Whitfield County Schools

THREE-YEAR STRATEGIC PLAN

Year 1 Progress Report
A strategic plan may be described as the big picture plan for an organization. In the middle of the 2015-2020 strategic plan cycle, we realized many of our goals and objectives had been met sooner than anticipated. Rather than reporting annually on performance measures that were already accomplished, moving forward we felt it would be beneficial to have a plan with goals and objectives on shorter time frames using language that keeps us constantly reaching for greater heights.

The process of developing the strategic plan was based on community survey results which sought input from parents, students, educators, community members and community leaders. Groups of educational leaders worked to refine and adapt the strategic plan goals, priorities and indicators of success, which will be the focus of the school system’s work from 2021 to 2024.

The strategic goal areas of the plan are: (1) teaching and learning, (2) human resources, (3) finance, (4) parent, family, and community engagement, and (5) district operations. Each goal area is made up of multiple priorities and subdivided by indicators of success.

Execution of the strategic plan is the most important element of accomplishing our mission as a school district. In the immortal words of Yogi Berra, “If you don’t know where you are going, you might end up someplace else.” Our three-year strategic plan will help us to continue to know where we are going so that we can accomplish our mission of providing our students with the experiences and environments needed to maximize their learning.

Dr. Mike Ewton

Our mission at Whitfield County Schools is to “maximize student learning by providing challenging and engaging educational experiences in a safe and supportive learning environment.” To help us execute our unified mission, we depend on our district strategic plan.
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 the students, personnel, families and 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.

BOARD OF EDUCATION

The Whitfield County Board of Education has been recognized as a Georgia School Board Association (GSBA) Exemplary School Board. The Board met or exceeded the criteria set forth by GSBA to become one of 58 out of 180 public school boards to earn Exemplary status.

Four members represent one of four voting districts. A fifth member serves at-large, representing the entire district.

Pictured, from left, are 2022 Board of Education members Ron Johnson, Bill Worley, Carolyn Weaver, Joseph Farmer and Jamie Johnson.
Provide the educational foundation and opportunities to accelerate all students to achieve expected or high academic growth.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Priority 1</th>
<th>Priority 2</th>
<th>Priority 3</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Provide a challenging and engaging curriculum while implementing appropriate interventions through a tiered system of supports</strong></td>
<td><strong>Utilize and implement evidence-based instructional practices</strong></td>
<td><strong>Prepare students for college and/or career</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Indicators of Success:  
  - Revise and implement curriculum guides for the four academic areas: mathematics, language arts, science and social studies  
  - Implement evidence-based interventions through the Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS) process to meet the academic, developmental, social and emotional needs of our students | Indicator of Success:  
  - Review, revise and implement Non-Negotiable Practices | Indicator of Success:  
  - Analyze data from a variety of sources to address student needs |

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**YOUNG GEORGIA AUTHORS**

The purpose of the Young Georgia Authors writing competition is to encourage K-12 students to develop enthusiasm for and expertise in their writing, to provide a context to celebrate their writing successes, and to recognize student achievement in arts and academics.

Source: [http://galangartssup.weebly.com/](http://galangartssup.weebly.com/)

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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>87.2%</th>
<th>322</th>
<th>$143.5K</th>
<th>65</th>
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</table>
| **2021 Graduation Rate**  
Compared to the Georgia Graduation Rate of 83.7% | **Number of students who completed Pre-K, which provides a strong educational foundation** | **GA Department of Education Readiness in Literacy Grant to improve literacy outcomes** | **Total instructional staff added to meet the academic needs of students** |
In the midst of all this important work, I hear two distinct voices. The first sadly says, 'Oh no! I messed up.' The second one replies, 'It's okay, you can always fix it. Let's look at it together.' That is when my heart smiles; I know my students have the confidence to try not only new things — but harder and bigger things. They know if they mess up, they can always fix it. I want each of my students to hold on to this priceless gift of self-confidence.

- Sally Creswell, 2022 Teacher of the Year from Varnell Elementary School

### COMPASS TRANSITION ACADEMY

The Compass Transition Academy (CTA) provides specialized instruction to students with significant cognitive disabilities who have completed requirements for high school graduation and elected to complete a fifth or sixth year option to focus on job skills, independent living skills and on-the-job training.

### ROBOTICS TEAM

The FIRST Robotics Competition is a hands-on program that inspires students to become the future engineering, computer science, and STEM leaders needed in our community and across the world. Students not only improve their technical skills, but also their interpersonal and collaboration skills. Through participation in robotics, students are learning relevant, real-world skills and identifying career opportunities they can pursue.

### MEASURES OF ACADEMIC PROGRESS

Measures of Academic Progress (MAP) helps teachers monitor students’ academic growth from fall to spring in the areas of math, reading and language arts. The data below compares WCS students’ scores to millions of students across the country based on pre-pandemic normative data. Due to the determination of WCS students, staff, families, and community through the pandemic, our students in grades K-8 continued to approach or surpass peers nationwide.

#### MATH

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Kindergarten</th>
<th>3rd Grade</th>
<th>5th Grade</th>
<th>8th Grade</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>153.7</td>
<td>156.6</td>
<td>216.7</td>
<td>229.2</td>
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#### READING

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Kindergarten</th>
<th>3rd Grade</th>
<th>5th Grade</th>
<th>8th Grade</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>149.7</td>
<td>150.7</td>
<td>201.2</td>
<td>221.2</td>
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</table>

RIT stands for Rasch Unit and is a measurement scale developed to simplify the interpretation of test scores. Source: teach.mapnwea.org
Recruit, develop and retain highly-skilled personnel

Priority 1

Recruit and recommend highly-skilled applicants to be hired by the Whitfield County Board of Education

Indicator of Success:
- Increase recruitment efforts for highly-skilled employees in classified staff positions

Priority 2

Develop and retain personnel

Indicator of Success:
- Provide an ongoing leadership development program for future leaders within the district

NEW TEACHER INDUCTION

New teachers participated in an annual induction program that began in July 2021. Supported by district staff and school-level mentors, new teachers gained instructional strategies and built relationships that promoted a successful first year in Whitfield County Schools.

12 Job recruitment events for certified and/or classified staff
$1,000 Sign-on / referral bonus for high-need positions
94.04% Teacher Retention Rate
19 Aspiring Leaders Program participants
The experiences we have had so far in our Key Leader meetings have been wonderful. I feel like we are able to focus on our own growth during this time, not just the 'happenings' around the district. It is more than informative... It is transformative and makes me proud to be a leader in this district.

- Anonymous Principal

The Whitfield County Aspiring Leaders Program is designed to identify and develop future leaders who have the character, knowledge and ability to strengthen our system and our community as effective school leaders.

Tara Brown, a nationally renowned motivational speaker, met with school and district leadership to share the importance of positive relationships and the impact it can have on our students and staff members. Our leadership team left energized and ready to start the new school year!

The goal of recruitment is to hire and retain the most skilled workers in order to support teaching and learning. WCS actively seeks individuals who aspire to make school a safe and inviting place for students and staff. Principals and directors have the opportunity to speak with applicants to find the most qualified individuals whose beliefs are closely aligned to the vision of WCS.
Maintain fiscal stability through sound financial practices

Priority 2

Maintain sound financial integrity and stability

Indicators of Success:
- Continue to build an understanding of sound financial practices by providing training and ongoing support
- Maintain successful audit reviews

AUDIT REVIEWS

The Whitfield County Board of Education was issued a clean audit report of the school system's financial statements from fiscal year 2021 by the Georgia Department of Audits and Accounts and received the Award of Distinction for Excellent Financial Reporting. This award is presented to organizations that submit quality financial statements and supporting documentation that are free of deficiencies or material weaknesses and comply with all transparency in reporting requirements.

GOAL 3

$10,540
Per pupil spending in WCS

28TH
School system ranking in GA
Based on student enrollment

24
Years of voter support for ESPLOST

100%
Successful school audit reviews
Through clear expectations, consistent procedures, and frequent communication, I have been able to assist our administration and teachers with expenditures and revenues in a way that creates accountability and confidence that we are being fiscally responsible. I appreciate that I have a direct line to the central level finance staff should any questions or concerns arise.

- Holly Poe, bookkeeper at Coahulla Creek High School

In conjunction with the annual audit review of local school financial records, district finance representatives took an in-depth look at the local school accounts with the school finance team. This 'pulse check' fostered a training opportunity for pulling data reports and managing account balances.

In an effort to enhance support for our school finance personnel, the district launched online assistance opportunities throughout the year. Open office hours give school personnel an opportunity for district resources to be available as their time allows.
Strengthen school, family and community partnerships

Priority 2

Coordinate school and community resources to support students’ academic, physical, social and emotional needs

Indicator of Success:
- Continue to provide families resources to assist with academic, physical, social and emotional needs

READ + FEED

The Eastside Read and Feed program is designed to build relationships with the school’s families and equip them with resources needed to support reading at home. Each family who participates commits to attending four consecutive weeks. During this time, they learn effective reading strategies they can use at home with their children. Families receive a book each week and have dinner with Eastside teachers. This is a great opportunity for Eastside and its families to strengthen their partnership and work together to help their children succeed.

- **8,376** Translation services provided by district translators to students and families
- **279.9K** Number of meals served during 2022 USDA Seamless Summer Feeding
- **971** Visits to seven school libraries opened to families during summer 2022
- **442** Number of students who benefited from school-based mental health services
Somewhere down the line, a child will grow up to be very successful and, when asked about his or her childhood, will say, 'When I was little a truck came by with food and these people helped me read, and this enabled me to be, or do...'. We may not know for years the true impact of what we have done, but there will be successful people because of this grant.

- Sharon Hixon, Dean of the School of Education at Dalton State College

Without school meals, many children lack access to nutritious food options on the weekends. Whitfield County Schools has partnered with local churches to provide Saturday Sacks every Friday to 939 elementary school students across our school system. Each sack contains healthy food items and easy-to-prepare, single meals which help sustain the students through the weekend.

Whitfield County Schools partners with Big Brothers Big Sisters and United Way of Northwest Georgia’s Young Leaders Society (YLS) to provide mentors to middle school students. YLS is a group of professional leaders who give back to our community by creating relationships that ignite the power and promise of youth.

In an initiative called Mentors United, mentors meet bi-weekly with North Whitfield Middle School students for an hour, either to eat lunch together, make crafts or help with homework. Through these simple activities, the students have greater aspirations, increased confidence, better relationships and higher educational successes.
## District Operations

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

### Priority 1

**Schools and support facilities will be safe and inviting places for students, staff, families and the community**

Indicators of Success:
- Prioritize renovations of instructional spaces, administrative buildings, athletic venues and other facilities
- Continue to develop a facilities preventive maintenance and replacement program

### Priority 2

**Safety and Emergency Operations Plans**

Indicator of Success:
- Ensure staff and students are familiar with and ready to implement Emergency Operations Plans (EOP)

### Priority 3

**Technology Infrastructure**

Indicators of Success:
- Maintain a replenishment plan for technology equipment
- Establish cybersecurity procedures and training for staff

### Renovations + Preventive Maintenance

In order to create and maintain safe and supportive learning environments for all, facility renovations and preventive maintenance are of the utmost importance. Prioritizing renovations and preventive maintenance maximizes resources, minimizes operational downtime, extends asset life spans, and reduces costs of maintaining assets.

### Numbers

- **$26M**: Roof and HVAC upgrades
- **2.3M**: Square feet of indoor space maintained in 26 facilities
- **100%**: Completion of school-level Emergency Operations Plan training
- **3,000**: Number of end-of-life Chromebooks replaced using Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief (ESSER) funds

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**Antioch Elementary School Roof Replacement**

*Before & After images*
The upgraded technology in my room has increased engagement ten-fold. With the ViewSonic board, multiple students can now simultaneously write or draw on it. It has allowed us to incorporate more activities, such as math relay races, Connect 4, Classroom Feud, and other games. Students can't raise their hands fast enough when I ask for a volunteer to write or draw on the board.

- Judelle Herrera, 6th grade math teacher at Eastbrook Middle School

The Whitfield County Schools Emergency Operations Plan (EOP) is a comprehensive, all-hazards approach to school safety. During the 2021-2022 school year, school safety coordinators worked diligently to ensure all staff members at each school and district building were confident with the procedures in the EOP for their facility. The district EOP was updated during the summer of 2021 with feedback and approval from the Georgia Emergency Management Agency and our local public safety partners. Practice lockdown drills were conducted at all schools to ensure students and staff were familiar with EOP procedures.

WCS is responsible for students' personal data; therefore, it is imperative we do everything we can to keep our students' data safe. With Cyber Security becoming an increasing concern, WCS provides training to all staff on how to identify different cyber threats.
2021-2022

ENROLLMENT

12,492 STUDENTS

GIFTED

12.6%

ENGLISH LEARNERS

14.9%

STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

16%

SAT / ACT

1043 DISTRICT AVERAGE 19.5 DISTRICT AVERAGE
1077 STATE AVERAGE 22.6 STATE AVERAGE

D A T A

ON GRADE-LEVEL READING OR ABOVE: GRADES 3-8

The percentages of students reading on grade level in Whitfield County Schools are based on normed Lexile levels determined by performance on spring 2022 Georgia Milestones assessments.

3RD GRADE
State Average 64%

4TH GRADE
State Average 56%

5TH GRADE
State Average 70%

6TH GRADE
State Average 55%

7TH GRADE
State Average 67%

8TH GRADE
State Average 70%

DEMOGRAPHICS

49.5% WHITE
44.9% HISPANIC
3.2% TWO OR MORE RACES
1.5% BLACK
0.6% ASIAN
0.3% AMERICAN INDIAN

12.6% 14.9% 16% 1043 19.5 1077 22.6
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<tr>
<th>Elementary Schools</th>
<th>Middle Schools</th>
<th>High Schools</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Antioch Elementary</strong>&lt;br&gt;1819 Riverbend Road&lt;br&gt;Dalton, GA 30721&lt;br&gt;(706) 278-7550</td>
<td><strong>Tunnel Hill Elementary</strong>&lt;br&gt;203 East School Street&lt;br&gt;Tunnel Hill, GA 30755&lt;br&gt;(706) 673-4550</td>
<td><strong>Coahulla Creek High</strong>&lt;br&gt;3361 Crow Road&lt;br&gt;Dalton, GA 30721&lt;br&gt;(706) 694-4900</td>
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<td><strong>Beaverdale Elementary</strong>&lt;br&gt;9196 Highway 2&lt;br&gt;Dalton, GA 30721&lt;br&gt;(706) 275-4414</td>
<td><strong>Valley Point Elementary</strong>&lt;br&gt;3798 South Dixie Highway SW&lt;br&gt;Dalton, GA 30721&lt;br&gt;(706) 277-3259</td>
<td><strong>Crossroads Academy</strong>&lt;br&gt;2818 Airport Road&lt;br&gt;Dalton, GA 30721&lt;br&gt;(706) 271-2495</td>
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<td><strong>Cedar Ridge Elementary</strong>&lt;br&gt;285 Cedar Ridge Road&lt;br&gt;Dalton, GA 30721&lt;br&gt;(706) 712-8400</td>
<td><strong>Varnell Elementary</strong>&lt;br&gt;4421 Highway 2&lt;br&gt;Dalton, GA 30721&lt;br&gt;(706) 694-3471</td>
<td><strong>Northwest Whitfield High</strong>&lt;br&gt;1651 Tunnel Hill-Varnell Road&lt;br&gt;Tunnel Hill, GA 30755&lt;br&gt;(706) 673-6533</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Cohutta Elementary</strong>&lt;br&gt;254 Wolfe Street&lt;br&gt;Cohutta, GA 30710&lt;br&gt;(706) 694-8812</td>
<td><strong>Westside Elementary</strong>&lt;br&gt;1815 Utility Road&lt;br&gt;Rocky Face, GA 30740&lt;br&gt;(706) 673-6531</td>
<td><strong>Northwest Georgia College &amp; Career Academy</strong>&lt;br&gt;2300 Maddox Chapel Road&lt;br&gt;Dalton, GA 30721&lt;br&gt;(706) 876-3600</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Dawgnville Elementary</strong>&lt;br&gt;1380 Dawnville Road&lt;br&gt;Dalton, GA 30721&lt;br&gt;(706) 259-3914</td>
<td><strong>Eastbrook Middle</strong>&lt;br&gt;1382 Eastbrook Drive&lt;br&gt;Dalton, GA 30721&lt;br&gt;(706) 278-6135</td>
<td><strong>Phoenix High</strong>&lt;br&gt;2300 Maddox Chapel Road&lt;br&gt;Dalton, GA 30721&lt;br&gt;(706) 260-2206</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Dug Gap Elementary</strong>&lt;br&gt;2032 Dug Gap Road&lt;br&gt;Dalton, GA 30720&lt;br&gt;(706) 226-3919</td>
<td><strong>New Hope Middle</strong>&lt;br&gt;1111 New Hope Road&lt;br&gt;Dalton, GA 30720&lt;br&gt;(706) 673-2295</td>
<td><strong>Southeast Whitfield High</strong>&lt;br&gt;1954 Riverbend Road&lt;br&gt;Dalton, GA 30721&lt;br&gt;(706) 876-7000</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Eastside Elementary</strong>&lt;br&gt;102 Hill Road&lt;br&gt;Dalton, GA 30721&lt;br&gt;(706) 278-3074</td>
<td><strong>North Whitfield Middle</strong>&lt;br&gt;3450 Cleveland Highway&lt;br&gt;Dalton, GA 30721&lt;br&gt;(706) 259-3381</td>
<td><strong>Administrative Offices</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>New Hope Elementary</strong>&lt;br&gt;1175 New Hope Road&lt;br&gt;Dalton, GA 30720&lt;br&gt;(706) 673-3180</td>
<td><strong>Valley Point Middle</strong>&lt;br&gt;3796 South Dixie Highway&lt;br&gt;Dalton, GA 30721&lt;br&gt;(706) 277-9662</td>
<td><strong>Central Office</strong>&lt;br&gt;1306 South Thornton Avenue&lt;br&gt;Dalton, GA 30720&lt;br&gt;(706) 217-6780</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Pleasant Grove Elementary</strong>&lt;br&gt;2725 Cleveland Road&lt;br&gt;Dalton, GA 30721&lt;br&gt;(706) 259-3920</td>
<td><strong>Westside Middle</strong>&lt;br&gt;580 LaFayette Highway&lt;br&gt;Rocky Face, GA 30740&lt;br&gt;(706) 673-2611</td>
<td><strong>Operations Center</strong>&lt;br&gt;1030 Hill Road&lt;br&gt;Dalton, GA 30721&lt;br&gt;(706) 876-7280</td>
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<td><strong>Tunnel Hill Elementary</strong>&lt;br&gt;203 East School Street&lt;br&gt;Tunnel Hill, GA 30755&lt;br&gt;(706) 673-4550</td>
<td><strong>Westside Middle</strong>&lt;br&gt;580 LaFayette Highway&lt;br&gt;Rocky Face, GA 30740&lt;br&gt;(706) 673-2611</td>
<td><strong>Student Services</strong>&lt;br&gt;201 East Tyler Street&lt;br&gt;Dalton, GA 30721&lt;br&gt;(706) 876-3955</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
The Whitfield County School System does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, national origin, disability, age or genetic information in its employment practices.