

The Strategic Plan for the Wake County Public School System

Vision 2016

Joint Letter from Superintendent and Board of Education Chair (to be drafted for final plan)

Introduction

The Wake County Public School System (WCPSS) is the largest district in North Carolina and the 17th largest in the country with 165 schools serving over 147,000 students. The school system has experienced significant growth in its student population over the past decade. Approximately 50,000 new students have enrolled in the system during the past 10 years and the minority populations in the system have increased to the point that today the majority of students are minorities.

Today we are at a moment of opportunity and challenge in WCPSS. High community expectations, new federal and state legislation, the rapid growth and use of technology and the lingering economic challenges in our country and state are all impacting our school district. But the Wake County Public School System is a strong district that enjoys tremendous support from the community, its parents and its employees. It provides an excellent education to the majority of its students and has done so for many years.

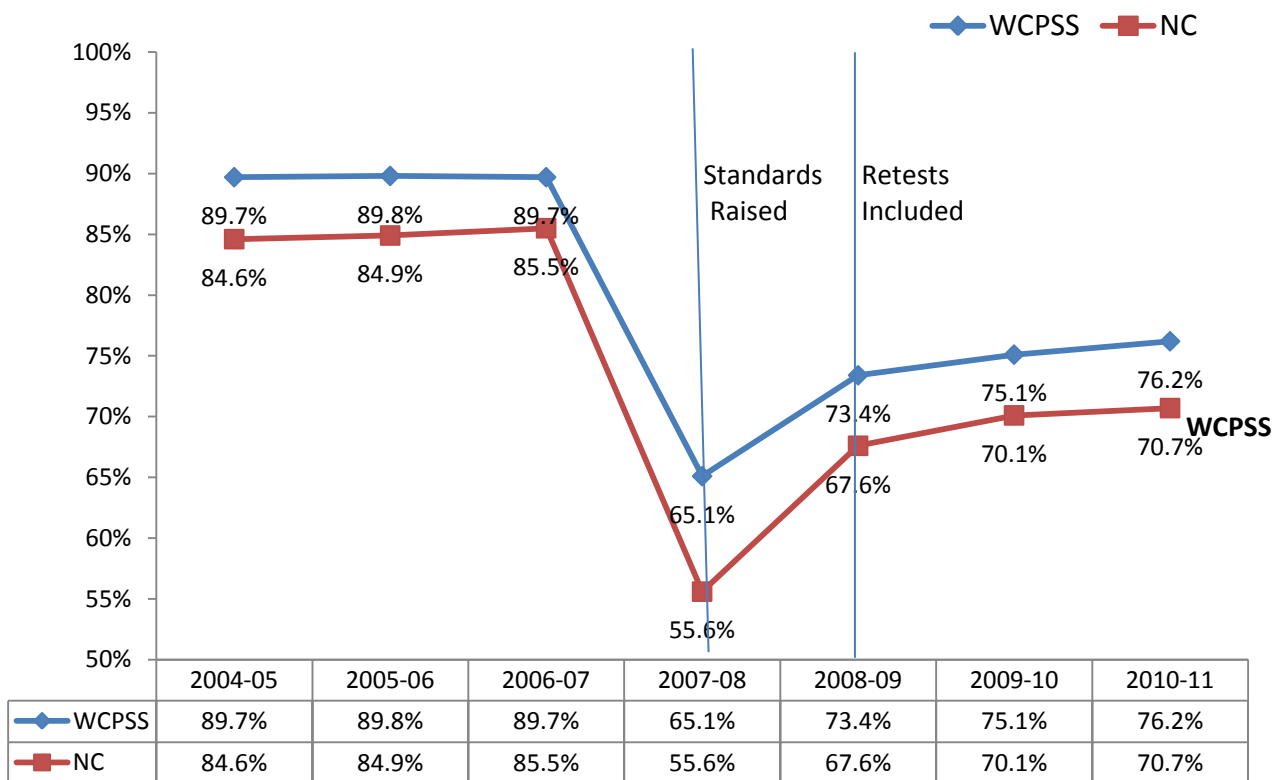
We have the opportunity to build on our strengths and harness the support of our community to move the district to the next level. We must take advantage of the advances in technology to ensure a system of innovative schools in which teachers, principals, parents, staff, policy leaders and the entire community collectively focus all energy, efforts, and resources on building a 21st century culture of achievement. A culture where students come first, talent is nurtured, excellence is the norm, and opportunities are made equal. A culture where success is measured by the steady improvement in the effectiveness of teaching and learning in the classroom and accelerated student achievement. A system in which all students succeed, families have many quality choices, the staff is supported, adults are held accountable and a world class, technologically advanced operation based on continuous improvement supports the entire operation.

We cannot do this alone. We need the involvement of our families and our community partners. As parents, as educators and as a community we all share the responsibility for our successful students and our struggling students. We must work collectively to ensure that our students have the skills and tools to succeed in life. We must do all we can to prepare our students for the ever changing, competitive global workplace they will enter.

Student Achievement in WCPSS – Where We Are

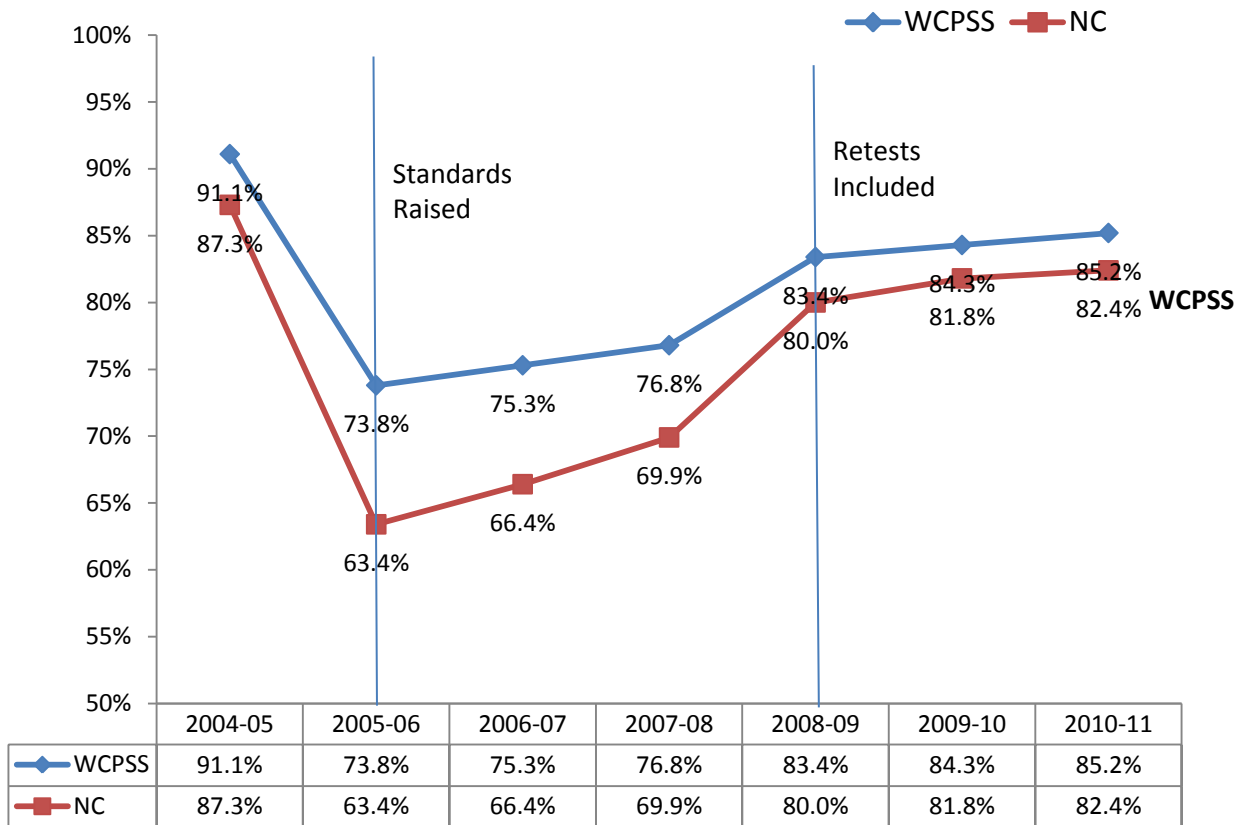
Most large, diverse districts that undergo the increased populations of students WCPSS has experienced over the last decade have also experienced a decline in student achievement. But WCPSS has consistently had higher proficiency rates in reading and math than the state of North Carolina over time. The positive difference for reading has fluctuated slightly over time, with an advantage of about five percentage points each of the last three years. Proficiency has been increasing each year in both WCPSS and the State since standards were raised in 2007-08.

EOG Reading Proficiency for Students in Grades 3-8 in North Carolina and WCPSS Over Seven Years



In mathematics, the pattern is slightly different than in reading. WCPSS has consistently had higher percentages of students scoring proficient over time, but the size of the advantage has been decreasing since standards were raised in 2005-06. Both WCPSS and the State have had increasing percentages of students reaching proficiency each year since the standards were raised in 2005-06, but the state saw steeper rises than did WCPSS over the past several years. WCPSS currently has 2.8% more students scoring proficient than in the state overall.

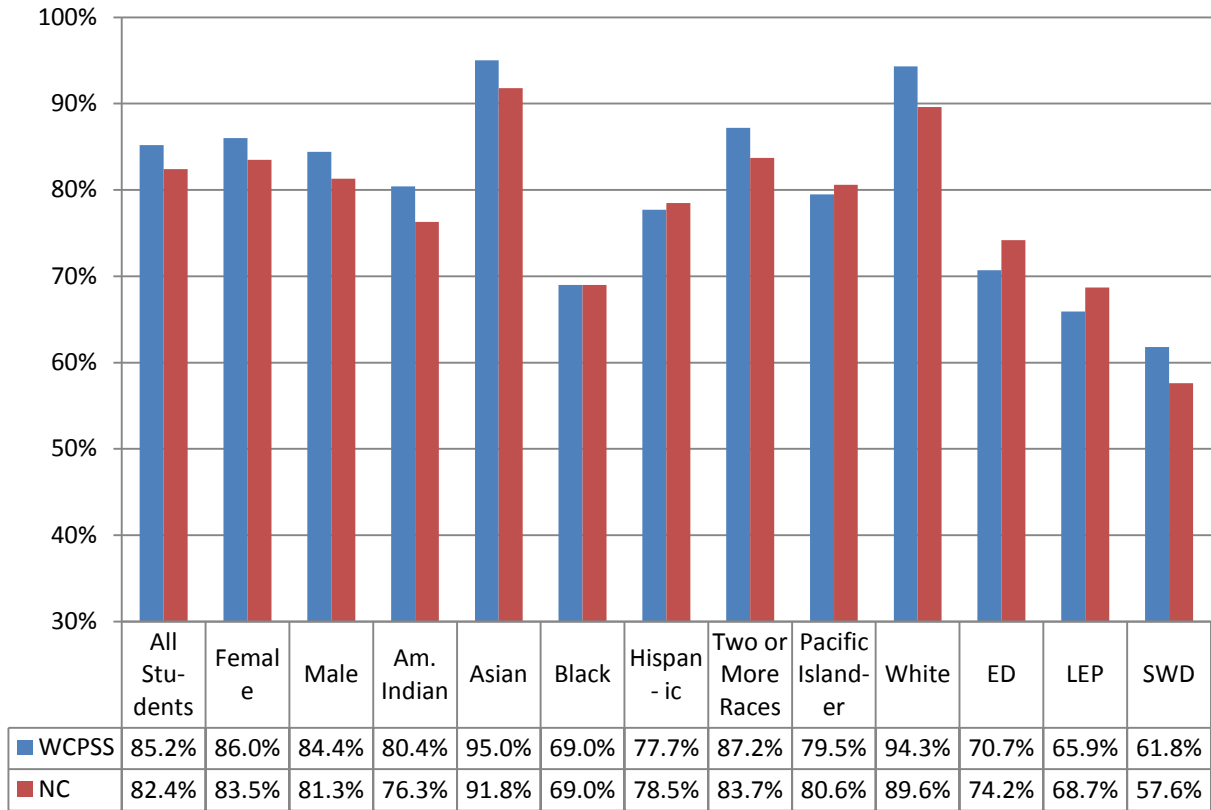
EOG Math Proficiency for Students in Grades 3-8 in North Carolina and WCPSS Over Seven Years



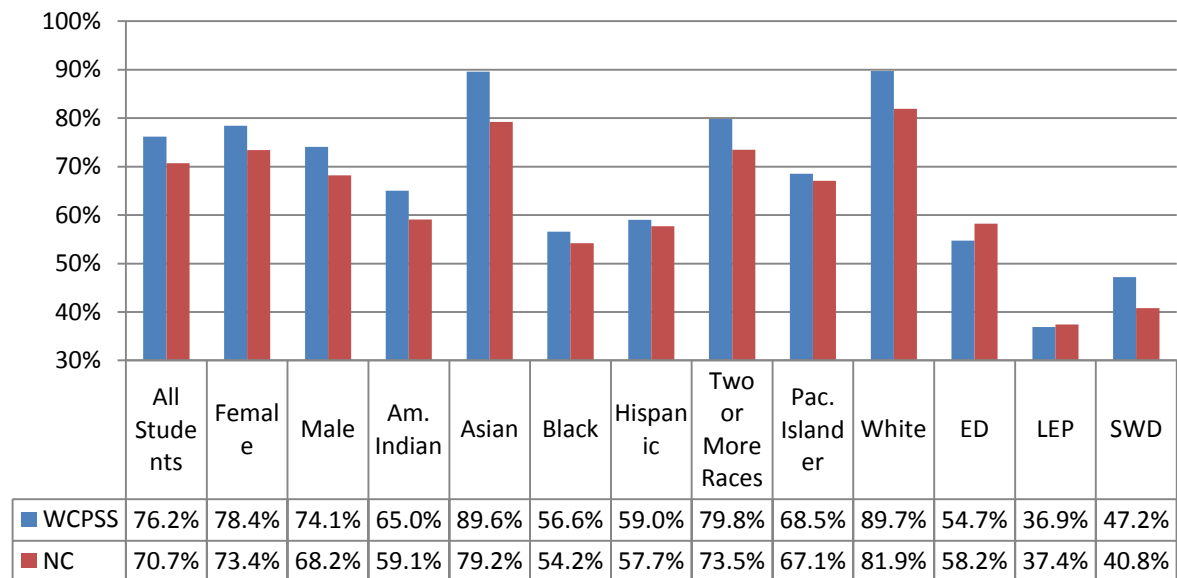
For most subgroups, math proficiency percentages are higher for WCPSS than for the state of North Carolina. However, proficiency rates for Black students are equal (at 69%) for both groups, and proficiency rates in the State are slightly higher than in WCPSS for Pacific Islanders, Economically Disadvantaged, and Limited English Proficient students. Reading result patterns are slightly better, but the state still has higher percentages of students proficient for Economically Disadvantaged and Limited English Proficient students.

When these results are provided on a school by school basis it is also clear that there is inconsistency in results across schools at all levels. Many schools did not achieve AYP in 2010-2011, generally because some subgroups are performing less well than others. While many sub-groups (especially students who qualify for free and reduced lunch, Black and Hispanic students) made gains in many areas, there continues to be a large gap between their performance and that of comparison groups.

Disaggregated WCPSS and NC Proficiency Rates on EOG (Grades 3-8) for 2010-11 in Math



Disaggregated WCPSS and NC Proficiency Rates on EOG for Grades 3-8 for 2010-11 in Reading



While WCPSS has more positive proficiency rates than the state overall, achievement gaps across subgroups are an issue, and these gaps have been persistent over time. Only the gap between Asian and White students is in the acceptable difference range of ten percentage points or less (as recommended by Ron Edmunds years ago). As shown below, when examined in terms of proficiency, gaps between economically advantaged and disadvantaged and White and Asian versus other minority groups have decreased slightly over time, but are still substantial. To close these gaps down to five percentage points would take at least 15 years at the present rate of improvement (and considerably longer for Black-White gaps). If examined in terms of scale score gaps, little improvement is evident. The groups that show higher proficiency continue to score about nine scale score points greater than the other groups. While we want all students to grow over time, we need our lower achieving groups to grow at a faster rate.

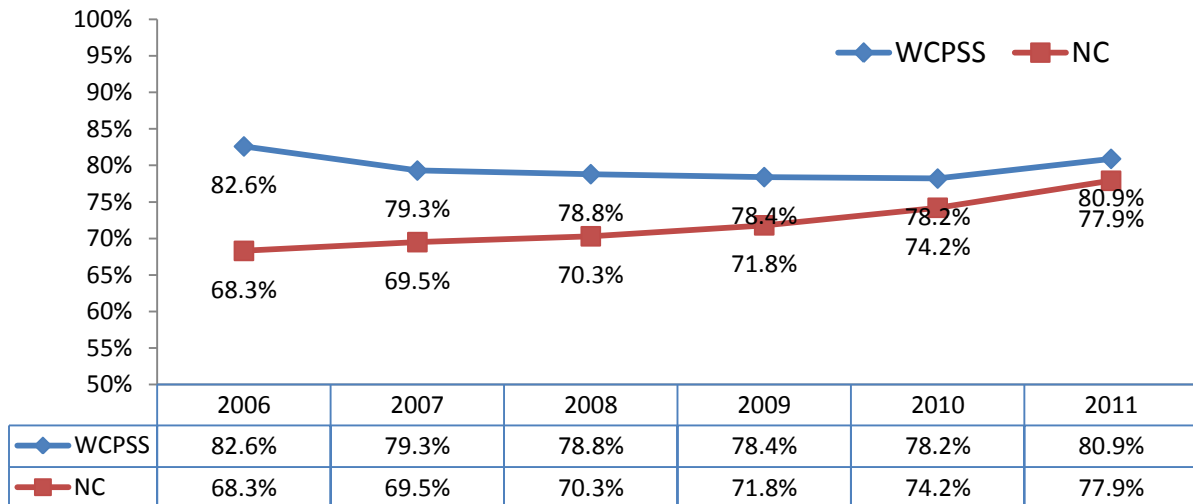
Summary of Achievement Gap Trends based on Grade 5 Mathematics EOG Assessment

Black-White Gap	2006-07	2007-08	2008-09	2009-10	2010-11	Trend
Gap in Scale Score Points	-10 points	-9 points	-9 points	-10 points	-10 points	→
Gap in % Proficient	-37 %age points	-34 %age points	-31 %age points	-31 %age points	-33 %age points	↓
Hispanic-White Gap	2006-07	2007-08	2008-09	2009-10	2010-11	
Gap in Scale Score Points	-8 points	-8 points	-8 points	-8 points	-7points	↓
Gap in % Proficient	-29 %age points	-28 %age points	-27 %age points	-25 %age points	-22 %age points	↓
Asian-White Gap	2006-07	2007-08	2008-09	2009-10	2010-11	
Gap in Scale Score Points	3 points	2 points	3 points	2 points	3 points	→
Gap in % Proficient	4 %age points	1 %age point	2 %age points	2 %age points	3 %age points	↓
ED-non-ED Gap	2006-07	2007-08	2008-09	2009-10	2010-11	
Gap in Scale Score Points	-9 points	-9 points	-9 points	-9 points	-9 points	→
Gap in % Proficient	-34 %age points	-30 %age points	-28 %age points	-29 %age points	-25 %age points	↓

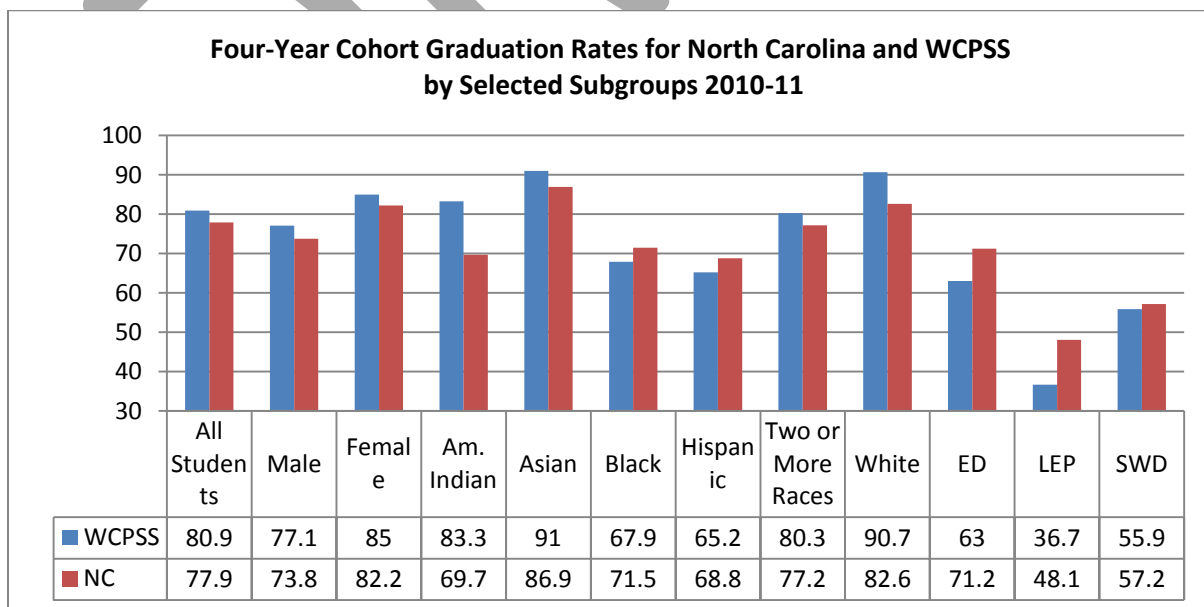
WCPSS Graduation Rates Compared to North Carolina

WCPSS had a four-year graduation rate of 80.9% for the four-year cohort that was to graduate in spring 2010-11. This is among the highest graduation rates for large diverse districts. WCPSS has also consistently had higher graduation rates than North Carolina overall over time. However, as with math, North Carolina rates are increasing more quickly than those in WCPSS, so challenges remain.

Four-Year Cohort Graduation Rates over Time: WCPSS and North Carolina



Disaggregated graduation rates also show persistent gaps in graduation rates between subgroups that need to be addressed and improved. While overall the graduation rate for the district has risen for the first time in 3 years, it is still the case that a smaller percentage of African American, Hispanic and students who qualify for free and reduced lunch graduate in WCPSS schools than is true for the state as a whole and for other large districts.



We have the opportunity to build on the positive results the district has achieved and extend those results to each subgroup of students to better meet our newly adopted Mission of providing a world-class education that equips all students with the knowledge and expertise to become successful, productive citizens.

Our Guiding Principles – Where We Are Going

WCPSS is operating today without the benefit of a comprehensive strategic plan based on a common vision and a clear set of priorities. As part of new Superintendent Tata's 90 day plan of entry, the Board of Education recently adopted a unified Mission, Vision and set of Core Beliefs for the district that can form the foundation of a focused strategic plan.

Mission, Vision and Core Beliefs

The Wake County Board of Education formally adopted the following statement of its mission, vision and core beliefs at its March 1, 2011 meeting. The school board and superintendent collaborated as a unified governance team to develop the new statement during a February 25 retreat.

Mission

The Wake County Public School System will significantly increase achievement for all students by providing a world-class education that equips students with the knowledge and expertise to become successful, productive citizens.

Vision

WCPSS will serve as the national standard for increasing student achievement in the 21st century. Highly effective teachers and principals are empowered to raise the achievement of all children and will provide students with high quality classroom instruction that fosters intellectual development.

WCPSS recognizes children have different needs and is committed to ensuring all are challenged to reach their full potential. Students will graduate in increasingly high percentages and compete successfully as productive citizens. WCPSS will continue this community's proud tradition of education leadership and academic excellence with a proactive school staff, effectively supported by the Board of Education and Central Services.

Core Beliefs

1. All children, regardless of socio-economic circumstances, can be high achieving students.
2. Academic achievement gaps can and will be eliminated by aggressively challenging students at all achievement levels.
3. Highly effective principals and teachers are the key to improving growth in student achievement.

4. The Board of Education and Central Services promote an environment of continuous improvement that results in a high performing organization and is 100% focused on student achievement.
5. Supportive and passionate parents, families, student mentors, and other members of the multi-cultural Wake County community are active participants in the education of our students.

Theory of Action

Along with these important overarching beliefs, the Board of Education is reviewing adoption of a Theory of Action, their view about how the district will carry out the important daily work of improving student achievement at the school level. Called *Managed Performance Empowerment (MPE)*, the theory of action grants flexibility and decision-making authority to schools based on successful performance. From a school support perspective, we will measure our school performance based first and foremost on student achievement and place schools along a continuum of performance to best target our support and resources as a district.

At one end of the MPE continuum will be a change in the current governance structure so that school-based management and decision making is diminished and district control, monitoring and oversight of instructional practice is increased to better support our low-performing schools. At the other end of the continuum will be empowerment and high degrees of flexibility to our high-performing schools. This will encourage all schools to assume full ownership for student performance, exhibit better decision-making at all levels, establish more innovative and flexible approaches for resolving problems and challenges, and ultimately to continuously improve within a strong, performance-oriented culture.

Insert a graphic of the MPE continuum

Framework for Success

The Wake County Public School System (WCPSS) is committed to equity and excellence for all students. Equity recognizes that our students have different needs and commits to ensuring that all children are challenged to meet their full potential. Excellence is achieved through high standards that ensure that all students grow to reach their highest levels year after year and are college or career ready as high school graduates. In order to accomplish this, measurements are needed to monitor system progress in promoting equity and excellence.

The Seven Keys to College or Career Readiness establishes the trajectory that will ensure a clear path for student success and a guide for staff and parents to ensure all students achieve at these high levels. The goal of the Seven Keys is to set advanced rather than proficient standards and to ensure that results are not predictable for any group. This raises the bar to high levels, with the expectation that many of our students are going to far exceed this high bar – the intent is not to limit any student’s level of achievement. Importantly, parents will have a clear understanding of what their student must achieve to be college or career prepared at the end of 12th grade.

Seven Keys to College or Career Readiness

1. Advanced Reading in Grades K-2 (102+ on Reading Curriculum Based Measurement)
2. Advanced Reading and Math in Grade 5 (3 or 4 on EOG, 70% math Education Value Added Assessment System or higher)
3. Algebra 1 with “C” or higher by Grade 8
4. Algebra 2 and Geometry by Grade 11 with “C” or higher
5. All students enrolled in at least one Honors, AP, or IB class or at least two Career Technical Education (CTE) courses before graduation
6. Target of 1650 SAT, 24 ACT or higher
7. Graduation

WCPSS has made great strides to provide a rigorous and high-quality education for every student. But we must do more to ensure students are learning to read at an earlier age, more students are taking rigorous and challenging courses, and more students are being provided with opportunities to succeed at higher levels than ever before. This will be accomplished through the implementation of the initiatives in this strategic plan that promote equity and excellence by creating the organizational culture, the conditions, and the support systems to ensure our students’ success. WCPSS recognizes that there is more work to be done to eliminate the achievement gap and raise the academic achievement for all.

Fostering an organizational culture of high expectations for all students that is pervasive throughout WCPSS requires the commitment of staff, parents, and the community to equitable practices in classrooms and workplaces. Creating this culture also requires three critical conditions to encourage, support, and nurture equity and excellence—high expectations, positive relationships, and cultural competence. To create and sustain these positive conditions, we need to establish comprehensive support systems in each of our focus areas in this plan to help all students, staff, and parents learn and grow at the personal, professional, and institutional levels.

Growth and transformation at the personal, professional, and institutional levels will not take place without ongoing, deliberate efforts to build the capacity of staff, students, and parents through targeted professional development and a system of monitoring, continuous improvement and accountability. In order to maintain focus and momentum in this important work, measurements will be identified and employed to monitor system progress in promoting equity and excellence.

The next phase of our work in leading systemic change is focusing our efforts to ensure equity and excellence for all students so that academic success is not predicted by race, ethnicity, gender, socioeconomic status, language proficiency, or disability. These efforts will address the challenging issues that limit students from excelling at the highest academic levels. We are committed to the fundamental belief that this is possible.

WCPSS Focus Areas

WCPSS will align its planning and core business practices along five focus areas which reflect our core beliefs and will provide important guidance toward the vision in a time of continued enrollment growth, changing demographics, and elevated academic standards. These are:

1. Provide all students with extensive opportunities, high expectations, and support in achieving continuous high academic success
2. Eliminate achievement gaps by challenging students at all levels
3. Recruit, select, develop, and retain highly-effective personnel to provide the best educational opportunities and services for all students
4. Establish a supportive, positive and effective district climate and culture singularly focused on the improvement of student achievement, using a continuous improvement model, with fiscal transparency and accountability
5. Engage family and community members in strong relationships and meaningful opportunities to increase participation, trust, and shared responsibility for student success

Preparing Students for the Future, Today

Focus Area 1: High Academic Achievement for all Students

Overview

The Wake County Public School System's core business is learning and teaching. We are charged with providing each child in our school system with a sound, basic education. Focusing upon the results – or learning – supports our purposeful change into an accountable, learning organization for the current century. WCPSS is a school system that constantly relies on data, our community, outside experts, and parents and business volunteers to continuously improve our school system. This will help us realize our vision of having all students graduate on time, with career readiness skills and the knowledge and expertise to become successful, productive citizens.

The Board of Education's vision and mission requires WCPSS to provide all its students with a world class education. Critical to achieving our goal is the systematic and systemic monitoring of student performance of every student in every school so that student achievement is high.

WCPSS will need to continue successful programs and apply them consistently across the district. Ineffective programs must be retired and replaced with new initiatives that increase student achievement. While some students will always need extra help, we must also work to accelerate academic progress and close the achievement gap. We believe that students will rise to meet, and often surpass, high expectations. So we must set high expectations, and increase them over time. We must align all of our tests, measurements, classroom practice and school management to focus on maximizing student achievement. Performance management is closely aligned with student achievement. By

improving the performance of all employees using fair and rigorous standards, we will create a cycle of continuous learning and improvement throughout the district.

Strategies

1. Provide rigorous, relevant curriculum
2. Deliver high quality differentiated instruction
3. Administer and utilize valid assessment data to guide instruction

Key Processes/Action Steps

- **Focus on research-based differentiated instruction**
The WCPSS Differentiation Initiative is aligned with the strategic goal of systematic and systemic monitoring of student performance of every student so that student achievement is high. The coordinating teacher for Differentiated Instruction will:
 - Develop and deliver online professional development modules of learning for differentiated instruction
 - Provide ongoing training and support for school based Differentiation Champions to manage school wide implementation of on line modules
 - Provide a continuum of professional knowledge for differentiated instructional practice for all certified teachers
- **Develop system-wide structure to support literacy instruction K-8**
 - Implement use of Daily Five and Café as a structure for literacy instruction
 - Implement the use of Writers Workshop district-wide
- **Implement universal screening in reading K-5**
 - Use Aimsweb or mClass for universal screening and progress monitoring at all elementary schools
 - Provide on-going support for implementation through identified school contacts
- **Provide professional development for math teachers in grades 6-12 focusing on the investigative approach to teaching mathematics**
 - Provide training for middle and high school teachers in MathMatters and Algebra I Concepts
 - Teachers will be required to use hands-on activities and manipulatives that make mathematics more accessible to students. Through these activities, students explore mathematical concepts in an investigative manner, creating meaningful connections between the physical world and abstract mathematical ideas
 - Provide teachers with resources and sample lessons
- **Implement coaching models in the areas of mathematics, literacy, and SIOP, K-12**
 - Develop a system-wide expectation for instructional coaching
 - Develop and implement a Rubric as an evaluation tool to increase the fidelity of the implementation of the WCPSS coaching model

- **Expand world languages instruction in middle schools**
 - WCPSS offers instruction in languages other than English in all of its high schools. Current research on second language acquisition indicates that students reach higher levels of proficiency when they engage in a long, articulated sequence of study. To meet the increased demand for world language instruction at an earlier age, WCPSS will provide funding for world language programs in all of its middle schools. Both central and regional Professional Learning Teams will support teachers with the implementation of the new programs.

- **Complete the development of a system-wide curriculum management tool (C-MAPP)**

The Director of Curriculum Management & Resource Development will collaborate with Tech Services to continue developing the functionality of C-MAPP. New functions will include:

 - Lesson planning – teachers will be able to use aspects of C-MAPP to create daily lesson plans
 - Integrated dashboard – the opening page will change to a dashboard on which teachers can personalize for effective use
 - Increase levels of access – teachers will be able to set the access level for students and parents to increase communication

- **Expand development and support the STEM and Global Networks**
 - The Director of Curriculum Management & Resource development will work in partnership with the Global Collaborative Schools and the STEM School Network school leaders to develop and implement the strategic plans
 - Advisory Boards will bring together the school system and the community to provide on-going support for the Network schools
 - Develop and implement a plan to increase the number of schools within each network
 - Work in conjunction with the content specialists to create curriculum alignment with the STEM and Global curricula
 - Provide electronic lesson plans with a STEM focus that enhances C-Mapp
 - Implement a plan to increase the number of schools within each network

- **Target support to Renaissance schools to ensure their viability and sustainability**
 - Conduct analysis of data walkthroughs in Literacy, Mathematics and Science to ensure implementation of research based instructional practices
 - Provide professional development and planning to support instruction
 - Work in partnership with Data and Accountability to conduct a thorough analysis of best practices and develop a system to share this information between schools

- **Implement the adoption of Math Expressions K-5 with fidelity**
 - Continue to support the use of Math Talk as an instructional practice
 - Continue to support the use of Student Leaders as an instructional practice
 - Conduct Walkthroughs at elementary schools across the district to provide feedback on instructional practice (K-12)
 - Provide professional development on the Standards for Mathematical Practice

- **Ensure all students successfully complete Algebra I by the end of 8th or 9th grade**
 Recognizing that successful completion of Algebra I is the gateway to accessing more rigorous math course in high school, WCPSS staff has worked to create a plan that spans K-12 in an effort to improve access to more rigorous course offerings for all students. In order to ensure that all students have equal access the following initiatives will be implemented:
 - Objective criteria will be established to aide school based staff in placing students in the appropriate math class at the middle and high school levels
 - Alternative approaches to teaching that have proven to be more successful for all students will be required of all teachers and supported via system wide staff development and through the online curriculum management system, CMAPP
 - Systems of support will be put in place at all levels to provide additional instructional support for students demonstrating the need for this support
 - Criteria for AIG identification will be reviewed to establish a more inclusive means of identifying giftedness

- **Implement the student assignment plan**
 The growth in the student population has outpaced the system's ability to construct schools sufficient to meet the need for additional facilities. This has resulted in increased student mobility and decreased parental satisfaction as the system has had to reassign students to manage significant growth in its student population. The student assignment plan aligned with Board policy 6200 and adopted in Oct. 2011 promotes proximity, stability, choice and student achievement. To ensure it meets its intended goals we will:
 - Implement the plan and monitor its impact on student performance and school demographics
 - Report annually on impact of plan and provide recommendations for modifications based on the data
 - Survey parent satisfaction and report to the Board on results

Targets we will Measure

1. Wake County percentage of schools meeting state high growth standards will exceed that of the state average and will improve by 4% per year (currently 69.6% for 2010)
2. The percentage of WCPSS students reaching their growth targets at grades 3-5 will increase three percentage points each year culminating in 74% of students meeting their growth target in 2015-16
3. The percentage of WCPSS students reaching their growth targets in grades 6-8 will increase two percentage points each year culminating in 71% meeting their growth target by 2015-16
4. The percentage of students who score at or above standard on science in grade five will exceed the state average and increase each year by three percentage points. (75% as of 2010-11)
5. The percentage of students who score at or above standard on science in grade eight will exceed the state average and increase each year by three percentage points. (79% as of 2010-11)

6. The performance composite for grades 9-12 based on End of Course (EOC) tests will exceed the state and increase each year by three percentage points (83% performance composite for 2010-11)
7. All students will successfully complete enough credits each year to be on track for graduation
8. All students will successfully complete Algebra I and English I by the end of ninth grade, and Biology by the end of tenth grade in order to graduate on time
9. Increase the number of students participating and achieving scores of at least 24 on the ACT and 1650 on the SAT by 2016
10. The average score on Work Keys for students who are CTE concentrators will increase over time
11. All schools will achieve or exceed local and state standards for attendance
12. The student assignment plan will be implemented and reviewed quarterly to implement necessary changes and annually to assess its impact on student achievement

Targets 1-6 will be measured by the North Carolina End-of-Grade and End-of-Course assessments and ABC growth and proficiency calculations

Target 7 and 8 will be measured by NCWise reports and Data and Accountability analyses

Target 9 will be measured by ACT/SAT participation rates and final scores

Target 10 will be measured by Work Keys scores

Target 11 will be measured by review of annual attendance reports (Principal Monthly Reports)

Target 12 will be measured by the annual review of the Community Advisory Board established to monitor the plan

Focus Area 2: Eliminate Achievement Gaps by Challenging Students at all Levels

Overview

WCPSS is a district that is aligned and accountable for making decisions that promote the best educational opportunities for every student to achieve high academic success and receive the support they need to graduate ready for college and highly-skilled careers. From early childhood programs, like pre-K and full-day Kindergarten opportunities, to Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM) Schools and foreign language opportunities, to AP and IB programs, to credit recovery and magnet elementary, middle and high school programs, a full spectrum of initiatives will be directed at improving academic achievement and eliminating the achievement gaps.

The District will develop a rigorous, relevant curriculum and a system of assessments to allow for successful transitions for students. High-quality instruction will be differentiated and engaging, and those students who need additional support will receive targeted interventions to ensure academic success. In addition, those students who are succeeding and excelling will receive opportunities to achieve even more. To track each student's progress toward proficiency, classroom teachers, principals, and senior leaders will monitor student performance by disaggregating data by race, ethnicity, gender, socioeconomic status, language proficiency, or disability.

Disaggregating the data ensures that every student's needs are considered when making instructional decisions. Administrators, principals and classroom teachers use a variety of tools and strategies to monitor student performance. At the system level, cross-functional teams will study student performance by drilling down to root causes and then developing action plans and making recommendations for improvement.

Strategies

1. Maintain high expectations for all students and use formative, summative and other appropriate data to ensure students are placed in rigorous classes
2. Align intervention strategies and support services with daily instruction
3. Monitor student progress on an ongoing basis and provide timely strategic supports and interventions

Key Processes/Action Steps

- **Provide appropriate services for AIG students**

Grades 3-8 focus:

- Identification: Seek to increase the number of AIG identified students, particularly under-represented populations, by review of multiple indicators and use of alternative pathway
- Curriculum & Instruction: Differentiated curriculum with rigor as focus to support, and enrich and extend the Standard course of Study; nurture potential in students with high ability
- Professional Development: Deep curriculum alignment; support for 2010-2013 AIG plan

- **Refine RtI model and practices (Karen Hamilton) Not completed**

- **Promote increased opportunities for students to read and write across all content areas**

- Implement the Literacy Strands of the Common Core State Standards for English Language Arts and Literacy in History/Social Studies, Science and Technical Subjects
- Require use of the DPI Online Writing Instructional system across content areas

- **Expand the Cultural Responsiveness training**

- Seek additional funding for Cultural Responsiveness Training to include an increase in the number of trainers and materials

- **Expand inclusive practices for students with disabilities (Jeff Larson and Joann Medlin) Not completed**

- **Address the needs of English Language Learners**

- Improve cross-coordination between the ESL Office and other areas in C&I to align staff development efforts and ensure mainstream teachers have the strategies needed to work with the LEP population

- Provide targeted extended day programs for LEP students (after-school, track-out, and summer school)
- Reduce non-instructional related demands on ESL teachers to allow them to focus on instruction
- Strengthen the home-school connection between LEP families and school staff
- Continue to develop innovative/research-based programs to improve the educational outcomes of LEP students

Address the needs of American Indian students

The coordinator for the American Indian Education grant will use the EVAAS data bank and student reports to identify the neediest of our American Indian students who may be eligible for student services. Once these students have been identified the coordinator will:

- Provide tutorial services for students
- Coordinate content specific workshops to aide in the enhancement of student achievement
- Team with local universities, business and community leaders to make American Indian students more aware of local resources and services available.
- Coordinate regional EOG/EOC review sessions for students
- Host a College Fair for American Indian students to provide information for parents and students to encourage greater participation among American Indian students in higher education
- Expand the use of instructional technology at the Indian Education Center in Garner
- Provide learning field trips for students who could not otherwise afford cultural experiences

• Address the needs of African American students

- Continue offering and expanding early intervention opportunities providing background and experience to students before entering school (K-12)
- Continue offering and expanding Extended Day programs and targeted intervention (reading and math) in order to meet a wider range of student needs as we strive for increased proficiency
- Continue Sheltered Instruction Observation Protocol (SIOP), increasing classroom interaction and focusing on academic language, essential to increased student performance
- Strengthen connections with the family by increasing involvement in the schools, by creating frameworks to inform of graduation and college preparation, by presenting speakers who can provide testimony “Can Do” stories
- Ensuring that core instructional leaders are equipped with strategies to meet students’ needs in the mainstream (offered by Title I and Title III)
- Conduct program evaluations in collaboration with Data and Accountability to address fidelity of implementation of these strategies. Provide feedback across all programs and efforts
- Identify the needs based on data
- Continue to provide professional development on Culturally Responsiveness Training throughout the district

- Aggressively recruit high quality African American, persons of color, and other Academics staff members representative of the overall student population
 - Review current practices and materials that may be systemic and provide obstacles to learning
 - Conduct informal research regarding both the cognitive and emotional needs of students of color
- **Address the needs of Economically Disadvantaged students**
 - Continue offering and expanding early intervention opportunities providing background and experience to students before entering school (K-12)
 - Continue offering and expanding Extended Day programs and targeted intervention in order to meet a wider range of student needs as we strive for increased proficiency
 - Continue Sheltered Instruction Observation Protocol (SIOP), increasing classroom interaction and focusing on academic language, essential to increased student performance
 - Strengthen connections with the family by increasing involvement in the schools, by creating frameworks to inform of graduation and college preparation, by presenting speakers who can provide testimony “Can Do” stories
 - Ensure that core instructional leaders are equipped with reading strategies to meet students’ needs in the mainstream (offered by Title I and Title III)
 - Address fidelity of instruction across all programs and efforts, remaining consistent over time and provide high quality professional development to communicate, achieve, and ensure this fidelity
 - Identify the needs based on data
 - Provide professional development on Culturally Responsiveness Training district-wide
 - Aggressively recruit high quality African American, persons of color, and other staff members representative of the overall student population
 - Review current practices and materials that may be systemic and provide obstacles to learning
 - Consider both the cognitive and emotional needs of students of color
 - **Expand the use of ELEMENTS for formative and benchmark assessments**
 - Provide ongoing training to teachers and administrators in the use of the ELEMENTS instructional management system for monitoring student achievement using data to drive instructional improvement
 - **Expand Career Academies to integrate academic and technical content through application and work-based learning**
 - As funding allows, all regular comprehensive high schools will be allocated a Career Academy Coordinator position. The goal is have at least one Career Academy per regular comprehensive high school by 2016.
 - **Expand opportunities for students to enroll in upper level CTE courses**
 - Career Development Coordinators will develop career guidance information and provide individual and group sessions for students focusing on the importance of

students CTE course sequences.

Targets we will Measure

1. Reduce disparity between Economically Disadvantaged (ED) and Non-Economically Disadvantaged student groups in reading by increasing ED proficiency by three or more percentage points per year (grades 3-5 and 6-8).
2. Reduce disparity between White/Asian and Black/Hispanic racial/ethnic groups in math by increasing proficiency for Black and Hispanic students by two or more percentage points per year (grades 3-5 and 6-8).
3. Reduce disparity between racial/ethnic groups in science by increasing proficiency for minority students (other than Asian) by six percentage points per year at grades 5 and 8.
4. Reduce disparity between socioeconomic groups in reading by increasing proficiency for ED students by five percentage points per year (grades 3-5 and 6-8).
5. Reduce disparity between socioeconomic groups in math by increasing proficiency for ED students by four percentage points per year (grades 3-5 and 6-8).
6. Reduce disparity between socioeconomic groups in science by increasing proficiency for ED students by five or more percentage points per year at grades 5 and 8. (Grade 5 ED proficiency for ED students was 52% in 2010-11; grade 8 was 57.9%).
7. Reduce disparity between Limited English Proficient (LEP) and non-LEP students by increasing the percentage of LEP students reaching growth targets in reading and math by two percentage points per year. (grades 3-5 and 6-8--approximately 60% in 10-11 reading and math)
8. Students graduating on time will increase annually.
9. WCPSS will eliminate the disproportionate representation of African American and Hispanic students in special education.
10. All schools will provide students with disabilities access to the general education environment, to the maximum extent appropriate.
11. All schools will increase levels of participation by all groups of students in Honors, AP, advanced level classes and sequenced CTE classes.
12. The percentage of students who meet proficiency on Career and Technical Education post assessments will have an overall increase of 3.1% by 2016.

Targets 1-7 will be measured by the disaggregated End-of-Grade and End-of-Course assessments.

Target 8 will be measured by the cohort graduation rate disaggregated for the four-year cohort.

Target 9 will be measured by an annual review of demographics of special education students.

Target 10 will be measured by an annual district review of numbers of students with disabilities in general education courses (NCWise reports or data files analyzed by Data and Accountability)

Target 11 will be measured by enrollment and final course grades in Honors, AP, advanced level and sequenced CTE courses (NCWise data files analyzed by Data and Accountability)

Target 11 will be measured by Career and Technical Education post assessments

Focus Area 3: Recruit, Train, and Retain High Quality Employees

Overview

The core of a successful school system is its employees, both those who teach and those who support teachers. Preparing for the future and developing new leaders is more important than ever. This year 12

percent of principals will be eligible for full retirement and 6.7 percent of our teachers will be eligible for full retirement over the next five years. We will need more qualified teachers and administrators in place to fill these vacancies and to keep up with growth in the system.

We have taken a number of steps to ensure that we are retaining, recruiting and training the best people. During the fall of 2011, recruiters will attend 37 recruitment events in 11 states and the District of Columbia. We hired more than 900 new teachers for the 2011-2012 school year; we've developed a framework for a succession planning model that contains 10 unique training opportunities for teachers, assistant principals, and principals; advanced study opportunities are being offered at Peace College, NC State University and East Carolina University; a Master of School Administration (MSA) Degree Program at NC State University is helping us retain 98 percent of WCPSS assistant principals.

Strategies

1. Attract, recruit, and hire highly qualified personnel
2. Motivate and retain high performing employees
3. Provide quality professional development and training
4. Manage employee performance using readily available, accurate and timely information
5. Revise compensation structure to focus on performance

Key Processes/Action Steps

Recruit

- Employment opportunities will be effectively advertised and qualified internal and external candidates will be actively recruited to vacant positions through the use of various techniques to increase the diversity and quality of the applicant pools.
- All hiring processes will use rigorous criteria and a transparent, streamlined system with clear, concise postings that are accessible to all interested individuals and will include: electronic forms and simplified searches
- An orientation course will be available for all new employees, including support staff, to educate individuals who are joining the organization about the school system's history, culture, and expectations for all employees related to achieving excellence and equity.
- All beginning teachers (BT's) will participate in the BTSP program. This program is a comprehensive wrap-around training and support program for new teachers that includes a mentor component, an orientation, induction activities, and targeted training.

TRAIN

- All employees will be provided with high-quality professional development opportunities to promote individual and organizational effectiveness and improve student achievement outcomes.
- Inclusionary instructional practices will be expanded through effective professional development in the areas of differentiated instruction, research based academic and behavioral interventions, Response to Instruction intervention strategies, co-teaching, scheduling, and site-based leadership

- All teachers and administrators will receive training in teaching English language learners and students with special needs.
- A “Principals Academy” will be developed to provide a means of orientation and mentor support for new principals
- Departments and offices will cross-train support personnel to allow for coverage due to absences or extended workloads
- Every school will create/revise and implement an annual school improvement plan. A leadership team will review data, school strengths, areas of concern, and possible solutions. From this, the school will write goals, objectives, and action steps as well as monitoring and evaluation procedures.
- Pre-service and job-specific trainings for support personnel will be expanded and, where feasible, will be supported with online technology
- Central services employees will ensure that school leaders have the ability and resources to meet the needs of students and teachers

Retain

- A professional growth system will be developed and implemented for all personnel to build capacity and provide opportunities to improve performance. Performance-based evaluation tools (e.g., rubrics, walk-throughs, self-reflections) will be designed to promote professional growth, life-long learning, and continuous improvement for all employees and bring clarity to the separation process for employees not meeting the expected performance standards
- Teacher leadership opportunities will be expanded to include non-administrative roles and responsibilities. A career lattice system will be developed so master teachers can seek professional opportunities without leaving the classroom
- Mentor programs will provide employees throughout the district with opportunities to learn and improve performance in essential job skills and strategies through expert guidance and coaching
- Signing bonus and performance bonus plans will be used to retain effective teachers and principals in low-performing schools with special needs
- Proactive measures will be taken to ensure that low-performing schools will have access to highly-qualified and talented teacher and administrator candidates to promote student achievement and meet the schools’ needs. The school system will increase the number of minority teachers and school-based administrators to align the student demographics with the demographics of the school-based workforce.

Targets we will Measure

1. Academic degrees or other qualifications and EVAAS teacher result scores for all teachers will increase annually
2. Demographic make-up of all new hires and the total employee population will move closer to reflecting %s in the community annually
3. Number of principals and teachers receiving professional development will increase (by XX%) annually
4. Number of highly rated employees retained will be over XX%
5. Number of teachers scoring Above the state benchmark on annual teacher reports will be XX%
6. Highly effective Professional Development will be tracked.

Target 1 will be measured by annual review of newly hired teacher qualifications and annual Teacher reports

Target 2 will be measured by annual review of district employee demographics vs. community demographics

Target 3 will be measured by annual review of principal and teacher PD participation

Target 4 will be measured by review of retention rates

Target 5 will be measured through annual teacher reports

Target 6 will be measured by review of PD tracking tool

Focus Area 4: Supportive, Transparent Culture of Continuous Improvement Singularly Focused on Student Achievement

Overview

WCPSS will create and implement structures, systems, policies, and procedures that reflect the Vision, Mission, and Core Beliefs. They will be based on a positive, productive culture of meaningful, collaborative relationships and attention to a safe, orderly, and respectful learning and working environment focused on student achievement. To embark upon purposeful change, the right systems, technology and organizational structures – and processes and procedures – must be in place to serve as the framework for how we go about our business of learning and teaching. These systems and structures serve as tools, enabling us to chart our course and help us better support our schools, ensure accountability and become more responsive to our community.

Through this strategic plan, WCPSS guarantees a District commitment to providing safe, orderly, and respectful environments to ensure equitable opportunities for all students and employees to learn and work to optimal capacity. Initiatives will build leadership competence for all personnel to inform and inspire one another within a diverse and cohesive education community, a community where a culture of mutual respect begins in every classroom and is expanded throughout the entire district community. A community in which all students succeed, families have many quality choices, the staff is supported, adults are held accountable and a world class, technologically advanced operation based on continuous improvement supports the entire operation.

Strategies

1. Ensure safe and orderly schools and collaborative relationships
2. Establish a culture of continuous improvement and innovation
3. Implement a System of Performance Management for all areas aligned to the strategic plan
4. Develop Individual Department Plans of Action
5. Develop a comprehensive Information Technology Strategic plan for the district to enable student achievement and operational efficiency through the deployment of appropriate technical solutions.
6. Develop a long range facilities construction plan that builds schools in a cascading fashion in support of the new student assignment plan.
7. Build schools taking advantage of future technology and energy saving capabilities.

Key Processes/Actions Steps

- A foundational district policy will establish a framework for developing, refining, and implementing PBIS at each school to ensure a consistent range of appropriate consequences for student discipline issues at all district sites.
- Schools will provide a safe, orderly, positive, and engaging educational climate and culture through the use of a four-tiered, school-wide prevention and intervention system which includes positive behavioral intervention support (PBIS) and High Expectations Training.
- Site-based professional learning communities (PLCs) and data teams will be supported with their focus on collaborative inquiry, action research, and development of data-driven teaching and learning strategies
- School System Security will continue to partner, consult, and collaborate with other law enforcement, fire officials, first responders, and related local and regional agencies and businesses in maintaining emergency and safety systems and in reporting and investigating crimes and implementing comprehensive school safety, crisis response, and emergency management.
- Students and their parents will be provided with strategies for dealing with bullying, cyber-bullying, and harassment within and outside the school environment
- Shared leadership and decision-making will create opportunities for teachers, parents, and community members to work together to identify problems and formulate solutions to maximize student achievement through the Superintendent's Behavior Advisory Committee, the Special Education Parent Advisory Committee and the E.D. Task Force.
- Under the new Office of Innovation, cross-functional teams will collaboratively support one another in exploring and formulating new, innovative ideas for continuous improvement.
- Interim dashboards will link to year-end scorecards that display leading indicators designed to predict whether a school or the district is on-track to meet its year-end performance expectations
- Scorecards (with key indicators, baselines, targets, and progress) and dashboards (collections of scorecards, reports, and other performance indicators) will be in place for every district office/department to ensure continuous improvement
- Every central office department will develop an annual work plan with all initiatives tied to the five focus areas
- Information Technology will develop a comprehensive Information Technology Strategic plan for the district to enable student achievement and operational efficiency through the deployment of appropriate technical solutions for students, families, our employees and the community
- Facilities will develop a comprehensive building and renovation plan that anticipates the expected growth in student population in the district over the term of this strategic plan and responds with the appropriate facilities planning that builds schools in a cascading fashion in support of the new student assignment plan.
- Future schools will be built taking advantage of future technology and energy saving capabilities.

Targets we will Measure

1. School suspensions, police reports and expulsions will decrease by XX% annually
2. All departments will have annual work plans and measurable targets tied to five focus areas
3. Performance management plans will be in place for 100% of district employees

4. School scorecards and school improvement plans will be in place for all schools
5. A comprehensive technology plan will be adopted by the Board of Education
6. A comprehensive facilities building and renovation plan will be adopted by the Board of Education and Board of County Commissioners

Target 1 will be measured by review of annual school suspension, police and expulsion reports
Target 2 and 3 will be measured by SLT review of work plans and performance management plans
Target 4 will be measured by Deputy Superintendent and Area Superintendent's for each school
Target 5 will be measured by review of IT Strategic Plan
Target 6 will be measured by review of Facilities strategic plan

5: Engage Family and Community Members

Overview

Through increased communications networks, parent involvement and family engagement initiatives, and strategic community partnerships, WCPSS will build strong family and community relationships to increase expertise, trust, and shared responsibility for student success. As one of the fastest growing areas in the nation, many new families and businesses have joined the district community over the past 10 years. This has proved to be challenging in establishing solid, long-term relationships to support education initiatives.

WCPSS must go beyond speaking about the importance of parent and community involvement and will proactively engage them, with an intentional focus on those who have previously been underserved or excluded. By increasing family and community initiatives and evaluating them for improvement, the District will strengthen relationships and understanding of the necessary collaborative efforts needed to ensure success for every student. Frequent, clear, two-way communications will improve trust and public confidence as well as facilitate the transparency needed for accountability. Our goal must be to have all family and community members feel welcome in contributing to the important work and responsibility of preparing our students for the future.

Strategies:

1. Engage our diverse community by building strategic partnerships and platforms for communication
2. Provide communication support to assist individual schools in communicating with WCPSS, other schools, parents, students, staff, businesses, and the media
3. Leverage district resources to enhance two-way communication between the district, schools, parents, and the community

COMMUNICATIONS

Goal: To provide clear, timely information and tools that keep the community informed, and engage them in WCPSS' mission

Key Processes/Actions Steps

- Rebrand WCPSS to enhance a positive, public image that reflects vision, mission, core beliefs and articulates a trusted, transformative district focused on student achievement and innovation
- Overhaul WCPSS website strategy, design and development platform. Improve the Web governance structure and organizational policies that define responsibilities, relationships, and rules involved in managing the district's online communications to ensure targeted audiences have access to timely, up-to-date information/contacts and effective communications
- Strengthen and promote various communication channels (both online, print and in-person) to encourage flow of information from parents/community to the district (email listservs, RSS, parent portal, principal updates for dissemination to school communities, social media channels, including Facebook, Twitter and YouTube)
- Establish an effective media relations program that enhances the district's image in the community
- Create a speaker's bureau to assure that strategically targeted leaders receive communications from the District on a regular basis
- Provide ongoing training and support for administrators in effective communication with staff and the public
- Clarify district flow of information (communicate decision-making process, reporting and accountability structure)
- Communicate with and attend civic, community and faith-based groups meetings
- Develop program for touring WCPSS that includes bus tours of schools and facilities. Participants could include senior citizen groups, community members, civic leaders, etc.

Key indicators for communications

Public feels and is more informed, resulting in a greater trust of the information and of the source. Parents and community will know how and where to get information and how they can share their ideas, and they will know that their ideas are being considered.

Targets we will measure: *(establish baseline in year one to determine goal)*

1. Increase in percentage of community members (within and outside district) who are more informed, engaged and trusting, as evidenced by survey results
2. Increase in number of website hits, return visitors, time on-site, pages viewed
3. Increase in number of success stories
4. Increase in stakeholder belief that they are being listened to and district is using feedback constructively, as evidenced by survey results
5. Increase in number of staff serving as members of key community groups and organizations

Target 1 will be measured through an annual parent/community survey

Target 2 will be measured through website tracking tool

Target 3 will be measure by annual review of success stories

Target 4 will be measured through annual parent/community survey

Target 5 will be measured by annual staff survey

FAMILY/PARENT INVOLVEMENT

Goal: To collaborate with families as full partners in the learning and development of their children

Strategies

1. Build a positive school connection with families and parents that overcomes cultural and language barriers
2. Involve families and parents in student learning
3. Provide meaningful training opportunities for parents that increases student achievement and development and family involvement

Key Processes/Actions Steps

- Provide differentiated supports for parents and families, including multilingual families, through Parent Academies and (to consider) Parent and Community Resource Centers located in each region. Centers will partner with community organizations to implement targeted initiatives for groups historically underserved to develop differentiated communications and workshops
- Increase multilingual staff to provide targeted outreach and supports
- Jointly develop a parent-school-district compact that outlines parent, school and district expectations of each other
- Facilitate parent and family access to key school personnel; provide professional development/training for staff in how to communicate and engage with families; and include parent and family engagement measures in staff performance evaluations

Key indicators of success for family/parent involvement:

Families are involved in meaningful ways that help them support their children; an increase in the number and the quality of family contacts with the school community; and a recognizable improvement in student outcomes such as attendance and academic performance.

Targets we will measure

1. 20% increase in the number of contacts between families/parents and teachers, and the parent satisfaction level with parent/teacher interaction will be at least 80% as evidenced in a parent survey
2. The majority of parents (overall and within subgroups) will be involved in at least one student-led individual conference as evidenced in a parent survey
3. The majority of parents will have attended at least two school-based events as evidenced in a parent survey and reports from schools
4. Increase the use of SPAN and Blackboard and report on effectiveness
5. Schools (district offering by area/region?) will offer 2-3 workshops/year designed to build capacity of parents to support their child's learning, with topics selected based on parental

interest as evidenced in meeting agendas. Attendance/ participation will have increased at least 10% each year as evidenced in attendance rosters

Target 1-4 will be measured through an annual parent/community survey

Target 5 will be measured by annual review and tracking of workshops held and participation rates

COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS

Goal: To nurture and engage an active community of families, organizations and volunteers who will work with the district to help all students succeed.

Strategies

1. Increase community understanding and buy-in of WCPSS needs, goals and priorities
2. Increase community support of initiatives to meet WCPSS needs, goals and priorities
3. Ensure that all schools have the needed level of community support to help all students succeed
4. Create partnerships that will help overcome cultural, language and other barriers in this diverse community

Key Processes/Actions Steps

- Partner with Wake County to provide wrap-around services for students and families at school sites (scope out regional / parent support centers housed in schools)
- Provide a menu of partnership options for business
- Use business partnerships to expose students to careers and provide students internships and career exploration opportunities
- Build WCPSS alumni association to promote public awareness of WCPSS and engage alumni in networking, fundraising, and contributing expertise to benefit students, schools, and initiatives.
- Develop and implement a stream-lined process for accepting donations/contributions at the school and district level.
- Promote coalitions of parent, faith-based and community groups that improve children's lives and opportunities while advocating for children and strengthening school-based partnerships
- Build partnerships with organizations that are targeted toward the needs of particular students, schools, and WCPSS
- Develop the appropriate systems to track information on established partnerships, grant development, and idea and concept development

Key indicators for community partnerships

The community understands the needs of the district; overall involvement efforts will be targeted to where they are needed most and can have the greatest impact for students; and community members feel that they are being invited to participate, their input is being utilized, and their efforts are having a positive impact.

Targets we will measure *(establish baseline in year one to determine goal)*

1. Assess community partners (cover all sectors, i.e., businesses, nonprofits, donors, etc.) to measure how much they understand the district's priorities and the unique needs of schools and students
2. Increase level of involvement of partners in district committees, task force activities, which improve community understanding of district needs, goals and priorities
3. Increase in number of partners seeking out the district to be involved (including individuals and organizations)
4. Increase in number of volunteers and volunteer hours for each school; set goals for each school
5. Increase in the total number of partners
6. Increase in the total number of donors overall and by school (organizations and individuals)
7. Total amount of financial contributions overall and by school
8. Number of school and district partnerships serving our diverse populations

Target 1-4 will be measured through an annual parent/community survey

Target 5-8 will be measured by annual review of grants and partnerships to the district

Conclusion

The Superintendent and Board of Education are committed to charting a path for high academic achievement for all students which must be supported by a system of continuous improvement. This cycle began with the Board's desire to produce a World-Class education where all students are successful at high levels and was followed by establishing clear performance expectations and the development of this strategic plan for how those expectations would be met. As the continuous improvement cycle evolves, it will focus on building the capacity of those responsible for carrying out, monitoring, measuring, and adapting the work of the District to meet these Board determined goals.

Through these efforts, the Board has set the Vision, Mission, Core Beliefs, and commitments along with expectations for the District and given the Superintendent the responsibility of carrying out the District plan. Striking the right balance between system control and empowerment through a balanced accountability system is an on-going responsibility of the Board/Superintendent team. The District office through its support efforts, while ensuring accountability for the performance of all schools, must be fully responsive to individual school needs and will do this efficiently and successfully through a system singularly focused on having ALL students performing at high levels and graduating from high school with the knowledge, skills, and aptitude to be successful, productive citizens.

If we are to successfully implement the strategies and actions contained in this plan it will take a commitment from all of us. We must be united in our commitment to challenge, support, teach, inspire and celebrate all children. The students of the Wake County Public School System deserve no less than our best efforts on their behalf.

Add Appendix, list of commonly used acronyms, glossary of terms if appropriate and a thank you page listing all of the individuals and groups that will have been involved in the process of developing and finalizing this plan.

DRAFT