

The Strategic Plan for the Wake County Public School System

Vision 2017

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 16th largest in the country with 165 schools serving nearly 147,000 students. It is located in the heart of the Research Triangle Park where a critical mass of technology and R&D companies creates a dynamic region with a highly sought-after labor pool that is both broad and deep. WCPSS strives to prepare students to be college & career ready. We enjoy strong partnerships with businesses to expose students and teachers to practical experiences that connect them with a richer understanding of the types of skills and knowledge needed for careers.

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 students who have historically been in the minority now make up the majority of the student population.

Today we are at a moment of great 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 all impact our school district. However, WCPSS is a strong, successful district which enjoys tremendous support from community, parents, and staff.

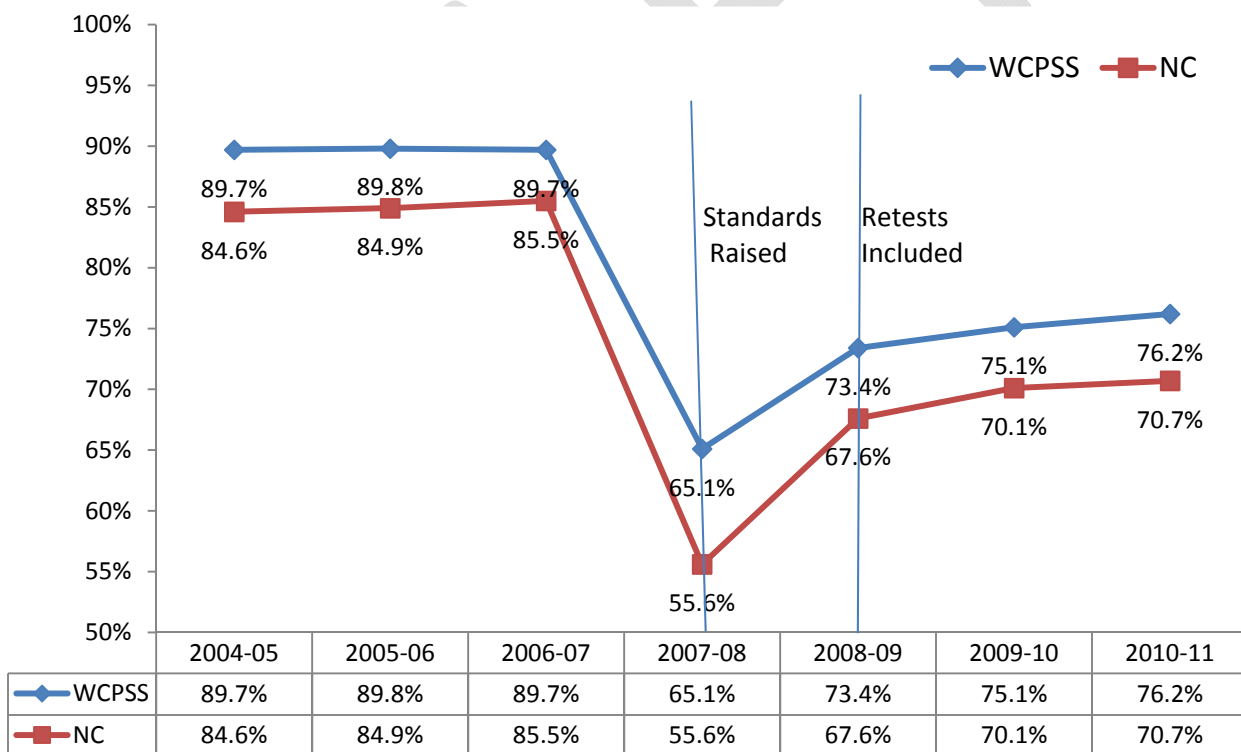
We have the opportunity to build on our strengths and harness the support of our community to move the district to the next level. For many years the district has provided an excellent education to the majority of its students. We must continue that proud tradition and take advantage of the advances in technology to ensure a system of innovative schools in which students, 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. We must ensure that students come first, talent is nurtured, excellence is the norm, and opportunities are equitable. Our success will be measured by continued improvement in the effectiveness of teaching and learning as well as accelerated student achievement. Our goal is a high functioning system where all students succeed and all families have quality choices. A system where adults are supported yet held accountable. And a system with a world class, technologically advanced operation that strives for continuous improvement.

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. Yet WCPSS has maintained proficiency rates in reading and math that are higher than the state of North Carolina. The proficiency rate for reading in WCPSS has been about five percentage points higher than NC for the past three years. Proficiency on the North Carolina End of Grade Reading Test has increased each year in both the state of North Carolina and WCPSS since the standards were raised in 2007-08. The state, however, is increasing at a faster rate than WCPSS.

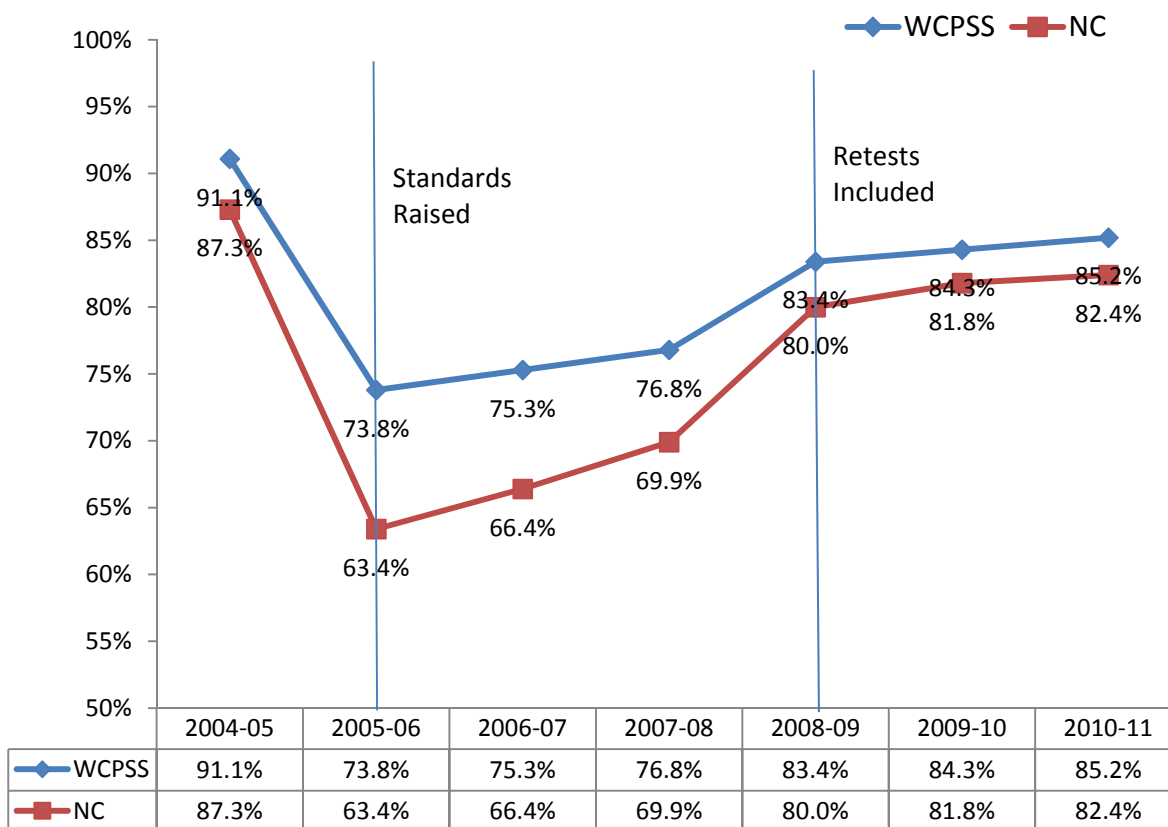
EOG Reading Proficiency for Students in Grades 3-8 in North Carolina and WCPSS Over Seven Years¹



¹ DPI Accountability Services Division (Fall, 2011). Retrieved from: <http://www.wcpss.net/evaluation-research/reports> (graphs based on all tested; created by R. Regan in Data and Accountability)

Over the last three years the district proficiency rate for mathematics has been about nine percentage points higher than for reading. WCPSS proficiency in mathematics has consistently been higher than the state average, but, as in reading scores, the difference has been decreasing over the past three years. Both WCPSS and NC have seen a higher percentage of students reaching proficiency each year since the standards were raised in 2005-06, but the state of NC has seen a steeper rise than WCPSS. 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 Years²

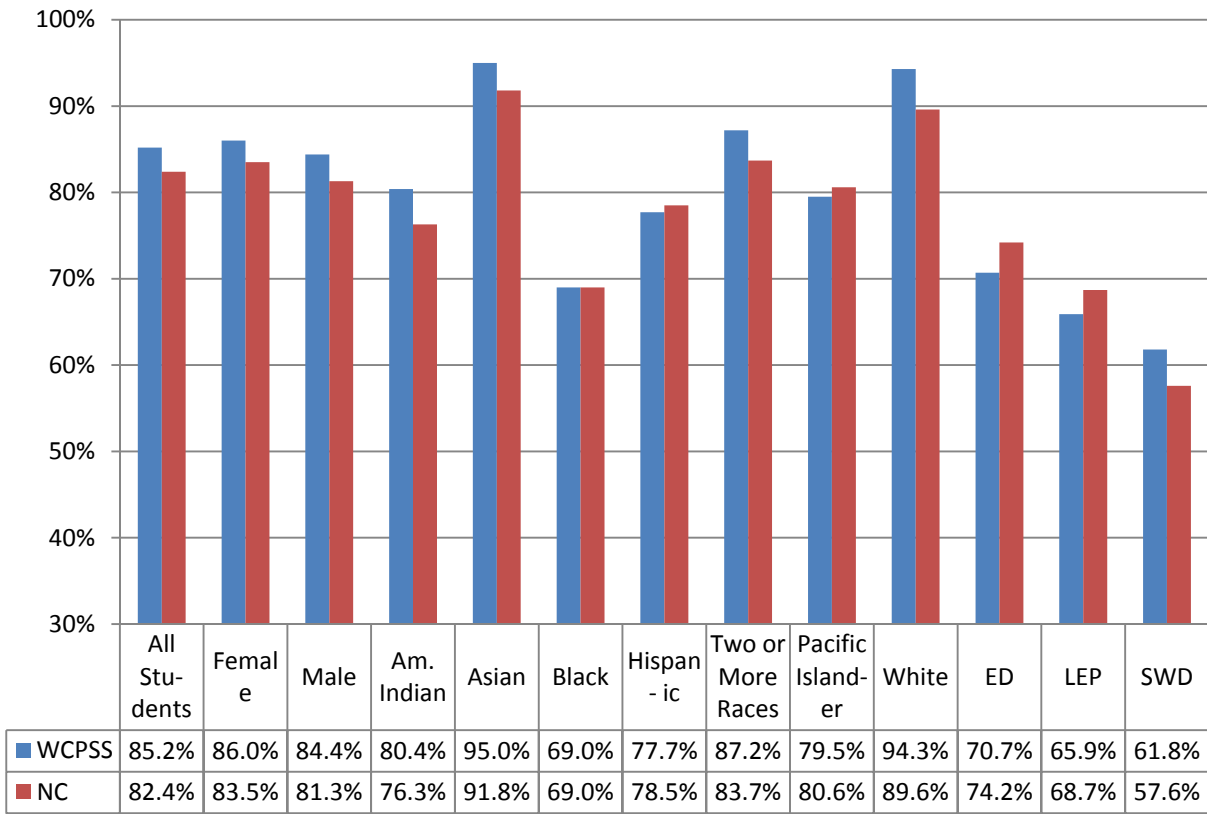


For most subgroups, math proficiency percentages are higher for WCPSS than for NC. However, proficiency rates for Black students are equal (at 69%) for both WCPSS and NC, and proficiency rates for NC are slightly higher than in WCPSS for Pacific Islanders, Economically Disadvantaged, and Limited English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

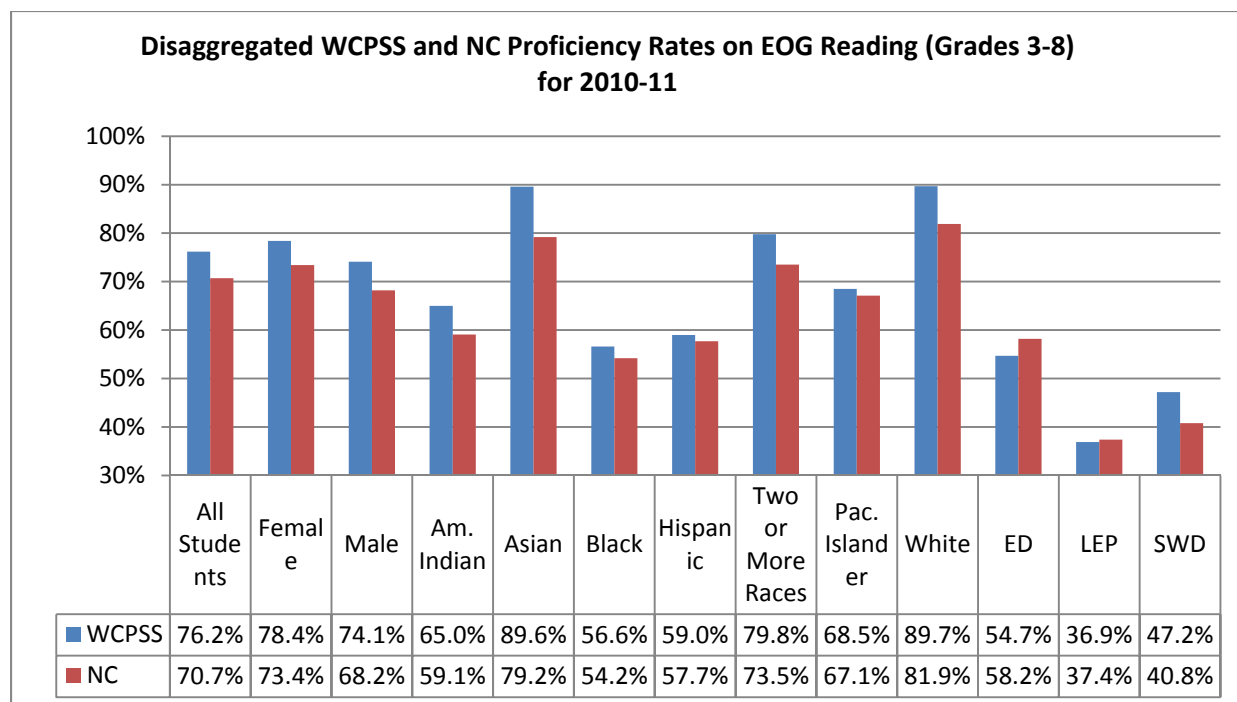
² DPI Accountability Services Division (Fall, 2011). Retrieved from: <http://www.wcpss.net/evaluation-research/reports> (graphs based on all tested; created by R. Regan in Data and Accountability)

When these results are analyzed by school, it is clear that inconsistencies exist 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 subgroups (especially Economically Disadvantaged, Black and Hispanic students) made gains in many areas, there continues to be a large gap between their performance and that of other subgroups.

Disaggregated WCPSS and NC Proficiency Rates on EOG Math (Grades 3-8) for 2010-11³



³ Source: DPI Accountability Services Division (Fall, 2011). Retrieved from: <http://www.wcpss.net/evaluation-research/reports> (graphs created by A-S Boykin in Data and Accountability)



While WCPSS has more positive proficiency rates than the state of North Carolina overall, achievement gaps across subgroups are of concern, 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 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 EOG Math Assessment⁴

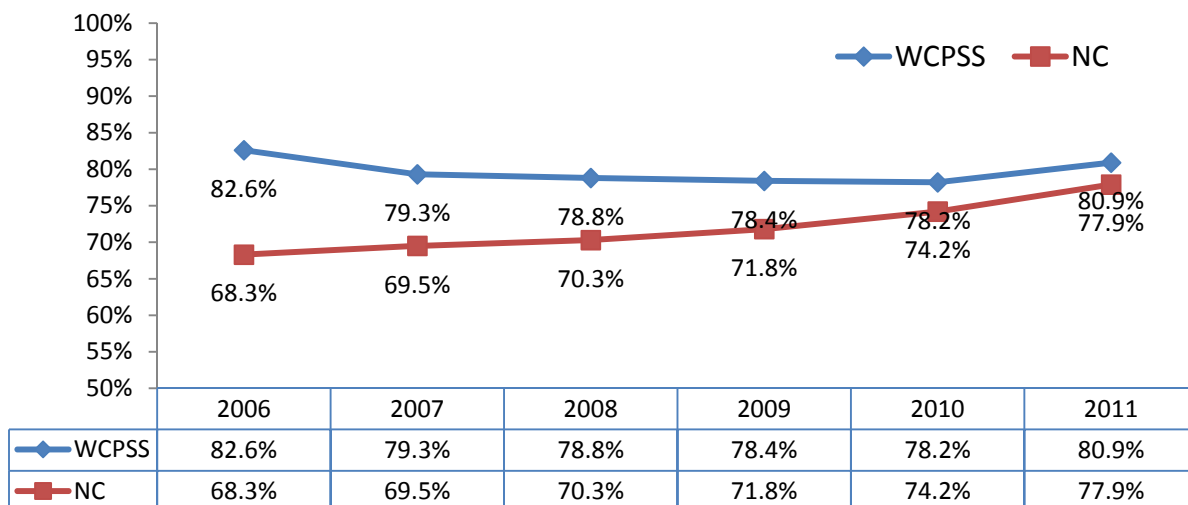
Black-White Gap	2006-07	2007-08	2008-09	2009-10	2010-11	Trend
Gap in Scale Score Points	-10 points	-9 points	-9 points	-10 points	-10 points	→
Gap in % Proficient	-37 %age points	-34 %age points	-31%age points	-31 %age points	-33 %age points	↓
Hispanic-White Gap	2006-07	2007-08	2008-09	2009-10	2010-11	
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

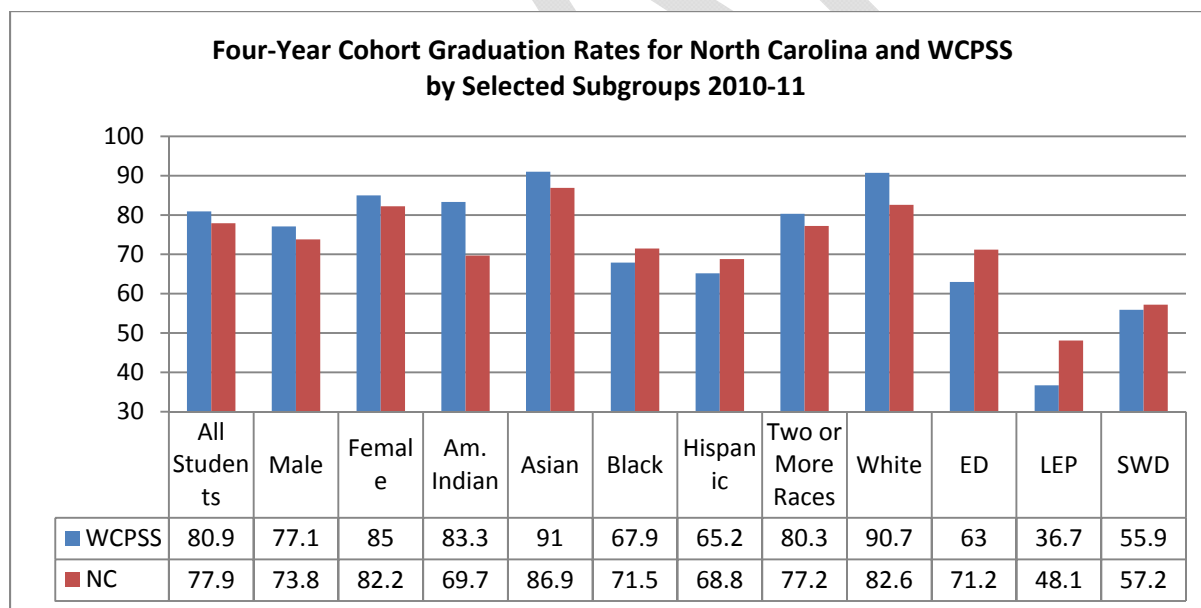
WCPSS had a four-year graduation rate of 80.9% for the 2010-2011 cohorts. This is among the highest graduation rates in the nation for large, diverse districts. WCPSS consistently has higher graduation rates than NC over time. However, as with math and reading, NC four-year graduation rates are increasing more quickly than for WCPSS, so challenges remain.

⁴ Student Achievement in WCPSS, 2010-2011 <http://www.wcpss.net/evaluation-research/reports/2011/achievement2011.pdf> (Taken from presentation to WCPSS administrative team by Dr. Lindsay Page of Harvard in summer, 2011)

Four-Year Cohort Graduation Rates over Time: WCPSS and North Carolina⁵



Disaggregated graduation rates also show persistent gaps between subgroups that need to be addressed and improved. While the overall graduation rate for the district has risen for the first time in three years, it is still the case that Black, Hispanic, Economically Disadvantaged, Limited English Proficiency and Students with Disabilities are graduating at a smaller percentage when compared to the state and other large districts.



We have the opportunity to build on the historically 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.

⁵ Regan, R. (Fall 2010). *Press release*. Raleigh, NC: WCPSS Data and Accountability Department through Communications Office.

Our Guiding Principles – Where We Are Going

WCPSS has been operating without the benefit of a comprehensive strategic plan based on a common vision and a clear set of priorities. As part of Superintendent Tata's 90 day plan of entry, the Board of Education adopted a unified Mission, Vision and set of Core Beliefs for the district that can form the foundation of a focused strategic plan. The current Board has affirmed the Mission, Vision, and Core Beliefs while also adding one new Core Belief. These beliefs serve as the guiding principles of our strategy. We have developed objectives that support each Belief as well as metrics by which to measure our progress.

Mission, Vision and Core Beliefs

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. WCPSS is committed to ensuring all students are challenged to reach their full potential and to be accountable partners in their learning. Students will graduate in increasingly higher 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.
3. Challenging all students by providing academic rigor is essential to student success.
4. Highly effective principals and teachers are key to improving growth in student achievement.
5. The Board of Education and Central Services promote an environment of continuous improvement and innovation that results in a high performing organization and is 100% focused on student achievement.
6. 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.

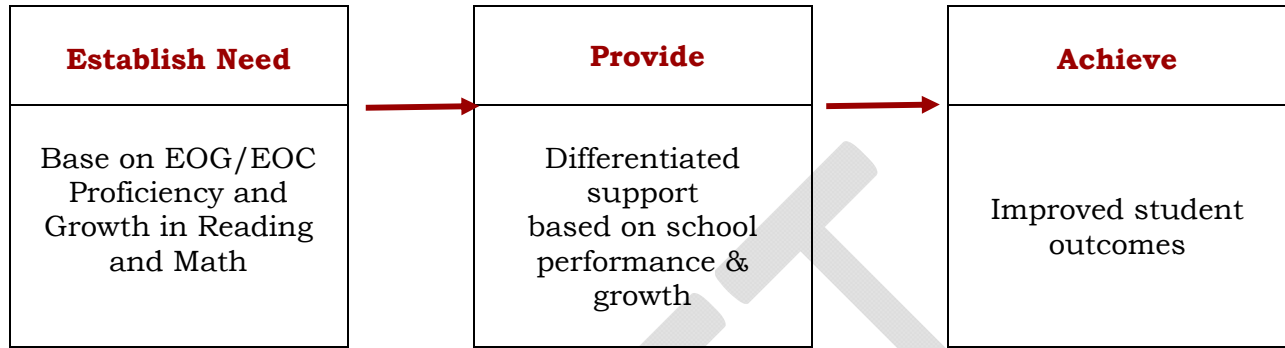
Theory of Action

Along with these important overarching beliefs, the Board of Education is reviewing the adoption of a theory of action called *Managed Performance Empowerment (MPE)*;⁶ our view about how the district will carry out the important daily work of improving student achievement at the school level. 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 support and resources as a district.

At one end of the MPE continuum, school-based management and decision making are diminished while district monitoring and oversight of instructional practice is increased to better support low-performing schools. At the other end of the continuum, empowerment and high degrees of flexibility are offered to high-performing schools, with the expectation that they remain high performing. This encourages 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 continuously improve within a strong, performance-oriented culture.

⁶ Donald R. McAdams, "What School Boards Can Do" (Teachers College Press, New York, NY,2006) pg.33.

ABC Growth and Proficiency Status of Schools and Appropriate Central Support Provided



	Growth		
Performance	Low Performance High Growth Medium Support & Control Extra Resources	Medium Performance High Growth Basic Support and High Flexibility	High Performance High Growth High Flexibility High Empowerment
	Low Performance Medium Growth Medium Support & Control Extra Resources	Medium Performance Medium Growth Basic Support Some Flexibility and Empowerment	High Performance Medium Growth Medium High Flexibility and Empowerment
	Low Performance Low Growth High Support & Control Extra Resources	Medium Performance Low Growth Some Support Medium Support	High Performance Low Growth Some Flexibility Medium Support

Framework for Success

WCPSS strives to provide equity and excellence for all students. Equity recognizes that our students have different needs. Excellence is achieved through establishing and maintaining high standards for all children. WCPSS commits to ensuring that all children are challenged to meet their full potential and all students grow to reach their highest levels year after year so that they 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 establish a trajectory for student success and serve as a guide for staff and parents to ensure all students achieve at high levels. The goal of the Seven Keys is to set advanced rather than proficient standards to support achievement for all students. This raises the bar to high levels, with the expectation that many students will far exceed these standards and will need additional challenges to reach their full potential. Through the Seven Keys, parents will have a clear understanding of what students must achieve to ensure they are prepared for college or a career at the end of 12th grade, without having to take remedial courses when they reach the college level.

Seven Keys to College or Career Readiness

1. Successful Reading in Grades K-2
2. At or above grade level at Grade 5
3. CC Math I with “C” or higher by Grade 8
4. Geometry and Algebra II by Grade 11
5. Honors, AP/IB or CTE classes
6. Target of 1650 (composite) or higher on the SAT, 24 or higher on the ACT
7. Graduation

Fostering a pervasive culture of high expectations for all students throughout the organization requires a district and community commitment to equitable funding, programming, technology and practices in our classrooms and workplaces. In addition, three critical conditions are necessary to nurture equity and excellence—high expectations, positive relationships, and cultural competence. To create and sustain these conditions, we will establish comprehensive support strategies in each focus area of 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 only take place with ongoing, deliberate efforts to build the capacity of staff, students, and parents through targeted professional development, continuous improvement, systemic monitoring, 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.

WCPSS Focus Areas

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

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 with consistent academic rigor
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 and Growth for all Students

Overview

The core business of WCPSS is learning and teaching. We are charged with providing each child in our school system with a sound basic education and have successfully done so for many years. Focusing on results – and 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 parent 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 to promote high student achievement.

WCPSS has a strong history of innovative and successful programming that has resulted in high student achievement. We intend to continue and replicate successful programs and apply them consistently across the district. Ineffective programs will be retired and replaced with new, research-based initiatives that increase student achievement. While some students will always need extra help, we must also work to accelerate academic progress of our gifted students and close achievement gaps. 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 curriculum, instruction, assessments, 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. Align the implementation of a rigorous and relevant curriculum with the Common Core and Essential Standards.
2. Provide the time and resources for high quality professional development for school-based staff.
3. Implement a comprehensive assessment system to monitor student growth and inform instruction.
4. Infuse 21st Century skills, such as critical thinking, communication, collaboration and creativity in all of our learning and teaching practices.

KEY PROCESSES *and Action Steps*

1. **Expand development and support equitable and innovative programming in schools** (for example Magnet programming, STEM Network, Global Network, World Languages, Career Academies, Leadership Academies)
 - a. Develop an implementation plan to increase the number of schools within each network/innovative program
 - b. Work in conjunction with content specialists to align curriculum in C-MAPP to support innovative programming in schools
 - c. Align community partnerships to support innovative programming in schools
2. **Continuously improve the system-wide Curriculum Management Application (C-MAPP) to guide daily learning and teaching.**
 - a. Elicit on-going feedback from users to refine and adjust program and resources
 - b. Expand resources for instruction and professional development available on C-MAPP
 - c. Provide supplemental supports for students needing additional acceleration for academics and/or behavior
3. **Develop system-wide structures to support research-based literacy and mathematics instruction.**
 - a. Require teachers to use multiple research-based literacy and mathematics instructional approaches to teaching which is supported by system-wide staff development and the on-line Curriculum Management system (C-MAPP)
 - b. Establish objective criteria (including EVAAS) to aid school-based staff in placing students in the appropriate math class/course
 - c. Develop and implement systems (using tools such as curriculum-based measures or EVAAS) to provide additional instructional support for students demonstrating need
 - d. Conduct walk-throughs across the district to inform instructional practices
 - e. Recommend a framework that provides teachers with guidelines for effective instruction across all College and Career Readiness anchor standards
 - f. Implement the literacy strands of the Common Core State Standards for English/Language Arts K-12, and Literacy in History/Social Studies, Science, and technical subjects 6-12

4. Align professional development with High Quality standards that focus on effective instruction

- a. Review all professional development currently offered in the Office of School Performance for alignment to High Quality professional development standards and NC Teaching Standards
- b. Prioritize, sequence, and effectively communicate professional development options for employees, including access to teacher mentors or coaches.
- c. Develop High Quality professional development needed to support the Strategic 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 Advance Placement (AP) and International Baccalaureate (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 achievement gaps.

The District will develop and implement a rigorous, relevant curriculum aligned with the Common Core 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 increased opportunities for enrichment 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, and 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. Implement the Responsiveness to Instruction (Rtl) framework with fidelity
2. Reduce barriers to academic performance
3. Build support systems to foster the social and emotional health of students throughout the district, schools, and classrooms
4. Provide high quality professional development on instructional and intervention strategies that work

KEY PROCESSES *and Action Steps*

- 1. Identify students in at-risk subgroups and provide appropriate services.**
 - a. Collaborate with Data and Accountability Department to review current practices and materials that may provide obstacles to learning for at-risk subgroups
 - b. Provide schools with information about opportunities that strengthen experiential connections for students
 - c. Support targeted extended-day programs for at-risk subgroups (before or after school, track out and summer school)
 - d. Increase identification of students from underrepresented subgroups as Academically or Intellectually Gifted
 - e. Review our long term suspension data and our alternative school programs to address any disproportionality issues and provide innovative programming that will best serve the needs to these at-risk students
- 2. Refine the district's Responsiveness to Instruction (RtI) framework and practices.**
 - a. Align current practices associated with RtI with newly developed guidelines from NCDPI
 - b. Develop and deploy professional development on the RtI framework and associated practices
 - c. Support schools in screening all K-5 students in reading at the beginning, middle, and end of the school year using curriculum-based measures
 - d. Support schools as they progress monitor students receiving reading interventions and assist schools to adjust instruction as appropriate
 - e. Deploy and support schools with the implementation of the EASi tool specifically Tier II (PEP) and Tier III (SST)
- 3. Coordinate supplemental intervention program services to maximize student time in core instruction and teacher collaboration. (Intervention Services, SPED, Title I, ESL,)**
 - a. Create systems and structures to identify and provide supplemental support to students requiring additional acceleration and/or behaviors
 - b. Align professional development efforts between ESL, Title I, Special Education, Intervention Services and Academics Departments
 - c. Foster school-based collaboration between ESL, Title I, Special Education. And Intervention Services to inform decisions about intervention strategies
 - d. Promote (PBIS) training to aid in the enhancement of student achievement
 - e. Support Schools in the use of district tools to identify students with 2 or more "at risk" indicators
 - f. Assist schools with identifying and deploying appropriate supports and interventions for identified at "risk students"

4. Enhance inclusive practices for students with disabilities.

- a. SWDs at the middle school level will be provided an array of services through the middle school model targeting the ID Mild and HFA populations in order to be prepared for 9th grade and participate within the least restrictive environment
- b. SWDs at the elementary level will be provided an array of services through an elementary school model targeting the ID Mild and HFA populations in order to graduate from high school with a diploma and participate within the least restrictive environment
- c. Identify mental health and behavioral services for identified elementary, middle, and high school SWDs at potential targeted sites in order to allow SWDs to participate within the least restrictive environment

5. Address the needs of at-risk preschool children and align and expand development and support of Early Learning Programs.

- a. Create systems and structures to identify and provide supplemental support and progress monitoring to preschool- aged students
- b. Work collaboratively with community partners to seek out and find preschool children who may be in need of special education services (Child Find)
- c. Through the Office of Early Learning, align professional development efforts among programs (Title I Pre-K, Preschool Special Education Services, Project Enlightenment, Ready to Learn and ESL Pre-K)
- d. Support preschool classrooms in completion of Creative Curriculum assessments at the beginning, middle and end of the year
- e. Support schools with preschool classrooms with screenings and interventions, and progress monitoring for children at risk for special education services (Child Find)

Support schools with preschool classrooms with implementation of a social emotional framework (i.e. SEFEL) **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. WCPSS has a history of attracting the best and the brightest to work in the district on behalf of our students. Preparing for the future and developing new leaders is more important than ever. Over the next five years 6.7 percent of our teachers and 12 percent of our principals will be eligible for full retirement. In addition, our district continues to grow, adding between 3500-5000 students annually. We will need more qualified teachers and administrators in place to fill these vacancies and to keep up with growth in the system.

Strategies

1. Develop a comprehensive human capital management system for the district to ensure that we attract, recruit, and retain highly qualified personnel at all levels
2. Manage employee performance using readily available, accurate and timely information
3. Revise compensation structure to focus on performance

Key Processes and 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 Beginning Teacher Support Program (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.
- 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 Comprehensive Needs Assessment and (CNA) and School Improvement Plan. A leadership/SIP team will review data, CNA, root causes, school strengths, areas of concern, and possible solutions. From this, the school will write goals, key processes, and action steps as well as monitoring and evaluation procedures aligned with the strategic plan.
- 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
- Coaches will provide ongoing, site-based, in-the-moment, live training as they support teachers in the implementation of instructional practices

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 when appropriate to retain effective teachers and principals in low-performing schools with unique challenges
- 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.

Focus Area 4: Supportive, Innovative, and 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 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 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. Develop Individual Department Plans of Action and a system of Performance Management and continuous improvement for all areas aligned to the strategic plan
2. Develop a comprehensive Information Technology Strategic plan for the district to enable student achievement and operational efficiency through the deployment of appropriate technical solutions that are equitable across schools regardless of size, age of building or location within the county
3. Develop a long range facilities construction plan that builds schools in a systematic fashion in support of the new student assignment plan and taking advantage of future technology, security and energy saving capabilities
4. Diversify the academic portfolio available to students in the Wake County Public School System by designing novel school models that vary learning environments and provide opportunities for all students to be academically successful.

Key Processes and Actions Steps

- Every central office department will develop an annual work plan with all initiatives tied to the five focus areas
- 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
- 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
- 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 with a focus on providing equitable resources in all buildings regardless of age or location in the county
- 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
- Explore national, state and local models and collaborate with key educators to develop new innovative delivery models
- Cultivate and manage relationships with local education leaders, state officials and external partners to build new and existing school innovation initiatives
- Ensure that innovation programs and schools are rigorously monitored for efficacy, using data that measures student academic growth, graduation rates and percentage of students' college bound.
- Develop standardized criteria to streamline key district processes in school transition and/or start-up

Focus Area 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, in large part attracted by the quality of our school district and the educational opportunities for their children.

WCPSS will go beyond speaking about the importance of parent and community involvement and will proactively engage them, with an intentional focus on reaching 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 provide clear, timely information and tools that keep the community informed and engage them in the WCPSS mission and have all family and community members feel welcome in contributing to the important work and responsibility of preparing our students for the future.

COMMUNICATIONS

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

Key Processes and 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 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.

FAMILY/PARENT INVOLVEMENT

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 and 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 historically underserved populations 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
- Provide monthly workshops to Title I Pre-K families in order to enhance educational support in the home.

COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS

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 and 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

Conclusion

The Superintendent and Board of Education are committed to charting a path for high academic achievement for all students which must build on our proud history as an outstanding district and be supported by a system of continuous improvement. This cycle began with the Board's adopted Mission, Vision and Core Beliefs statements committing to providing a World-Class education where all students are successful at high levels. It will be realized 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.

Striking the right balance between system control and empowerment through a Managed Performance Empowerment 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.