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GCS Unveils Strategic Plan Outlining District Goals *Ignite Learning includes six goals to be reached by 2022*

Greensboro, N.C. – Superintendent Sharon L. Contreras unveiled the district’s new strategic plan, *Ignite Learning*, at the Guilford County Board of Education meeting Thursday. The plan streamlines goals and priorities and provides more accountability.

The plan includes six goals to be met by 2022. They are:

- Goal I: To increase the percentage of students who will read proficiently by the end of third grade to 63 percent (currently 53.4 percent).
- Goal II: To increase the percentage of incoming sixth-graders passing N.C. Math 1 (Algebra 1) with a C or better by the end of their ninth grade year to 75 percent (currently 69.8 percent).
- Goal III: To increase the percentage of graduating seniors who complete a rigorous career pathway to 35 percent (currently 28.6 percent).
- Goal IV: To increase by 50 percent the number of schools that exceed growth (currently 32.5 percent).
- Goal V: To decrease the achievement gap between black and Latino students and their white peers by 7 percentage points (currently the gap ranges from 25-37 percent in reading and math).
- Goal VI: To increase organizational efficiency and effectiveness to better support student learning.

Upon her arrival to the district, Contreras sought input and ideas from more than 2,000 parents, students, school volunteers, educators, business and community leaders and elected officials. Following those visits, Contreras established a Transition Team, which identified long-standing challenges and inequities, as well as successes. The team’s work assisted in the development of the new strategic plan, *Ignite Learning*, which focuses all resources in the district on the core business of teaching and learning.

The district will better prepare students for post-secondary success by strengthening Career and Technical Education programs and by forming more public-private partnerships with businesses and universities.

To eradicate achievement and preparation gaps, the district will provide identify and prepare more students of color for gifted, honors and Advanced Placement/International Baccalaureate and dual enrollment classes, as well as other enrichment opportunities. There will also be an increased focus on early literacy, in addition to other measures.

Steps have already been taken toward improving operational efficiency. Several district and school board policies and protocols have been reviewed by credible and experienced outside experts. The results of a comprehensive study of all facilities and renovating facilities for 21st century learning will also be a key driver in improving productivity.

The district also prioritizes the need to recruit, develop and retain a diverse and culturally proficient and high-performing workforce. There will be an emphasis on teacher recruitment and retention, increased professional learning opportunities and compensation for those who perform better and lead or teach in high-needs schools.

In addition to guiding the district's work forward, Contreras says *Ignite Learning* conveys the hope of meaningful change and the promise of better and more equitable learning and life outcomes for all students.

"We're excited about igniting learning in GCS, and we hope the community will be too," she says. "This plan represents only a beginning. We are focusing our limited resources on our core business of teaching and learning and seeking ways to improve operational efficiencies so we can invest more in our students."

About Guilford County Schools

Guilford County Schools, the third largest school district in North Carolina, the 47th largest of more than 14,000 in the United States, and serves more than 73,000 PK-12 students at 126 schools. With approximately 10,000 employees, GCS works in partnership with parents, businesses, colleges and the community to deliver an education that connects student interests and skills with the careers and economy of our future here and around the world. We provide educational choices to meet individual student needs in a culturally diverse citizenship and new opportunities to help our students Soar to Greatness. For more information, visit the district's website at www.gcsnc.com.