**FIRST DAY FACTS 2016-17**

### What’s New?

- **New math resources for all grade levels**
- **Enhanced school/lobby security access will be installed at eight elementary schools**
- **New principal at Hasty ES Fine Arts Academy: Rodney Larrotta**
- **Adding a school nurse at ACE Academy**
- **New principal at Clark Creek ES STEM Academy: Joey Moss**
- **New principal at Macedonia ES: Dr. Carolyn Daugherty**
- **New principal at Creekview HS: Dr. Mark Merges**
- **Website redesign: http://cherokeek12.net**
- **New principal at Boston ES: Izell McGruder**

### By the Numbers

- **386 buses will transport 70% of students daily on 1,525 routes, covering 4.6 million miles**
- **31% of CCSD students qualify for free or reduced price meals**
- **School cafeterias serve more than 5 million meals**
- **More than 50 native languages are spoken among the CCSD student population**
- **Student Demographics**
  - 70.2% White
  - 16.9% Hispanic
  - 7.3% Black
  - 3.3% Multiple
  - 1.8% Asian
  - <1% Other
- **Special Education department serves more than 500 special needs preschoolers. . .**
- **. . . and more than 4,200 students in grades K-12**
- **5,500 students receive gifted instruction in CCSD schools (about 13% of students)**
- **CCSD facilities total more than 6.5 million square feet**

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**School Year:** August 1—May 25  
**Projected Enrollment:** 41,727  
**Employees:** 4,553 full-time  
**Classroom Teachers:** 2,557

**Schools:**  
- 24 Elementary (K-5)  
- 7 Middle (Grades 6-8)  
- 6 High (Grades 9-12)  
- 4 Centers/Programs

---

“Educating The Emerging Generation”

---

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---

“Educating The Emerging Generation”
**FIRST DAY FACTS 2016-17**

**CHEROKEE COUNTY SCHOOL DISTRICT INNOVATION ZONES**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Cherokee Innovation Zone</th>
<th>Creekview Innovation Zone</th>
<th>Etowah Innovation Zone</th>
<th>River Ridge Innovation Zone</th>
<th>Sequoyah Innovation Zone</th>
<th>Woodstock Innovation Zone</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cherokee HS</td>
<td>Creekview HS</td>
<td>Etowah HS</td>
<td>River Ridge HS</td>
<td>Sequoyah HS</td>
<td>Woodstock HS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teasley MS</td>
<td>Creekland MS</td>
<td>E.T. Booth MS</td>
<td>Mill Creek MS</td>
<td>Dean Rusk MS</td>
<td>Freedom MS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Canton ES</td>
<td>Avery ES</td>
<td>Bascomb ES</td>
<td>Arnold Mill ES</td>
<td>Hickory Flat ES</td>
<td>Woodstock MS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Liberty ES</td>
<td>Ball Ground ES</td>
<td>Boston ES</td>
<td>Johnston ES</td>
<td>Holly Springs ES</td>
<td>Carmel ES</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hasty ES</td>
<td>Free Home ES</td>
<td>Clark Creek ES</td>
<td>Little River ES</td>
<td>Indian Knoll ES</td>
<td>Sixes ES</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Knox ES</td>
<td>Macedonia ES</td>
<td>Oak Grove ES</td>
<td></td>
<td>Mountain Rd ES</td>
<td>Woodstock ES</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Cool Stuff for Parents to Know**

- Parents can monitor grades, assignments and attendance for their students in grades 3-12 through the Aspen Parent Portal. Students access their grades and class information through the Student Portal. Teacher webpages are located within the portal.
- Parents can review the standards by subject area and grade level for Georgia public schools at [www.georgiastandards.org](http://www.georgiastandards.org). CCSD schools have a BYLD (Bring Your Learning Device) program that allows students to bring their web-enabled personal devices (smart phone, tablet, laptop) to the classroom to use for academic purposes. Teachers designate whether a class period is BYLD or not.

**All CCSD schools are equipped with security cameras, and all schools have “panic button” technology in multiple locations. Lock/buzz-in systems control access at each elementary and middle school.**

**Cherokee County students can access free productivity tools at home through Microsoft Office365, including Word, Excel, PowerPoint and One Note. And, each student is provided with a 50G District email account and a 1 terabyte OneDrive for storing personal files at no cost.**

**Each school has an individual School Improvement Plan approved annually by the School Board.**

**The School Board has voted for an increase in the millage rate for school property taxes only ONCE in the last 18 years.**

**Upcoming Issues**

- The Ed-SPLoST penny sales tax renewal for classroom technology and new school construction will be on the ballot for voter approval Nov. 8 as part of the General Election. This extension will focus on debt reduction, classroom additions, technology and acquiring land for future schools.
- Georgia voters will consider a Constitutional Amendment allowing a State takeover of schools it has deemed “failing” in a ballot referendum Nov. 8 (same ballot as Ed-SPLoST). We encourage parents to research the amendment thoroughly before Election Day.
- AdvancED will conduct its 5-year accreditation review of CCSD in February 2017. Formerly known as SACS CASI, AdvancED provides onsite external reviews of K-12 schools and school systems with a focus on school improvement.

**“Educating The Emerging Generation”**

Dr. Brian V. Hightower, Superintendent of Schools 110 Academy Street, Canton, GA 30114 770.479.1871 http://cherokeek12.net
Cherokee County School District (CCSD) is recognized as one of the top school districts in Georgia; and its students, schools and staff routinely receive state and national recognition for programs and performance. While the majority of students (90%) attend a neighborhood school, there are many opportunities for school choice in Cherokee County.

School Reassignment within CCSD

Parents in Cherokee County can apply for school reassignment between February 1 and March 1 each year. Information is posted on the CCSD website February 1 of each year, with all necessary documents and the list of schools with space available to accommodate additional students. Transportation is not provided for students who receive a reassignment. Parents should be aware that students at the high school level may lose eligibility under Georgia High School Association rules for Varsity-level athletics under this type of transfer.

Cherokee Academies

CCSD opened four STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics) Academies and two Fine Arts Academies at elementary schools across the County in 2012. Students at these schools have a more integrated curriculum focused on either STEM or Fine Arts; and all six academies are open to reassignment. The next registration process for these Academies will occur March 15-31. Transportation to the Academies is available to most students via a hub system. One of the STEM Academies, Clark Creek ES, earned State STEM Certification in 2015, the first school in Cherokee County (and the 11th elementary school in Georgia) to achieve this designation.

High School Options

While the majority of high school students complete diploma requirements in a traditional setting, CCSD offers multiple avenues and settings to earn credit toward graduation:

- **Polaris Evening Program** – students attend class on campus in the evening hours.
- **ACE Academy** – an alternative learning environment for middle and high school students to work at their own pace. ACE operates during regular school hours; transportation is provided.
- **Virtual Courses** – students can take courses for initial credit and credit recovery online. CCSD high school students can take advantage of the Georgia Virtual School (GaVS) and our local APEX Learning Program. In 2014-15, more than 3,500 courses were successfully completed by CCSD high school students in these two programs.
- **Move On When Ready (MOWR)** – Qualified high school students can earn high school and college credit simultaneously on a college campus through the Move On When Ready dual-credit program. [MOWR website](http://example.com)

Consult your child’s school counseling office for more information on any of these options.

Other Options

- **Home School**: the State Department of Education now handles Home School enrollment and related paperwork. For information, please see the DOE website at [http://www.gadoe.org/Curriculum-Instruction-and-Assessment/Pages/Home-Schools.aspx](http://www.gadoe.org/Curriculum-Instruction-and-Assessment/Pages/Home-Schools.aspx)
- **Private School**: there are a number of private schools located in and near Cherokee County.
- **Charter School**: Cherokee Charter Academy is the only charter school with a campus in Cherokee County; there are several statewide virtual charter schools, as well. Cherokee Charter Academy was approved by the Georgia Charter School Commission and is not affiliated with CCSD.
How Do Cherokee County Schools Perform?

Cherokee County Schools consistently perform above State and National averages on all assessments. Note... CCSD assessment data for all schools is posted on the CCSD website for the public to review and is updated throughout the year: http://cherokeek12.net/open-ccsd/student-assessment-reports/

2016 ACT AVERAGE SCORES

- CCSD 23.1
- GEORGIA 21.1
- NATION 20.8

2016 SAT AVERAGE SCORES

- CCSD 1577
- GEORGIA 1459
- NATION 1484

- Four-year graduation rate: 85%
- Five-year graduation rate: 89%
- HOPE eligible graduates: 56%
- Advanced Placement (AP) pass rate: 70%
- CCSD graduates in college remedial classes: 10%

CCSD’s district average SAT and ACT scores routinely rank it as one of the Top 5 school districts in GA

Do Private Schools Perform Better?

Private schools are not subject to transparency or open records requirements; so, it is up to the individual school whether it will release test results or other information. As a consumer, it is up to you to ask for comparative data and then use that information to determine if the school is a good fit for your child.
Do Charter Schools Perform Better?
Charter schools were conceived as incubators of innovation, envisioned as small schools where teachers were freed from bureaucratic restraints and empowered to utilize various teaching methods and techniques to increase student achievement. The best practices gleaned from charter schools were then intended to be introduced to traditional public schools so all students could benefit.

While the scope and purpose of charter schools has shifted now to being primarily a vehicle of school choice and/or privatization, the State still requires that charter schools be held accountable for increasing academic achievement. Results for charter schools both in Georgia and across the Nation have been mixed in this regard, with little concrete evidence that students are consistently performing better in charter schools. Start-up charter schools in Georgia continue to lag behind traditional public schools (source: Georgia Charter Schools Division 2015-16 Annual Report).

While knowing the state and national outlook is helpful, what can Cherokee County families determine? In 2013, the State of Georgia premiered its first index score of school performance, called the College and Career Readiness Performance Index (CCRPI), which is intended to be a more comprehensive measure of student achievement and progress than a mere set of test scores. Using the CCRPI for 2016, Cherokee Charter Academy (a State Commission-approved start-up charter school) ranked 14th among CCSD’s 24 elementary schools and below six of seven CCSD middle schools. CCA’s one year of high school performance in 2013-14 ranked last behind all six CCSD high schools. The overall score for CCSD of 81.6 exceeded the overall score for Cherokee Charter Academy, which was 77.6. The Georgia average overall score is 73.6.

Measuring CCA against the CCSD countywide average is not the most accurate comparison because of the significant difference in student demographics. CCA has a much smaller percentage of low-income families, few English Learner (EL) students, and the ratio of students with disabilities is lower at CCA. Using free and reduced lunch eligibility and comparing CCA to CCSD schools more similar in demographics reveals a wider gap in achievement between the charter school and similar traditional public schools.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CCRPI</th>
<th>2016 SCORE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CCSD DISTRICT OVERALL</td>
<td>81.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CHEROKEE CHARTER OVERALL</td>
<td>77.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GEORGIA AVERAGE OVERALL</td>
<td>73.6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS</th>
<th>2016 CCRPI SCORE</th>
<th>2016 FREE/REDUCED LUNCH %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>SIXES ES</td>
<td>83.3</td>
<td>12.81%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HICKORY FLAT ES</td>
<td>88.4</td>
<td>12.95%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MOUNTAIN ROAD ES</td>
<td>83.3</td>
<td>18.58%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AVERY ES</td>
<td>87.1</td>
<td>19.53%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CHEROKEE CHARTER</td>
<td>78.4</td>
<td>21.57%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ARNOLD MILL ES</td>
<td>77.5</td>
<td>22.25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LIBERTY ES</td>
<td>81.3</td>
<td>23.34%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>KNOX ES</td>
<td>78.3</td>
<td>28.35%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>INDIAN KNOLL ES</td>
<td>78.8</td>
<td>31.97%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>MIDDLE SCHOOL</th>
<th>2016 CCRPI SCORE</th>
<th>2016 FREE/REDUCED LUNCH %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>FREEDOM MS</td>
<td>80.6</td>
<td>15.31%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CREEKLAND MS</td>
<td>84.4</td>
<td>16.86%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CHEROKEE CHARTER</td>
<td>75.1</td>
<td>21.57%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DEAN RUSK MS</td>
<td>82.1</td>
<td>26.21%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BOOTH MS</td>
<td>86.4</td>
<td>28.6%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

CCRPI scores for all 37 CCSD schools can be found on the DOE website at http://ccrpi.gadoe.org/2016/
T eacher Quality and Retention

Georgia State University completed a study of the performance of State Charter Schools in Georgia for 2014-15 for the Governor’s Office of Student Achievement (GOSA) and the State Charter Commission, published in May of 2016. The report notes that comparing charter schools to traditional schools is problematic because the conscious decision to attend a charter school could reflect the attributes of the students and their families, rather than the school they attend, giving an upward bias to the performance of some state charter schools. In order to compensate for such complexities, researchers utilized multiple methods of comparison, including the new Georgia Student Growth Model and a Value-Added model for a more accurate assessment of the actual effect of the school on student achievement. These measures are meant to mitigate the impact of a student’s demographic and socio-economic background on his/her achievement level. The full report can be reviewed on the Charter Commission website [here](https://scsc.georgia.gov/contact-commission).

P. 73—Key Findings for Cherokee Charter Academy

“In general, Cherokee Charter Academy’s performance is strong in middle school ELA and social studies, but its performance in elementary school math is weak relative to both the district and the state.”

A report on findings for 2016 should be released this spring.

For more recent information on Cherokee Charter Academy’s performance, contact the Georgia Charter School Commission.

https://scsc.georgia.gov/contact-commission

Teacher Quality and Retention

Charter schools nationally have struggled with high teacher turnover. CCSD’s teacher turnover rate is 7% annually, versus a Statewide average of 11%. The average CCSD teacher has 14 years of experience, holds a masters degree and earns a salary of $59,711. The average teacher at Cherokee Charter Academy has a bachelor’s degree, five years of experience and earns $41,868, with annual turnover rates exceeding 30%.

Source: GOSA and CSUSA

Student Funding

State charter schools do not receive local funds, but they do receive a double allotment of state funds that in many cases exceeds what their revenue from local property taxes would be. In FY2016, Cherokee Charter received $8,712 per student in total funding, compared to CCSD’s receipt of $8,437. View details [here](https://scsc.georgia.gov/contact-commission).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>2016 PER STUDENT FUNDING</th>
<th>STATE</th>
<th>LOCAL</th>
<th>FEDERAL</th>
<th>TOTAL</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CCSD</td>
<td>$4,597</td>
<td>$3,509</td>
<td>$ 331</td>
<td>$8,437</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CHEROKEE CHARTER</td>
<td>$8,020</td>
<td>$ 426</td>
<td>$ 266</td>
<td>$8,712</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: DOE online revenue reports

### Measuring Student Growth

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PERCENTAGE OF STUDENTS READING AT OR ABOVE STATE GRADE TARGET</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>2016</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5TH GRADE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8TH GRADE</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### STUDENT GROWTH PERCENTILES (SGP)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>2016</th>
<th>CCSD</th>
<th>CCA</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>READING</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MATH</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SCIENCE</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SOCIAL STUDIES</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>58</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

SGPs describe the amount of growth a student has demonstrated in one year relative to academically-similar students from across the state. State average is 50.

### MIDDLE SCHOOLS FOCUSED ON ACHIEVEMENT

CCSD middle schools help students get a jump on high school credits by offering challenging classes for high school credit to eligible 8th graders. These courses (13 in all for 2016-17) include fine arts classes (band, drama, chorus, visual arts and orchestra); physical science; foreign language (Spanish, French, Latin, German and Chinese); algebra I and accelerated algebra and geometry; business technology; and drafting.
CCSD Public Schools Offer:

- Award-winning, high-achieving schools that consistently win region, state and national recognition and awards
- AdvancED accreditation as a Quality School System
- School Choice within the District
- Elementary STEM and Fine Arts Academies
- Professionally staffed and trained School Nurses
- Counselors at every school
- Transportation to zoned school, transportation hubs for Academies
- Certified School Police Department
- High school credit courses for advanced 8th graders, along with middle school foreign language
- Middle school band and chorus, plus intramural sports, basketball teams and cheer programs
- Affordable lunches and After School programs
- Nationally recognized classroom technology integration and teacher training
- Kindergarten paraprofessionals
- School-based Pre-K at select sites
- Character Education at all grade levels
- Full range of high school athletics, fine arts and academic competition teams/programs
- 31 AP courses offered; 70% of CCSD students achieved AP scores in 2016 to qualify for college credit
- AP STEM and STEM Achievement high schools
- 9th Grade Academies for freshmen
- Evening and online high school credit options
- Elected School Board members for fiscal/policy transparency, accountability and local control; accessible open meetings of the Board
- School Councils and PTAs at every school for parent input and participation
- Comprehensive website for parents and community, including online access to School Board agenda materials, financial reports, budget documents and test score reports
- BYLD initiative allowing students to bring and use their own technology in class
- Access to 21st century technology in every CCSD school... including desktops, tablets, laptops and mobile devices, student response devices, interactive whiteboards, high speed and filtered internet access, research and curricular digital resources
- Opportunities for students to explore technology-enriched careers and/or fields of study including video broadcast, robotics, engineering, 3-D modeling, architecture and design, computer programming, as well as app and game development
- Teachers who have had and continue to have extensive and ongoing professional development experiences and opportunities that enrich student learning, innovation and creativity
- Family Portal for online access to student grades and attendance
- Student Portal for online access, e-mail accounts, free software programs and Cloud storage
- Online MealPay program to make payments, check lunch account balances and monitor purchases
- Active, open social media outlets for news and information, including Facebook and Twitter
- General Administration costs that rank among the lowest in Georgia
- Senior Project Initiative, launched in 2006, to add rigor and relevance to the senior year, in preparation for college
- Nationally recognized Parental Awareness for Safe Schools program (PASS) and Parent Emergency Response Team (PERT) programs available in each school and Innovation Zone
- High school foreign language options include French, German, Mandarin Chinese, Spanish and Latin. Additional 5th-year offerings include Honors/AP French, Spanish and Latin. American Sign Language is an additional option in some schools.
- Average classroom teaching experience: 14 years; 68% of CCSD teachers have earned a master’s, specialist or doctoral degree; annual teacher turnover of less than 7%.
- STEM elective for eighth-graders in robotics and design
- 8th grade STEM partnership with Georgia Institute of Technology

http://cherokeek12.net/ 770.479.1871
SAT 2016

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>READING</th>
<th>MATH</th>
<th>WRITING</th>
<th>TOTAL SCORE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CCSD</td>
<td>531</td>
<td>531</td>
<td>515</td>
<td>1577</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>STATE</td>
<td>493</td>
<td>490</td>
<td>476</td>
<td>1459</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NATION</td>
<td>494</td>
<td>508</td>
<td>482</td>
<td>1484</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

CONSISTENT QUALITY

All six CCSD High Schools are in the top 50 scoring high schools in Georgia, with total scores less than 3 percent apart:

26. Woodstock HS
29. Cherokee HS
30. Creekview HS
32. Sequoyah HS
40. Etowah HS
44. River Ridge HS

There are 448 public high schools in Georgia

TOP 5 SCHOOL DISTRICTS IN GA BY SAT SCORE

1. Oconee County Schools | 1603
2. Forsyth County Schools | 1584
3. Cherokee County School District | 1577
4. Decatur City Schools | 1571
5. Fayette County School District | 1567

Number One Among Metro Atlanta School Districts!

By subject area, CCSD ranks:

- 2nd in Writing
- 3rd in Mathematics
- 4th in Critical Reading

Among 180 public school districts in Georgia

Dr. Brian V. Hightower, Superintendent of Schools
Kyla Cromer, School Board Chair
Patsy Jordan, School Board Vice Chair
Board Members: Mike Chapman, John Harmon, Clark Menard, Kelly Poole, and Robert Rechsteiner
http://cherokee12.net
CCSD saw a 12% increase in the number of students taking the ACT compared to 2015; and, more CCSD students took the ACT in 2016 than took the SAT in 2015.

⇒ The average ACT score for CCSD’s six traditional high schools varies by less than 6%, indicating a consistent quality of education and preparation across the county for all students.

⇒ All six CCSD high schools ranked in the top 60 (of more than 400 high schools in Georgia), placing them all in the top 15% statewide; and,

⇒ Even the CCSD high school with the lowest score would rank 10th in the State if compared as a school district.

Dr. Brian V. Hightower, Superintendent of Schools
Kyla Cromer, School Board Chair
Patsy Jordan, School Board Vice Chair
Board Members: Mike Chapman, John Harmon, Clark Menard, Kelly Poole, and Robert Rechsteiner
http://cherokeek12.net
2017 LEGISLATIVE PARTNERSHIP PRIORITIES

PRIORITY #1: Partner with K-12 public school districts by requiring any changes to the State's education funding formula to fully restore "austerity budget cuts" or provide for the equivalent in new state revenue ... thereby empowering local School Boards to: address continued student population growth in Georgia; maintain a 180-day school calendar for students; reduce class sizes to State-funded maximums; and, replenish annual reserve fund balances.

Locally-earned Quality Basic Education (QBE) formula funding was fully provided to local school districts by the Georgia General Assembly for 15 years with initial funding beginning in 1986-87 and continuing thereafter until 2002.

CCSD FACTS: Since 2002, $205.2M ($3.9M this year and $84M over the past five years) of statutorily-required QBE formula funding earned by CCSD has gone unfunded through austerity budget cuts ... all during a time when CCSD student enrollment increased by more than 53% (14,527 students).

PRIORITY #2: Partner with K-12 public school districts and their employees by addressing cost-prohibitive premiums and out-of-pocket expenses for participation in the State Health Benefit Plan (SHBP) ... thereby empowering local School Boards to provide competitive, affordable and responsible health and benefit packages to their employees.

Develop a statewide strategy for State Health Benefit Plan cost containment ... rather than continuing to pass annual premium increases along to local school districts and their employees. State-level policy planning and budgeting, and the appropriation of necessary funding in this regard, are critically needed to address immediate and future healthcare needs of educators, non-certified staff and educational system retirees.

• Between FY2008 and FY2017, State appropriations for non-certified health insurance premiums have been systemically reduced and are slated for total elimination. Non-certified employees most often represent local school district's' lowest wage-earners and have been the most negatively impacted by the State's recent actions in this regard.

• SHBP is currently projected to operate with an annual deficit of more than $55 Million in FY 2018, signifying probable continued premium increases under current policy and planning.

• Extraordinary employee health care costs (in the form of significantly higher premiums and out-of-pocket expenses for deductibles, annual maximums, reduced credits and co-insurance expenses) continue to erode the quality and competitiveness of the overall compensation package developed by local school districts for its employees.

CCSD FACTS: While CCSD had approximately 350 fewer non-certified employees participating in SHBP in FY2016 compared to FY2009, employer contributions increased over $7M (from $3.6 to $10.7M) during that same time period.

CCSD has been forced to privatize custodial and grounds services and increase the use of part-time/temporary workers for non-certified staffing as cost-reduction measures. The annual cost of providing health insurance for a non-certified employee has risen from $2,000 in 2010 to $9,000 in 2016 ... a $7,000, or 450% increase! And with an additional $100 per employee per month increase effective Jan 2017, the cost of providing health insurance for a non-certified employee will increase to $846.20 per month and more than $10,000 per year.

CCSD benefit costs for non-certified employees are projected to be $11.7M for 2016-17; up from $10.7M in 2015-16; $8.2M in 2014-15 and $7.5M in 2013-14. Local school systems cannot continue to absorb these extraordinary costs.
PRIORITY #3: Partner with K-12 public school districts by ensuring proposed legislative initiatives strengthen provisions for the local control and management of schools . . . thereby empowering local School Boards to fulfill their Constitutional authority and responsibility to involve their local constituency, develop locally-derived educational policy and oversee continued performance improvements among their students.

CCSD FACTS: CCSD and its highly-respected School Board has garnered multiple State and National awards relative to student achievement gains and innovative educational programs. Through a model of determining a visioning Mission Statement, a prioritized listing of Major System Priorities and collaborative, governance-based policies, the CCSD School Board has a transparent and proven ability to guide its schools in exemplary teaching and learning.

PRIORITY #4: Partner with K-12 public school districts by developing statutory provisions to further insure workforce readiness skills and preparation by high school graduates for transitions directly into careers or secondary-level career educational opportunities by providing students in Georgia with an alternative diploma option in the area of Technical/Career Preparation.

PRIORITY #5: Partner with K-12 public school districts by implementing statutory provisions designed to address continued erosion of the State’s tax base through exemptions from the sales and use tax, income tax and other State taxes.

PRIORITY #6: Partner with K-12 public school districts by opposing the continuation and/or expansion of existing programs that directly or indirectly use public funds to pay private school tuition for students or provide tax incentives for their parents.

PRIORITY #7: Partner with K-12 public school districts by insuring timely, state and local access to all federal funding allocations.
DESCRIPTION OF THE SCHOOL: Describe the school’s size, community/communities, location and changes it has experienced in the last three years. Include demographic information about the students, staff and community at large. What unique features and challenges are associated with the community/communities the school serves? (6000 character limit)

The Cherokee County School District, as Georgia’s ninth-largest school system, builds upon a foundation of blue-ribbon excellence by focusing on the mission of “Educating the Emerging Generation.”

Home to more than 236,000 residents and ranking seventh in population among Georgia counties, Cherokee attracts homeowners with its family friendly reputation and “Where Metro Meets the Mountains” location.

While the high quality of CCSD schools, proximity to Atlanta and north Georgia mountains and strong public safety top the list of attractive features, unique selling points include historical sites, natural beauty and opportunity for sports and recreation.

Founded in 1831, Cherokee retains many of its original communities and celebrates its rich history, including its Cherokee Indian heritage, role in the cotton, marble, poultry and railroad industries and birthplace of leaders such as U.S. Secretary of State Dean Rusk and Gov. Joseph E. Brown.

The Etowah River runs through Cherokee, which is home to Allatoona Lake… one of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers’ most popular properties, as well as two local reservoirs set in recreation areas, and expanding holdings of parks land, athletic facilities and greenspace.

A popular saying in Cherokee is “no matter your zip code, you’ll find outstanding public schools – just choose the lifestyle you want”: cosmopolitan downtown Woodstock, Towne Lake’s golf neighborhoods, Allatoona lakeside homes, equestrian communities to the east, Canton’s historic district, mountainside homes to the north… and many choices in between.

The county’s school system, ranging from grammar schools to rural one-room schoolhouses, was established in 1886, growing in 1956 with the merger of the Canton city system and in 1967 with
the addition of the African-American community’s high school. Today, CCSD includes 41 schools and centers, as well as award-winning alternative high school and Cherokee Academies school choice programs.

During the 1990s-2000s housing boom, Cherokee consistently ranked among the fastest-growing counties in the Nation... and CCSD’s student enrollment increased just as rapidly. While the Recession provided a respite, pre-existing “pipe farms” now are quickly transforming into new neighborhoods, and enrollment’s rising along with it. The School District’s enrollment has grown from 16,000 students in 1990 to 41,169 in 2016 – 157%, with a rate of 5% over the last three years (2,088 students).

The community’s changing demographics are reflected in CCSD’s enrollment, with 69% Caucasian, 18% Hispanic, 7% Black, 2% Asian/Pacific Islander and 4% two or more races. Cherokee County since 1990 has seen an influx of immigrants from Mexico and Central America to work in construction, poultry processing and agriculture, also reflected in CCSD’s 6% of students from households where English is a second language (54 different languages are spoken in students’ homes).

The percentage of students qualifying to receive free or reduced-price lunch, which hit a high of 1 in 3 during the Recession, has dipped to 30%; while the local economy is improving, many still struggle. Seven CCSD schools operate as Title I programs.

The School District is the community’s largest employer, with 4,500 full-time employees and another 1,000 part-time and at-will employees. More than 75% of CCSD’s certified employees hold advanced degrees; the average CCSD teacher has 14 years of experience and a master’s degree.

Attracting and retaining high-quality teachers is a National challenge, but CCSD has positioned itself well through the development of a stellar reputation, competitive packages (fifth-highest average teacher salary in the State), Districtwide mindset of supporting and encouraging employees and consistent recruitment. The School District’s annual teacher attrition rate is 7%, as compared to the State’s 11%.

Despite significant State “austerity budget cuts” and declining Local property tax revenue already hindered by a residential-heavy tax base, CCSD has maintained financial stability and its focus on teaching and learning... 67.5% of the budget is dedicated to classroom instruction. While at the height of the Recession, CCSD used furlough days and increased class size to weather the storm, the School Board since has eliminated furloughs and steadily returned class size to nearly pre-Recession levels. The School Board recently reduced the millage rate to 19.45, and maintains reserves at 12-15% levels. The $451.9 Million budget receives 52% of its funding from Local, 46% from State and 2% from Federal revenue.

In order to construct new and replacement schools to house skyrocketing enrollment and develop a Districtwide technology program, a blue ribbon committee of local leaders in 2000
recommended a system of Education SPLOST (Special Purpose Local Option Sales Tax) and bonds to fund more than $500 Million in capital costs in 15 years. The community agreed and has since renewed this plan three times, most recently in November with 73% approval... 78,796 voters said “yes,” more than the three previous renewals combined.

The past year has brought significant change and excitement to CCSD, with the appointment of the first new Superintendent of Schools in 18 years! Dr. Brian V. Hightower, who now has served CCSD for 30 years, took office on Feb. 1. Since taking office, he has led the update of more than 50 School Board policies, the implementation of the Strategic Waiver School System plan, the development of the Instructional Framework for teaching and assessment expectations, the redesign of numerous important facets of operations such as the Strategic Plan, School Improvement Plans, website, branding and mission statement and other significant initiatives.

Dr. Hightower’s vision for CCSD is continuous improvement, building on a foundation of success and blue-ribbon reputation and encouraging leadership districtwide to accomplish the mission of “Educating the Emerging Generation.”

SCHOOL’S PURPOSE: Provide the school’s purpose statement and ancillary content such as mission, vision, values and/or beliefs. Describe how the school embodies its purpose through its program offerings and expectations for students. (6000 character limit)

The Cherokee County School District’s full Mission Statement, which is annually reviewed by the School Board along with its Belief Statements and Major System Priorities, was revised this summer to state:

“We, the School Board of the Cherokee County School District, are committed to educating the emerging generation through learning environments designed to increase the performance of all students.”

The abbreviated mission mantra of “Educating the Emerging Generation,” since adoption this summer, has been embedded throughout the District... from the top of the website to the top of the minds of teachers, administrators and leaders in all that they do.

The Mission Statement is based on a set of Belief Statements, which are reviewed by the School Board during its annual leadership retreat and serve as standards for CCSD leadership planning:

1. All students deserve the opportunity to learn, achieve success and become productive citizens.
2. Education/learning is a shared responsibility and should take place in the home, at school and in the community.
3. All students can learn; but they learn in different ways, at different rates and with different preferential learning styles.
4. Learning is achieved through the use of a variety of effective teaching techniques.
5. A safe and secure environment is essential for teaching and learning.
6. All students should be taught by teachers and parents how to learn and how to become lifelong learners. All students deserve equal access to a quality education.
7. Quality education requires quality staff, programs, facilities, equipment and technology.
8. Parent and community participation, support and responsibility are essential to the positive social, emotional, cultural and academic development of every student.
9. Student achievement is enhanced through partnerships with parents, businesses, community-based organizations and agencies, local institutions of higher learning and other public entities.
10. All policy, administrative, instructional and educational support decisions should be based on student needs and what is best for students.
11. Diversity should be promoted so that isolation of racial, ethnic and socioeconomic groups is avoided and education is enhanced in a diverse, inclusive setting.
12. All schools should be accountable for improving student achievement.
13. All schools should reflect school-based, participatory management.
14. All students must be prepared to function effectively in a knowledge-based, technologically-rich and culturally-diverse 21st century.
15. All staff should have access to results-driven professional development and training which is aligned with the School Board’s Major System Priorities and School Improvement Plans. Such professional development and training must be standards-based, job-imbedded, collaborative and build an organizational culture that insures continuous improvement.

The Belief Statements inform the Major System Priorities, which are reviewed by the School Board during its annual leadership retreat and guide the annual update of CCSD’s Five-Year Strategic Plan:

1. Establishing internationally competitive standards for student performance and an accountability system and policy framework designed to insure that all students are challenged individually and collectively to meet more rigorous standards.
2. In collaboration with technical colleges, other institutions of higher learning and the local business community, insuring that vocational/technical education programs prepare students for a diverse and technologically rich society.
3. Insuring that all students and staff have a safe and secure environment for teaching and learning.
4. Attracting, retaining, and training the best teachers, principals, and support staff.
5. Utilizing technology both to improve student achievement and to increase the school district’s productivity and efficiency as a major business enterprise.
6. Increasing parental and community involvement through public engagement policies and practices that treat parents, businesses, community-based organizations and agencies, local institutions of higher learning and other public entities as true partners in the educational process.
7. Addressing exploding student population growth, recognizing that there is a large gap between the school district’s facilities and technology needs and available capital outlay revenue.

These statements – Mission Statement, Belief Statements and Major System Priorities – are showcased in CCSD’s websites, publications and communications, and the messages are consistently delivered to leaders, administrators, teachers, students, parents, volunteers, partners and the community at large.

These statements guide all aspects of School District operations, decision-making processes and strategic planning, with expectations in that regard communicated in united messages by the School Board and the Superintendent, not only through publications, written communications and meeting addresses, but also through the annual CCSD Leadership Symposium retreat and workshop.

Adherence to these statements is evidenced in the Annual Report of District Progress, which assesses performance based on the Strategic Plan and Major System Priorities, and School Improvement Plans, which additionally are informed by “gap analyses” of and site visits to demographically like schools in CCSD and surrounding communities and School Council input; student academic performance on State and National assessments; teacher and leader performance on TKES and LKES assessments; parent survey responses and communication; and volunteer and partner engagement and involvement.

**NOTABLE ACHIEVEMENTS AND AREAS OF IMPROVEMENT:** Describe the school’s notable achievements and areas of improvement in the last three years. Additionally, describe areas for improvement that the school is striving to achieve in the next three years. (6000 character limit)

The Cherokee County School District is recognized nationally for its leadership in developing model standards and academic school choice initiatives, effective use of instructional and business technology, successful community engagement and collaborative strategic planning. These elements all contribute to students’ exceptional performance on National exams, schools’ presence on National ranking lists and District, school, student and staff achievement of top honors.

While each school’s two 3-year School Improvement Plan goals must be measurable, align with CCSD’s Strategic Plan and be adopted by the School Board, the process is community driven... goals vary by school, such as one school’s focus on increasing early childhood literacy versus another’s targeted graduation rate goal. At the District level, top goals for the next three years include fully implementing Instructional Framework standards for teaching and assessment, maximizing Strategic Waiver School System flexibility for optimizing resources, furthering business technology use to improve operations, and attracting and retaining the best workforce.
A leader in developing standards, CCSD created local standards for student knowledge mastery, which served as a blueprint for the State and continue to inform instruction; and developed a career education program, including a capstone Senior Project, which influenced the State’s Career Pathways initiative. For its innovations in academic school choice, CCSD has twice won National recognition from the American School Board Journal’s MAGNA Award Program recognizing outstanding programs that advance learning... most recently in 2015 for its Cherokee Academies.

The Cherokee Academies initiative, launched in 2012-13, creates school-wide specialized programs at 6 elementary schools – four STEM Academies and two integrated Fine Arts Academies -- with open districtwide enrollment and transportation. Academies not only provide additional resources to these Title I schools, but also incubate new instructional methods, resources and equipment for subsequent sharing as “best practices” districtwide.

Canton Elementary School STEM Academy in November 2016 was named the State’s top elementary school for STEM education by the Technology Association of Georgia (TAG)... a significant achievement for a traditional elementary school – even more so for a Title I school. Additionally, Clark Creek Elementary School STEM Academy – one of only a dozen State-certified STEM elementary schools -- was named a State finalist for a TAG top honor. The School District also now is in the midst of a U.S. Department of Education-funded $1.9 Million competitive grant project to study integrated arts model outcomes.

The School District in March for the 11th time was named one of the top 10 large school systems nationwide by the Center for Digital Education and the National School Boards Association for its effective use of technology in education. This recognizes CCSD’s successful use of technology including integration of mobile devices and technology into curriculum such as Bring Your Learning Device, iPad labs and 3D technology; the Open CCSD online public information warehouse; Microsoft Innovation Educator certification of teachers, classrooms and schools and Apple Vanguard certification; and operational efficiency and communications technology such substitute teacher scheduling, application and payroll management systems and an emergency notification system for parents.

Efficiency in all arenas is an area of continuous improvement for CCSD, as evidenced by being one of only 14 districts in the Nation to win the 2015 U.S. Department of Education Green Ribbon School District Sustainability Award for exemplary efforts to reduce environmental impact and utility costs, promote better health, and ensure effective environmental education.

The School District consistently achieves success in parent and community engagement initiatives, and one measure is 100% school participation in PTA and the election of numerous CCSD parents to State and National roles including the current Georgia PTA President. The School District also is home to the 2015-17 National PTA School of Excellence: Hickory Flat Elementary School.
The result of this effort to work efficiently and collaboratively shows in the academic success of students and teachers throughout the District:

CCSD’s Class of 2016 average SAT Score increased to 1577, No. 1 in metro Atlanta and 3rd in Georgia, exceeding the National average by 93 points;

CCSD’s Class of 2016 average ACT score increased to 23.1, ranking in Georgia’s top 5 and exceeding the National average of 20.8. Seven CCSD seniors are 2017 National Merit Scholarship semi-finalists;

CCSD for the 5th consecutive year exceeded the State’s average under the College and Career Ready Performance Index system... and increased its average score by more than 3 points;

CCSD is one of only 6 Georgia school systems on The College Board’s 2015 Sixth Annual AP District Honor Roll... CCSD’s 3rd consecutive year earning the distinction;

CCSD’s Class of 2015 exceeded National and State averages on rigorous Advanced Placement (AP) exams and earned Georgia’s 3rd-highest passage rate;

CCSD’s high schools all made The Washington Post’s “America’s Most Challenging High Schools” list, 2 were named to U.S. News and World Report’s “Best High Schools in America” list and all are Georgia AP STEM or AP STEM Achievement Schools;

Twenty-seven CCSD schools (up from 24) made the Governor’s 2016 SHAPE (Student Health and Physical Education) Honor Roll, reflecting their commitment to fitness and nutrition... CCSD claimed 12% of Georgia’s honorees; and,

CCSD’s leaders include Georgia’s 2016 Distinguished Principal, Middle School Principal of the Year, National Distinguished Assistant Principal and School Bell Award Principal; two 2016 Character.org Promising Practices Award-winning Principals; and Georgia’s 2014 High School Principal of the Year!

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION: Provide any additional information you would like to share with the public and community that was not prompted in the previous sections. (6000 Character Limit)

The 2011 AdvancED Quality Assurance Review Team recommended CCSD for District Re-Accreditation as a Quality School System, with two required actions:

- As part of the District annual review and update of the Five Year Strategic Plan: Clearly define timelines; Identify means for monitoring progress; and Identify metrics for evaluating effectiveness.
• As part of the annual review and update of the Five Year Strategic Plan, include a professional development plan in 5-year strategic plan that aligns with: System priorities; Strategic planning; and School Improvement planning.

The Team also issued Standards Ratings of Highly Functional for Vision and Purpose; Governance and Leadership; Teaching and Learning and Commitment to Continuous Improvement; and Operational for Documenting and Using Results; Resources and Support Systems; and Stakeholder Communication and Relationships.

Following this review, CCSD implemented strategies to specifically address the required actions and areas not rated Highly Functional.

In regard to CCSD’s Five-Year Strategic Plan, an annual review process began involving District-level leaders, but also employees from all levels, community leaders and parents. This review culminated in an updated plan presented for public review prior to School Board adoption.

A major overhaul of the Strategic Plan was initiated this summer, with a goal of aligning CCSD goals with AdvancED’s Standards for Quality School Systems. This process began with close examination by District-level leaders of every domain, action step and metric in the existing plan. Every element was reviewed to determine relevance, and all retained content was reorganized by AdvancED standards.

All of this work led to a more useful document for all levels of CCSD leadership and one that can be easily understood by the community at large. An important part of the process was conducting presentations at School Council Meetings throughout CCSD, and taking that feedback from staff, parents and partners into account during the revision process.

A similar process was undertaken at the school level through the Strategic Plan-aligned revision of School Improvement Plan, with an end goal of focusing on two, 3-year measurable goals supported by staff, parents and partners.

Three significant actions in the past year addressed improving documentation and using results: shifting Assessment staff to the Division of Educational Programs, a logical move joining instruction and assessment; conducting a “gap analysis” comparing CCSD schools to demographically like schools within CCSD and neighboring counties to identify “best practices” for adoption; and approving the Instructional Framework: expectations guiding how teachers design instruction and assess student learning. This strong focus on documentation and use of results also is clearly evident in CCSD’s recently established Strategic Waiver School System plan, which outlines specific achievement benchmarks and timelines.

The value of professional development has been heightened in response to the Team’s review, with a greater focus on ensuring training aligns with CCSD’s Strategic Plan and School Improvement Plans and the mindset that opportunities for continuous self-improvement should be afforded to all employees.
The newly appointed Superintendent made “growing leaders” an important theme for his first year, and carried out this belief through actions.

These actions included development of a Superintendent’s Leadership Symposium featuring a National leadership speaker and District leadership presentations; quarterly leadership meetings offering District staff the opportunity to present to peers and colleagues; and monthly Cardinal Directions newsletters sharing his recent leadership readings.

The Superintendent also directed improvements to existing programs, such as the Superintendent’s Leadership Academy administrator development workshops, Camp Cherokee new teacher orientation and a major expansion of instructional technology professional development. The District achieved a National reputation for its successful Microsoft Innovative Educators (MIE) and Experts and certified classrooms and schools training... claiming the world’s first certified elementary and middle schools, as well as its development of a CCSD Apple Vanguard elite program. This support has extended to the Superintendent personally, who completed MIE training along with his senior staff and support staff.

Stakeholder communications and relationships have dramatically improved in last five years, and Dr. Hightower views this as one of his most important roles as CEO.

The District has significantly enhanced use of electronic communications – through a new website designed in-house focused on parents’ needs, 15,000+ Facebook followers, 11,000+ Twitter followers and increased internal and external e-newsletters; and the adoption of a Districtwide emergency parent notification system (text, email and phone).

The District’s extensive communications publications now consistently win top honors from the Georgia School Public Relations Association, with CCSD claiming four “best in the state” titles in the past four years.

The District strongly supports community engagement through PTA, with 100% school participation and Superintendent support including meeting attendance and State conference presentations on collaboration; School Councils, with new opportunities for input, leadership and CCSD committee service; and recently established annual Partner of the Year and Volunteer of the Year Awards, recognizing outstanding partners and volunteers at the school and district level.

As woven throughout this document -- and CCSD’s operations -- the Superintendent and School Board believe continuous improvement only is achieved through openness to self- and external assessment and willingness to change in response to best serve students... and fulfill CCSD’s mission of “Educating the Emerging Generation.”
Domain I: PURPOSE AND DIRECTION

Strategic Statement: The School District will maintain and communicate at all levels of the organization a purpose and direction for continuous improvement that commits to high expectations for learning, as well as shared values and beliefs about teaching and learning.

Domain II: GOVERNANCE AND LEADERSHIP

Strategic Statement: The School District will operate under governance and leadership that promotes and supports successful, positive student performance and system effectiveness.

Domain III: TEACHING AND ASSESSING FOR LEARNING

Strategic Statement: The School District will utilize its curriculum, instructional design and assessment practices to guide and ensure teacher effectiveness and student learning across all grades and courses.

Domain IV: RESOURCES AND SUPPORT SYSTEMS

Strategic Statement: The School District will seek, evaluate and utilize effective resources and provide quality services that support its purpose and direction to ensure success for all students in all schools.

Domain V: USING RESULTS FOR CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT

Strategic Statement: The School District will implement a comprehensive assessment system that generates a range of data about student learning and system effectiveness and utilize the results to guide continuous improvement.
Domain I: PURPOSE AND DIRECTION

Strategic Statement: The School District will maintain and communicate at all levels of the organization a purpose and direction for continuous improvement that commits to high expectations for learning, as well as shared values and beliefs about teaching and learning.

SYSTEMIC FOCUS 1: Increasing student achievement

ACTION STEPS
- Revisit/revise mission and vision statements, as well as Major System Priorities. (School Board: annually)
- Review and revise School Improvement Plans. (Schools: annually)
- Develop and implement an Instructional Framework to define and identify research-based effective teaching strategies and professional practices for teachers across the district. (School Board adoption in December 2016)
- Adopt and implement a Learning Management System to enhance individualized classroom instruction and support teachers with a high-quality student and parent information/communication resource. (Staff: Pilot in fall, 2016; expansion in spring, 2017; full implementation in fall, 2017)
- Conduct an annual analysis of student achievement in accordance with the Strategic Waiver Systems contract with State Department of Education and identify areas for improvement at each school. (Schools and Staff: annually)
- Engage in a comprehensive process for the review, and adoption of, instructional resources in areas of identified needs. (Staff: annually)
- Analyze and assess student and teacher use of technology for enhancement and new implementation (i.e., BYLD, One to One, Apple Vanguard, MIE and STEM). (Staff: ongoing)

SYSTEMIC FOCUS 2: Designing diverse educational programs to meet the individual academic needs of students

ACTION STEPS
- Support STEM and Fine Arts Academy curriculum and school-based initiatives, and analyze possibilities for expansion or revision. (Staff: annually)
- Enhance and expand digital and virtual curriculum offerings and online assessment opportunities for all students. (Staff and Schools: ongoing)
- Explore additional high school CTAE Career Pathways and/or accelerated academic tracks, leading to initial magnet offerings for high school students. (Staff: ongoing)
- Continue to offer alternative hours (evening program, summer program) and self-paced instructional settings (ACE Academy) to meet all student needs. (Schools and Staff: ongoing)
- Facilitate and support district and school-based grant initiatives aligned with School Board Mission and School Improvement Plans in order to expand and increase diverse and innovative learning opportunities for all students. (Staff: ongoing)
Domain II: GOVERNANCE AND LEADERSHIP

Strategic Statement: The School District will operate under governance and leadership that promotes and supports successful, positive student performance and system effectiveness.

**SYSTEMIC FOCUS 1:**
Maintaining strong governance and leadership by the School Board, Superintendent & management team

**ACTION STEPS**
- Engage in School Board training that is both meaningful and relevant in order to enable Board members to better respond to the challenges facing the School District while functioning effectively as a governing body. (School Board: annually)
- Make recommendations and decisions based upon the best interests of the School District as a whole. (Superintendent and School Board: monthly)
- Establish annual budget priorities for the School District and the Superintendent, oversee the development of a balanced budget, utilizing a zero-based methodology, that supports student performance. (School Board: annually)
- Inform the School Board of issues facing the School District through regular communication and open dialogue. (Superintendent: ongoing)

**SYSTEMIC FOCUS 2:**
Attracting, training and retaining quality educational leaders

**ACTION STEPS**
- Expand CCSD Leadership Academy experience for identifying and growing leaders within the School District. (Superintendent and Staff: annually)
- Provide professional development that supports leader evaluation instruments (LKES). (Staff: ongoing)
- Enhance Professional Learning Communities for increased effectiveness of professional development throughout the district. (Staff and Schools: ongoing)
- Offer competitive compensation and benefits package to retain talent within the School District. (School Board and Staff: ongoing)
- Build talent maps and career ladders to encourage/promote upward mobility and opportunities for high performing employees. (Staff: ongoing)
- Support the professional learning of all instructional leaders. (Staff: ongoing)

**SYSTEMIC FOCUS 3:**
Increasing parental and community involvement, collaboration and leadership

**ACTION STEPS**
- Ensure Stakeholder input component is present in all major School District initiatives. (Staff and Schools: ongoing)
- Review potential new partnerships with public and private community entities and evaluate School District partnership agreements for enhancements. (Staff: ongoing)
- Enhance School District communication to parents and community and create opportunities for feedback. (Staff and Schools: ongoing)
- Conduct communication audit to identify gaps in communication. (Staff: annually)
Domain III: TEACHING AND ASSESSING FOR LEARNING

Strategic Statement: The School District will utilize its curriculum, instructional design and assessment practices to guide and ensure teacher effectiveness and student learning across all grades and courses.

**SYSTEMIC FOCUS 1:**
Recruiting, employing, allocating, evaluating, training and retaining high-quality personnel.

**ACTION STEPS**
- Establish and execute a planned recruitment strategy to address staffing in critical areas and to accommodate student population growth. *(Staff: annually)*
- Deepen implementation of effective Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) in all schools for increased effectiveness of professional learning across the District. *(Schools and Staff: ongoing)*
- Maintain competitive benefits and compensation package. *(Staff and School Board: annually)*
- Conduct biannual staffing conferences that promote strategic use of personnel and flexibility to meet the needs of all students. *(Staff and Schools: annually)*
- Provide research-based instructional strategies and professional practices training to support teacher evaluation (TKES). *(Staff and Schools: ongoing)*
- Continue support for induction phase teachers with mentors and training. *(Staff and Schools: ongoing)*

**SYSTEMIC FOCUS 2:**
Providing technical assistance and intervention strategies to ensure that all students receive appropriate academic programming.

**ACTION STEPS**
- Collaborate within each School Innovation Zone to combine resources to identify, enhance and expand upon the curricular needs of each zone to improve student achievement. *(Schools: ongoing)*
- Provide supplemental instructional services for students at risk of not meeting state and local performance standards. *(Staff and Schools: ongoing)*
- Provide training for school counselors and social workers for student support. *(Staff: ongoing)*
- Directly target achievement gaps as identified by CCRPI data through School Improvement Plans and Academic School Improvement Support Teams. *(Staff and Schools: ongoing)*
- Sustain a comprehensive, data-driven, Response To Intervention (RTI) plan for students requiring intervention strategies. *(Schools: ongoing)*

**SYSTEMIC FOCUS 3:**
Administering meaningful learning assessments where results are utilized to improve student and school achievement.

**ACTION STEPS**
- Reduce selective test administration to one grade level (CogAT, ITBS) *(Staff: annually)*
- Track and report progress on Georgia Milestones as identified in the CCSD SWSS contract with the State. *(Staff and Schools: annually)*
- Increase use of formative and diagnostic assessment data to inform instructional practice. *(Staff and Schools: ongoing)*
- Utilize assessment data to identify areas of instruction that require emphasis in order to raise achievement and increase CCRPI scores. *(Staff and Schools: annually)*
Domain IV: RESOURCES AND SUPPORT SYSTEMS

Strategic Statement: The School District will seek, evaluate and utilize effective resources and provide quality services that support its purpose and direction to ensure success for all students in all schools.

SYSTEMIC FOCUS 1:
Providing safe and secure learning/work environments, supported by fiscally responsible practices.

ACTION STEPS
- Ensure a safe and secure environment for teaching and learning is sustained by treating parents, students and staff with fairness and respect and equal protection under the law. (Staff and Schools: ongoing)
- Work with School District level and school-based staff to ensure that School Safety Plans and School District response protocols meet or exceed the standards established by Georgia law. (Staff and Schools: ongoing)
- Collaborate with local and state public safety agencies to ensure plans for multi-agency response to/recovery from a School District emergency or critical incident are current and up-to-date. (Staff: ongoing)
- Continue to engage the school-based community and other community stakeholders to cultivate and support initiatives to improve school safety and security (e.g., PASS/PERT programs). (Staff and Schools: ongoing)
- Review and update policies and procedures to align business practices (including Internal Revenue Service regulations and Generally Accepted Accounting Practices and Standards) and workflow with School District goals and strategies. (Staff: annually)
- Ensure compliance with Federal laws regarding online student safety and data privacy. (Staff: ongoing)

SYSTEMIC FOCUS 2:
Maintaining adequate support services for continued student population growth

ACTION STEPS
- Update and implement a 3-year technology integration and use plan for teaching, learning and administration. (Staff: ongoing)
- Update and implement a State and local five-year facility plan, revising and modifying to address growth. (Staff: annually)
- Evaluate facilities to assess the status of instructional space, common service areas, mechanical platforms and athletic facilities to identify emerging needs. (Staff: ongoing)
- Maintain data on student demographics and enrollment growth projections. (Staff: annually)
- Seek school sites for projected enrollment growth and shifting student populations. (Staff: ongoing)
- Maintain a 10-year replacement cycle for route buses. (Staff: annually)
- Recruit and train school bus drivers, monitors and bus technicians, incorporating extensive staff development and career incentive programs. (Staff: ongoing)
- Provide a comprehensive bus rider safety program for all students in grades PK-12. (Staff: ongoing)
**Domain V: USING RESULTS FOR CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT**

**Strategic Statement:** The School District will implement a comprehensive assessment system that generates a range of data about student learning and system effectiveness and utilize the results to guide continuous improvement.

**SYSTEMIC FOCUS 1:**
Incorporating research-based, data-driven systems of accountability

**ACTION STEPS**
- Update the five-year strategic plan and evaluate progress. *(Staff: annually)*
- Align local accountability policy/framework with requirements of State and Federal law. *(Staff: annually)*
- Utilize Data Management Teams, both at the individual school level and at the central office, to analyze test data to impact instruction and review student academic achievement. *(Staff and Schools: ongoing)*
- Analyzing data on students over the course of years to identify areas and make adjustments in instructional or service models. *(Schools: ongoing)*
- Benchmarking high achievement schools with comparable demographics across the state to support gap analysis. *(Staff: annually)*
- Analyze, synthesize and compile disaggregated data reports to reflect student progress and evaluate programs. *(Staff and Schools: ongoing)*
- Conduct and publish annual financial audits of the School District and individual schools to present fair, accurate and transparent financial statements, evaluate implementation and maintenance of internal controls. *(Staff: annually)*
- Provide professional development for teachers and leaders on data interpretation. *(Staff: ongoing)*

**SYSTEMIC FOCUS 2:**
Utilizing technology to increase school and district communication, productivity and efficiency.

**ACTION STEPS**
- Engage parents in communication via electronic means (i.e., email, text message and emergency notification system) for increased efficiency and lower costs. *(Staff and Schools: ongoing)*
- Provide students with secured web-based access to their academic performance data including grades, attendance and assignments, as well as easy access to digital content and resources that will support their efforts to improve their academic achievement. *(Staff and Schools: ongoing)*
- Complete implementation of new HR software, offering seamless integration of multiple personnel management software applications with the General Ledger accounting system. *(Staff: ongoing)*
- Utilize electronic purchasing/accounting and inventory system to track expenditures and facilitate budget analysis. *(Staff: ongoing)*
- Maintain the efficiency of the District’s network infrastructure through implementation of best practices such as server centralization, consolidation and virtualization and the continued use of a centralized network management solution. *(Staff: ongoing)*
- Utilize and expand available accounting software resources to manage school and School District finances and provide forecasting data. *(Staff: ongoing)*
APPENDICES

A. School Board Mission Statement & Belief Statements
B. School Board’s Major System Priorities
C. Data Sources
D. Five-Year Facility Plan
E. Three-Year Technology Plan
Appendix A: Cherokee County School Board Mission and Beliefs

SCHOOL BOARD’S MISSION STATEMENT:

We, the School Board of the Cherokee County School District, are committed to educating the emerging generation through learning environments designed to increase the performance of all students.

SCHOOL BOARD’S BELIEF STATEMENTS:

1. All students deserve the opportunity to learn, achieve success and become productive citizens.
2. Education/learning is a shared responsibility and should take place in the home, at school and in the community.
3. All students can learn; but they learn in different ways, at different rates and with different preferential learning styles.
4. Learning is achieved through the use of a variety of effective teaching techniques.
5. A safe and secure environment is essential for teaching and learning.
6. All students should be taught by teachers and parents how to learn and how to become lifelong learners.
7. All students deserve equal access to a quality education.
8. Quality education requires quality staff, programs, facilities, equipment and technology.
9. Parent and community participation, support and responsibility are essential to the positive social, emotional, cultural and academic development of every student.
10. Student achievement is enhanced through partnerships with parents, businesses, community-based organizations and agencies, local institutions of higher learning and other public entities.
11. Diversity should be promoted so that isolation of racial, ethnic and socioeconomic groups is avoided and education is enhanced in a diverse, inclusive setting.
12. All schools should be accountable for improving student achievement.
13. All schools should reflect school-based, participatory management.
14. All students must be prepared to function effectively in a knowledge-based, technologically-rich and culturally-diverse 21st century.
15. All staff should have access to results-driven professional development and training which is aligned with the School Board’s Major System Priorities and School Improvement Plans. Such professional development and training must be standards-based, job-embedded, collaborative and build an organizational culture that insures continuous improvement.
Appendix B: Cherokee County School Board Major System Priorities

1. Establishing internationally competitive standards for student performance and an accountability system and policy framework designed to insure that all students are challenged individually and collectively to meet more rigorous standards.

2. In collaboration with technical colleges, other institutions of higher learning and the local business community, insuring that vocational/technical education programs prepare students for a diverse and technologically rich society.

3. Insuring that all students and staff have a safe and secure environment for teaching and learning.

4. Attracting, retaining, and training the best teachers, principals, and support staff.

5. Utilizing technology both to improve student achievement and to increase the school district's productivity and efficiency as a major business enterprise.

6. Increasing parental and community involvement through public engagement policies and practices that treat parents, businesses, community-based organizations and agencies, local institutions of higher learning and other public entities as true partners in the educational process.

7. Addressing exploding student population growth, recognizing that there is a large gap between the school district's facilities and technology needs and available capital outlay revenue.
Appendix C: Cherokee County School District Data Collected to Measure Progress

Student Profile

- Enrollment Pre K-12
- Diversity – by race, ethnicity and gender
- Percent of students receiving free/reduced lunch
- Percent of students enrolled in Special Programs (ESOL, EIP, REP, Gifted, RTI and Special Education)
- Percent of students in grades 3-8 performing at or above grade level
- Percent of Students with Disabilities (SWD) within the regular education classroom
- High School Graduation Rate – four and five year extended rates, as calculated on the College and Career Readiness Performance Index (CCRPI)

Test and Accountability Data

- Percent of students meeting standards on Georgia Kindergarten Inventory of Developing Skills (GKIDS)
- Cognitive Abilities Test (CogAT) – School Ability Index (Grade 2)
- Percent of students in grade 3 achieving a Lexile measure equal to or greater than 650
- Percent of students in grade 5 achieving a Lexile measure equal to or greater than 850
- Percent of students in grade 8 achieving a Lexile measure equal to or greater than 1050
- Percent of high school students achieving a Lexile measure greater than or equal to 1275 on the American Literature EOC
- Georgia Milestones End of Grade (EOG) Grades 3-8 and Georgia Milestones End of Course (EOC) Grades 9 – 12
- Percent of elementary and middle school English Learners with positive movement from one Performance Band to a higher Performance Band as measured by the ACCESS for ELLs
- Percent of students completing 2 or more state defined career related assessments/inventories by the end of grade 8
- Percent of students with a completed Individual Graduation Plan by the end of grade 8
- Percent of students grades 1-5 completing the identified number of grade specific career awareness lessons aligned to Georgia’s 17 Career Clusters
- Percent of 5th grade students passing at least five courses in core content areas (ELA, reading, mathematics, science, social studies)
- Percent of 8th grade students passing at least four courses in core content areas (ELA, mathematics, science, social studies)
- Percent of high school graduates completing a focus area (CTAE, advanced academic, fine arts, or world language) within their program of study
- Percent of high school graduates: entering college not requiring remediation or learning support courses; or scoring at least 22 out of 36 on the composite ACT; or scoring at least 1550 out of 2400 on the combined SAT; or scoring 3 or higher on two or more AP exams
- Percent of high school graduates earning high school credit(s) for accelerated enrollment via Move On When Ready
- Percent of high school graduates successfully completing 1 or more Advanced Placement courses
- Percent of AP exams scoring 3 or above
- Percent of students taking Honors or AP classes
- SAT scores/Percent of students taking SAT; American College Testing (ACT) scores/Percent of students taking ACT; PSAT participation
- Georgia Milestones End-Of-Course (EOC) tests
- Percent of students passing the standard on Georgia Alternate Assessments (GAA)
- Number of middle school students taking high school courses and number of students receiving high school credit

School Climate Components

- School Climate Score
- Average daily attendance of staff and students
- Percent of students with more than six and more than 15 absences
- In-school and out-of-school suspensions/expulsions
- Number of discipline incidents and administrative actions among public school students reported to State
- Teacher Keys Effectiveness System Student Surveys
- Leader Keys Effectiveness System Climate Surveys
- Safe and Substance Free Learning Environments
- Persistently Dangerous Schools
- Georgia Student Health Survey II (GSHS II)
- Georgia School Personnel Survey (GSPS)

**Parent/Community Participation**
- School Council composition
- Participation in Customer Surveys
- Georgia Parent Surveys
- Georgia Department of Education (GDOE) Special Education Parent Satisfaction Surveys
- CCSD Special Education Parent Satisfaction Surveys
- Number of business partnerships; Business involvement with Mentoring, Internships, Scholarships
- Career, Technical, Agricultural Education Advisory Committee Recommendations
- Technology Advisory Committee Recommendations
- Number of Senior Project capstones
- Number of Career Fair Presenters
- Participation in PTA organization at every school in the District
- Percent of parents utilizing Family Portal
- Percent of students utilizing Student Portal
- Social media Insight data on reach/engagement, number of followers

**Facilities/Finance**
- Percent of schools over capacity with or without number of portable classrooms
- Gap between needed facilities and anticipated revenue
- Total operating expenditures per Full Time Equivalent (FTE) student average
- Operating expenditures as a percent of total by Function and Object
- Administrative cost as a percent of total operating expenditures and per FTE student
- Instructional cost as a percent of total operating expenditures and per FTE student
- Teacher to Administrator ratio
- Amount of Federal, State, Local, Grant, Competitive Grant and Formula revenues received annually
- Total state student funding revenue received per FTE student
- Historical millage rate and property tax receipts

**Teacher Profile**
- Percent of classroom teachers annually engaged in professional learning communities
- Percent of teachers with advanced degrees and State and local endorsements (ESOL, gifted, coaching)
- Number of highly qualified teachers/Number of classes taught by teachers not in teaching field
- Teachers in the first three years of career
Appendix D: Cherokee County School District Five-Year Facility Plan

Five Year Facility Plan
New/Replacement Schools and Projects

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Project Name</th>
<th>Estimated Construction Start Dates</th>
<th>Estimated Occupancy Dates</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 Middle School “F” (Dean Rusk MS Replacement)</td>
<td>February-14</td>
<td>August-16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 New/Replacement Educational Services Facility (ESF) at Bluffs Parkway</td>
<td>December-15</td>
<td>August-17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 New Parent Entrance-Boston ES</td>
<td>TBA</td>
<td>TBA</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: This schedule of projects and related timelines are dependent upon various economic and other conditions (e.g., SPLOST revenue levels, continuation of current state funding, construction costs and savings on current projects, as well as developer donations).

REVISED: 21 July 2016

Appendix E: Cherokee County School District Three-Year Technology Plan