



Schools and Systems Executive Summary

Emanuel County School System
Denise Warnock
201 North Main Street
Swainsboro, Georgia, 30401
United States of America

Emanuel County Schools has 3826 students enrolled in grades Pre-K through twelve. There are 818 students in grades Pre-K through second at Swainsboro Primary, 495 students in grades Pre-K through five at Twin City Elementary, 603 students in grades three through five at Swainsboro Elementary, 595 students in grades six through eight at Swainsboro Middle, 536 students in grades six through twelve at Emanuel County Institute, and 773 students in grades nine through twelve at Swainsboro High School.

Emanuel County Executive Summary

Emanuel County Schools History

Emanuel County has a long tradition of public education dating to the early 19th century, culminating in the formation of the Emanuel County School District serving communities including Adrian, Garfield, Nunez, Oak Park, Stillmore, Summertown, Swainsboro, and Twin City. Educational opportunities expanded with East Georgia State College (1973), now a four-year institution and Georgia Southern University satellite, and technical education began with Swainsboro Area Vocational Technical School, later merged into Southeastern Technical College. Most recently, the district partnered with Southeastern Technical College to establish EDGE College and Career Academy, providing advanced career pathways for local high school students.

Emanuel County Schools Community

Emanuel County, Georgia is a rural community of approximately 23,000 residents, predominantly English-speaking, with White and Black or African American as the largest ethnic groups. Centered in Swainsboro, the “Crossroads of the Great South,” the county consists of close-knit communities with small-town charm, agricultural heritage, and a resilient spirit. It offers cultural attractions, natural beauty, and educational opportunities through a college and technical college, while faith, civic engagement, and local businesses drive economic growth. Regional healthcare is supported by a public hospital and healthcare system, and the Joint Development Authority and Chamber of Commerce work to attract businesses and foster prosperity.

Governance and Leadership

Emanuel County Schools is governed by a seven-member elected Board of Education that sets policy, provides oversight, and ensures accountability, working closely with Superintendent Dr. Denise Warnock. Department leaders oversee curriculum, special services, technology, and student support, aligning operations with the district Strategic Plan and School Improvement Plans. The district prioritizes transparent governance under Georgia’s Open Records Act and actively

engages families and community stakeholders to share responsibility for student success.

Strategic Direction

The 2021–2022 strategic plan, developed with community input, guides the district with the following statements: Mission: Prepare and inspire every student for college and career success; Vision: Strengthen the community one student at a time; Beliefs: Strong schools build thriving communities, education is a shared responsibility, students are unique and capable, learning is lifelong, and all deserve a safe, secure environment.

Enrollment Trends

Enrollment has gradually declined from 4,001 students in FY22 to 3,834 in FY26, a 4.2% decrease. While modest, this trend highlights the need for strategic planning to maintain strong programs. Located an hour from the new Hyundai plant in Bryan County, the district can align education with workforce development to prepare students for emerging regional career opportunities.

Institutional Philosophy of Education

The district believes every student can succeed with clear goals, timely feedback, and strong support. Rooted in Glaser’s mastery learning and Fisher, Frey, and Hattie’s Visible Learning framework, instruction emphasizes clarity, evidence-based practices, and measurable progress. Literacy follows the Science of Reading, and numeracy emphasizes conceptual understanding and problem-solving. Personalized, growth-focused learning moves students from their current level to their “next best” level, fostering mastery, confidence, and lifelong learning.

Curriculum and Learning Opportunities

Emanuel County Schools provides a well-rounded, future-ready education guided by the Georgia Department of Education curriculum. Students have access to Career, Technical, and Agricultural Education; fine arts; world languages; physical education; gifted education; STEM/STEAM; and Georgia-grown school meals. Partnerships with families, businesses, and community stakeholders ensure graduates are equipped for college, careers, and life beyond school.

Personalized and Technology-Enhanced Learning

The district uses software applications and web-based technologies to plan, personalize, implement, and assess learning experiences. Teachers and students collaborate on goals and interactive projects, fostering ownership, digital literacy, and higher-order thinking skills. Multimedia, adaptive tools, and real-time feedback prepare students for college, careers, and a rapidly evolving digital world.

Personnel Management and Professional Development

Emanuel County Schools recruits highly qualified, diverse staff through a structured hiring process. High-quality, tiered professional learning supports district and individual goals, with a vertically aligned system monitored for effectiveness. Teacher induction and mentoring, strengthened by growth-focused feedback, are supported by the new GaLeads evaluation system, which emphasizes professional growth and elevates the teaching profession. Staff social and emotional well-being is a priority, fostering a supportive, resilient professional community.

Student Performance

Emanuel County Schools administers a comprehensive system of state- and district-mandated assessments at designated grade levels, including Georgia Milestones EOGs (grades 3–8), EOCs in key high school subjects, GKIDS for kindergarten, ACCESS for ELLs, GAA for students with significant cognitive disabilities, and MAP Growth benchmarks, DIBELS, and common unit assessments in ELA and Math, Science, and Social Studies. Students demonstrate strong performance in U.S. History, 6th grade ELA, and 6th grade Math, with notable growth over the past three years, while areas needing improvement include early literacy, upper-grade ELA, Math (particularly grades 4–5), Science, and 8th grade Social Studies. Assessment practices are tailored through adaptive, standards-aligned measures, triangulated data reviews, and interventions such as iXL and Boost Reading, enabling targeted support based on student readiness. Trend data show overall stability with pockets of improvement in key areas, indicating progress while highlighting the need for continued focus on literacy, mathematics, and vertical alignment in Science and Social Studies. Major improvement initiatives include districtwide collaborative planning and professional learning, K–5 Amplify ELA implementation, literacy data triangulation, Lexia LETRS training, district instructional walk-throughs, and the EDGE College & Career Academy, all designed to strengthen instruction, enhance teacher capacity, and increase student achievement across academic and career pathways.

Current Major Improvement Initiatives

Major initiatives supporting districtwide improvement include strengthened collaborative planning structures, expanded professional learning, improved instructional alignment, and increased consistency in curriculum and assessment practices. Districtwide Collaborative Planning/Professional Learning days provide common time for teachers to analyze data, refine instructional practices, and align curriculum horizontally and vertically. At the K–5 level, the implementation of the high-quality Amplify CKLA ELA curriculum, along with Lexia LETRS professional learning, has significantly advanced evidence-based literacy instruction. The district is also implementing the new Georgia ELA standards, ensuring alignment between curriculum, instruction, and assessment.

At the 6–12 level, vertical and horizontal alignment has been strengthened through the development and refinement of valid and reliable district ELA unit assessments, increased focus on adolescent literacy, and the use of a structured framework for lesson planning. In mathematics, district unit assessments for grades 6–12 were created last year and have been reviewed and revised during CP/PL days to improve validity and reliability. While GaDOE Math Learning Plans have been implemented in

select K–12 classrooms, district leadership intentionally avoided requiring full K–5 implementation this year to prevent initiative overload during major literacy rollouts. Data from pilot classrooms will guide next steps for future districtwide adoption.

District Instructional Walk-Throughs were implemented this year to increase instructional coherence, identify strengths and needs across schools, and support principals and teachers with actionable feedback aligned to district expectations. These walk-throughs help ensure alignment between instructional practice, professional learning, and school improvement priorities.

The district has also created a District Implementation Team to strengthen whole-child supports and MTSS structures. With guidance from the FDRESA Director for Whole Child Supports, the team is utilizing the GaMTSS District Fidelity Tool to reorganize and update the District MTSS Handbook for 2026–2027. This work, combined with collaboration among district and school staff, will improve consistency, clarity, and fidelity of MTSS implementation across all schools. Once finalized, the updated handbook will be communicated to schools, with clear expectations that administrators consistently reference the protocols to ensure appropriate tiered interventions and prevent steps from being skipped.

The establishment of the EDGE College & Career Academy represents another major improvement initiative. EDGE CCA strengthens secondary programming by expanding access to industry-aligned pathways, technical skills, dual-enrollment opportunities, and work-based learning experiences. This initiative supports the district’s mission by preparing students for postsecondary success and responding directly to regional workforce needs. EDGE also enhances alignment between high school and college programs, increases equitable access to career pathways, and builds stronger partnerships with Southeastern Technical College and local industry.

Collectively, these initiatives—high-quality curriculum adoption, targeted professional learning, improved assessment systems, strengthened instructional alignment, district walkthroughs, enhanced MTSS structures and the expansion of the EDGE College & Career Academy—reflect the district’s commitment to building instructional capacity, supporting teacher effectiveness, and improving academic and career outcomes for all learners.