806-0162

Norcross Health Center
5030 Georgia Belle Court
Norcross, GA 30093
Phone: 770-638-5700

Buford Health Center
2755 Sawnee Avenue
Buford, GA 30518
Phone: 770-614-2401

OTHER SERVICES

Latin American Association

Atlanta Outreach Center
2750 Buford Hwy.
Atlanta, GA 30324
404-638-1800

Lawrenceville Service Center
308 North Clayton Street
Lawrenceville, GA 30046
770-910-7660

AARC

3635 Peachtree Industrial Blvd. Ste. 450
Duluth, GA 30096
770-270-0663
www.aarc-atlanta.org

CPACS

Gwinnett Center
2100 Pleasant Hill Rd. #366
Duluth, GA 30096
770-232-5200

Catholic Charities Atlanta

3669 North Peachtree Road, Suite 100
Chamblee, GA 30341
770-790-3104

Cooperatives

(Provide aid and resources for low income families)

Lawrenceville Cooperative Ministry

52 Gwinnett Drive, Suite C

Phone: 770- 339-7887

Hours of Operation:

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Monday: 6:00 PM – 7:30 PM*

Wednesday: 10:00 AM – 1:30 PM

Friday: 10:00 AM – 1:30 PM

Saturday: 10:00 AM – 11:30 AM*

*Food service only

Lilburn Cooperative Ministry

5329 Five Forks Trickum Road

Lilburn, GA 30047

Phone: 770- 931-8333

Norcross Cooperative Ministry

2275 Mitchell Road, Norcross, GA 30071

Phone: 770-263-8268

Hours of Operation:

Monday, Wednesday, Friday: 10 am - 2 pm

Tuesday: 6 pm - 8 pm

Saturday: 10 am - 12 noon

North Gwinnett Cooperative

4395 Commerce Drive, Buford, Georgia 30518

Phone: 770-271-9793

Hours of Operation:

Monday 6:00pm -8:00pm

Wednesday 10:00am - 2:00pm

Thursday 10:00am - 2:00pm

Friday 10:00am - 2:00pm

Gwinnett County Public Library

Monday - Thursday: 10 am - 8 pm
Friday and Saturday: 10 am - 5 pm
Sunday: 12 pm - 5 pm

Buford-Sugar Hill

2100 Buford Hwy
Buford, GA 30518

Centerville

3025 Bethany Church Road
Snellville, GA 30039

Collins Hill

455 Camp Perrin Road
Lawrenceville, GA 30043

Dacula

265 Dacula Road
Dacula, GA 30019

Duluth

3480 Duluth Park Lane
Duluth, GA 30096

Five Forks

2780 Five Forks Trickum Road
Lawrenceville, GA 30044

Grayson

700 Grayson Parkway
Grayson, GA 30017

Hamilton Mill

3690 Braselton Highway
Dacula, GA 30019

Lawrenceville

1001 Lawrenceville Highway Lawrenceville,
GA 30046

Lilburn

788 Hillcrest Road NW
Lilburn, GA 30047

Mountain Park

1210 Pounds Road SW
Lilburn, GA 30047

Norcross

6025 Buford Highway
Norcross, GA 30071

Peachtree Corners

5570 Spalding Drive
Peachtree Corners, GA 30092

Snellville

2740 Lenora Church Road
Snellville, GA 30078

Suwanee

361 Main Street
Suwanee, GA 30024