GWINNETT COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS

FIRST 100 DAYS REPORT

UNDERSTANDING GCPS THROUGH LISTENING AND LEARNING



DR. ALEXANDRA ESTRELLA

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A MESSAGE TO THE GWINNETT COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS COMMUNITY

Dear Gwinnett County Board of Education,

Over the past 100 days, I have had the opportunity to listen to and learn from thousands of students, families, teachers, staff members, community partners, and leaders across Gwinnett County Public Schools.

Through school visits, the Listening and Learning Tour, the Superintendent's Transition Team, leadership meetings, student conversations, and our Equity Study, I have heard tremendous pride in GCPS and a strong belief in what this district can become.

I have seen that pride firsthand. I have met talented educators who care deeply about students, staff members who work every day to support our schools, and students who are excited about their futures. GCPS offers an extraordinary range of programs, pathways, and experiences.

But throughout these first 100 days, I have also heard an important question: Are all students equally able to access and benefit from those opportunities?

That question has become central to my thinking.

Students have talked about the adults who believe in them, the classes that spark their interests, and the experiences that help them see what is possible for their future. They have also reminded us that students do not experience academics, student support, school operations, and family engagement as separate systems. They experience one school district and one educational journey.

Our responsibility is to make that journey as connected and supportive as possible.

That means creating an ecosystem where students know what opportunities are available, have the support to pursue them, and can see a pathway from where they are today to where they want to go.

I have also heard our community thinking deeply about the future. Artificial intelligence, new technologies, changing workforce needs, and an evolving world are reshaping what our students will encounter after graduation. We must continue asking ourselves not only what students need to know, but what skills, experiences, and confidence they will need to thrive.

The Superintendent's Transition Team has begun turning what we have learned into draft recommendations across five focus areas. Those recommendations, along with the voices gathered throughout the Entry Plan process, will help inform our next Strategic Plan.

Our work is now beginning to move from listening and learning to greater focus and action.

We will build on the strengths that already exist across GCPS. We will work to strengthen connections across schools and departments. We will continue expanding access to opportunities and making sure students have the support they need to take advantage of them.

Most importantly, we will keep students at the center of the work.

The first 100 days have reinforced my belief in this district and in the people who serve it. Thank you to everyone who has welcomed me, challenged our thinking, shared your experiences, and contributed your voice.

There is important work ahead. I am excited about what we can build together and about the possibilities that exist when every student can discover their strengths, pursue their aspirations, and thrive in the pathway that is right for them.

Sincerely,

Dr. Alexandra Estrella
Superintendent



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

During Dr. Estrella's first 100 days, Gwinnett County Public Schools engaged thousands of students, families, staff, community members, and partners in a comprehensive effort to better understand the experiences, aspirations, and opportunities that will shape the district's future. Through the Superintendent's Transition Team, Listening and Learning Tour, leadership development sessions, and Equity Study, stakeholders shared perspectives on what is working well, where challenges persist, and what they believe is possible for GCPS. Those insights informed the Transition Team's second meeting, where members began developing draft recommendations across five focus areas that will help shape the district's next Strategic Plan.

Across engagement opportunities, participants expressed deep pride in GCPS, highlighting employees' talent and commitment, the strength of its schools, and the breadth of opportunities available to students. Yet the conversation consistently extended beyond what opportunities exist to how they are experienced. Questions of access, awareness, belonging, and support surfaced repeatedly, reflecting a shared belief that excellence is not measured solely by the opportunities a district offers, but by whether every student can access and benefit from them.

Student voice provided some of the most powerful insights. Students spoke about the importance of trusted adults, engaging learning experiences, and opportunities that help them discover their interests and envision their future. Their perspectives underscored a broader challenge and opportunity for the district. While academics, student support, operations, and family engagement are often organized as separate entities, students and families experience them as a single educational journey. Throughout the engagement process, stakeholders emphasized the importance of strengthening coherence across the organization so that every learner experiences a connected and aligned ecosystem of learning, support, and opportunity.

FIRST 100 DAYS IN CONTEXT

Days 1–30

Listen, Learn, and Build Relationships

- Engage educators, staff, leaders, and community partners
- Identify strengths to preserve and opportunities to strengthen
- Begin to build understanding of GCPS today

Days 31–60

Engage Schools, Families, and Communities

- Visit schools and engage students and families throughout Listening and Learning Tour
- Assess supports, operations, and stakeholder needs

Days 61–100

Establish Priorities and Build Alignment

- Synthesize key themes and feedback
- Identify key priorities and begin developing measures of success
- Strengthen alignment around a shared direction for GCPS

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The conversations also increasingly focused on the future. Stakeholders also challenged GCPS to consider how it will prepare students for a world shaped by rapid technological advancement, artificial intelligence, evolving workforce demands, and changing societal needs. Participants raised important questions about the knowledge, skills, and mindsets students will need to thrive, as well as how the district can ensure those opportunities are accessible to every learner.



Taken together, the insights from the first 100 days point toward a shared aspiration for the future of GCPS. Stakeholders consistently expressed a desire to build on the district's many strengths while ensuring every student has access to the opportunities and supports needed to thrive. As the district moves from listening to refining recommendations and developing its next Strategic Plan, the work ahead will focus on strengthening coherence across the organization, expanding access to opportunity, and creating the conditions for every student to discover their potential, pursue their aspirations, and thrive in the pathway that is right for them.



STAKEHOLDERS ENGAGED

Throughout her pre-work and first 100 days, Dr. Estrella met with a broad range of stakeholders to gain a comprehensive understanding of the district, its operations, and the community it serves.

District Departments, Leaders, and Staff Members

- Administrative Assistants
- Assistant Principals
- Bus Drivers
- Business and Finance
- Cluster Superintendents
- Directors
- Educators
- Executive Directors
- Fine Arts Educators
- GCPS Foundation Fund, Inc.
- Human Resources
- Paraprofessionals
- Principals
- Research, Evaluation, and Assessment
- School Nutrition
- Teaching and Learning

Community Members and Educational Partners

- Accelerate
- ALMA Advisory Group
- Community School Partners
- Faith-Based Organizations
- Families and Parents of GCPS
- Future School Fund
- Georgia Gwinnett College
- Georgia Hispanic Chamber Commerce
- GUIDE, Inc.
- Gwinnett Board of Health
- Gwinnett Chamber
- Gwinnett Coalition
- Gwinnett County Association of Educators
- Gwinnett Municipal Association (GwMA)
- Gwinnett Technical College
- Higher Education Partners
- Latin American Association
- League of Innovative Schools
- Learn4Life Leadership Council
- LSAA
- Metro RESA
- NAACP
- Northside Hospital
- Ohana Solutions
- Partnership Gwinnett
- Students
- Texas Educational Alliance
- The Children's Cabinet
- The Village
- University of Georgia College of Education
- White Board Advisors

Government and Civic Leaders

- City Council Members
- City Managers
- Community Leaders
- Gwinnett County Board of Commissioners
- Gwinnett Convention & Visitors Bureau
- Explore Gwinnett
- Mayors
- Regional Partners

STAKEHOLDERS ENGAGED (cont.)

Dr. Estrella met with a broad range of invested community members and organizations at one-on-one meetings and events in addition to internal GCPS meetings.

- State Representatives
- Governor's Luncheon with Brian Kemp
- United Way of Greater Atlanta

Broadcast Media

- 11Alive (NBC)
- Atlanta's Morning News
- CBS Atlanta
- Fox 5
- Good Day Atlanta (FOX)
- Hispatlanta
- Telemundo
- Univision
- WABE FM
- WANF 46
- WSB TV (ABC)
- WSB AM (Radio)

Other Publications

- Gwinnett Daily Post
- Gwinnett Magazine
- Korea Daily Atlanta
- The Atlanta Journal-Constitution

Community Events and Engagements

- Book Mobile Visits
- Baggett Elementary's International Food Fest
- Coalition Luncheon
- Community School Meeting: Rockbridge ES
- Community School Meeting: South Gwinnett HS
- Fluency in Math and Literacy Salon Dinner
- Harbins-Alcovy Small Area Plan Meeting
- Moxie Awards
- Summer High School Graduation
- Summer Leadership Conference
- Youth Entrepreneurship Program
- The BIG T'do - A Gala to fundraise for all the North Gwinnet Cluster Schools Program
- A Brilliant Mind Gala - Silence the Shame Event Meeting with CEO of Texas Education Alliance
- Bay Creek Middle School - Soccer Field Dedication
- Hispanic Heritage Tailgate @ CGHS
- Connection with GUIDE, Inc.
- Meeting with pastor of Grace New Hope
- L4L Leadership Council
- Gwinnett Chamber - State of the Schools Address
- Virtual Call Jean-Claude Brizard - Digital Promise
- BIG GAME BALL - National Down Syndrome Congress (NDSC)
- Promise Schools/At Risk Schools: Principal Meeting
- Golf4Water 2026
- Inauguration - Volleyball Tournament
- Northside Services Meeting

TRANSITION TEAM UPDATE
OCTOBER 2026

Overview of the Transition Team

Dr. Alexandra Estrella's entry into GCPS follows a four-phase leadership transition that moves the district from listening to action. The Superintendent Transition Team is the third phase. It connects what we heard during the first 100 days to the strategic plan that will guide the district forward.

Phase ONE	Phase TWO	Phase THREE	Phase FOUR
Pre-entry March–June Establish relationships	**First 100 Days** July–September Listening and Learning Tour	**Transition Team** August–November Assess the current state and recommend	**Strategic Plan** September–June Set the district's direction

The Transition Team serves as the bridge between listening and future action. Its role is advisory: to assess the current state of GCPS and offer short-term and long-term recommendations aligned to the district's Core Beliefs and Commitments. The work is organized around four aims: understand what is working, build capacity, strengthen engagement, and support student learning.

The Team is co-chaired by Stan Hall, President and CEO of Gas South District and Explore Gwinnett, and Belisa Urbina, Co-Founder and CEO of Ser Familia. Members from across the GCPS community work in five subcommittees: Academics; School Culture and Climate; Human Resources and Talent; Operations, Facilities and Finance; and Community Engagement and Communications. The Team meets three times between August and November, and its final recommendations will inform the strategic plan.

Process to Date

The Transition Team has met twice, moving from understanding where GCPS stands today to drafting emerging recommendations.

Meeting One (August 11, 2026): Understanding the current state. Each subcommittee reviewed the district data available for its area and identified the strengths and challenges that stood out. Members also named the additional information they would need to make sound recommendations.

Meeting Two (September 22, 2026): Drafting emerging recommendations. Subcommittees reviewed new data, themes from the Listening and Learning Tour, and feedback from LDI and LDII staff. The co-chairs framed the second meeting around two questions:

- What must GCPS preserve, rethink, or create to prepare every student to thrive, including how we proactively and responsibly use AI?
- How do we bring our community with us, ensuring every student, family, and employee has meaningful access to the opportunities created?

How Stakeholder Input Shaped the Work

In addition to quantitative data that represents the current state of the district, the Transition Team has been keenly interested in understanding the lived experience of different stakeholders across the district. Below represents the qualitative data that has informed the Transition Team to date.

INPUT	REACH
Students who shared experiences and ideas	500+
Listening and Learning sessions, in person and virtual	28
Staff, family, and community members who RSVP'd to sessions	2,200
Listening and Learning Tour survey responses	1,000
LDI and LDII members who offered input on each subcommittee area	1,000+

Listening and Learning Tour. Themes from the tour were shared with each subcommittee at Meeting Two, so members could test district data against what students, families, and staff told us directly.

Leadership Development I and Leadership Development II. School leaders offered input tied to each subcommittee's area. Their feedback surfaced realities that data alone does not show, including how initiatives roll out in schools, facilities and budget constraints at the building level, why staff stay or leave, and how trust with families is built locally.

Subcommittee Emerging Trends and Recommendations

The summary below shares the emerging trends and emerging recommendations from each subcommittee's discussion. These recommendations will continue to be refined between now and the final report.

CULTURE & CLIMATE

Emerging trends: Belonging, engagement, behavior, attendance, and access to support are viewed as interconnected outcomes rather than separate problems. Roughly one-third of students report that a sense of belonging is only sometimes, seldom, or never true. Participants raised concerns that counselor caseloads exceed the American School Counselor Association (ASCA) recommended 250:1 ratio and that some family-support positions depend on federal funding and are not consistently available across schools. Discipline practices, including PBIS/SEL implementation, and resource access vary across schools and clusters, and participants connected discipline disparities for Black male students and students receiving special education services to broader school conditions.

Emerging recommendations:

- Make belonging and connection a systemwide focus by creating intentional opportunities for adult relationships, peer connection, extracurricular participation, inclusive practices, student voice, and social interaction.
- Build a stronger, more equitable student-support infrastructure: build staff capacity and increase counseling staff; examine social worker, therapist, and family-liaison staffing; establish baseline supports; coordinate community supports through resource mapping; and differentiate additional resources based on student need.
- Establish consistent preventative practices across schools: set intentional, consistent leadership expectations, systems, and supports for belonging and discipline; strengthen districtwide implementation of MTSS, PBIS, SEL, discipline practices, inclusive practices, and early intervention; and monitor disparities and implementation fidelity.
- Increase engagement through relevance, choice, and access by expanding career pathways, extracurricular opportunities, student leadership, future planning, and other experiences that give students meaningful reasons to connect with school, particularly beginning before senior year.

OPERATIONS, FACILITIES & FINANCE

Emerging trends: Participants are not primarily asking GCPS to spend more; they are asking the district to become more needs-driven, transparent, flexible, and forward-looking in how it allocates existing resources. Equity is defined as responsiveness to need rather than equal distribution, and facilities are viewed as an instructional and equity issue, not only an operations issue. Because the district's facilities and equipment standards (the educational specifications and basic equipment list) have not been reviewed in over a decade, GCPS lacks a clear measure of differences across schools.

Emerging recommendations:

- Needs-based resource allocation: develop a consistent process for assessing individual school needs and use those findings, alongside student data, to inform staffing, supports, equipment, and funding, including teacher point allocations that reflect the teacher and staff specialization each school's needs require.
- Integrated long-range planning: review and re-establish districtwide facilities, furniture, and equipment standards; assess all schools against them, and connect the results with enrollment projections, building utilization, capital renewal and deferred maintenance needs, program placement, capital investment, and instructional needs in a single longer-term planning process aligned to the district's capital funding cycles.
- Transparent investment framework: clearly communicate how GCPS makes investment decisions and tradeoffs, showing how student needs drive decisions and what outcomes the district expects, and promote student voice in the budget process so students build knowledge of how district resources are allocated.

ACADEMICS

Emerging trends: Participants are calling for system redesign more than program expansion: a coherent instructional system with clear expectations for high-quality teaching, strong teacher and leader capacity, and equitable access to relevant pathways. Time and scheduling emerged as barriers alongside training, and AI is viewed as one part of a broader future-readiness agenda.

Emerging recommendations:

- Establish a coherent instructional model: clarify the districtwide non-negotiables of high-quality Tier I instruction, along with expectations for curriculum implementation, literacy, instructional strategies, leadership practice, and feedback.
- Build adult capacity and conditions for success: dedicate protected, differentiated professional learning time for teachers, aligned to student needs and future readiness, and ensure teachers and leaders have sustained, job-embedded support and adequate planning and collaboration time.
- Create a K–12 future-ready learning continuum: develop a K–12 baseline skillset and expectation for AI understanding, knowledge, and use for learning; strengthen STEM/CTAE pathways; examine course sequencing; expand technical and career-connected learning; and create greater room for innovation.
- Ensure equitable access and differentiated support: remove scheduling and programmatic barriers for students with disabilities and multilingual learners while providing additional staffing, time, incentives, and supports to schools with greater needs.

HUMAN RESOURCES & TALENT

Emerging trends: The discussion shifted from recruitment and staffing toward a student-centered talent system. Retention is seen as deserving as much attention as recruitment, with leadership and school culture as central levers, and staffing decisions should begin with student need: "the right staff in the right places for students." Paraprofessionals emerged as a distinct workforce focus.

Emerging recommendations:

- Build a differentiated employee retention strategy: identify what causes employees to stay, examine variation across schools and employee groups, strengthen recognition and compensation strategies, and replicate practices from high-retention schools.
- Create clear career and leadership pathways for all employees: create teacher leadership pathways and expand endorsement pathways, provide centralized training and recognition programs for paraprofessionals, and develop comparable growth opportunities for other support employees.
- Align staffing more closely to student need: conduct a staffing utilization analysis and use it to create staffing models that ensure the right staff is in the right places to support students.
- Strengthen leadership, culture, and employee belonging: develop school leaders' capacity to create supportive workplace cultures, systematically collect employee voice, strengthen culturally responsive practices, diversify recruitment pipelines, and ensure employees feel valued, supported, and connected.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT & COMMUNICATIONS

Emerging trends: GCPS does not necessarily need more communication; it needs communication that is simpler, more coordinated, more relational, and more responsive to families. Trust is framed primarily as a relationship issue, and survey fatigue appears tied to families not seeing results from past participation.

Emerging recommendations:

- Simplify and coordinate the communication ecosystem: streamline district and school communications to eliminate duplicative messages and survey questions; clarify who communicates what, when, and how; standardize key channels and website structures so families can easily navigate and access information; and set expectations for concise, actionable messaging.
- Build a relationship-based family engagement model: build and leverage trust and relationships by strengthening parent liaison capacity, face-to-face engagement, culturally responsive practices, and community partnerships; rely on trusted messengers and trustworthy sources of information; and pay particular attention to communities that have historically been less engaged.
- Establish family-friendly communication standards for readability, translation, accessibility, message length, timing, calls to action, and audience differentiation.
- Redesign the stakeholder feedback loop: coordinate and reduce surveys, make participation easier, time engagement strategically, and consistently communicate what we heard, what we decided, and what happens next.

Where the Process Is Heading Next

The Transition Team will finalize its recommendations at **Meeting Three on November 12, 2026**, and those recommendations will inform the GCPS strategic plan. Between now and then, the work will focus on:

- Mapping connections across subcommittees, including staffing, differentiated support, and future readiness, so the final recommendations address the system as a whole.
- Weighing recommendations for feasibility and impact, with attention to closing gaps for the students most affected.
- Gathering additional data to test emerging recommendations.

Following Meeting Three, the Transition Team's final recommendations will be shared with the Board and the community as the district moves into strategic planning.



LISTENING & LEARNING

Between August 24 and September 22, 2026, Gwinnett County Public Schools hosted a Listening and Learning Tour to understand the perspectives of people with the most insight into the district—students, parents, community members, and staff. GCPS conducted in-person and virtual focus groups across multiple locations and times of day to reach those who wanted to share their insights. The Fall 2026 student survey drew responses from 116,234 students in grades 4–12 across 143 schools.



Analysis of qualitative focus group data weighted those themes that recurred across multiple conversations, districts, and participant groups. However, care was taken to identify less common but still meaningful perspectives as evidence of variation that could inform the district. Focus-group findings reflect the experiences of participants and should not be treated as statistically representative of all GCPS students, families, or employees. Survey results likewise reflect participating students, with participation varying by school and grade. Together, these sources provide a broad picture of district strengths and areas for improvement.

HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE LISTENING AND LEARNING TOUR



500+
STUDENTS
from 31 schools have shared their experiences, ideas, and aspirations for the future of GCPS

28 **Listening & Learning Sessions**
(in-person and Virtual)

1000+ **Listening and Learning Tour survey results.**

Learn more about the Listening and Learning Tour!

2,200+ **staff, family, and community members RSVP'd to participate in the Listening and Learning Tour.**



LISTENING & LEARNING

FINDINGS

Students, families, community members, and employees describe Gwinnett County Public Schools as a school district with much to value: educators who care about children, numerous opportunities, and a diverse community that enriches school life. Participants also describe how their experiences vary too much by school, classroom, program, or a family's ability to find information and advocate for a child. Across the conversations, people want the district's strengths to reach students more reliably.

Below are the major cross-cutting themes described in general terms and with data drawn from multiple focus group sources and the survey.

Appreciation for the Process

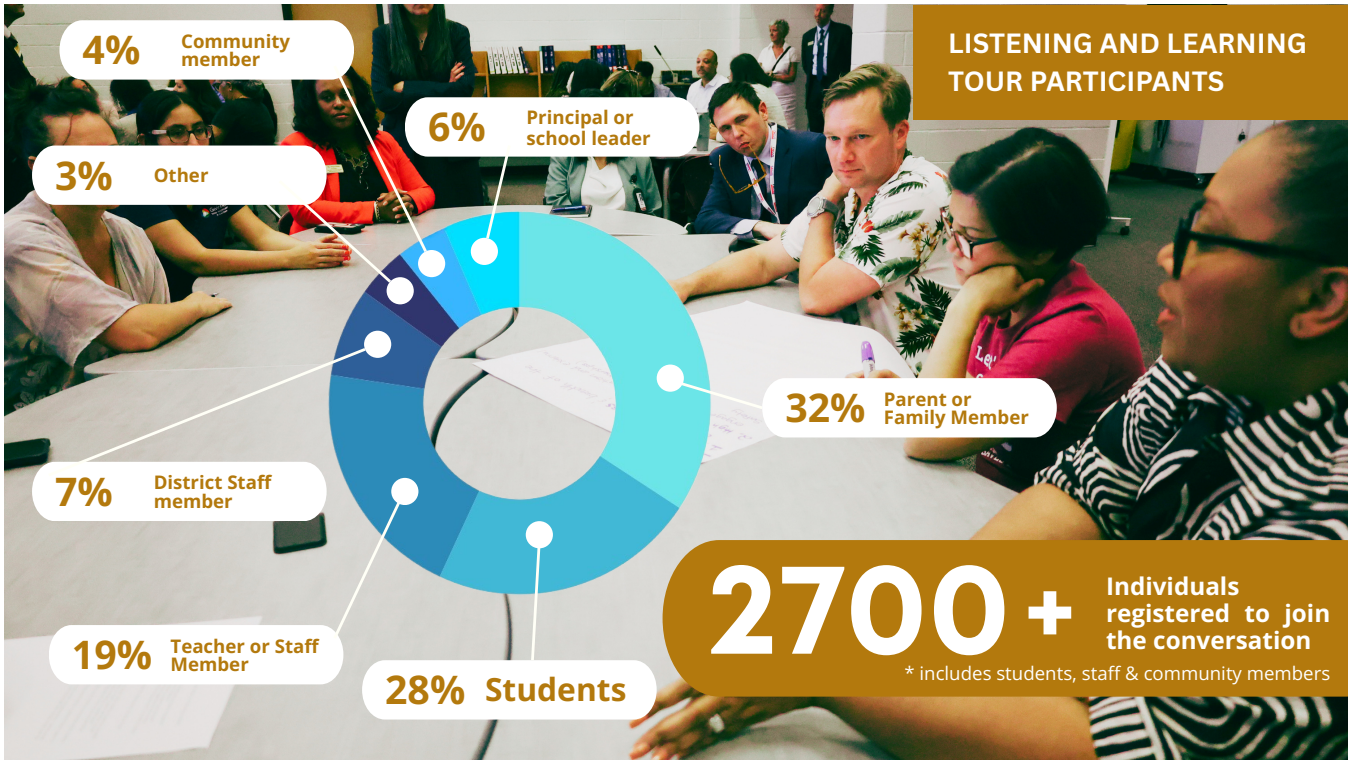
One of the strongest messages from the Listening and Learning Tour was how much participants valued being heard. Staff and community members regularly said they had never experienced this kind of open conversation with the superintendent directly involved and listening to their perspectives. Many expressed hope that these conversations would become a regular part of how GCPS engages with its community. They wanted continued opportunities to share their experiences, along with clear communication about how their input would inform the district's work.

Participation Snapshot:
As of September 28, 2026

- **500+** students are expected to participate in student sessions and focus groups
- **1,000+** stakeholders have completed the Listening and Learning Survey

  For live survey updates, click HERE.

- **116,000+** students shared insights and feedback via the EES survey



LISTENING & LEARNING

Caring educators are a defining strength and need support to sustain their work

Across all five districts, students could name adults who made school feel welcoming, helped them understand difficult material, or encouraged them to pursue a goal. Teachers, counselors, coaches, club sponsors, and other employees helped young people find a place in large schools. Families offered similar accounts, including examples of specialized services that had made a lasting difference for their children. In the survey, 73.8% of students agreed that they had at least one adult they could approach, and 73.4% agreed that teachers helped them learn.

Access to those supportive student-adult relationships was less available for some students. Discussions within focus groups surfaced challenges of accessing school counselors, delays in receiving help, and students who remained unnoticed because they were quiet, struggling, or disconnected from activities. Having a counselor or teacher assigned to a student did not always mean that the student felt known.

Staff and community members repeatedly linked these experiences to issues of workload and staffing. They described large classes, competing organizational responsibilities, limited professional planning time, and shortages of specialized and support staff. Compensation was named as a contributing factor, making it more difficult to fill particular roles. In addition, focus group participants also named leadership, professional respect, and availability of support before becoming overwhelmed as influencers on staff success. Central-office employees described similar pressures in teams that support many schools. These concerns were among the most consistent findings in the staff and community conversations.

Students value broad opportunities, but access remains uneven

Advanced courses, career and technical programs, college coursework during high school, arts, athletics, clubs, and specialized schools were major sources of pride. Students valued opportunities to discover interests and try out possible careers. Families and employees praised the district's ability to offer different routes to success, including hands-on experiences at programs such as Maxwell and Grayson Tech.

Across different stakeholder groups that participated in the Listening and Learning Tour, people described barriers between particular opportunities and actual participation. Fees, transportation, scheduling, limited space, prerequisites, or learning about a program too late could prevent a student from taking part. Families sometimes needed personal connections or extensive knowledge of the school system to find the right option. Participants also described differences in facilities, staffing, enrichment, and course offerings among schools, including differences that local fundraising could widen.

Survey results reinforce the need to examine who experiences these opportunities. Students identified as gifted gave more positive ratings than other students on every survey statement. Students receiving special education services gave less positive ratings than students not receiving those services. Black and Hispanic students generally reported less favorable experiences than White and Asian students, and students receiving free meals gave less positive ratings than students not eligible for meal benefits. These differences describe students' perceptions; they do not explain their causes. A recurring request in the focus group conversations was dependable access to resources that reflect the needs of different schools and students.

LISTENING & LEARNING

Strong learning combines high expectations with teaching that responds to students

Students consistently described effective teaching in everyday terms. In classrooms where they were learning the most, teachers explain content and process clearly, use vivid examples that bring ideas to life, invite questions, check understanding, and make time to help students. In addition, students described those classrooms where hands-on learning, active discussion, projects, and connections to life were common as particularly powerful. Students noted that there is considerable variation across classrooms in terms of these characteristics of effective instruction.

There were also concerns about the quality of teaching and learning. Some families felt their children needed greater challenge. Some students described classrooms moving too quickly, completing work without understanding it, or carrying a heavy workload with little time to absorb what they had learned. Families of gifted students wanted advanced course choices that reflect a child's strengths, interests, and readiness, rather than assuming that taking more advanced courses is always better.

In terms of teaching and learning, school and central-office staff supported the existence of common academic standards, well developed curricular, and useful curriculum material. Some educators described "scripting" of lessons and less room for adjusting instruction to the particular students in their classrooms. Literacy concerns included how to help older students with substantial reading gaps. Educators and families raised questions about technology, most commonly, "When does a technological tool actually improve learning without creating other challenges." Families and staff understood the power of modern technologies, but also questioned the rise of student screen use or scripted lessons that displaced explanation, writing, discussion, or personal interaction. Concern about excessive elementary screen use was particularly prominent in District 3 community conversations.

Belonging and individualized support need to extend to every learner

Students and community members celebrated the district's vast cultural and linguistic diversity. Clubs, teams, the arts, and school traditions helped students form friendships across backgrounds. Yet some students described isolation, bullying, or difficulty finding a group. On average, students reported that their schools provided welcoming environments, but that sentiment was not universal. Survey differences were especially





LISTENING & LEARNING

concerning for students receiving special education services: 66.1% agreed that they felt safe, compared with 73.3% of students not receiving those services.

Special education families praised dedicated educators and valuable services while questioning whether support was consistently built around the individual child. These families wanted meaningful participation in Individualized Education Program (IEP) meetings, clearer information about progress, and fuller access for students to classes, activities, and school life. Some also described changing degrees of support when students moved between schools or grade levels.

Focus groups with members of the Multilingual Learner community focused on a range of related issues. Families recognized important investments the district had made in teacher learning, language programs, and translation services. Participants, including educators, wanted language expertise more closely connected to everyday classroom instruction. Families and educators noted that it is critical to understand that limited English skills are not a predictor of academic ability or background. Families of gifted students valued broad screening and repeated opportunities for identification, while seeking more consistent enrichment and continuity across grade levels. Both gifted and special education conversations raised the needs of children who require advanced learning and disability-related support at the same time. Across these groups, families wanted schools to recognize the full range of a child's strengths and needs.

People want understandable information and a meaningful role in decisions

Families regularly described receiving numerous messages while still feeling they lacked the information needed to make a sound decision on behalf of their child. Information regarding program details, deadlines, course choices, and support options could exist across numerous platforms or be explained in unfamiliar terms. Multilingual families also raised additional questions about timely translation and access to meetings. Work schedules, transportation, and comfort with technology also affected participation. Parents are wanting guidance they could understand and use.

Students and employees appreciated being invited into the listening process and wanted to know what would happen afterward. Students asked for regular ways to influence school decisions and for broader participation beyond the most visible leaders or highly involved students. Staff wanted the people carrying out a decision involved before it was finalized. Special education families similarly wanted their knowledge of their children to shape planning from the start.

The survey gives this theme particular weight. Districtwide, 64.7% agreed that their school listened to students, compared with 57.9% among high school students.

Preparation for the next stage should begin earlier and reflect different futures

Students, families, and staff valued college preparation, career programs, internships, and opportunities to earn credentials. They also described learning about options too late to choose the necessary courses or meet application requirements. Students wanted practical guidance on scholarships, applications, employment, and everyday responsibilities such as managing money. Families wanted clearer explanations of the choices among advanced courses, college coursework, and career programs.

In the survey, 66.7% of respondents to the high-school readiness question felt prepared for their next step. Multilingual learners reported lower confidence

LISTENING & LEARNING

on this question than other students. Special education families also sought earlier planning for employment, further education, independence, and community life. The common request was for guidance that develops over time and recognizes several worthwhile futures, including college, technical training, employment, and military service.

Daily routines and academic pressure affect whether students can thrive

Students regularly described their experience in terms of the the day-to-day practice aspects of schooling. Some vividly described racing across a huge campus in minutes while having to navigate crowded halls. Some discussed not have enough time to eat. Many described challenges of accessing the restroom. Food and lunch were among the most frequent concrete improvement topics in written survey responses. Requests for breaks, outdoor time, and opportunities to connect with friends also recurred. Transportation and scheduling were especially important when they restricted access to specialized programs or activities.

Students in focus groups described balancing demanding courses with jobs, sports, family responsibilities, and college applications. Families of gifted students raised similar concerns about the pressure that young people are experiencing these days and fears about the overall well-being students experience. Both staff and families wanted sufficient counseling, mental health, and behavior support for students; they recognized that classroom teachers could not adequately meet every student need alone.

Better coordination would help existing resources reach schools and families

School-level staff and Instructional Support Center employees described Gwinnett County Public Schools as a district with extensive expertise, instructional resources, and vast options related to professional learning. Their strongest organizational concern was that departments sometimes worked separately, leaving schools to reconcile overlapping expectations, training, technology, and timelines. New initiatives could arrive before staff, materials, and practical arrangements were ready. Families experienced a related problem when they had to find their own way among different offices and various services.

GCPS employees asked for clearer priorities, earlier professional collaboration, and enough time to make improvements work before introducing the next improvement strategy. They also wanted central-office staff to remain connected to ordinary school days.

Community participants described the great potential in partnerships that could connect schools, classrooms, and students with a community that could provide mentoring, career experiences, and family support.



EQUITY STUDY

GCPS EQUITY STUDY SUMMARY REPORT

Collaborative Equity Solutions

July through September 2026

Overview

Between July and September 2026, the CES Dispro Lab team established the study's data collection infrastructure, received and prepared core student administrative datasets, launched staff and parent/community surveys, conducted focus groups, and completed visits to 12 GCPS schools. These activities assembled evidence to examine district and school practices related to MTSS, special education, discipline, and advanced programming.

By October 1, the two surveys had generated 4,121 responses (1,474 staff and 2,647 community/parent). September fieldwork also included 11 focus groups with 21 participants and school visits conducted September 14–16. Document collection and coding, additional stakeholder participation, and quantitative analyses remained underway at the end of the reporting period.

Data Collection Accomplishments

Evidence source	Accomplishments through September
Administrative data	Received student-level administrative datasets in August and cleaned and merged the core student datasets.
Staff survey	Launched September 1; 1,474 responses as of October 1. Participation monitoring and reminders continued throughout September.
Parent and community survey	Launched September 1; 2,647 responses as of October 1. Community outreach and response monitoring continued throughout September.
Focus groups	Conducted 11 staff and parent/community focus groups in September, with 21 participants: 10 staff and 11 community members.
School site visits	Visited 12 schools September 14–16 across the cluster settings listed on the next page.
District and school documents	Finalized the document request list and developed the coding framework. Receipt and cataloging were underway in August; coding remained underway in September.

GCPS EQUITY STUDY SUMMARY REPORT

Preparation and collection across the reporting period

July established the procedures needed for collection. The team finalized the administrative data request and data dictionary, established a secure transfer process, and completed the district and school document request list. Staff and parent surveys were customized for GCPS, parent-survey language needs were verified, and the July–August report noted translations in five lead languages. Parent, staff, and leadership focus-group protocols were finalized. Governance, points of contact, meeting frequency, and the workplan supported coordination with GCPS.

In August, the team received student-level administrative data, cleaned and merged the core datasets, and developed the document coding framework. Document receipt and cataloging, participant recruitment, and regional scheduling were still progressing. These activities prepared the study for September fieldwork.

Stakeholder participation and school context

The staff and parent/community surveys launched September 1. Both surveys were scheduled to remain open through October 1. Response monitoring, staff reminders, and community outreach supported continued participation. The outreach from the Communication team, Cluster Superintendents, and Principals truly advanced the representation across all the clusters; every school and cluster is represented in both surveys.

September focus groups included 11 community participants from 60 sign-ups and 10 staff participants from 15 sign-ups. Virtual scheduling and evening options were used to reduce participation barriers. The attendance figures identify a need for continued recruitment, particularly to broaden community participation and increase staff sign-ups. Currently the study has note established representative participation across GCPS.

The 12 school visits covered North Gwinnett, Lanier, Seckinger, Collins Hill, Norcross, Duluth, Meadowcreek, Central Gwinnett, and Brookwood clusters and Special Entity schools. The visits added school-level context about practices and implementation conditions for comparison with administrative records, surveys, focus groups, and documents.

Remaining collection and analysis priorities

The October agenda includes closing and cleaning the surveys, continuing parent/community, staff, and leadership focus groups, confirming data completeness and participation coverage, and conducting visits to 10 additional schools October 21–23. Those additional visits were planned and are not included in the 12 schools visited during September.

Descriptive statistics, subgroup tables, disparity analyses, and document coding were underway in September. A preliminary descriptive report on disproportionality patterns in special education, discipline and advanced programming (i.e., gifted, AP, Honors, IB, Dual Enrollment, and Pathways) was submitted for district leadership review on September 29. The next phase calls for conducting additional disproportionality analyses, coding focus-group transcripts and documents, and developing working memos that connect the evidence across sources.

RESOURCE EQUITY REVIEW

100-DAY UPDATE

Understanding how GCPS invests people, time, and money to support all students and schools

EDUCATION RESOURCE STRATEGIES

October 2026

Executive Summary

As part of the Superintendent's first 100 days, Gwinnett County Public Schools (GCPS) has launched a comprehensive resource equity review in partnership with Education Resource Strategies (ERS). The work is designed to help the district better understand how its people, time, and money are currently distributed and used—and how those resources can best support students and schools across Gwinnett County.

The review will provide GCPS with a fact base to inform future decisions about how resources are allocated across schools and the central office. Importantly, the work is not focused simply on whether resources are distributed equally. Rather, it examines whether resources are aligned with differences in student and school needs and whether those investments translate into equitable access to high-quality educational experiences.

During the first 100 days, GCPS and ERS have established the foundation for this work through quantitative analysis, qualitative analysis, and ongoing cross-functional collaboration. The work is continuing, and findings and potential implications will be developed as the analysis progresses.

Purpose and Context

Why this work is important for GCPS and what we aim to achieve

GCPS serves students with a wide range of needs across schools and communities throughout Gwinnett County. Ensuring that students have access to the people, programs, time, and financial resources they need requires understanding not only how much the district invests, but also where resources are deployed, why differences exist, and how those investments shape students' experiences.

The resource equity review is intended to build that understanding. ERS is examining patterns in school-level resources, central office investments, and student access to key educational opportunities. Quantitative analysis is being paired with interviews, surveys, listening sessions, and ongoing collaboration with district leaders so that the data can be understood within the context of how GCPS operates.

Together, this work will help establish a shared fact base that GCPS leaders can use as they consider future priorities and resource decisions.

RESOURCE EQUITY REVIEW

Three Areas of Focus

How we are examining GCPS investments in students

School Funding & Resource Allocation Equity

ERS is analyzing how financial, human, and other resources are allocated across GCPS schools, clusters, and student groups. The analysis will examine the level of resources students receive, how investment varies across schools, and the extent to which differences in school-level spending are driven by student needs or other factors.

This work will help GCPS develop a clearer picture of where resources are currently concentrated and whether existing allocation approaches effectively respond to differences in student and school needs.

Central Office & District Benchmarking

The review also examines GCPS central office staffing and resource investments relative to comparable districts in Georgia and nationally. ERS is analyzing staffing levels and ratios across major functions and departments, as well as organizational structures such as management layers and spans of control.

The goal is to provide district leaders with objective benchmarks that can help them understand how GCPS organizes and invests in its central office relative to peer school systems.

Student Experience, Instructional & Programmatic Equity

The review looks beyond funding formulas and staffing allocations to examine how resources translate into students' experiences in schools. This includes examining differences in access to advanced coursework and other academic opportunities; the distribution of experienced and effective teachers and school leaders; and the extent to which the teacher and school leadership workforce reflects the diversity of the students GCPS serves.

Together, these analyses will help GCPS better understand whether students have equitable access to important educational opportunities and resources across schools.

Progress During the First 100 Days

Quantitative analysis, qualitative analysis, and cross-functional collaboration

Quantitative Analysis: Building the Fact Base

ERS has begun collecting and analyzing data from multiple GCPS departments, including Human Resources, Finance, and Research and Accountability. Initial benchmarking analyses are underway, with additional data collection and analysis continuing.

This work will ultimately allow GCPS to examine resource patterns across schools, student populations, and district functions and compare aspects of its resource use with relevant peer school systems.

The next phase of this work includes completing remaining data collection and advancing the school-level, central office, and peer benchmarking analyses.

RESOURCE EQUITY REVIEW

Qualitative Analysis: Understanding the Context Behind the Data

The quantitative analysis is being complemented by interviews, listening sessions, and a principal survey designed to provide important context for interpreting the data.

To date, ERS has participated in one in-person and five virtual Listening Tour sessions and has interviewed key district leaders, including the Chief Financial Officer, Chief of Schools, Chief Operating Officer, Interim Chief Human Resources Officer, Deputy Superintendent, and Executive Director of Visioning and Strategy. Additional interviews with leaders are planned, including leaders responsible for academics and other major district functions.

GCPS principals are also being invited to participate in a survey focused on how resources are experienced and used at the school level. The survey will gather school leaders' perspectives on how staff and funds are allocated to their schools and how principals organize people, time, and money to meet the needs of their students. Their feedback will provide important context for the quantitative analysis and help identify where districtwide allocation approaches may interact differently with the needs and circumstances of individual schools.

These perspectives are important because data alone cannot fully explain why resource patterns exist or how allocation decisions affect schools and students. Combining quantitative analysis with the experiences of district and school leaders will help GCPS develop a more complete understanding of current resource allocation practices, strengths, challenges, and opportunities.

Cross-Functional Collaboration: Establishing Structures for Effective Teaming

Because decisions about resources cross organizational boundaries, GCPS and ERS have established a cross-functional project team that meets weekly and includes representatives from Human Resources, Finance, and Research and Accountability.

ERS also participated in the September Superintendent Transition Team meeting and has met with the Superintendent and members of her team. ERS is scheduled to participate in the November Transition Team meeting as the work progresses.

This cross-functional structure helps ensure that the review is not conducted in isolation. District leaders are helping provide context, interpret information, identify additional questions, and connect the work across departments.

What's Next

Key activities and next steps over the coming months

Over the coming months, GCPS and ERS will continue building the comprehensive fact base needed to understand how resources currently support students and schools.

RESOURCE EQUITY REVIEW

Immediate next steps include completing remaining data collection; advancing school-level, central office, and peer benchmarking analyses; conducting additional Cabinet-level interviews; gathering and analyzing principal survey responses; and continuing engagement with district and school leaders.

> As the work progresses, ERS will bring together findings across the three areas of the review to identify important patterns, questions, and opportunities for further consideration. This synthesis will allow GCPS to move from understanding individual data points to developing a more complete picture of how resources, organizational choices, and student experiences intersect across the district.

The review will ultimately provide the Superintendent and GCPS leadership with a stronger evidence base for future decisions about how the district organizes and invests its resources in support of students and schools.

The resource equity review is intended to build that understanding. ERS is examining patterns in school-level resources, central office investments, and student access to key educational opportunities. Quantitative analysis is being paired with interviews, surveys, listening sessions, and ongoing collaboration with district leaders so that the data can be understood within the context of how GCPS operates.

> **The goal of the resource equity review is not simply to understand where resources are today, but to strengthen GCPS' ability to align people, time, and money with student needs and the educational experiences the district seeks to provide for every student.**





PRE-ENTRY: Understanding the Table of Organization, Operating Rhythm, and How Work Moves Through GCPS

Status Key: ✓ Completed ● In progress ■ In planning

Orientation to the District Operating Model	
Activity	**Status**
Review GCPS Divisions and Teams structure and current leadership assignments	✓
Engage in town halls across all Board Districts to connect with key stakeholders to gather insights and understand community priorities.	✓
Request current Table of Organization charts by division and major departments	✓
Identify critical cross-functional dependencies (Schools, Learning, Operations)	✓
Create an internal "Who Does What" map: division purpose, key services, decision rights, escalation paths.	✓
Next step: revise "Who Does What" map as work evolves.	●



PRE-ENTRY: Understanding the Table of Organization, Operating Rhythm, and How Work Moves Through GCPS

Status Key: ✓ Completed ● In progress ■ In planning

Cabinet and Senior Leader Familiarization	
Activity	**Status**
Schedule structured 60–90 minute preentry interviews with each cabinet leader and key senior leaders	✓
Use a consistent interview protocol: • Mission and core services to schools • Current priorities and initiatives underway • Decision rights and approval pathways • Performance measures and reporting routines • Risks, urgent issues, and stabilization needs • Strengths to protect, bottlenecks to remove	✓



PRE-ENTRY: Understanding the Table of Organization, Operating Rhythm, and How Work Moves Through GCPS

Status Key: ✓ Completed ● In progress ■ In planning

Department Function Reviews	
Activity	**Status**
For each major division and key departments: • Confirm scope, responsibilities, and staffing model • Clarify how work enters the department • Identify prioritization method and service standards • Review how support is delivered to schools • Review current metrics: what is tracked, how often, and how it is used • Identify top 3 recurring barriers schools experience with this department	✓



PRE-ENTRY: Understanding the Table of Organization, Operating Rhythm, and How Work Moves Through GCPS

Status Key: ✓ Completed ● In progress ■ In planning

Meeting Structure and Operating Rhythm	
Activity	**Status**
Inventory standing meetings: • Cabinet meetings • Cross-divisional leadership meetings • Principal, cluster, or network meetings - Instructional leadership teams - Operations coordination meetings - Budget and staffing meetings - Safety and crisis management meetings	✓
Document for each meeting: • Purpose and decision scope • Attendees and roles • Agenda structure and expected outputs • Decision documentation method • Action tracking and follow-up expectations	✓



PRE-ENTRY: Understanding the Table of Organization, Operating Rhythm, and How Work Moves Through GCPS

Status Key: ✓ Completed ● In progress ■ In planning

Communication Flow and Information Dissemination	
Activity	**Status**
For each major division and key department: • Identify primary channels used for internal and external communication • Map message flow: who initiates, who reviews, who approves, and who distributes • Review how urgent updates, policy guidance, and initiative expectations are communicated • Identify feedback loops: how questions are received, routed, answered, and tracked • Confirm translation and accessibility practices for family communications	✓



PRE-ENTRY: Understanding the Table of Organization, Operating Rhythm, and How Work Moves Through GCPS

Status Key: ✓ Completed ● In progress ■ In planning

Initiative Intake, Governance, and Implementation	
Activity	**Status**
Reduce initiative overload and strengthen follow-through. • Map how initiatives enter the system (Board priorities, compliance, grants, department work, partners) • Review how initiatives are screened for alignment and capacity • Identify current implementation supports and monitoring expectations • Review what schools are currently being asked to implement, and by whom • Identify duplications, competing timelines, and unclear ownership	✓
Facilitated two Board retreats to strengthen governance effectiveness, clarify roles and communication expectations, and align on governance practices and operating norms.	✓



PRE-ENTRY: Understanding the Table of Organization, Operating Rhythm, and How Work Moves Through GCPS

Status Key: ✓ Completed ● In progress ■ In planning

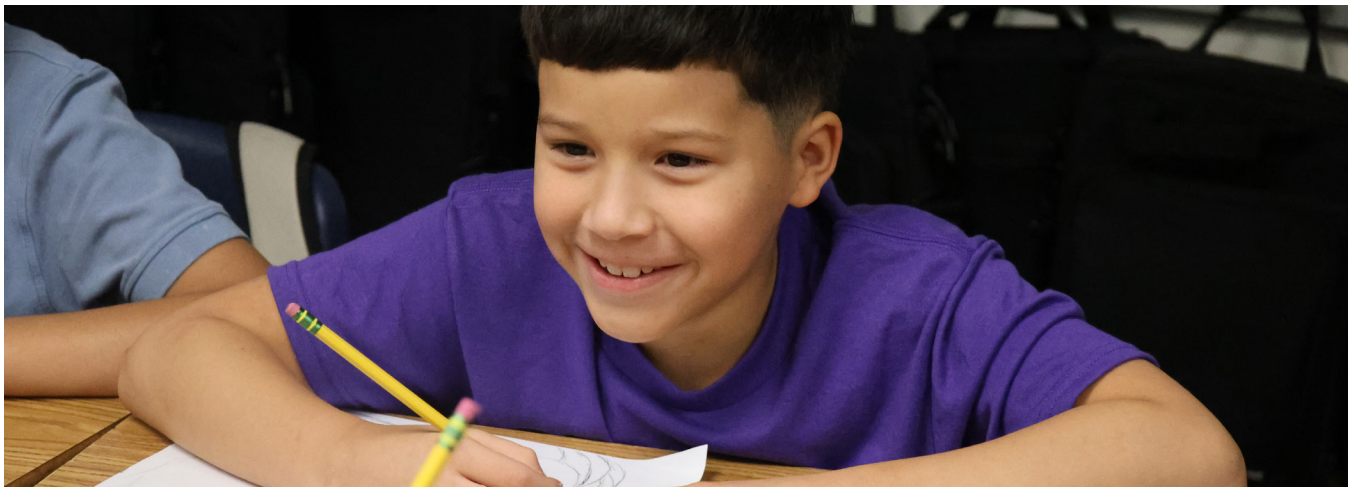
Early Risk Scan and Stabilization Priorities	
Activity	Status
Identify what must be steady from Day 1. • Safety readiness and consistency (procedures, staffing, training, communications) • Staffing pipeline and critical vacancies (time-to-hire, onboarding, retention risks) • Transportation and operational reliability (service standards, escalation, response times) • High-attention topics likely to surface early (enrollment, placement, redistricting, policy concerns) • Budget constraints and near-term decision points	✓
Next step: work with the GCPS Cabinet to fine tune processes.	●



DAYS 1–15: Stabilize, Align, and Set the Operating Rhythm

Status Key: ✓ Completed ● In progress ■ In planning

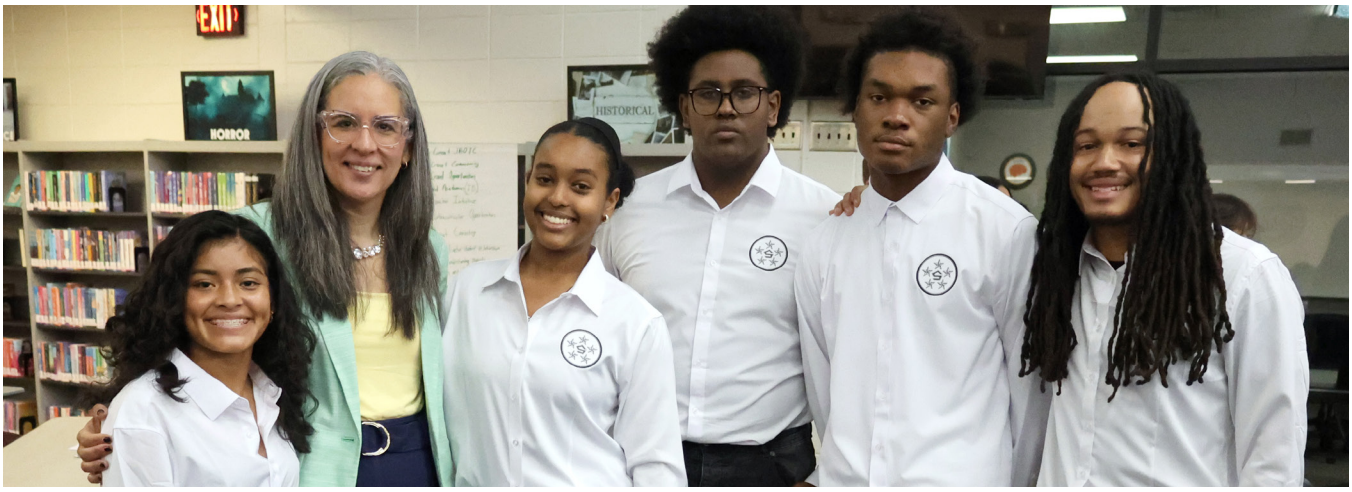
Activity	Status
Establish board and cabinet operating norms.	✓
Confirm districtwide non-negotiables: safety routines, instructional time, respectful culture, and consistent communication.	✓
Next step: work towards refining non-negotiables based on Transition Team recommendations.	●
Launch a public entry hub: listening calendar, feedback pathway, and weekly updates that stakeholders can count on.	✓
One-page operating memo: how we will work together (cadence, escalation pathways, decision timelines).	✓
Public 100-day calendar and feedback pathway.	✓



DAYS 16–30: Listen with Structure, Be Visible in Schools, and Identify Immediate Actions

Status Key: ✓ Completed ● In progress ■ In planning

Activity	Status
Conduct a Listening and Learning Tour across clusters and communities, aligned to themes already raised through district engagement.	✓
Complete Back-To-School visits using a consistent set of look-fors	✓
Next step: continue school visits throughout the academic year	●
Hold staff reality-checks with teachers, principals, and support staff to identify barriers that slow schools down.	✓
Convene a Board retreat to develop, align on, and approve a Governance Team Communication Plan that clarifies roles, decision-making norms, and communication expectations.	✓
30-day summary: what I am hearing and what I am seeing, including strengths to preserve and barriers to address.	✓
Stability actions list (5 to 7 items) with owners and timelines.	✓
Next step: use Transition Team feedback to update and refine action list	●



DAYS 31–45: SAFETY, OPERATIONS, AND TRUST CHECKS THAT FAMILIES WILL FEEL

Status Key: ✓ Completed ● In progress ■ In planning

Activity	Status
Complete a safety implementation review: Evolv consistency in high schools, middle school rollout readiness, training, staffing, and daily procedures.	✓
Complete an operational reliability review: work order response timelines, building readiness, transportation reliability, and school-facing customer service routines	✓
Publish a clear, family-facing update: what stays consistent, what is improving, and how concerns are addressed.	✓
Safety implementation brief (internal): gaps, fixes, and a 30-day action plan	✓
Family-facing safety and operations update (plain language, translated access, clear timelines)	✓



DAYS 46–60: ALIGN TO THE BLUEPRINT, SIMPLIFY, AND SHOW EARLY WINS

Status Key: ✓ Completed ● In progress ■ In planning

Activity	Status
Build a Blueprint-to-execution alignment map: what continues, what is refined, what stops, what must be strengthened, and what is missing.	✓
Next step: Further refinement to aligment map based on Transition Team's final analysis	●
Strengthen attendance as a shared operating practice: reinforce school attendance teams, clarify escalation supports, and differentiate support to high-need schools	✓
Begin budget clarity work tied to staffing stability: explain how investments protect classroom impact and support retention.	✓
Public-facing Blueprint alignment summary will be available after conclusion of the Transition Team's work	●
Two to three early wins with simple measures (examples: attendance team implementation checks, faster service response, consistent safety entry routines)	✓



DAYS 61–75: PREPARE FOR HIGH-INTEREST ISSUES THAT SHAPE TRUST QUICKLY

Status Key: ✓ Completed ● In progress ■ In planning

Activity	Status
Redistricting readiness and support planning: ensure consistent explanations, clear timelines, and a dependable family support pathway for transitions	✓
Kindergarten placement and enrollment clarity: ensure consistent messaging and a respectful, predictable placement review process where applicable	✓
Create a policy clarity protocol: when confusion arises, we communicate who decides what, timelines, how families get support, and how feedback is incorporated	✓
Family transition support plan for redistricting and enrollment, including a clear help pathway and decision timelines	●
Policy clarity protocol for schools and central office to use during high attention issues	✓



DAYS 76–90: ESTABLISH YEAR 1 PRIORITIES AND A PERFORMANCE RHYTHM THAT SCHOOLS CAN SUSTAIN

Status Key: ✓ Completed ● In progress ■ In planning

Activity	Status
Convene a Year 1 planning series with principals, teacher leaders, and central office teams to set a small number of measurable priorities	✓
Set a district performance rhythm: monthly internal reviews, quarterly public updates, and clear ownership for each priority	✓
Clarify responsibilities among schools, clusters, and central office so support is dependable and predictable. Based on principal and Transition Team feedback, GCPS will develop a revised support plan.	●
Year 1 priorities draft (3 to 5 priorities) with owners, measures, and support actions	✓



DAYS 91–100: PUBLISH THE YEAR 1 PLAN, COMMIT TO TRANSPARENCY, AND BEGIN EXECUTION

Status Key: ✓ Completed ● In progress ■ In planning

Activity	Status
Publish the Year 1 execution plan and scorecard aligned to Phase II transition priorities	✓
Announce a predictable communication cadence: weekly superintendent update, monthly progress snapshot, and quarterly cluster-based community forums with follow-up tracking	✓
Clarify responsibilities among schools, clusters, and central office so support is dependable and predictable	✓
Year 1 priorities draft (3 to 5 priorities) with owners, measures, and support actions	✓



KEY MEASURES OF EARLY PROGRESS

Attendance trends and school attendance team implementation practices

As of Day 30 of SY2027, the district's chronic absenteeism rate is 15.8%, down from 17.1% at the same point last year and significantly lower than the post-pandemic high of 22.0% in SY2023. This marks continued districtwide progress, with improvements seen across all grade levels: Elementary (13.1%, down from 14.7%), Middle (13.2%, down from 14.4%), and High School (20.9%, down from 22.0%).

These gains reflect the ongoing work of local school attendance teams, which are implementing early identification processes, targeted interventions, family engagement strategies, and regular attendance monitoring to address barriers before students become chronically absent. Several schools are demonstrating particularly strong attendance outcomes, including Roberts ES (7.4%), Riverside ES, Crews MS (7.7%), North Gwinnett HS (9.9%), and GSMST (4.4%). In addition, visits to schools across the district have highlighted the creative and engaging ways schools are building a positive culture of attendance. One elementary school has launched a sticker challenge to recognize students who arrive on time each day, while a middle school has a "Wheel of Fortune" attendance incentive tied to individual attendance goals. Another school celebrates students with perfect monthly attendance through pizza parties, and one cluster has partnered with local businesses to provide gift vouchers and other incentives. These innovative approaches help make attendance a visible, celebrated, and shared responsibility among students, families, and staff.

While overall trends are encouraging, the district continues to focus support on schools with higher chronic absenteeism rates, particularly at the secondary level. Attendance teams, social workers, counselors, and administrators are working collaboratively to strengthen intervention efforts, address barriers to attendance, and sustain the positive trends observed across the district. Following the submission of local school attendance plans, the team has been reviewing each plan and providing individualized feedback to strengthen attendance strategies and intervention practices, and monitor processes. This review process helps ensure schools are implementing comprehensive, research-based approaches to addressing chronic absenteeism.

Additionally, the Office of Health and Social Services (HSS) has partnered with two community organizations to pilot expanded mental health services for students. One partnership, Project Place, will provide group-based supports specifically designed for students experiencing attendance challenges and related social-emotional barriers. We have also partnered with an additional organization, UWill, to provide Tier II interventions focused on students with emerging attendance and social emotional concerns, allowing schools to offer more targeted supports before attendance issues become chronic.

Together, these efforts are intended to strengthen school-based attendance practices, expand access to preventive supports, and address the underlying factors that may impact student attendance.

Staffing stability indicators: vacancies, time-to-hire, and retention markers

Human Resources is supporting instructional continuity through recruitment, employee development, benefits support, and consistent workplace guidance. Recent evidence shows strong staffing and substitute coverage, expanding internal teacher pipelines, and improved annual retention. This update distinguishes current operational progress from annual outcomes and earlier hiring activity that provide context for the 100-day review.

HR Division Alignment and Communication

HR teams are aligning recruitment, certification, employee support, and school leadership guidance. So far this semester, Principal Hiring Practices Training has launched, fall principal touchpoints are underway, and certification validation through cross-functional partnerships is occurring. GCPS also received recognition this fall from American Association of School Personnel Administrators for HR Communication. The Talent Management reporting framework aligns weekly staffing monitoring, monthly hiring and recruitment reviews, semester workforce reviews, and annual retention and diversity reporting.

Talent Management and Staffing Stability

GCPS opened the 2026–27 school year with just 18 teacher vacancies districtwide (0.15% vacancy rate), maintaining a strong staffing position comparable to the prior year. Paraprofessional vacancies decreased by 13%, from 54 to 47, with Title I schools improving by 21%, from 28 to 22. These results highlight continued staffing stability and progress in strengthening student support, particularly in our Title I schools.

1,715 teachers and paraprofessionals have been hired for 2026–27 as of October 2: 1,321 teachers, including 445 special education teachers, and 394 paraprofessionals. Grow Your Own pathways contributed 437 of 1,307 teacher hires: 189 former student teachers, 110 classified employees, and 138 substitutes. Seven former registered apprentices are GCPS teachers, with nine active apprentices reported in August. 100% of 2025-26 teacher residents were hired as full-time GCPS teachers for the 26-27 school year.

Substitute coverage reached 97.15% as of September 2026, up 4.18 percentage points from the September 2025 snapshot, with 3,755 substitutes. Mentoring, provisional certification support, substitute training, and employee experience partnerships continue to support workforce stability.

Employee Services and Employee Wellbeing

Employee Services is preparing for 2027 benefits Open Enrollment on October 19–November 6, 2026. Planned enhancements include $25,000 basic life insurance, expanded dental and vision options, as well as health screening benefits in accident and hospital indemnity plans. SupportLinc continues to provide confidential, no-cost support with up to eight clinician visits annually for household members. Work is underway to improve supervisor records and organizational charts and evaluate performance management vendors.

Employee Relations and Leadership Support

Employee Relations presented two new initiatives: an After Care Process for intentional employee follow-up after internal investigations, especially when allegations are unsubstantiated, and an Office of Employee Relations Learning Portal for targeted development following substantiated concerns. These initiatives connect accountability with employee support and professional growth. OER also hosted Title IX learning and a state compliance symposium, and monitored annual compliance training throughout the semester.

Operational reliability: response times, critical work order backlog, and transportation performance

Work Order Response Timelines and Critical Work Order Backlog

Our Facilities and Operations Building Maintenance department operates 24 hours/day, 7 days/week, 365 days/year; and we have one of the lowest Craftsman to Square Foot ratios in the industry. Our team of 96 craftsmen have responsibility for maintaining approximately 30 million square feet of building space, meaning that each craftsman is responsible for maintaining a coverage area of ~312,500 square feet. By comparison, industry standard for K-12 nationwide hovers near 1 skilled tradesman for every 120-170K square feet. Despite a lean support model, GCPS consistently achieves best-in-class work order response times; and has met or exceeded our districtwide Key Performance Indicator (KPI) every year since inception.

- We receive ~85,000 work orders per year, and they are prioritized upon receipt.
  - Emergency work orders affect safety (flooding, fire, no power) – our GCPS response time is less than one day, on average.
  - High-Priority work orders are not emergencies but affect large numbers of students (too hot/too cold) – our GCPS response time is ~2 days, on average.
  - Routine work orders are typically break/fix, adjustments, or installations.
  - KPI: Building Maintenance has met or exceeded the district-wide KPI measuring "days to complete work orders", every year since inception.
    SY22 – Baseline 8.8 days
    SY23 – Target 8.4 days, actual 8.4 days
    SY24 – Target 8.1 days, actual 6.9 days
    SY25 – Target 7.7 days, actual 5.9 days
    SY26 – Target 7.4 days, actual 4.408 days
- By comparison, the ActPoint KPI & Council of the Great City Schools (2024) industry standard for K-12 maintenance work orders is 17 days to complete.
- As of October 5, 2026, the Building Maintenance Department has approximately 90 high-priority work orders in progress across 143 facilities. Notably, the department has fewer open work orders than at the same time in October 2025, despite the addition of Murphy Middle School and its 209,000 square feet of new building space, demonstrating continued improvements in operational efficiency and service delivery.

Transportation Performance

- GCPS districtwide ridership has historically hovered around 75%, with approximately 133,000 students riding a school bus as their primary form of transportation to-and-from school in the 2025–26 school year.
- The Transportation Department collects student headcount ridership data during the first week of October each year. At the end of October 2026, the Transportation team will have updated ridership data for the 2026-27 school year.
- The Transportation On-Time Delivery rate for the 2025-26 school year was 99.94% based on reported late-arrivals, which is greater than the ActPoint KPI & Council of the Great City Schools (2024) average industry standard of 99.57% for on-time student delivery.

- GCPS manages the largest district-owned fleet in the nation with 2,012 active school buses. Each school bus is inspected every month of the school year and one month in the summer by one of our certified fleet mechanics, to ensure readiness and reliability for student transportation.
- GCPS performs our monthly fleet inspections at our school bus lots in the evening hours, repairing minor mechanical issues when possible, so that our school buses are fully operational and ready to be driven to pick up our scholars and deliver them to school on time the next morning.
- In addition to those inspections completed by our GCPS mechanics, every school bus is also inspected each summer by a Georgia Department of Public Safety (DPS) inspector, as required by Georgia law. Following these inspections, any necessary repairs are performed before our bus drivers pick their school buses up at the end of summer. This ensures that our fleet of over 2,000 buses is safe, reliable, and ready for service at the start of each school year.
- The Transportation department is in the middle of a robust system modernization initiative that began last school year, and will run through 2026-27. This initiative replaces much of our outdated and antiquated technology with new, modern equipment and systems. These improvements, once fully implemented for 2027-28, are also aimed at increasing transportation operational efficiency, performance and reliability, and enhancing parent communication.

School Construction and Facility Improvements

- GCPS completed over 30 capital improvement projects at our schools during Summer 2026, including replacements of critical infrastructure systems like HVAC and roofing, along with the paving of school parking lots, replacement of carpet and construction of new CTAE labs at those schools selected for projects during the Summer 2026 program. In total, there were 3 HVAC replacement projects that were extended to Fall Break for completion due to supplier inventory issues; all other projects were completed on-time for the return of students.
- F&O finished construction on our newest school, Murphy Middle School, and finished construction to add more capacity at our existing Harbins Elementary School. These projects were both completed and the schools cleaned and ready for the return of staff and scholars prior to the start of this school year.
- Construction continues to progress on-schedule on our 26,000 square-foot addition to Shiloh Middle School, and our 4th-floor build-out and construction of a new auditorium at GSMST, both set to open in fall 2027, for the 2027-28 school year.
- Construction of a new fieldhouse for South Gwinnett High School was approved by the Board of Education in September 2026, and construction is planned for completion by May 2027.
- Facility improvement projects identified for Summer 2028 have been designed and will be awarded this fall, including HVAC and roof replacements, and five interior renovation projects.
- Also this fall, construction projects for planned additions to Trip Elementary and Bay Creek Middle School will be bid and awarded, to be completed in fall 2028 for the 2028-29 school year.
- GCPS continues to deliver construction projects reliably on time and within budget, at costs significantly lower than peer districts. GCPS' construction costs range, on average, between $221-$264 per square-foot for projects completed within the past two years. Peer school districts across the metro-Atlanta area report construction costs above $300 per square-foot for comparable projects.

Community trust indicators: participation, responsiveness, and satisfaction patterns, especially during redistricting and enrollment transitions

Over these first 100 days, GCPS has taken intentional steps to strengthen community trust by creating meaningful opportunities for students, families, staff, and community members to share their experiences, perspectives, and aspirations for the future of the district. The district's digital newsletters, Ed. Briefs (Staff) and GCPS Links (Students, Families, and Staff) kept its respective communities informed. Delivered via ParentSquare, these digital publications reached over 30,000 and 270,000 recipients, respectively. Through the Listening and Learning Tour, district leadership prioritized listening first, ensuring all stakeholders had multiple avenues to provide input and engage in the conversation. Transition-related videos had an average watch time of 30 hours and brought in an average of 74% new viewers. The video, "Superintendent's Listening and Learning Tour Promo", brought in 98% new viewers.

From August through October, GCPS conducted 28 Listening and Learning Tour sessions, both in-person and virtually, engaging a broad cross-section of the community. More than 2,700 individuals registered to participate, including students, parents and family members, teachers, staff, school leaders, district staff, and community members. The district's social media platforms—Facebook and Instagram—informed the public about all aspects of the Superintendent's Entry Plan. Facebook views were up 55%, viewers increased by 34%, and content interactions increased by 43%. The district received 1,562 follows and 70,203 visits to the page. On Instagram, views were up 129% at 4,188,685. Viewers increased by 68%, and content interactions increased by 141%, with 3,464 follows and 36,167 visits to the profile.

Additionally, more than 500 students representing 31 schools participated in conversations about their experiences and hopes for the future of GCPS. To ensure voices could be heard beyond scheduled sessions, the district also supported a Listening and Learning Tour Feedback Survey, which received more than 1,000 responses. Reels and photos with links to RSVP for an in-person or virtual session or fill out a survey received an average of 25% more link clicks than static graphics.

Finally, as part of its commitment to transparent communication and meaningful stakeholder engagement, GCPS developed the Superintendent's Entry Plan webpages that featured the Listening and Learning Tour, Transition Team, and the district's Equity Study activities to share emerging insights, provide regular updates, and connect the community to ongoing opportunities for engagement. The six-page section received 18,258 sessions/unique views, 13,508 unique users, and generated an average of 2 minutes in active engagement time. The top-performing page featured the Listening and Learning Tour content with 13,721 sessions/unique views.

Most importantly, community feedback did not end with the collection of input. Insights gathered through the Listening and Learning Tour have been embedded within the district's transition and strategic planning efforts. Findings from the tour were shared with members of the Transition Team and informed the development of their draft recommendations. As the district moves into the next phase of planning, additional Listening and Learning insights will be shared with the Strategic Planning Task Force. GCPS is committed to ensuring that the district's priorities reflect the experiences and aspirations voiced by stakeholders across the district.

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APPENDIX

APPENDIX A

TRANSITION TEAM PARTICIPANTS

Aimee Darwazeh
Aireane Montgomery
Al Taylor
Aleesia Johnson
Alena Avdic
Alexandra Estrella
Alison Breedy-Johnson
Amy Crapo
Amy Lazic
Amy Washington
Anais Garnett
Andrea Everett
Andrea Thomas-Reynolds
Angela King
Angela Nottingham
Angela Sneed
Angie Wright
Anita Andelic
Aurora Lora
Austin Hannon
Autum Andrews
Ava Sheffield
Avery Headd
Barbara Lashley
Barnett Bailey
Belisa Urbina
Bernard Watson
Bill McAuliffe
Blanca E. Valle
Bo Ford
Bob Runcie
Brandon Bell
Caitlin McMunn Dooley
Candice Richardson
Carla Jordan
Carolina Rojas
Carrie Petty
Catana Harris
Chris Long
Christian Garcia
Christina C. Kim
Christopher Baker
Christy Lee
Chuck Allen
Chukwumeziri Orabuchi
Crystal Baskerville
Cynthia A. Taylor
Dana Poole
David Barber
David Botelho
David Goldie
David Smith
Deborah Gist
Deborah Johnson
Denise Showell
DePriest Waddy
Derek Thorton
Diana Rubio
Diane Felix
Dina-Marie Tosto
Dipa Patel
Dorothy Kindred
Doug Callahan
Edward Fergus
Elijah Swift
Eric Spoto
Eugena Cornelius
Felecia Jones
Francisca Clavijo
Glen Cannon
Glenda Brown
Grady Caldwell
Grant Guyer
Greg Corwin
Gypsy Hernandez
Hayden Merrick
Hector Sanchez
Hollie Marcus
Hong Wan
Huy Harwell
Jaime Aquino
Jason Culbertson
Jason Stricker
Jeannie Hildalgo
Jeff Hall
Jeff Lee
Jennifer Diaz
Jeramie Cavallaro
Jeremy Grant-Skinner
Jeremy Nix
Jesmarie Cantres
Jess Wilson
John Cox
John Gramigna
John Green
John Mangano
John Nickerson
JW Mozley
Kelley Donovan
Kenny Efford
Kevin Kriews
Kevin Tomlinson
Kimberly Bussey
Kimberly Erickson
Kondria Woods
Kristan Hunter
Kristina Jackson
Layla Bell
Lenie George
Lisa Babbage
Lya Clay
Marcus Jackson
Marlyn Tillman
Martha Dyer
Martin Maze
Martina L. Liranzo
Mary Williford
Mathew Lovelace
Matt Jones
Matthew Tucker
Melissa Huffman
Mira Williams
Mo Gaffney
Natalie Looney
Nathan Ballantine
Nick Masino
Nicole Lippman
Niki Ross
Nikki Withrow
Nila Lopez
Nneka Bernard
Nyasha Grant
Olufunke Osunkoya
Onika St. James
Oscar Jimenez-Castellanos
Paula Cobb
Pauline Bullard
Qiong Ly
Randy Rainwater
Randy Tindall
Rasheedra Nelson
Renee Byrd-Lewis
Renita Dorsey
Richard Lemons
Robert Frazier
Rosalita Kennedy
Rose McPherson Greene
Sam Chapman
Sean Jack
Serena Sacks-Mandel
Sharon Hall
Shawnda Halyard
Shea McMahon
Shonda Stevens
Shonika Ochoa-Williams
Solomon Bazuaye
Sonja Santelises
Sophia Jetpuri-Naviwala
Stacey Suber-Drake
Stan Hall
Taffeta Connery
Tamison Yancy
Tim Dunn
Tony Patino
Vanessa Moua-Johnson
Vanessa N. Cartier Craddock
Veronica Maldonado-Torres
Wendy Amato
Windy Bottoms
Yerisson Cardenas

TRANSITION TEAM STUDENT PARTICIPANTS

Students from grades 3–12 participated as members of the Transition Team, meeting virtually with facilitators.

Finley A.
Cali C.
Siya K.
Patrick S.
Isaiah A.
Ezana T.
Heidy Lopez G.
Abdiel Linares G.
Jordan "JJ" L.
Yasmine T.
Elijah Barak D.
Jack R.
Jackson T.
Allyson S.
Kristyn S.
Brandon Silva-G.
Jorvint M.
Jonas C.
Jolie T.
Mattilyn T.
Emilson Ortiz L.
Eliana R.
Audrey M.
Jocelyn J.
Garrett P.

APPENDIX B

LISTENING & LEARNING TOUR

IN-PERSON TOUR, AUGUST 24–31

Dr. Estrella, in collaboration with Partners for Educational Leaders, conducted in-person meetings in each district, as well as meetings at several special entity schools. The meetings provided students, staff, families, and community members with the opportunity to highlight strengths and areas of opportunity in the district.

DISTRICT 1: Dacula High School, August 24
Students: 105
Staff: 14
Families/Community Members: 35

DISTRICT 2: Central Gwinnett High School, August 25
Students: 90
Staff: 39*
Families/Community Members: 63*

DISTRICT 3: Duluth High School, August 26
Students: 50
Staff: 19
Families/Community Members: 38

DISTRICT 4: Brookwood High School, August 27
Students: 125
Staff: 63*
Families/Community Members: 65*

DISTRICT 5: McClure Health Science High School, August 31
Students: 100
Staff: 78*
Families/Community Members: 29*

Dr. Estrella met with students during in-person meetings and classroom visits at four special entity schools.

GIVE Center East: 35
GIVE Center West: 35
Oakland Meadow School: 12
Buice School: 12

ISC STAFF
4 sessions: 100*

*Number reflects RSVPs, head count was unavailable.

VIRTUAL TOUR SEPTEMBER 8–21

Dr. Estrella, with Partners for Educational Leaders, conducted virtual meetings for those unable to attend in-person meetings.

September 8	84
September 8 (Multilingual Learners)	43
September 9	67
September 14	118
September 21	60
September 21 (Gifted Learners)	208

APPENDIX C

LIST OF SCHOOLS VISITED BY DR. ESTRELLA AND CABINET AS OF AUGUST 28, 2026

Anderson-Livsey ES
Annistown ES
Baldwin ES
Beaver Ridge ES
Benefield ES
Berkley Lake ES
Berkmar HS
Berkmar MS
Bethesda
Britt ES
Brookwood ES
Brookwood HS
Buice Center
Camp Creek ES
Cedar Hill ES
Centerville ES
Central Gwinnett HS
Chattahoochee ES
Chesney ES
Coleman MS
Collins Hill HS
Craig ES
Creekland MS
Dacula ES
Dacula HS
Dacula MS
Discovery HS
Duluth HS
Freeman's Mill ES
GIVE Center East
GIVE Center West
Grace Snell MS
Graves ES
Grayson HS
Gwinnett School of Mathematics, Science, and Technology
Harbins ES
Harris ES
Head ES
Ivy Creek ES
Jackson ES
Jenkins ES
Jordan MS
Joyful Learning Academy
Kanoheda ES
Lanier HS
Lawrenceville ES
Lilburn ES
Lilburn MS
Magill ES
Maxwell CTAE
McClure Health Science HS
Meadowcreek ES
Mill Creek HS
Moore MS
Mountain View HS
Murphy MS
Nesbit ES
Norcross HS
North Gwinnett HS
North Gwinnett MS
Oakland Meadow School
Osborne MS
Parkview HS
Parsons ES
Paul Duke STEM HS
Peachtree Ridge HS
Pinckneyville MS
Radloff MS
Roberts ES
Rock Springs ES
Rockbridge ES
Seckinger HS
Shiloh HS
Shiloh MS
Simonton ES
Simpson ES
Snellville MS
South Gwinnett HS
Summerour MS
Sycamore ES
Trip ES
Twin Rivers MS
Walnut Grove ES



It is the policy of the Gwinnett County Public Schools not to discriminate on the basis of sex, age, race, color, disability, religion or national origin in any program or activity, employment, admission, service, treatment, admissions to facilities or access to any program or activity operated by the Board or in the employment practices of the Board.