



**POWER  
OF  
THE  
DREAM**

2014 ANNUAL REPORT

# POWDER O F THE D R E A M





Dear Friends,

From mastering a chapter book or beginning violin to acing Advanced Placement Calculus or gaining fluency in a world language, Guilford County Schools students have big dreams. They deserve an education that matches their aspirations.

In 2014, GCS celebrated great successes. We achieved our highest-ever four-year graduation rate of 88.5 percent – nearly five percentage points above the state average. More GCS students graduated with college credit in 2014 than the year before – in fact, 35 percent of 2014 graduates passed at least one AP or International Baccalaureate exam or passed a college course. Thirty-four students graduated with high school diplomas and associate degrees or diplomas.

Four schools were named 2014 State Schools of Character, and three were named National Schools of Character. The generosity of our students and staff earned GCS the United Way Spirit of North Carolina Award – for the second year in a row.

Student achievements ranged from nationally recognized energy-conservation programs to hosting the U.S. Secretary of Transportation. Nearly 1,200 students danced, acted, sang and painted during the Summer Arts Institute. Our employees earned fellowships, state and national awards, and GCS is ranked ninth in the country for teachers with National Board Certification – ninth!

While we have much to celebrate, we also face many challenges.

We completed the second year under tougher, more in-depth state standards. Our students improved on End-of-Grade (EOG) science and all End-of-Course (EOC) assessments. Students also improved in all other state measures, including the ACT and ACT WorkKeys. Members of the Class of 2014 also continued their strong showing in math, with more than 95 percent taking challenging math courses. While proficiency levels on standardized tests aren't the only measure of success, they do show we are making progress.

Meanwhile, GCS has faced six years of state budget cuts totaling more than \$47.6 million, including nearly \$18 million in cuts or redirections to balance the 2014-15 budget. That includes millions in cuts from central office, eliminating dozens of high school graduation coach and testing positions, reducing magnet transportation costs, and increasing class size.

We are thankful for the 1,300 community agencies, faith organizations and businesses partners that recognize the power of the dream. Together, we address student needs, from food and shelter to classroom supplies to school readiness.

When our children realize their dreams, we all benefit. It is our shared responsibility to help the next generation of parents, neighborhood leaders, teachers, business owners and strong members of our community to achieve those dreams.

Thank you for supporting our public schools, our teachers and our students.

Sincerely,

Maurice "Mo" Green  
Superintendent

"NEVER UNDERESTIMATE  
THE POWER OF DREAMS  
AND THE INFLUENCE OF THE  
HUMAN SPIRIT. WE ARE ALL  
THE SAME IN THIS NOTION:  
THE POTENTIAL FOR GREATNESS  
LIVES WITHIN EACH OF US."

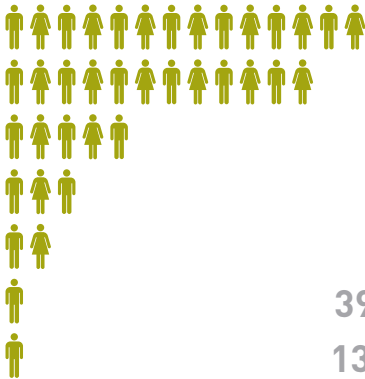
WILMA RUDOLPH

# WE ARE GCS

GCS serves a diverse and changing population of students and families from across North Carolina, all over the United States and around the globe. We have students from 79 countries speaking 128 different languages and dialects.

More than 10,000 students are in special education classes, and more than 14,000 are considered advanced learners. More than half our students - 59.41 percent - qualify for free or reduced-price lunch.

## Students (2014-15)



**29,444 BLACK**  
**25,404 WHITE**  
**8,964 HISPANIC**  
**4,192 ASIAN**  
**2,679 MULTI-RACIAL**  
**392 AMERICAN INDIAN**  
**134 HAWAIIAN PACIFIC**

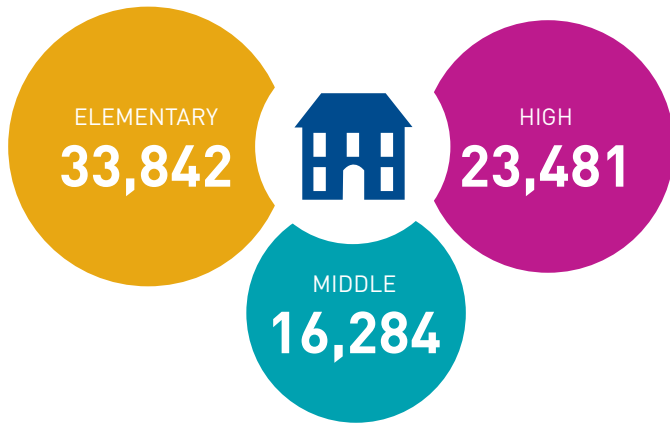
**TOTAL NUMBER OF K-12 STUDENTS: 72,192\***  
\*DOES NOT INCLUDE PRE-K

## OPERATIONS

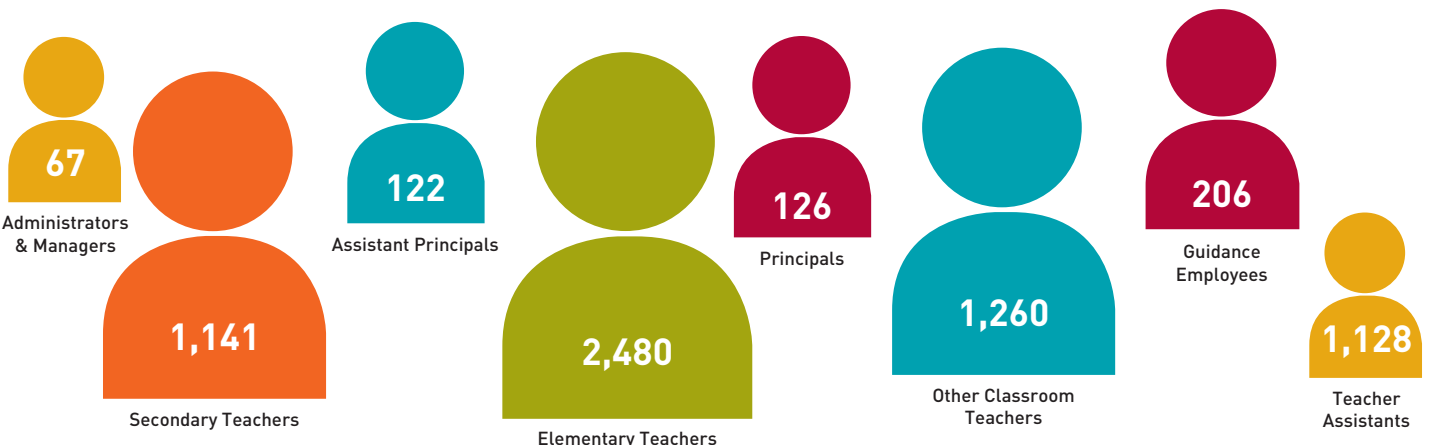
- 127 schools and more than 340 buildings
- More than 12,000,000 square feet of facilities
- 11,371 telephones
- 13.3 million meals served annually
- 610 school buses
- 41,286 student riders daily
- 52,831 miles traveled daily

## GCS BUDGET (2014-15)

- \$620.1 million operating budget
- \$686.6 million total budget (including all funds)
- \$47.6 million in state cuts since 2008-09
- \$4.2 million increase in local funding for operations since 2008-09
- \$3 million in private contributions and in-kind donations in 2013
- 80% of 2014-15 operating budget allocated to instructional staff and purposes
- 20% of 2014-15 operating budget allocated to school support and administration



The backbone of GCS is made up of 10,256 employees, including 9,390 full-time and 866 part-time workers.



# GCS AND PROUD

Guilford County Schools:  
A Proud State and National Leader

## DISTRICT HONORS

2013 National District of Character

2013 North Carolina District of Character

2013 and 2014 United Way Spirit of North Carolina Award

## STANDOUT SCHOOLS

**15** high schools on the 2014 Washington Post's America's Most Challenging High Schools list. GCS schools also took 4 of the top 10 spots in the state

**Two** high schools on the U.S. News and World Report 2014 Best High Schools list

Since 2011, **four** schools named National Blue Ribbon Schools by the U.S. Department of Education

The state's **only** Advanced Placement Capstone program, part of Western High's new AP Academy

**7** GCS high schools had 100% graduation rates in 2014

2014 North Carolina Title I Distinguished School

2014 recipient of Vision in Action: The ASCD Whole Child Award

3 National Schools of Character

4 North Carolina Schools of Character

**9** nationally recognized early and middle colleges

## TOP EDUCATORS

2013 North Carolina Teacher of the Year

2012 North Carolina Principal of the Year

**778** National Board Certified Teachers – ranking ninth in the country

**Three** teachers named 2013-14 Kenan Fellows; one teacher named 2014-15 Kenan Fellow

2013 North Carolina Outstanding Earth Science Teacher

Outstanding Secondary Mathematics Teacher, North Carolina Council of Teachers of Mathematics (NCCTM) and the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction (NCDPI)

2013 National Engineers Week Foundation DiscoverE Educator award-winner

## SUPERIOR STUDENTS

**22** 2013-14 National Merit Scholarship semi-finalists

**4** 2013-14 National Achievement Scholarship winners

**34** members of the Class of 2014 received their high school diploma and an associate degree or diploma

Experiments from **four** GCS schools selected to go into space as part of the Student Spaceflight Experiments Program

**36** students selected to attend the 2014 Governor's School of North Carolina, the nation's oldest statewide summer residential program for academically gifted students

**\$149.5 million** in scholarship offers to the Class of 2014

## BEYOND THE CLASSROOM

2013 North Carolina High School Athlete of the Year

Northern High: 2014 3AA NCHSAA Football State Champions


Since 2010-11, state championships in football, basketball, men's and women's indoor and outdoor track, tennis, golf, wrestling, lacrosse and swimming

GCS schools took first place in the state in the elementary, middle and high school categories of the 2014 NEED Youth Awards for energy conservation. One of those schools was also a national finalist.

Visual and performing arts awards, including the Mr. Holland's Opus Foundation Grant and honors at international theatre festivals

**7** major awards at the 2013 North Carolina Theatre Conference Play Festival, including five awards of excellence

**7** schools honored by U.S. Green Building Council's Environmental Stewardship Challenge



**"INTELLIGENCE PLUS  
CHARACTER - THAT IS THE  
GOAL OF TRUE EDUCATION."**

REV. MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR.

1285



# WE HAVE A DREAM

"EVERY GREAT DREAM BEGINS WITH A DREAMER. ALWAYS REMEMBER, YOU HAVE WITHIN YOU THE STRENGTH, THE PATIENCE, AND THE PASSION TO REACH FOR THE STARS TO CHANGE THE WORLD."

HARRIET TUBMAN

From designing a home to choosing a college, from mastering Advanced Placement Calculus to unlocking the secrets of a jet engine, Guilford County Schools students have big dreams.

It's our job to reach students where they are right now and help them achieve their goals. **GCS is a national leader in personalizing programs and services to meet the needs of our diverse student body.**

We have **46 magnet and choice schools with 54 programs**, from science and technology to aviation, health sciences, International Baccalaureate and performing and visual arts. And **52 schools offer 208 Career and Technical Education courses.**

Our students are succeeding in the classroom, too. Members of the Class of 2014 took **4,542 Advanced Placement (AP) and International Baccalaureate (IB) exams and 1,071 college courses** during their high school careers, and **663 students qualified for Cool to Be Smart**, earning passing scores in at least five AP or IB exams or receiving a B or better in at least five qualifying college-level courses.

We also want our students to dream big when it comes to their communities. We want our students to be kind, compassionate and engaged citizens, to make a difference in their neighborhoods and in the world. That's why we focus on character

development, service learning and civics. Students and staff have embraced this, with high school students contributing more than **845,000 volunteer hours** to the community to date.

**GCS was named the 2013 North Carolina District of Character, as well as a 2013 National District of Character.** In addition, the compassion and generosity of our students and staff earned GCS the 2013 and 2014 United Way Spirit of North Carolina Award.

We dream big because our students and their families do. We dream big because that's what our students deserve. Join us as we create the future together.

# ALL DREAMS ARE PERSONAL

Because dreams are as individual as each of our 72,000 students, GCS is committed to personalizing learning. The Strategic Plan 2016, Achieving Educational Excellence - Personalizing Learning, focuses on reaching students through their academic levels or interests, then providing the tools to move them ahead.

But what does personalizing learning look like? It's creative and interactive, moving away from the traditional classroom where students simply receive information from teachers. It means students can lead classroom activities. It means we provide service-learning and project-based opportunities.

It's choosing – and using – the best assessment tools to measure where students are and where they need to be. It's providing training for teachers in how to educate students of all levels and all backgrounds. It's finding each student's strengths and building on them.

Personalizing learning includes diverse choices for students and families, including strong magnet, high school and career-preparation options. Students can tailor their learning to their individual interests, whether it's Science, Technology, Engineering and Math (STEM), performing or visual arts, advanced academics, health care or aviation.

Personalizing learning also means turning to technology to open access to the world. GCS students are preparing to succeed and lead in a global community, and it's up to all of us to provide the resources and support they need to achieve their dreams.

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## ONE-TO-ONE TECHNOLOGY

Nearly 17,000 new Amplify tablets are in Guilford County Schools students' and teachers' hands, and the relaunch of the Personalized Achievement, Curriculum and Environment (PACE) project is going well. Staff distributed the new tablets beginning in August, with the final students receiving their tablets in November.

While access to one-to-one technology is significant, Robin Britt, director of instructional technology for GCS, says the PACE project is about much more than tablets and related items.

"PACE is about personalizing learning for all our students," he said. "The tablet is another tool our teachers can use to ensure each child is getting instruction at his or her level. It allows teachers to introduce a concept in class, create a quick quiz, and check in to see which

students understand the lesson and which don't. That immediate feedback means teachers can immediately try a different way to reach students."

The PACE initiative is funded by a \$35.2 million Race to the Top-District grant from the U.S. Department of Education. The program launched in 18 middle schools in the 2013-14 school year with Amplify tablets manufactured by ASUS. GCS suspended the program in the fall of 2013 after concerns about the quality and safety of the tablets.

The focus on personalizing learning continued without the tablets. Teachers received intensive professional development on personalizing learning, from looking at new ways to physically set up the classroom to creating small groups to receive and share lessons.

Parents are a key part of the PACE initiative. Part of the federal grant allowed Guilford Parent Academy to



provide additional tablets to middle school centers that are available for parents to check out. The tablets are one more way families can access valuable engagement resources to help their children succeed in school.







# YOUR DREAMS, YOUR CHOICE

Today's families have more choices than ever before when it comes to their children's education. With 127 schools across the county, Guilford County Schools is proud to offer high-quality neighborhood schools, as well as 54 application-based magnet programs that are open to a broader geographic area.

Families can choose from advanced academics, International Baccalaureate, aviation, Montessori, visual and performing arts, Spanish immersion, STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Math) and more.

And magnet programs have proven benefits: According to Magnet Schools of America, magnet programs have higher graduation rates, increased rates of student attendance, more diverse student enrollment and increased parent satisfaction.

## SUCCEEDING IN SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

Mark your calendars for May 20, 2015. That's when the first senior class at The Middle College at UNC Greensboro will make history when it crosses the stage at Aycock Auditorium. The graduates will move on to succeed in one of the most in-demand fields in the area. The school helps students prepare for a career in the healthcare industry and offers college-level classes and hands-on experience to ensure that they have the skills to succeed.

The Middle College at UNCG is one of seven middle colleges in GCS designed to reach students who may not be successful in a larger high school setting. It's also part of a growing focus in GCS on STEM education. The district's second early college, the STEM Early College at N.C. A&T, will graduate its first class in 2016. Like the Early College at Guilford, the STEM Early College allows students



to finish their high school classes in two years, giving them two years of college classes for free before they graduate.

Despite state cutbacks, GCS can offer these programs thanks to private donations and business partnerships.

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## BREAKING THE CODE TO THE FUTURE

**"This is awesome!"**  
**"I want to make my monkey pink."**  
**"Mine is going to dance."**

Those were just a few of the excited comments made by fifth-grade students at General Greene School of Science and Technology when they participated in

an Hour of Code. The global movement is designed to teach students about computer coding and get them interested in computer science.

In this special class, the students designed holiday cards. They chose their own characters and colors and added movement and music by choosing different computer codes, or commands.

Samantha Lambillotte is the instructional technology teacher at General Greene. She started teaching students coding on iPads and allowed them to choose their own projects. Now, she's expanding on those lessons.

"The lessons offer different stages for the students and lets them see what code looks like," says Lambillotte.

The Hour of Code movement encourages students to study computer science in school, which is a top-paying college degree with jobs growing at twice the national average.



# ROADMAP TO A DREAM

The options are even greater for students entering high school. In addition to 22 magnet programs, GCS offers 14 areas of career and technical education at specific high schools. Want to study culinary arts? We have that. Dreaming of being an architect? No problem. Hoping to be a veterinary tech? Great. We have the roadmap for our students to reach their dreams.

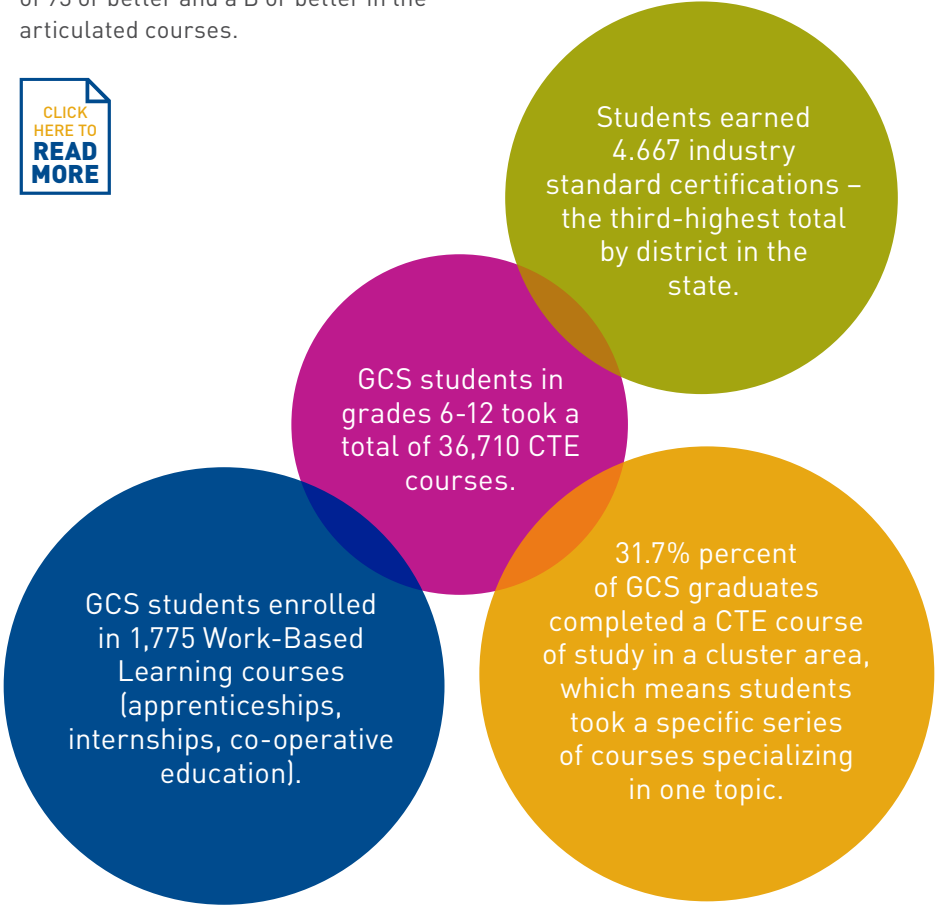
Guilford County Schools prepares its students for the colleges and careers they will enter after graduation, and once they graduate, they become examples and inspirations to current students. One of those graduates is Michelle Witherspoon, senior manager for global inclusion and collaboration at Cisco, the worldwide leader in information technology (IT).

The Smith High graduate recently returned to her alma mater to talk to students studying network engineering, one of many Career and Technical Education courses offered in GCS. During the roundtable discussion, Witherspoon asked students to not only think about their future careers, but to start taking actions now to be successful. Some suggestions included job shadowing, internships and pursuing IT certifications. Witherspoon also encouraged the students to consider the IT field and other options at Cisco, since they are already gaining valuable knowledge and experience through GCS.

Information Technology is one of 13 career cluster areas currently offered in the Career and Technical Education program. These programs bridge the gap between school and career, and the results are clear. CTE students graduate in higher numbers than non-CTE students and continue on to higher education, many with college credits to get them one step closer to their career goals. In 2015-16, GCS will offer a 14th cluster area – Law, Public Safety, Corrections and Security.



In 2013-14, GCS CTE students completed 1,427 courses that earned college credits. To qualify, students had an EOC score of 93 or better and a B or better in the articulated courses.



# DREAMING OF COLLEGE & BEYOND: AP/IB



Guilford County Schools wants students to challenge themselves in the classroom, including taking Advanced Placement (AP) and International Baccalaureate (IB) courses. Students who pass these challenging exams may receive college credit, which means they can start college with semesters of work already complete – for free.

More GCS students graduated from high school with college credit in 2014 than the year before. In fact, 35 percent of 2014 graduates passed at least one Advanced Placement (AP) or International Baccalaureate (IB) exam or college course. That's up from 33.2 percent in 2013.

And while our dedicated employees work with each student on his or her personal dreams, our district's larger size means we can offer many more opportunities for advanced academics than small schools.

GCS high schools offer more than 30 AP courses. These college-level classes prepare students for the higher-level courses they will take after they graduate high school and go on to colleges and universities. More than half (55.7 percent) of GCS graduates took at least one AP, IB or college course in the 2013-14 school year.

GCS is proud to offer the IB program at four high schools. Schools apply for authorization from the International Baccalaureate Organization (IBO). The authorization process requires several years as the school trains staff, modifies the curriculum to IB specifications, and learns to implement the IB program at the world-class level expected by the IBO. Only a small number of districts

in North Carolina are authorized by the International Baccalaureate Organization to offer the prestigious Diploma Programme, and GCS has been a part of it since 1996.

## COOL TO BE SMART

GCS students who challenge themselves by taking AP, IB and college courses have the chance to win a new car, iPod, iPad or other high-tech prizes at the district's annual Cool to Be Smart event.

It's a great opportunity – but it's not easy to get there. To qualify, students must earn passing scores on at least five AP or IB exams or receive a B or better in at least five qualifying college courses. In 2014, 51 students passed at least 10 AP exams and another 52 students also received a B or better in 10 or more qualified college courses.

More than 663 members of the Class of 2014 qualified for Cool to Be Smart and tried their luck at opening the door to a brand-new 2014 Toyota Corolla from Rice Toyota, taxes, tags and title included. Northern High graduate Olivia Koval had the winning key. She passed an incredible six AP exams to qualify for the event, which is sponsored by Businesses for Excellence in Education. She took her new wheels to North Carolina State University, where she is studying industrial design.

## CLASS OF 2014:

**55.7%**

took at least one AP, IB or college course

**33.1%**

passed at least one AP or IB exam or earned a B or better in a college course

## IN 2013-14:

- 5,497 students from 23 high schools took 10,717 Advanced Placement exams
- Of the 10,717 AP exams taken, 5,744 earned a passing score (3 or better)
- More than 1,300 students earned an AP Scholar Award
- More than 600 juniors and seniors in the four IB programs at Grimsley High, High Point Central High, Page High and Smith High took 1,444 IB exams with 920 exams receiving a passing score of 4 or higher



# AP CAPSTONE ACADEMY

The new Advanced Placement Capstone Academy at Western Guilford High opened for the 2014-15 school year. The program, developed by College Board, is the first and only of its kind in the state and is designed to provide students with an opportunity to develop critical thinking, collaborative problem-solving and research skills that are essential for college and career success.

"In the past, you could take just one class here, one class there, but the AP Capstone program actually has a core foundation of AP Research and AP Seminar and then you can go out and branch out into various topics," said teacher Diana Frye. "It gives students a better foundation of the skills necessary for upper-level thinking they can apply in the future."

The program consists of two year-long courses, AP Seminar and AP Research, beginning in eleventh grade. In AP Seminar, students learn to think critically, consider issues from multiple perspectives, evaluate the strength of an argument and make logical, fact-based decisions. In AP Research, students cultivate the skills and discipline necessary to conduct independent research to produce and defend a scholarly academic thesis.

"It might be difficult getting in and you will struggle a bit with the class because it's learning in a fashion that you probably haven't had before, but overcoming that challenge is really fulfilling," says junior Daniel Ervin.

"Being in the academy means everything to me," adds sophomore Serita Liles. "It's really fun and it's a really good experience, and I would encourage anybody who's not in the academy to try it."

Students who complete the program and earn a 3 or better on those two AP exams, plus four additional AP courses, will earn the AP Capstone Diploma. Students who receive a 3 or better on only the Capstone courses will earn the AP Capstone Certificate.



**"IT GIVES STUDENTS A BETTER FOUNDATION OF THE SKILLS NECESSARY FOR UPPER-LEVEL THINKING THEY CAN APPLY IN THE FUTURE."**

TEACHER DIANA FRYE

# COLLEGE READINESS

Members of the Class of 2014 improved slightly over the previous graduating class on the ACT, one measure of college readiness.

The ACT is an achievement test consisting of four separate exams in English, reading, mathematics and science, as well as an optional writing assessment. It is scored on a scale of 1 to 36 with 36 being the highest possible composite score.

The Class of 2014 were just the second group of students who were required by the state of North Carolina to take the ACT in their junior year. North Carolina selected the ACT as its new college readiness measure for high schools because it measures science as well as English, reading and mathematics. In 2012, the state became one of just a handful across the country requiring all high school juniors to take the ACT.

The GCS average composite score increased by 0.4 points, improving from 18.2 for the Class of 2013 to 18.6 for the 2014 graduating class.

The state also measures the percentage of students who meet the minimum academic requirement for the UNC system schools, which is a 17. In GCS, the number was 58.7 percent, up from 56.3 percent in 2012-13. Across the state, 59.3 percent of students met the minimum requirement in 2013-14, compared to 58.5 percent last year.



Year	Number Tested		GCS Composite Score		Percent Meeting UNC System Minimum	
	GCS	NC	GCS	NC	GCS	NC
2014	5,029	97,443	18.6	18.9	58.7%	59.3%
2013	4,993	95,782	18.2	18.7	56.3%	58.5%

“BECAUSE IT’S A CURRICULUM-BASED TEST, TEACHERS ARE ABLE TO EMBED PREPARATION FOR THE ACT IN DAILY INSTRUCTION, USING QUESTIONS AND SCENARIOS THAT ALIGN WITH THIS COLLEGE-READINESS EXAM”

DIBRELLE TOURRET,  
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR FOR  
ACADEMICALLY GIFTED

The Strategic Plan 2016: Achieving Educational Excellence: Personalizing Learning focuses on increasing the district’s average ACT composite score from 18.0 to 20.0 by 2016. As part of the Strategic Plan, all high schools offer opportunities for students to practice for the exam.

# RISING TEST SCORES, MEETING ACADEMIC GOALS

GCS students improved on 2013-14 End-of-Grade (EOG) science and all End-of-Course (EOC) assessments. Students also improved in all other state measures, including the ACT, ACT WorkKeys and the district's graduation rate - a record-high 88.5 percent. Members of the Class of 2014 also continued their strong showing in math, with more than 95 percent taking challenging math courses.

2013-14 was just the second year under North Carolina's new READY Accountability Model, which includes new tests, more challenging lessons and higher expectations for students. The model has three components to measure how schools and districts are performing:

**Performance Indicators** – Percentage of proficient scores on EOC and EOGs, as well as performance on the ACT, ACT WorkKeys, percentage of graduates passing more challenging math courses, and the four-year cohort graduation rate.

**Growth Indicators** – Measure of how much students have grown from one year to the next; for example, schools where students make an average amount of growth during one year of instruction meet expected growth.

**Progress Indicators** – Measured by Annual Measurable Objectives (AMOs), which are performance and participation targets for districts and schools



## PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

### 2013-14 overall performance

**composite: 53.6%**

EOG reading: 52.1%

EOG math: 49.2%

EOG science: 60.3%

EOC scores: 59.5%

### 2012-13 overall performance

**composite: 43.2\***

\*Cannot accurately compare to 2013-14 because NC set new achievement levels for EOCs and EOGs

### ACT WorkKeys

2013-14: 61.9%

2012-13: 60.1%

### Math Course Rigor

Over 95%

### Graduation Rate

GCS: 88.5%

NC: 83.8%

## GROWTH INDICATORS

2013-14: 76% met or exceeded expected growth

2012-13: 68%

## PROGRESS INDICATORS

The READY model also sets Annual Measurable Objectives (AMOs), which are performance and participation targets for the state, districts and schools. There are 210 possible targets; GCS has 208.

The targets are based on subgroups, which are groups of at least 30 students in different categories. They measure the performance and participation of all students in a school or district and of specific groups of students. Performance targets are set by the state for each subgroup. The participation target for all subgroups is 95 percent, which means schools must ensure that 95 percent of students in a subgroup take the required tests. Many of our high schools had difficulty meeting the participation targets due to a state policy change; in fact, 17 of the 19 schools that missed at least one participation target were high schools.

Despite those challenges, 29 GCS schools met all targets, including nine high schools.

# SCHOOL PERFORMANCE GRADES

The General Assembly passed legislation that means the state will issue A-F grades for nearly all schools in North Carolina. The grades are coming out on Feb. 5, 2015.

While that may sound simple, it really isn't. GCS – and most districts across the state – don't think the way the grades are computed reflects the quality of education our schools are providing. In fact, the Guilford County Board of Education passed a resolution calling for a repeal of the legislation.

## HOW ARE THE GRADES CALCULATED?

The simple answer: 80% is based on proficiency on state tests (high school grades include a few other measures, such as graduation rates and ACT scores) and 20% is based on growth. Based on preliminary calculations, GCS expects most schools to score at the lower end of the scale.

## WHY IS THIS A CONCERN?

Any fair evaluation of the quality of a school requires looking at multiple measures of performance, not just one or two numbers.

## WHAT'S IMPORTANT TO GCS?

GCS has a clear roadmap to ensure student success in character, academics and all that we do. That's our vision; that's our dream and our focus. It's outlined in the Strategic Plan 2016: Achieving Educational Excellence: Personalizing Learning.

We launched the plan in 2013 and it sets our goals and strategies through 2016.

Those Strategic Plan goals include:

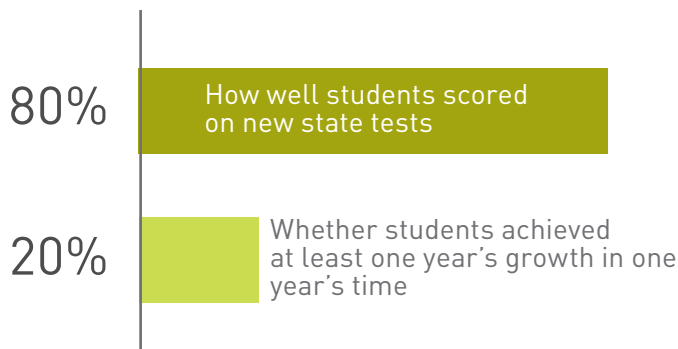
- Increasing our graduation rate, currently a record-high **88.5%**
- Raising **ACT scores**
- Ensuring elementary-school students have a **strong foundation for reading**
- **Reducing gaps and disparities** in student performance and other measures
- **Increasing the percentage** of middle school students on-track for high school graduation

We also want our students to be compassionate, kind and engaged citizens, so we focus on character development, service learning and civics, along with academics.



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IMAGINE IF YOUR CHILD TOOK ONE OR TWO QUIZZES OVER THE COURSE OF A YEAR AND RECEIVED A LETTER GRADE BASED JUST ON THOSE FEW NUMBERS? THAT'S NOT A COMPLETE PICTURE, YET THAT'S WHAT GCS SCHOOLS ARE FACING.

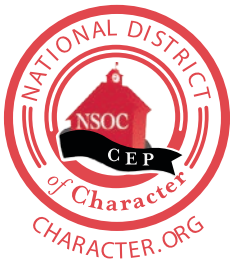




# DREAMING GLOBALLY, ACTING **LOCALLY**

GCS believes that strength of character, combined with the keen analytical skills of a finely tuned mind, can overcome any obstacles and create a limitless future, helping students achieve their dreams. That's why character development is a key component of the Strategic Plan 2016.

GCS launched its character development program in 2010 with three fundamentals: character education, service learning and civic education. Since then, students and staff have embraced the concepts, and it is having a positive impact on academics, student behavior and school culture.



GCS rose to the top and emerged as a national model, named the 2013 North Carolina District of Character and 2013 National District of Character. This was the first time a school district in North Carolina won this national award.

In 2014, four GCS schools were named North Carolina Schools of Character, the first time GCS schools received the honor. Southern High, Southern Middle, Southwest Middle and Colfax Elementary schools won the designation for their outstanding work in character education. Gibsonville Elementary received an honorable mention.



Three of those schools - Colfax Elementary, Southern Middle and Southwest Middle – were among just 44 schools and districts named 2014 National Schools of Character. The program recognizes schools and districts that have demonstrated that character development has had a positive impact on academics, student behavior and school climate.

The three schools will hold the distinction for five years, and were the only schools recognized in North Carolina. As National Schools of Character, they serve as models for other schools, helping them to achieve the same results.

Fourteen Guilford County schools and the GCS Peer Mediation Program earned the Character Education Partnership's 2014 Promising Practice Awards, which showcase innovative best practices in character education. GCS earned 16 of the 315 awards given to individual schools, districts and organizations from across the U.S., as well as from Canada, China, Greece and Mexico.

This year's winning practices in GCS include unique anti-bullying programs, creative ways to integrate character and academic subjects, effective strategies for developing student leadership and activities that build community support.

### Promising Practices Awards

- Brooks Global Studies
- The Early College at Guilford
- Foust Elementary
- Southeast Middle
- Northern Middle
- Gibsonville Elementary
- Guilford County Schools
- Haynes-Inman Education Center
- Northern High
- Oak Hill Elementary
- Penn-Griffin School for the Arts
- Southeast High
- The Middle College at Bennett
- Weaver Academy
- Western High



# DREAMS CAN MAKE A DIFFERENCE

## 845,641 HOURS OF LESSONS THROUGH SERVICE:

GCS students learn in a variety of ways. One of the best ways is when they are able to learn and help others achieve their dreams at the same time. GCS' service learning initiative, part of the district's overall Character Development initiative, does just that.

Service learning allows students to take what they learn in the classroom and apply it to the real world through projects that benefit their community. It could include using math and business skills to open a food pantry or taking lessons from literature about homelessness and organizing food, toy and clothing drives.

Service learning helps students of all grades and backgrounds understand how to connect what they are learning in the classroom to meaningful action in the community. It teaches them to be better leaders, communicators and decision-makers – skills that are essential for success in the workplace.

Service learning starts in elementary school, but high school students track their own hours. As of January 2015, high schoolers have completed more than 845,641 service hours. Students who complete at least 250 hours of service-learning experience over the course of their high school years will receive a special Service-Learning Diploma. Additionally, at graduation, these students will be distinguished by wearing a Service-Learning cord. Students who earn at least 100 hours of service are recognized with a Service-Learning Exemplary Award.

**"I CHALLENGE YOU TO BE DREAMERS; I CHALLENGE YOU TO BE DOERS AND LET US MAKE THE GREATEST PLACE IN THE WORLD EVEN BETTER."**  
BRIAN SCHWEITZER

A record 914 students were invited to the event this year, including 477 who earned the service-learning diploma and 437 who earned the service-learning award.



For their commitment to service, these students are also recognized at the district's annual Cool to Serve event. Students have the chance to win high-tech prizes and one lucky service-learning diploma recipient has the opportunity to win a new car. On June 30, 2014, Western High graduate Jenisa Henry turned the key to a new Dodge Dart, courtesy of Ilderton Dodge.

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SINCE GCS STARTED THE SERVICE-LEARNING PROGRAM, HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS HAVE COMPLETED MORE THAN 845,641 HOURS OF SERVICE IN THE COMMUNITY.



# MAKING AN IMPACT

GCS students are doing more than collecting canned goods and volunteering at their schools.



## GRIMSLEY WINTER COLLECTION

Students at Grimsley High took their service-learning project further than their English teacher, Kathleen Saunders ever imagined. She allowed her classes to pick an issue to research and then find ways they could help. After serious discussion, the students chose homelessness. They researched the issue, learned about its impact on the Greensboro community and started campaigning for a change.

The students held food drives, clothing drives and collected so many toys to give as presents to elementary students that they had to start holding classes in the media center because their classroom was filled with donations. All their marketing and hard work even inspired one of their fellow students to ask friends and family to donate toys instead of gifts for her Quinceañera.



## AYCOCK FOOD PANTRY

A group of Aycock Middle students decided to help families that may not have enough to eat when school is out of session. They wrote and won a grant from the Community Foundation of Greater Greensboro Teen Grant Council to open and run a food pantry. The pantry provides snacks and food to Aycock families on weekends, during the summer and over holiday breaks. They also managed to buy entire Thanksgiving and Christmas dinners for families who otherwise may have gone without this year.

The students went a step further over the holidays and held a coat drive, collecting more than 50 coats for students in need.



## A GIFT OF KINDNESS

The impact of GCS' Character Development initiative is evident outside the classroom as well. Yaovi Mawuli, a senior at Northeast High, made national news when he gave classmate Jared Newby a new pair of Air Jordans. Mawuli donated the sneakers after hearing another classmate tease Jared about his shoes. In an interview with Yahoo! Parenting, Principal Fabby Williams said, "We focus on building character at our school. And I am proud of Yaovi, because he seized the moment and helped secure a new pair of sneakers for Jared. I can't take any credit for that."

The story inspired people around the country, including one shoe company in Florida that donated more shoes for Northeast High students in need.

**"I WANT OUR YOUNG PEOPLE TO KNOW THEY HAVE A PLACE IN THIS WORLD, A PLACE OF LEADERSHIP AND SERVICE TO OTHERS."**

MAURICE O. "MO" GREEN

# DREAMING OF A GOOD BOOK

Reading can take a child around the world, into space or even to a land of make-believe. Dreams live within the pages of great books, and that’s why GCS makes reading a priority, and not just in the classroom. The district is finding new and innovative ways to encourage students to read and make it easier for them to pick up a book – or download an eBook.

A \$510,000 digital resources grant from the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction allowed the district to purchase thousands of eBooks available for free to all GCS students. Children in all grade levels can access the books on tablets, phones or computers, making it easier to read on the go. The age-appropriate, culturally relevant books are being accessed more than 20,000 times per month, all with the click of a button.

Adding eBooks has helped GCS students with their newest reading challenge, GCS Reads 20. Continuing the theme of 2013’s Roadmap 2 Reading, students are encouraged to read 20 minutes per day, every day, and record those minutes at school. Any material and any format are acceptable – the goal is simply to help students make reading for pleasure a habit.

GCS has continued its successful partnership with WFMY through the Read 2 Succeed program. Nearly every elementary school in Guilford County has been visited by the Good Morning Show crew, who inspire children with their message that reading is a lifelong activity. WFMY is also a sponsor of the GCS Reads 20 Schools of the Month, helping celebrate those who are reaching their reading goals.

Schools have embraced the challenge in creative ways. At Hairston Middle, one of the first GCS Reads 20 Schools of the Month, students are encouraged to “Get Caught Reading” – standing in line, in the cafeteria, wherever they are. Photographs of those who are caught reading are displayed to the school.



the story of a 10-year-old girl set in 1940s Korea. Sometimes, a timeless story can help build a lifetime love of reading.



And at Kernodle Middle, classes compete to see which grade level will have the most minutes in a month. Lynn Price’s seventh-grade language arts class led the school in reading minutes in November, the month they claimed the title of GCS Reads 20 School of the Month.

Price credits their surprising love of the book “The Year of Impossible Goodbyes,”

Now, students are focused on helping others have access to great books. Two schools – General Greene Elementary and Allen Jay Elementary – have participated in projects to build Little Free Libraries for public use in Greensboro parks and on their school grounds. And construction students at Weaver Academy are helping build the book boxes themselves, so that even more students can share their love of reading with the community.





# BUILDING DREAMS

“BUILDING UP A DREAM IS LIKE BUILDING A ROOM; THE FOUNDATION  
MUST BE DEEP, STRONG, FIRM AND DEPENDABLE.”

ISRAELMORE AYIVOR

Guilford County Schools makes dreams come true based on the support of our students, parents, and – perhaps most importantly – our staff. In order for our students to excel, our teachers, principals, bus drivers, paraprofessionals, cafeteria workers and custodians must help them build a foundation of excellence. It starts with that first interaction in the morning, which can set the tone for an entire day, and it continues in the classroom and cafeteria, on the sports field and back home.

GCS is committed to **working from the inside out** to ensure our students have the tools they need to

graduate on time, prepared for college or a career. That means **starting in the classroom**, then reaching out to our students’ **parents**, creating **partnerships** with local community organizations and working with **businesses** to provide financial and in-kind support.

**When schools are successful, the entire community benefits.**

We can’t do it alone, and thanks to dollars, donations and thousands of hours of volunteer time, **we are building dreams together.**

# THE POWER OF OUTSTANDING STAFF

## DREAMING TOGETHER: CELEBRATING EXCELLENCE IN EDUCATION

Marching bands, pom-poms, school mascots and a red carpet packed with paparazzi greeted GCS staff arriving at the annual Celebration of Excellence event. During the 14th annual event, teachers, principals and support staff were celebrated for the past year’s accomplishments and successes. The event ended with two exciting announcements that keep the audience on the edge of their seats – this year’s Principal and Teacher of the Year.



Fourth-grade teacher Eileen Cirincione, formerly at Fairview Elementary in High Point and now at Bessemer Elementary in Greensboro, was

named the district’s Teacher of the Year. Cirincione was honored for her positive, one-on-one approach to teaching. She makes a point to keep her lessons fresh with new ideas and hands-on activities, and can be found standing on tables or singing to her students to help them engage in learning.

“My role is to support, encourage, redirect, question and challenge,” she says. “If I am positive and excited about learning, it is only natural that some of that excitement may rub off on my students.”

Cirincione was also named Elementary Teacher of the Year.



The second time was the charm for 2014-15 Principal of the Year Shelia Gorham, who also was named a finalist in 2013 for her work as principal at

Wiley Elementary, where she successfully led a school turnaround effort. Now in her second year at Allen Middle, she’s doing the same, with impressive results.

One key to Gorham’s success is to give both staff and students access to data that helps track their progress. Through clear communication and expectations, she and her staff give students ownership of their accomplishments.

“We give students an opportunity to get in the game, to come out of the bleachers and become participants and not spectators in their learning,” says Gorham, who also incorporates single-gender classes as a strategy to meet the needs of her students.

She was also named Secondary Principal of the Year.

Other outstanding educators recognized at the event include:

- **Middle School Teacher of the Year**  
Theresa Kennedy, Jamestown Middle
- **High School Teacher of the Year**  
Alison Markwood, Southwest High
- **Teacher of the Year Finalist**  
Tracie Fitzpatrick, Gateway Education Center

- **Teacher of the Year Finalist**  
Tia Thompson, Claxton Elementary
- **Elementary Principal of the Year**  
Aaron Woody, Lindley Elementary
- **Principal of the Year Finalist**  
Patrice Brown, Guilford Middle
- **Principal of the Year Finalist**  
Loretta Rowland-Kitley, Middle College at GTCC-Jamestown
- **Principal of the Year Finalist**  
Kevin Wheat, Allen Jay Middle
- **GCS 2014 Arts Education Teacher of the Year – Ed Kimbrough,**  
Northern High
- **GCS Rookie Teacher of the Year**  
Setoria Moore, Wiley Elementary
- **Secondary Rookie Teacher of the Year**  
Bernard Mack, Smith High
- **Rosalyn Tanner Orr Mentor of the Year**  
Paula Williams, Pilot Elementary
- **GCS ACT Lateral Entry Teacher of the Year – Daylonda Lee,**  
Smith High



# DREAMING FOR OUR STUDENTS

## EMPLOYEES OF THE MONTH

Each month in GCS, a standout employee is recognized by Sam's Club for providing excellence every day. Their jobs vary, but one thing is the same: These employees do everything in their power to make GCS a great place for students to achieve their dreams.

Social worker Ann Reeder feels a twinge of pride when she sees the students she's helped cross the stage at graduation. Certain names, she knows, were more difficult to get onto that Dudley High graduation program than others. Her dedication to help those students become graduates instead of dropouts is what made Reeder a Guilford County Schools Employee of the Month.

As the school's social worker, Reeder works to help her students overcome obstacles at home that might prevent them from attending school. She builds relationships with families that often extend beyond the high school-age child she's there to serve, providing food, shelter and clothing and helping connect families to community resources.

"When you talk about bringing your A game, I think Ms. Reeder is an exemplar of that," said Dudley High Principal Jesse Pratt. "She brings her A game every day. She is so dedicated to the community and the students and families she serves."

Reeder is just one of the district's 10,000 employees, and one of the 12 who are chosen each year as representatives of what makes GCS great. Collectively they demonstrate dedication, determination and a selfless attitude toward the children, staff and families of our district.

Some are first-year teachers; others have spent more than 30 years in education. Some work directly with students; others work behind the scenes, greeting guests, polishing floors and keeping our technology on track. Regardless of their position, they are committed to serving GCS to the best of their abilities, each and every day.

From custodians to assistant principals, every employee recognized as Employee of the Month shares a love for students that transcends expectations.



### 2014 GCS EMPLOYEES OF THE MONTH:

January 2014	Sherry Wyche
February 2014	Christy Adams
March 2014	Susie Altizer
April 2014	Elbert J.T. Tonkins
May 2014	Vanessa Esquivel
June 2014	Nicholas Daniel
July 2014	Deborah Bryant
August 2014	Ann Reeder
September 2014	Emily Cooke
October 2014	Tiffany Douglas
November 2014	Tierra Shaheed
December 2014	Rodney Parker

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"I TAKE PRIDE IN WHAT I DO IN SERVING FAMILIES. NOT ONLY FAMILIES, BUT TO GIVE IT ALL I'VE GOT. WHEN I GO HOME IN THE EVENING, I SAY, 'THAT'S IT - I GAVE IT ALL I'VE GOT AND I'LL DO IT AGAIN TOMORROW.'"

ANN REEDER



# HIRING AND RECRUITING TOP TEACHERS

It's a challenge school districts across the country struggle with: filling openings in science, technology, engineering and math (STEM) classes. Over the past five years, GCS needed 800 teachers in these categories. Colleges and universities don't produce enough math and science teachers to meet the demand, but they do graduate many students in those fields who may not have planned to be teachers.

That's where GCS got creative, and, in addition to other strategies, a unique partnership between GCS local Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs) is bringing highly qualified, enthusiastic young graduates into the teaching profession.

"Our pitch to them is, 'You love science. Wouldn't you like to create more people just like you?'" said GCS recruiter Shaniqua Burnette. "If we don't have anyone teaching this content, science will go away."

In 2010, GCS partnered with four HBCUs to develop a pipeline of STEM graduates to enter education through alternative-licensure routes. The district used federal Transition to Teaching funds to hire a STEM recruiter. That person built relationships with department chairs and professors in the STEM departments at the four institutions: Winston-Salem State, Bennett College, North Carolina A&T State University and North Carolina Central University.

"Because of these partnerships, our recruiter can reach out directly to students studying in STEM fields and ask if they have ever thought about becoming a teacher," said Dr. Amy Holcombe, Executive Director of Talent Development for GCS. "We then invite interested students into the district to participate in professional development alongside practicing teachers, work as substitutes and observe in the classroom. Those opportunities help students decide whether they want to move forward into education."

After college graduation, the STEM recruiter helps place these new teachers in positions across the district, working under a provisional teaching license. And it's working: since 2010, GCS has trained 60 STEM teachers, with another 25 joining the ranks this school year.

**"YOU LOVE SCIENCE. WOULDN'T YOU LIKE TO CREATE MORE PEOPLE JUST LIKE YOU?"**

"I always loved math and science when I was in school, and it was easy to focus on those courses when I went to North Carolina A&T University," said Daylonda Lee, GCS-ACT Teacher of the Year for 2014, science teacher and head of the science International Baccalaureate program at Smith High School. "I never really thought about going back into the classroom as a teacher until I learned about the GCS program, and I'm so glad I did. I feel like I'm making a difference with my students every day, and it was the perfect way to share my love of science with the next generation of STEM students."



Here's where GCS has another advantage: the district has North Carolina's only in-house licensure program for teachers. Guilford County Schools Alternative Certification Track (GCS-ACT) allows new full-time teachers to also participate in a district-provided teacher preparation program that meets in the evenings, on the weekends and in the summer.

A team of coaches customizes courses to meet the needs of STEM teachers and provide multiple hours of on-site coaching and support in the classroom to ensure the success of each teacher. Upon completion of the rigorous licensure program, the teachers graduate with a North Carolina Standard Professional II teaching license that is recognized in North Carolina and in states with licensure reciprocity.

This innovative program has brought 247 teachers into GCS classrooms, filling positions from medical careers to drafting to foreign languages and history.





# THE POWER OF PARENTS

From the very first moments, parents dream of success for their children. Sometimes, we all need a little help, whether it's understanding advanced math, fostering a love of reading or supporting students having a tough time in middle school.

That's where Guilford Parent Academy (GPA) can help. The 2013-14 school year was a banner year for GPA, which reached more than 22,000 parents and family members through a range of helpful workshops and events.

"Whether a child dreams of being a policeman, teacher or astronaut, family support is key," said Lindsay Whitley, director of GPA. "We know family involvement is a key to success in the classroom, and Guilford Parent Academy is here to help our families."

During the year, GPA expanded digital and broadcast content for parents, adding a program to help parents ensure children are prepared for college, as well as a program that provides children with a safe, secure and educator-approved platform for conducting research. Parent Academy continues to align offerings with parent requests, input and evaluations, ensuring the Calendar of Events includes topics from planning for college to supporting academic success, computer basics and more.

GPA's major focus for the 2013-14 school year was expanding partnerships – with great success. Guilford Parent Academy teamed up with the Greensboro Science Center, High Point City Lake Park, ConvaTec and more to help bridge the experience gap for GCS students and their families.

In October 2014, students and their parents got a closer look at what a STEM education can mean after a visit with Core Technology Molding Corp., an advanced manufacturing company located in Greensboro.

Understanding the importance of meeting parents where they are, GPA continued to expand GPA on the Go, reaching families at housing communities, recreation centers, places of business and various churches across Guilford County.

Thanks to the Personalized Achievement, Curriculum and Environment (PACE) grant, GPA launched an exciting new program during the 2013-14 school year, appointing a parent volunteer at each PACE middle school to work with school staff to determine parent engagement priorities and opportunities.

These grassroots parent coordinators are from differing backgrounds, socioeconomic classes and ethnic groups. They came together to accomplish a number of goals, including planning



parent workshops, signing parents up for free GPA online accounts, leading parent outreach activities and finding creative and out-of-the-box ways to reach parents and families. Grassroots parent coordinators can receive rewards each month for parent engagement outcomes.

"A parent's contribution to their child's academic success is immeasurable," said Samuel Ponder, grassroots parent coordinator at High School Ahead Academy. "As a grassroots parent coordinator, Guilford Parent Academy provided a door for me to encourage parents to take an active role in the academic journey of their children."

## GPA BY THE NUMBERS

	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14:	Total
Number of Parents/ Family Members Participating	13,508	13,570	22,436	49,514
Number of Parent User Accounts	3,302	2,541	1,974	7,817
Number of Workshops, Classes and Events Held	259	188	246	693

**GUILFORD PARENT ACADEMY:  
BRINGING FAMILIES  
TOGETHER**

In 2012 and 2013, Guilford Parent Academy hosted Family Fun Day at Camp Weaver, which is the YMCA of Greater Greensboro’s flagship camp located in southeastern Guilford County. In 2014, GPA partnered with the city of High Point and moved Family Fun Day to a new location: High Point City Lake Park in Jamestown.

The event, held on May 31, 2014, drew more than 5,000 people to the park to enjoy swimming, waterslides, boating, train and carousel rides, great entertainment and fun activities for guests of all ages. All activities, including the pool and waterslides, were free of charge thanks to GPA and community partners.

GCS middle-schooler Destiny Davis had a great time at Family Fun Day. “It was awesome! I loved how everything - even the rides and everything - was free. I liked all the food and everybody just had really good spirits.”

Derrick McCrimmon works in GCS’ transportation department. “I’ve been going to Family Fun Day every year and this is the best one. This park has so many amenities - the lake, the rides and the pool. It’s great.”

Representatives from various community agencies, organizations and businesses were on hand to talk with parents. Families could also take a break with technology in the park’s gymnasium and learn more about eBooks, the PACE grant, summer reading and GPA online resources.



[CLICK HERE TO WATCH THE GCSTV STORY](#)



**GUILFORD PARENT ACADEMY: FOCUSED ON LITERACY**

Curious George made special visits to Guilford County to read with children at Bluford STEM Academy and Montlieu Academy of Technology. While kids read, parents learned more about all of the ways they can help their children with reading and homework at home using resources available to families for free thanks to Guilford Parent Academy.

Each child who attended took home a new book to keep, and enjoyed pizza and drinks.

The event was part of the district’s literacy initiative, GCS Reads 20, which encourages students to read 20 minutes a day, every day. Research shows that 20 minutes of time spent reading gives students the maximum benefit of increasing vocabulary and strengthening overall literacy, and helps students do better in all subject areas.

Given the importance of reading—and the popularity of Curious George—GPA is planning to host this event annually. Additionally, GPA plans various other events throughout the year that highlight literacy and the importance of reading.

[CLICK HERE TO READ MORE](#)

# THE POWER OF COMMUNITY

## VOLUNTEER COMMITMENT

Volunteers do so much for GCS schools and students, providing that extra support that can make a world of difference when it comes to helping children achieve their dreams. In the 2013-14 school year, **11,100 volunteers** read with students, tutored them in math, served as lunch buddies, worked in school offices, headed campus clean-up projects and worked with parents.

Those volunteers contributed a total of **526,691 hours** of service. Their time is priceless, but at the national value of an hour of volunteer time, their service totals **\$11,081,578.64**.

## A DECADE OF DEDICATION

Rosamae Thompson, the December 2014 Volunteer of the Month, has given her time to students at Jefferson Elementary for the last ten years.

“She is a great asset to Jefferson,” said first-grade teacher Pamela Bernard. “Since she has been with me for so long, I don’t know if I could do without her. I depend on her, and whatever I ask her to do, she’s always willing. So she’s my right hand.”

Thompson started volunteering in Bernard’s classroom at Jefferson when her granddaughter was in first grade. Her granddaughter is now in high school, but Thompson never left. She continues to go the extra mile assisting first-graders in all academic areas four days a week.

“I love helping children when they need help, and I think education is the most important thing that they will need, from the beginning to the end,” she said.



## 2014 VOLUNTEERS OF THE MONTH

January	Cedric Richard
February	Chanthaly Jiang
March	Melinda Farris
April	Zandra Solomon
May	Patsy Kestner
June	Carole Mezzapelli
September	Lisa Hawley
October	Thomas Griffis
November	Swapna Inamdar
December	Rosamae Thompson

“SINCE SHE HAS BEEN WITH ME FOR SO LONG, I DON’T KNOW IF I COULD DO WITHOUT HER. I DEPEND ON HER, AND WHATEVER I ASK HER TO DO, SHE’S ALWAYS WILLING. SO SHE’S MY RIGHT HAND.”

TEACHER PAMELA BERNARD

# THE POWER OF COMMUNITY

## PARTNERING FOR SUCCESS

GCS works closely with Triad businesses, faith partners and community organizations to give students as many opportunities as possible. This school year, **1,378** business, faith, nonprofit and university partnerships supported GCS schools and offices. Partners team up with schools in a variety of ways, from organizing volunteer events to offering internships and donations to school efforts.

The community also plays an important role in the district's service-learning initiative. There are **160 community partners** that have made commitments to provide service-learning opportunities to high school students.

In addition to giving time, Guilford County businesses, nonprofit organizations, foundations and individuals also

contributed financial resources to the district. Despite a tough economic year, our community contributed **more than \$3 million** in grants, cash and other donations to the district in the 2013-14 school year.

## POWERFUL PARTNERS



One partnership with Dun and Bradstreet Credibility Corp. and the Enrichment Fund for the Guilford County Schools created the new "Future Thinkers, Doers and Innovators" fund this year. The fund pays for student participation in national conferences related to academic or career interests, national performing arts competitions and academic challenge competitions.



ConvaTec, a global medical products and technologies company in Greensboro, partnered with Guilford Parent Academy to share information about STEM careers with more than 25 students and their parents in 2014. Students toured the ConvaTec facility and interacted with engineers and scientists.



Starting kindergarten is a big day for any child, but especially for students who have no preschool experience at all. Volunteers from First Baptist Church in Greensboro sponsored a two-week Kindergarten Camp at Bessemer Elementary over the summer that mimicked the kindergarten schedule. Rising kindergarten students not only received lessons on ABCs, counting, shapes and colors, but also learned how to stand in a line and walk down a school hall, things other children learn in preschool.

The church offered the camp for free to any student, providing breakfast, lunch and school supplies so the students could experience a full school day.

A photograph of a graduate in a green cap and gown hugging another person. The graduate is wearing a green mortarboard cap with a white tassel and a green gown with a gold stole. The background is a blurred crowd of people at a graduation ceremony.

**“NOTHING HAPPENS  
UNLESS FIRST WE DREAM.”**

CARL SANDBURG



# ACHIEVING THE DREAM

“SO MANY OF OUR DREAMS AT FIRST SEEM IMPOSSIBLE, THEN THEY SEEM IMPROBABLE, AND THEN, WHEN WE SUMMON THE WILL, THEY SOON BECOME INEVITABLE.” CHRISTOPHER REEVE

When we all work together – parents, families, school and district staff and the community – **students can achieve their dreams.**

The Class of 2014 is proof of that. Graduates reached a **record-high graduation rate**. Seven schools achieved **100 percent graduation rates** and another 14 had graduation rates **higher than 90 percent**.

Our high schools were recognized nationally as some of the **best in the United States**, and the U.S. Department of Education has honored four schools as **National Blue Ribbon Schools**.

Our teachers are winning **national awards** and are selected for prestigious scholarships and professional-development opportunities, and they are working with district staff to promote environmental awareness – with **impressive results**.

From increasing graduation rates to serving as national models of excellence, our students and staff are **achieving their dreams**.

# GCS HOLDS RECORD FOR MOST SCHOOLS WITH **100% GRADUATION RATE**

Graduation: It's the Super Bowl of public education, and for the sixth consecutive year, GCS is rising in the rankings.

The Class of 2014 achieved a record-high graduation rate of 88.5 percent, rising above the 2013 rate of 86.2 percent and exceeding the 2014 state average of 83.8 percent.

This year's graduation rate is 20 percent higher than in 2006, when the state began calculating graduation based on a four-year cohort. At that time, GCS' graduation rate was 74 percent, a difference of 14.5 percentage points from 2014. The four-year cohort essentially measures the number of students who entered ninth grade in 2010-11 and graduated four years later.

State Superintendent of Public Instruction June Atkinson honored 12 school districts and 43 high schools for having the highest four-year cohort graduation rates among all districts and schools in 2013-14. GCS had seven schools with a 100 percent graduation rate in 2014, the record for the state.

**GCS: 4-YEAR COHORT GRADUATION RATE**



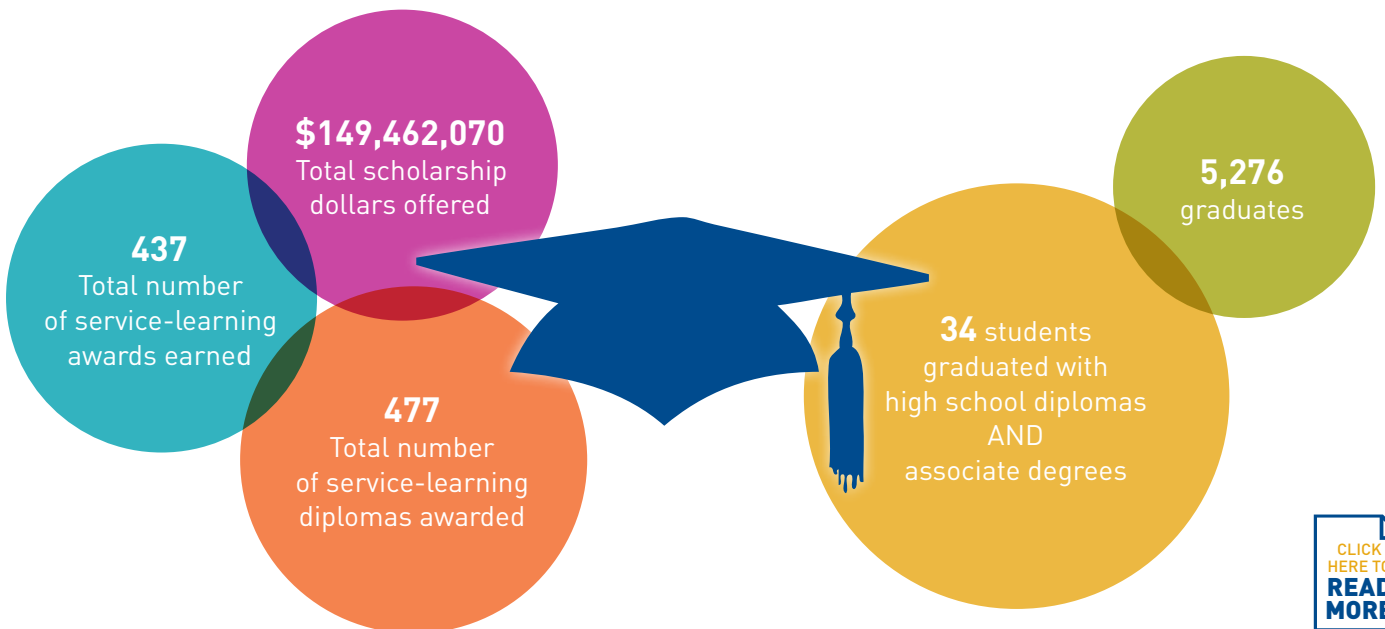
In 2014, seven GCS high schools achieved a 100% graduation rate:

- The Academy at Central
- The Academy at Smith
- The Middle College at Bennett
- Penn-Griffin School for the Arts
- The Early College at Guilford
- The Middle College at N.C. A&T
- Weaver Academy

- Andrews High (90%)
- Greensboro College Middle College (95.4%)
- Grimsley High (90.5%)
- The Middle College at GTCC-Greensboro (97.5%)
- The Middle College at GTCC-High Point (95%)
- The Middle College at GTCC-Jamestown (93.5%)
- Northeast High (90.6%)
- Northern High (98.8%)
- Northwest High (94.4%)
- Page High (90.5%)
- Ragsdale High (90.1%)
- Southern High (91.1%)
- Southeast High (94.2%)
- Southwest High (96%)

An additional 14 schools, including 10 traditional high schools, had graduation rates between 90 and 99%:

## CLASS OF 2014



[CLICK HERE TO READ MORE](#)





### ADDING UP TO SUCCESS

Class of 2014 graduate Akosua Bekoe has big dreams: she plans to study economics in college, and she can certainly do the math. She’s been in the United States for just seven years, scored a 2100 on the SAT, was accepted to 24 universities – including six of the eight Ivy League schools – and earned 22 scholarships totaling \$4.4 million.

That’s just one success story from the Class of 2014. The district’s 5,276 graduates earned a record \$149.4 million in scholarships, with Akosua leading the way.

Akosua’s family moved to the United States from Ghana seven years ago, choosing to trade their middle-class life in Africa for additional opportunities in America. She found those opportunities at the Early College at Guilford, a national model for Early College High Schools and the first of its kind in North Carolina. It’s also one of nine early and middle college high schools in Guilford County.

The school was created through a public-private partnership between Guilford County Schools and Guilford College to offer an intensive college-preparatory education to motivated high school students. Students take honors and Advanced Placement courses in ninth and tenth grades and college courses in eleventh and twelfth grades, most graduating with a high school diploma and two years of college credit.

**“I’VE REALLY HAD A LOT OF OPPORTUNITIES TO TAKE CLASSES THAT TRADITIONAL HIGH SCHOOLERS WOULDN’T BE ABLE TO TAKE,” SHE SAID OF HER EARLY COLLEGE EXPERIENCE. “I LOVE TO LEARN, SO THAT’S BEEN REALLY EXCITING TO ME.”**

Guilford College Literature Professor Caroline McAlister says Akosua exemplifies the passion for learning that she’s found to be common among Early College students.

“She isn’t just interested in getting good grades,” McAlister said. “She is interested in learning, in ideas and in getting a real education. She engages with the material. She possesses intellectual curiosity.”

That curiosity led Akosua to apply to dozens of colleges and universities, but there was a method to her application plans.

“Statistically, the more schools you apply to the more likely you are to get in,” she said. “It also offers you the chance to bargain with the schools for your financial aid package at peer institutions.”

Thanks to scholarships and waivers, applying to all those schools didn’t cost Akosua a dime. And her efforts paid off with acceptances from Princeton,

Dartmouth, Cornell, Brown, Penn, Duke, Northwestern, Vanderbilt, Vassar, Emory and more. Her final choice? Columbia University.

“I’m really drawn toward the city,” she said. “New York is just a mini-version of the world. It has so much diversity and so much opportunity.”

She plans to study economics and possibly East Asian studies with a pre-med track. Akosua would like to work with the economies of developing countries. She is particularly interested in micro-credit lending, a financial tool applauded for, among other things, empowering women to become small business owners in third-world countries.

Before she can take on global economic policy, however, Akosua will first have to conquer college life, this time all on her own. She was ready for the journey.

“This is why they gave up so much for me and my sisters and brother,” she said. “I have to make the most of every opportunity I’m given.”



**“THE WORLD NEEDS DREAMERS AND THE WORLD NEEDS DOERS. BUT ABOVE ALL, THE WORLD NEEDS DREAMERS WHO DO.”**

SARAH BAN BREATHNACH

# UPDATE: STRATEGIC PLAN 2016

In order to help our students achieve their dreams, GCS must have a clear vision and plan for success. In GCS, that vision means we will strive for excellence in academics, character and all that we do, and hold ourselves accountable to national standards of excellence.

In January 2013, GCS launched the Strategic Plan 2016: Achieving Educational Excellence - Personalizing Learning. The plan is a roadmap for the district's progress through 2016 and was created after input from hundreds of students, parents, staff and community members.

Strategic Plan 2016 Focus Areas	Goals	Strategies	Project Teams
I. Personalized Learning	16	34	9.5
II. Character, Service & Safety	8	17	6.5
III. Parent, Family & Community	12	23	6
IV. Educator & Organizational Excellence	8	25	7
<b>Total = 4</b>	<b>44</b>	<b>99</b>	<b>29</b>
<b>Current Status</b> *Due to budget constraints.		28 complete 20 on hold* 51 active	1 closed 1 complete 3 on hold* 2 combined 22 active

Strategic Plan 2016 includes four areas: Personalized Learning; Character, Service and Safety; Parent, Family and Community, and Educator and Organizational Excellence.

The plan has 44 goals and 99 strategies designed to help the district achieve excellence in all areas.

## 29 STRATEGIC PLAN STRATEGIES AND MAJOR INITIATIVES WILL LAUNCH IN 2014-15, INCLUDING:

### Area I: Personalized Learning

- I.14 Expand opportunities for students to earn course credits through virtual learning
- I.19 Allow students to earn high school elective credits while preparing for the ACT College Readiness exams
- I.25 Educate students and families about what college and career readiness means at various developmental stages and grade levels

### Area II: Character, Service and Safety

- II.3 Expand recognition of students and staff members who demonstrate excellence in character development

- II.4 Focus on the social and emotional well-being of students
- II.8 Expand prevention and intervention efforts regarding harassment, bullying and discrimination (in schools)
- II.14 Strengthen school and district capacity to mitigate, prevent, prepare for, respond to and recover from crises and emergencies

### Area III: Parent, Family and Community

- III.3 Develop a shared vision and model for parent and public engagement in GCS

- III.7 Develop more targeted communications and "self-service" options for parents and other key publics.
- III.11 Expand GCSTV programming to include more student-created productions and student-led newscasts

### Area IV: Educator and Organizational Excellence

- IV.12 Conduct an audit of facilities, identify and prioritize areas of need
- IV.20 Adopt a national model for performance excellence

# STRATEGIC PLAN **SUCCESSSES**

The strategies outlined in the strategic plan represent the priorities and major initiatives that will be underway by Dec. 31, 2016. It is updated every year as project teams work through the goals and develop plans.

In 2014, GCS celebrated the launch or expansion of several major strategic plan initiatives:

## **IMPROVING AFRICAN-AMERICAN MALE ACHIEVEMENT**

GCS is taking a system-wide look at improving outcomes for African-American males. This long-term effort requires a deeper understanding of racism, bias, and bigotry as well as the negative impact many “color-blind” policies and practices in schools can have on children of color and those who live in poverty. Since African-American males currently have the worst outcomes of any GCS students, the district is focusing time and resources on ways to best help this group of students.

Six schools continued to serve as pilots addressing achievement in early literacy during this second year of the African-American Male Initiative: Allen Jay, Fairview, Irving Park, Montlieu, Peck and Sedgefield Elementary schools. The district focused on African-American males in kindergarten through third grade.

There are two three-year goals; first, to ensure 90 percent of those students are on grade level. The second three-year goal is that 67.9 percent of third-grade students will perform at Level III or higher on the EOG reading test. These pilot schools have set individual K-3 goals for African-American male students.

At the end of year two of the initiative, none of the literacy pilot schools reached their three-year goals; the data showed that students made growth in reading, but did not make enough progress to reach grade level. At the end of the 2013-14 school year, 78% of K-3 students in GCS were proficient in literacy. And although the number of African-American males scoring proficient in literacy increased, only 68% of African-American males demonstrated the same skill level. This was the first time African-American males saw growth, with a four-percent increase. The pilot schools also increased the number of African-American males at or above goals by 12 percent.

## **ADVANTAGE MODEL MIDDLE SCHOOL**



Allen Jay Middle School – A Preparatory Academy started the 2014-15 school year in its new home: the renovated Allen Jay Middle School. This is the

school’s second year, and students and staff celebrated with a Mardi Gras party, complete with high-fives and cheers.

The unusual kickoff is all part of Allen Jay Middle’s mission, which combines a strong emphasis on leadership and college readiness with a high-energy teaching style using music and movement to keep students engaged. The school opened on the campus of Welborn Academy of Science and Technology in the 2013-14 school year while the Allen Jay Middle building was under renovation. This year, the school has fifth and sixth graders and ultimately, the school will serve 400 students in grades 5-8.

## **NEW LITERACY PROGRAMS**



In the 2014-15 school year, all GCS students in kindergarten through third grade are learning to read, spell and write with a new literacy program called Foundations. The program started in the lower grades in the 2013-14 school year and it expanded to third grade this year.

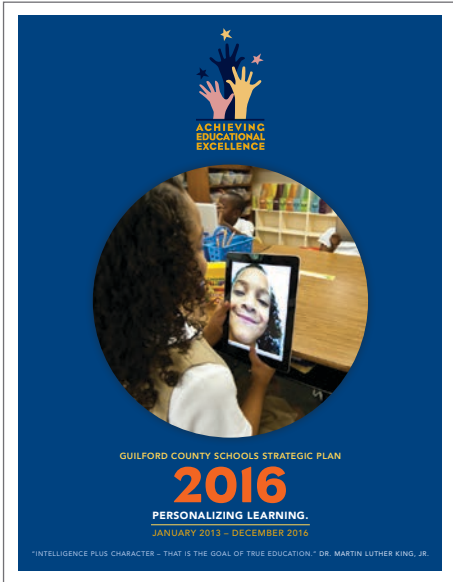
Foundations is a phonics, spelling and handwriting program. Students learn by mastering a series of skills, then building on those skills, including letter formation, phonics and writing. Linking these skills to vocabulary and comprehension allows students to connect meaning with words at a complex level.

Students in fourth and fifth grades also have a new tool to learn how to understand words. Words Their Way uses “word study” to teach students how to spell and understand meaning by grouping words into categories.

Each week, students are introduced to a new group of words with a specific feature. They may have the same vowel spelling patterns, prefixes and suffixes, or root or base word. Students do hands-on activities to sort words with the same or similar features into groups. They must decide whether the words fit into the groups based on the way they look or the way they sound – or both.

Just Words is the district’s program for middle school students who need extra help with reading and spelling. It’s an intervention program that helps students break words into parts to understand their meaning. Students are taught in small groups (15 or fewer) by a certified teacher. Lessons take place for 45

# STRATEGIC PLAN **SUCCESSES** (CONT)



minutes a day, five days a week, or 90 minutes a day, every other day.

## **SUMMER LITERACY CAMP**

Nearly 2,000 second- and third-grade students spent their summer mornings immersed in reading instruction, guided by GCS teachers and staff members, to help prepare them to be successful in their next grade level.

At one of those 14 summer camp locations, Falkener Elementary, students also had the chance to work one-on-one with a reading buddy, attend weekly field trips and gain additional skills at home, thanks to parent workshops provided by Guilford Parent Academy.

The pilot program at Falkener supplements the summer reading camps that began this year as part of the state's Read to Achieve law, which mandates that third graders who are not reading on grade level attend the camp and pass a reading test to be promoted to fourth grade. Thanks to a generous donation from Mike Weaver and Catherine Weaver, GCS also invited struggling second-graders who could benefit from the intensive reading instruction.

## **VIRTUAL LEARNING**

In 2014, GCS launched its first Virtual Learning courses designed specifically for middle school students, thanks to a grant from the U.S. Department of Education.

The courses are designed to accelerate student skills so they can take higher-level math courses in the following years. Students take the classes online, and at their own pace, in addition to regular math classes at school. Sixth- and seventh-grade students were invited to take one of two courses starting in January 2014: Bridge to Accelerated Math 7 for sixth graders, and Bridge to Common Core Math I for seventh graders.

Starting in February 2015, there will be two virtual course options for sixth and seventh graders, in addition to an option for eighth-grade students. These new "Overtime" courses are designed to introduce students to online learning, while teaching them strategies to succeed in a virtual learning environment. The course content focuses on the foundational standards that are being taught in their face-to-face math classes.





# DREAMING OF THE FUTURE

"IF YOU CAN DREAM IT, YOU CAN DO IT. ALWAYS REMEMBER THAT THIS WHOLE THING WAS STARTED WITH A DREAM AND A MOUSE."

WALT DISNEY

GCS is committed to **working from the inside out** to ensure our students have the tools they need to graduate on time, prepared for college or a career. That means focusing on the classroom, and putting **all the resources possible in our schools** so our students can not only dream of the future, they can also achieve it.

Our students, teachers and principals continue to reach for their dreams, embracing educational excellence while embracing the higher expectations of the Common Core.

After years of massive budget cuts, larger class sizes, inadequate instructional materials, outdated school library collections, leaky roofs and aging HVAC

systems, there comes a time when **doing more with less is simply not possible**. We are at that point; in fact, in many ways, we have already moved past it.

The only way to ensure academic success is to focus on what our students need and deserve. Achieving educational excellence for all children and young people requires teamwork, shared sacrifices and adequate funding.

But we can't do it alone. By setting aside differences and focusing on that goal, we can help GCS continue rising as one of the nation's leading school districts, a place where every child has an equal opportunity to **learn, achieve and excel**...and dream of the future.

# MAKING EVERY DOLLAR COUNT

Guilford County Schools takes its duty as a steward of taxpayer money very seriously. The 2016 Strategic Plan features several strategies aimed at improving efficiency across the district. That includes reviewing multiple data points and comparing our key performance indicators to other districts nationally, exploring ways to reward staff beyond financial incentives, increasing energy savings in facility operations and construction, and following a modified zero-based budgeting approach.

But even as we strive to use every dollar carefully, those dollars are disappearing. GCS had to cut or redirect about \$17.97 million in an effort to balance the 2014-15 budget, which totals about \$686.6 million.

The Guilford County Board of Commissioners provided an increase in funding for operating costs and capital outlay, but there was still a \$24 million gap between the Board of Education's request and the dollars the county will provide.

The district has lost more than \$46 million in state funding since 2008, including an additional \$7.4 million in cuts and increased costs for GCS this year. That's led to cuts of more 409 positions, including 186 classroom teachers and 83 assistants, facilitators and other school-based positions. Fewer teachers have meant more overcrowded classrooms and fewer course offerings.

In addition, years of local cuts to capital funds have forced the district to delay critical maintenance projects across GCS, including replacing leaky roofs and aging HVAC systems, as well as cutting regular paint and paving projects, which protect facilities from bigger issues down the road. Facilities employees have identified more than \$1 billion in capital needs across the district.

Some of the reductions and redirections approved for 2014-15 include:

- Reducing or redirecting **\$3.6 million** from central office divisions and departments
- Eliminating 15 high school graduation coach positions, which will save **\$1.1 million**
- Eliminating 7.5 high school testing coordinator positions in order to save **\$271,040**
- Reducing magnet school transportation costs by **\$634,599** as part of a multi-year phase-in process
- Reducing student accountability dollars allocated to schools by **\$600,000**
- Modifying the allocation formula for middle and high school reading teachers in order to save **\$202,800**

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## 1/4-CENT SALES TAX



Despite record voter turnout in Guilford County, the measure to increase the sales tax by a quarter cent was defeated in November 2014, with 43 percent "For" the increase and 57 percent "Against."

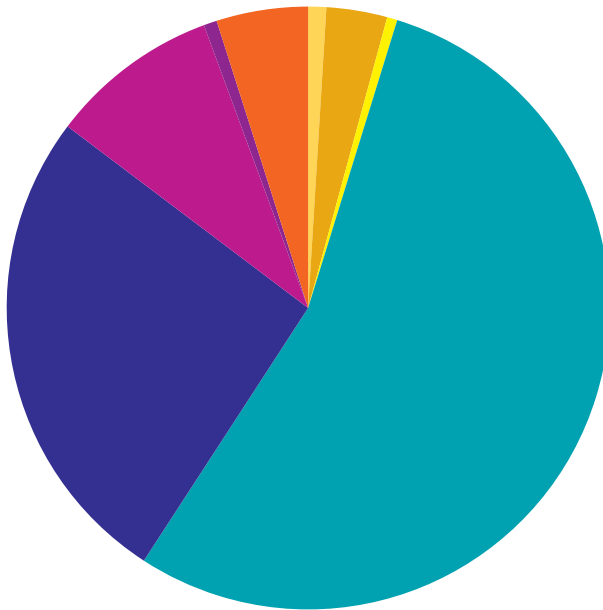
The vote followed budget discussions by the Guilford County Board of Education and Board of County Commissioners, who voted to put the ¼-cent sales tax increase on the ballot. County Commissioners committed to use the money for public education when they voted to put the referendum on the ballot. The Board

of Education voted in July to use 60 percent of the funds in the classroom and 40 percent for facility repairs and maintenance.

The proposal would have brought in \$14 million a year for public schools. Although it is too early to predict how the loss of the ¼-cent sales will impact the district, if current funding trends at the state and local level continue, GCS will likely have to identify further cuts in the 2015-16 budget.

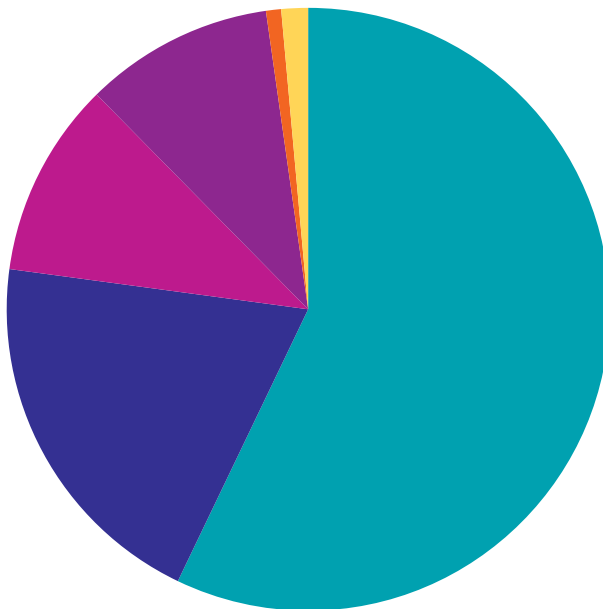
# GCS BUDGET

## REVENUES/SOURCES



- State \$373,499,974
- County Appropriation \$179,360,398
- Federal \$62,398,839
- Other Local \$4,878,743
- School Food Service \$33,705,175
- ACES \$6,661,863
- Local Special Revenue \$22,364,947
- Capital Outlay \$3,770,000
- Total \$686,639,939**

## EXPENDITURES/USES



- Salaries \$392,177,477
- Employee Benefits \$137,475,088
- Purchased Services \$72,042,257
- Supplies & Materials \$69,627,171
- Capital Outlay \$5,528,152
- Transfers \$9,789,794
- Total \$ 686,639,939**

# BUILDING A **FUTURE**



In 2008, Guilford County voters approved \$457 million in school construction bonds. To date, more than \$350 million has been spent or is currently under contract. By January 2015, GCS completed a total of 49 projects from the 2008 school bonds, including three major projects that wrapped up in 2014: the new Simkins Elementary School, major renovations to Allen Jay Middle School and renovations to the old cafeteria at Grimsley High.

Guilford County Schools selects construction and repair projects by priority; however, the Guilford County Board of Commissioners has to approve projects paid for by bond money before work can begin.

Guilford County Commissioners decided to use \$17 million from the federal American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) in place of local dollars approved by voters. Those funds, called Qualified School Construction Bonds (QSCB), had to be used for specific projects.

GCS used the QSCB funds at Allen Jay Middle Schools to renovate the rock gym and at Ragsdale High for a new roof. The money also paid for Grimsley High's new cafeteria addition and the conversion of the old cafeteria into classrooms.

GCS also received an additional \$16.8 million in QSBC funds for maintenance projects. Those dollars paid for new heating and cooling systems at 16 schools, roof repairs or replacement at 17 schools, and window/door projects at 17 schools.

The vast majority of bond projects came in on time and under budget, allowing the Guilford County Board of Education to reallocate **\$22.5 million** to new projects across the district.

## NEW BOND PROJECTS COMPLETED IN 2014 AS A RESULT OF COST SAVINGS

Heating and cooling systems: Andrews High

Roof repairs/replacement: SCALE Greensboro, Newcomers School, Smith High, Southern Elementary, Aycock Middle, Sedgfield Elementary, Welborn Academy of Science and Technology, Penn-Griffin School for the Arts.

Athletics: High Point Central High, Northeast High, Page High, Western High

## NEW PROJECTS IN PROCESS AS A RESULT OF COST SAVINGS

Heating and Cooling Systems: Allen Middle, Archer Elementary, Aycock Middle, Hampton Academy, Mendenhall Middle, Page High



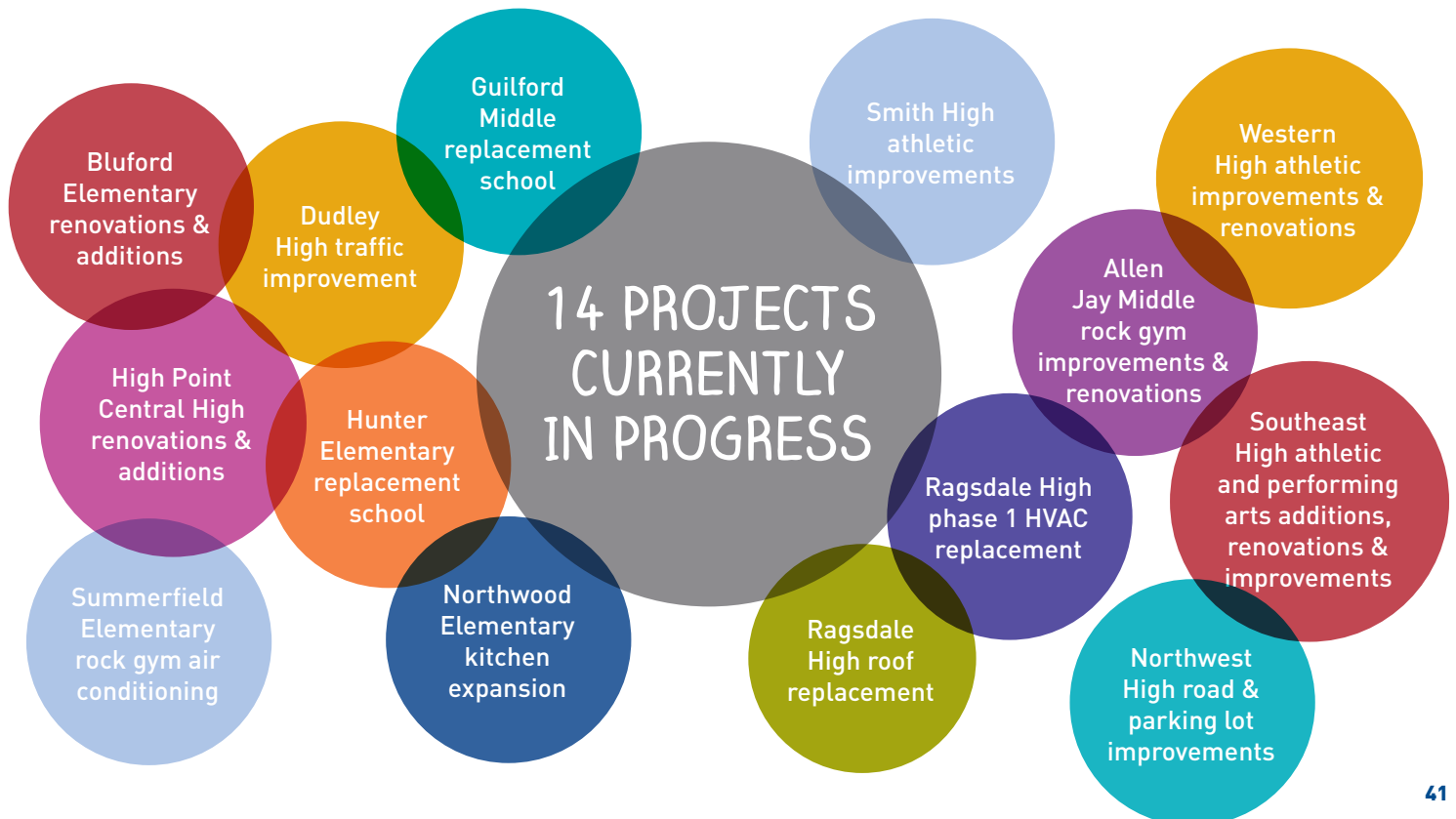
# 2014 CONSTRUCTION PROJECTS

2008 School Construction  
Bonds – Spending  
Through 2014

Construction Contracts  
**\$279,365,701**

Design Contracts  
**\$25,139,585**

Total  
**\$304,505,286**



## BUILDING A REAL DREAM



Construction projects at Guilford County Schools also serve as real-world learning opportunities for a number of students.

Samet/SRS earned the contract for several district projects and partnered with GCS to teach interested students about construction careers and give them valuable, hands-on business experiences. They hosted job-shadowing days for middle school students and presented lectures and interactive experiences to high school classes. Samet even hired two GCS students as interns who got on-the-job training working on the new Simkins Elementary School, which opened in August of 2014.

Jordan Garner, a recent Grimsley graduate, did so well as a Samet intern that the company hired him as a part-time employee while he works toward a degree at GTCC.

“During the internship I was able to see first-hand what it is like working on the business side of construction,” says Garner. “My internship encouraged me and has caused me to strive for higher goals than I had previously set for myself.”

Aisha Deskins is currently a senior at Southwest High, and may return to Samet this summer for another internship.

“I can truly say that through this program I have gained a mentor,” says Deskins. “He has taught me that going to college and getting a degree can allow me to be the person calling the shots. I truly thank everyone at Samet/SRS for taking the time out of their busy schedules to teach me things I never knew or knew I needed to know.”

Samet plans to continue the internship program, allowing other GCS students to have this priceless experience.

“MY INTERNSHIP ENCOURAGED ME AND HAS CAUSED ME TO STRIVE FOR HIGHER GOALS THAN I HAD PREVIOUSLY SET FOR MYSELF.”

JORDAN GARNER

# THE POWER OF PUBLIC OPINION

It's important to know what our parents and community think about GCS as we work to achieve educational excellence. It's also another way we learn what issues are most important to our families and community. We use this information to determine how to align resources and whether we are succeeding in meeting several Strategic Plan goals.

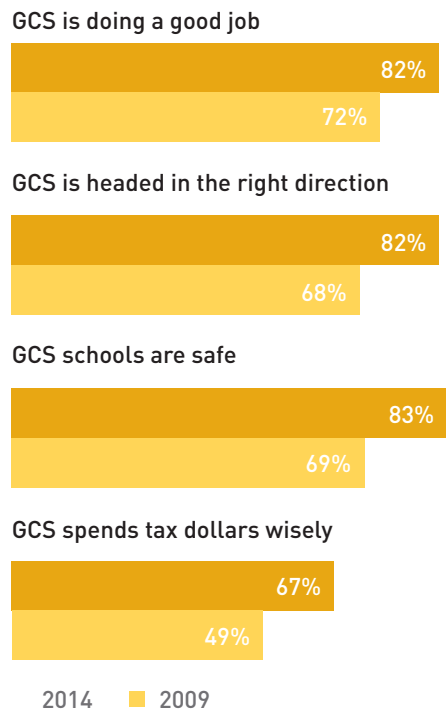
GCS has conducted two statistically valid telephone polls each year for the past six years, one with parents and one with community members. Polls are conducted in both English and Spanish, and are paid for by Guilford Education Alliance.

The results have improved or held steady each year in almost all of our measures, with large positive shifts when we compare the first poll in 2009 to the last in the fall of 2014.

The results also show that taxpayers and other community members need more first-hand experiences in our schools so they can better judge how well our students and educators are performing.

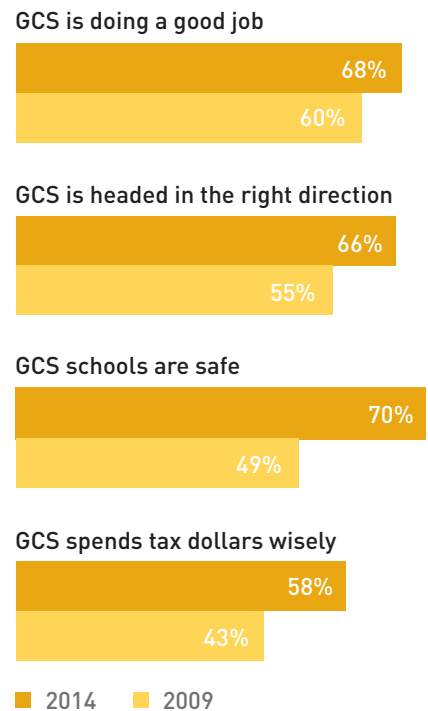
## PARENT RESULTS

Percentage of respondents who agree or strongly agree:



## COMMUNITY RESULTS

Percentage of respondents who agree or strongly agree:



# BOARD OF EDUCATION



## DISTRICT 1

Christopher Gillespie

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## DISTRICT 7

Rebecca M. Buffington

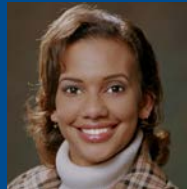
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