Walton County School District 21st Century Community Learning Centers Sustainability Plan FY27

"In Pursuit of Excellence"

Jimmy Pitzer, Program Director
Walton County School District
200 Double Springs Church Road
Monroe, GA 30656
770-207-3173

Table of Contents

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY 3
- **Goals and Objectives** 3
- **Background and Progress to Date** 4
- **Future Plans and Financial Status** 5

HISTORY, ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE, CURRENT STATUS 6
- **History and Organizational Structure** 6
- **Current Status** 7

ACHIEVING OUR GOALS: STRATEGIC CONSIDERATIONS 9
- **Strategic Direction - Environmental** 9
- **Strategic Direction - Demographic** 9
- **Strategic Direction - Community** 9
- **Board Effectiveness** 10
- **Community Leaders and Partners** 10

FINANCIAL PLAN 12
- **Fiscal Needs** 12
- **Strategies for Securing Resources** 13

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Goals and Objectives

The Nita M. Lowey 21st Century Community Learning Centers (21st CCLC) provide high quality after school programming that responds to identified needs of students and families. We focus on academic enrichment through small classes, tutoring, homework help, recreation, and engaging cultural experiences within a safe environment.

1. Increase academic performance through engaging academic activities.
    a. 55% of regularly attending (those attending 30 or more days) Georgia Milestones EOGT eligible students will meet or exceed the standards on the EOGT - Math.
    b. 55% of regularly attending (those attending 30 or more days) Georgia Milestones EOGT eligible students will meet or exceed the standards on the EOGT - English Language Arts.
    c. 55% of regularly attending (those attending 30 or more days) will increase or maintain their numeric classroom grades from fall to spring - Math.
    d. 55% of regularly attending (those attending 30 or more days) will increase or maintain their numeric classroom grades from fall to spring - English Language Arts.
2. Foster whole-child development through high-quality enrichment support activities.
    a. 75% of regularly attending (those attending 30 or more days) students in need of homework improvement will improve their homework completion.
    b. 60% of regularly attending (those attending 30 or more days) students in need of improving classroom participation will increase their level of participation.
3. Increase family engagement and student success through adult literacy education and academic focused events.
    a. 50% of parents/caregivers of regularly participating students will report that they have learned ways to help their children be more successful in school.
    b. 45% of parents/caregivers will attend at least two parent literacy nights.

The program utilizes baseline data on grades, attendance and behavior to monitor progress toward goals and objectives throughout the year.

The Walton County School District provides 21st CCLC programs at three school sites. The three sites operate outside of regular school hours for at least 12 hours weekly. The sites serve four K-5 Title I schools. The 21st CCLC programs provide high-quality after school programs that respond to identified needs of students and their families. They specifically address academic under-achievement, limited cultural experiences, low attendance rates, and the inability of working and poor families to provide safe, quality supervision and constructive activities for school-aged children. Partners work with the co-applicants to provide an after-school program that aligns with the regular school day and assures all resources are in place. After school programming focuses on increasing academic performance by providing academic/enrichment through small classes, tutoring and cultural/recreational activities in a safe environment. Furthermore, literacy opportunities, GED preparation and college/career education is available for parents/caregivers.

Our programs make a concerted effort to engage families at every opportunity and welcome them to attend with their children during program hours. The program also provides education to parents/caregivers to help their students succeed in school.

Background and Progress to Date

The first Walton County 21st CCLC sites were established in 2002. Currently, the program plays a unique role in Walton County as it enables many Community Partners to coordinate efforts in order to ensure all resources are in place to best serve approximately 340 children and youth each year. These coordinated efforts work to resolve specific, researched challenges that are present in the county.

We are pleased that many partners have become involved in the program over the years. Our co-applicant, The Partnership for Families, Children and Youth (Family Connections), is composed of approximately 70 organizations. The board members of The Partnership serve as part of the Advisory Council for the WCSD 21st CCLC program.

Partnerships for FY27 will include: The Walton County School District; The Partnership for Families, Children and Youth; The Walton Youth Advocacy Board, Walton Youth Project; the Development Authority of Walton County; and Faith in Serving Humanity.

Future Plans and Financial Status

FY26 funding saw a decrease of approximately $98,000 in one grant (Carver) due to an inability to sustain Average Daily Attendance (ADA) rates equivalent to 70% or higher of the number targeted in the Request for Proposal (RFP) grant over a three-year period.

Strategies implemented in response to this decrease included:

- Reduction of staff
- Adjustment to time and attendance for staff
- Reduction in supply line
- Reduction in activity funding line
- Re-alignment of administrative salaries/FICA/benefits to the WCSD general fund

After a review of current programming, the WCSD and program leadership determined that it could no longer adequately fulfill the requirements and objectives outlined in Carver grant request proposal/award. Therefore, the WCSD withdrew from the 21st Century Community Learning Centers (21st CCLC) Carver 21st Century grant effective May 22, 2026.

The FY27 budget for the program is approximately $620,000 for 21st CCLC programs at Harmony Elementary, Monroe Elementary and Walnut Grove Elementary. The WCSD 21st CCLC is positioned to sustain the strategies and activities of the 21st CCLC in Walton County through FY29 through a combination of grant funding and WCSD general funds.

Supplies and activity funds will be solicited through Cash Match opportunities and from program partners. If needed, transportation would be eliminated, and the external evaluator position would be eliminated.

HISTORY, ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE, CURRENT STATUS

History and Organizational Structure

The Walton County School District sought 21st CCLC funding for the initial year (2002) as a solution to issues revealed in the county-wide Community Assessment. Information derived from *Walton County Community Assessment: Profile on Families & Children*, 2008 and updated 2013, confirmed the great need for after school programs to reach a wide array of youth in all geographic areas of the county.

A comprehensive *FY19 Community Assessment* again supported the continuing need for after school programming to provide a safe place for struggling students to grow academically, socially and emotionally. According to citizen and service provider responses, the following are perceived as main challenges in the county: high school dropout, joblessness, affordable childcare, teen pregnancy, single parent families, mental illness, drug abuse and lack of transportation. Students cited bullying, cyber-bullying, suicide, drug abuse, binge drinking and violence. Data confirms that these perceptions are even stronger today than in previous years.

Strategy teams composed of stakeholders including students, parents, teachers, and other citizens determined that these challenges could be met with more educational and recreational after school programs, parent education, mentoring and transportation to educational opportunities. Since the first site opened in 2002, the WCSD 21st CCLC has addressed those challenges.

In 2002, the first site began serving 50 children and their families. Based on the success during the first year, WCSD was able to open three sites in 2006. Positive evaluation data has ensured continuation of programming. Now, in 2025, four sites are in operation.

Core to the WCSD 21st CCLC governance is the Advisory Council. The group consists of community partners, administrators, teachers, community members, parents and students. The Advisory Board is primarily made up of the board members of the Partnership for Families, Children and Youth and meets monthly. Members review policy and procedures, assess progress, and plan for the future. This group maintains, and annually updates, information about community resources for our families. Parent and student representatives from each site also provide input a minimum of once per semester.

The Program Director, with input from the Advisory Council, building administration, and district leadership, manages the overall program. In the spring of 2026, Jimmy Pitzer was selected as the new Program Director and began serving in this capacity on June 1, 2026. Mr. Pitzer brings over 30 years of experience as a public-school educator including years of service as a district level administrator for special education programming. Mr. Pitzer is certified in educational leadership and special education - general education curriculum.

Site Coordinators oversee the day-to-day site operations, including direct supervision of instructional staff and tutors. Key to their successful performance within schools is the on-going communication with the regular school day staff and school administration. Fiscal management is the responsibility of the WCSD.

Current Status

With purposeful direction and a sincere passion for children, the leadership of the WCSD 21st CCLC program assures the seamless delivery of high-quality services at all three sites. With intense deliberation by the Advisory Council, stakeholders, partners, staff, and administration, barriers to service delivery are removed.

Initial planning centered on strategies that would ensure coordination and linkage of community supports/resources and opportunities for students and their families. This would be impossible without cooperation and commitment from a broad base of partners who advocate for children and healthy families. Students and their families are able to achieve success due to delivery of remedial and preventive services. The program believes in teaching families life skills for success and how family members can realize their full potential.

The original planners determined that the Walton County School District was the best home for the 21st CCLC program and that remains true today. The district's commitments assure continuation.

Walton County School District Mission

"The mission of the Walton County School District is to ensure that each student acquires the knowledge and skills necessary to achieve personal success and enrich the community."

Walton County School District Vision

"Walton County School District, in partnership with families and the community, will empower all students to achieve their full potential in a safe and rigorous environment."

FY26 District Improvement Goals

1. Maintain a graduation rate of 90% or higher.
2. All schools will have a positive school climate.
3. All students will be taught by highly effective teachers, and all schools will be led by highly effective leaders.
4. Strengthen collaborative partnerships with stakeholders.
5. All principals and assistant principals will be well-prepared to assume leadership roles.

ACHIEVING OUR GOALS: STRATEGIC CONSIDERATIONS

Strategic Direction - Environmental

Efforts by downtown authority agencies are increasing and are having positive effects in some areas, but the local economic downturn has increased in some pockets of the community. In particular, affordable housing is becoming a challenge for young families.

This economic impact is also felt in the inability of partners to mobilize resources. The number of organizations and individuals in need has put more of a strain on existing resources. Issues such as mental illness, homelessness, and substance abuse continue to exist. Frequently grandparents are raising grandchildren with no parent in the home. The number of students who qualify for free and reduced lunch has held steady and, in some areas, has increased. The WCSD 21st CCLC will continue to seize this opportunity to engage more families.

Strategic Direction - Demographic

Walton County's population has steadily increased since 2000. At the same time, the median household income fluctuates. Several Walton County schools qualify for Title 1 funding. The WCSD 21st CCLC recognizes the need to bring more resources to children and families and the need to create an opportunity for programmatic and strategic linkage in order to meet objectives.

Strategic Direction - Community

Walton County continues the practice of implementing planned residential communities, high-tech industry growth, and increasing cultural attractions. The Downtown Development Authority, progressive thinking community leaders and the Chamber of Commerce are working collaboratively in an effort to increase growth and prosperity to be enjoyed by all citizens.

However, there is still a disconnect between those in need and those who can experience these improvements. This will provide opportunities for the WCSD 21st CCLC to bridge the gap, recruit more volunteers, identify resources, and provide educational and cultural opportunities to the students who need help. It will also serve as a model for youth to encourage them to become active citizens within their communities - whether returning to contribute after college or becoming employed in a new and exciting industry within their community.

Board Effectiveness

Beginning FY19, the Advisory Board was formed by the board members of The Partnership for Families, Children and Youth - Family Connections. This organization represents local churches, schools, DFCS, Foothills, government officials, parents, civic organizations, health organizations, literacy organizations, Walton Youth Advocacy Board, FISH, and former 21st CCLC staff.

The WCSD 21st CCLC will continue to maintain a board composition representing the community geographically, professionally and demographically. The Advisory Board will continue to seek more ways to co-implement special events and youth programming with other agencies in the community. The board will continue to engage students and parents in an advisory capacity.

The Walton Youth Project oversees a group of teens committed to advocating for teens with regard to issues facing teens today. Members of the WYP will serve as advisors to the WCSD 21st CCLC. The WCSD 21st CCLC Program Director will serve as a guest on The Partnership board and the Walton Youth Project board. Positive connection and relationships with mutual vision equals success.

Community Leaders and Partners

The WCSD 21st CCLC will maintain positive relationships with key community leaders. Working together on collaborative boards enables opportunities to work together on mutually helpful projects. Identified partners include:

- Dena Huff, Director - The Partnership for Families, Children and Youth
- Chip Underwood, Superintendent - Walton County School District
- Dessa Morris, Director - Development Authority of Walton, Workforce Development

- Cindy Little, Director - FISH Faith in Serving Humanity
- Tish McRae, Director - Walton Youth Project
- Jamie Antwine, Principal - Harmony Elementary School
- Dane Callahan, Principal - Monroe Elementary School
- Ken Cline, Principal - Walnut Grove Elementary School

Personal relationships with elected officials at the county and state level will be strengthened by updating the following on cost savings linked to the preventive efforts of the WCSD 21st CCLC.

- Bruce Williamson - State Representative
- David Thompson - BOC Chairman
- John Howard - Mayor of Monroe, GA
- Stephanie Moncrief - Mayor of Walnut Grove, GA
- Skip Baliles - Mayor of Loganville, GA
- David Keener - Mayor of Social Circle, GA
- Keith Brooks - Walton County Sheriff
- Robert Watts - Police Chief Monroe, Georgia
- MD Lowry - Police Chief Loganville, Georgia
- Jason Guest - Police Chief Social Circle, Georgia

Efforts will be made to recruit business leaders to serve on committees and promote the WCSD 21st CCLC through partnerships with the Walton Chamber of Commerce, social media, local faith communities and school groups.

Partners of the program recognize its value and the need to sustain programming to the extent possible. The goals, visions and strategies of the WCSD 21st CCLC align with those of community partners.

FINANCIAL PLAN

Fiscal Needs

Program costs are composed of a variety of areas including but not limited to:

- Staffing (salary and FICA) - Program Director, Data Specialist, Family Engagement Coordinator, Site Coordinators, Teachers, Tutors
- Consumable Supplies
- Non-Consumable Supplies
- Field Trips
- National Background Checks
- Indirect Cost
- External Evaluator
- Transportation

When possible, in-kind donations are used to support budgeted needs not allowed under grant rules (meals for functions, student incentives, etc.) as well as for promotion, recruitment and training. Due to budget cuts for the FY26 budget, administrative costs (salary/FICA/benefits) for the program director and data specialist were moved to the WCSD general fund. Equipment, supply maintenance, technology supplies, etc. are currently purchased with grant funds. There is no current cost for facility usage of regular school year snacks as those fees are absorbed by the school district.

In the event grant funds are reduced, additional services previously covered by the grant may need to be absorbed into the school district general fund or covered by partner contributions when feasible. Contracted services, such as the external evaluator, could be reduced or eliminated and contracted responsibilities could be taken on by partners.

If needed, professional development, technical assistance and indirect costs will also be in-kind or absorbed into the school district budget. Program evaluation would be conducted by the Advisory Council and district personnel. In extreme circumstances, the Program Coordinator/Data Specialist will be eliminated, and those duties will be handled by the Program Director and a part time clerk hired by the school system. The Program Director will reduce his/her workdays, and the school district will fund the remainder. Transportation is dependent on the number of students served but a minimum of $30,000 per grant has been needed in the past. Unfortunately, other than grant funds, there are no other funds currently available for transportation and would therefore require that this service be eliminated.

Strategies for Securing Resources

Individuals responsible for planning and implementation include the Program Director, Advisory Council, the Walton County School District and community partners. Strategies/resources needed for a continuation of programming may include:

- Strategic Financing: Increase support from co-applicants and partners
- Strategic Investing: Increase alternate streams of funding related to needs
- Strategic Engagement: Utilize local community resources