



Clarke County  
School District

# BETTER EVERY DAY

2018-2020 STRATEGIC PLAN

# 2018-2020 STRATEGIC PLAN

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## Ensuring the academic growth and achievement of every student

**Strategy is the set of actions an organization chooses to pursue to achieve its objectives (Childress, 2004).**

Childress went on to say that the deliberate actions are puzzle pieces that fit together to create a clear picture of how the people, activities and resources of an organization can work effectively to accomplish a collective purpose. It is with the purpose of identifying the few high-leverage ways to improve instruction, student learning and social-emotional growth that the enclosed two-year strategic plan has been crafted for the Clarke County School District.

The development of a strategic plan and organizational change is not an event, but rather a continuous improvement process that creates greater coherence for the organization (Hall & Hord, 2001). The construction of a strategic plan is inextricably connected to research that supports exemplary district leadership. The process of collaborative goal setting, establishing goals for achievement and instruction, creating board alignment with and support of district goals, monitoring achievement and instructional goals and ensuring the allocation of resources to support goals for achievement and instruction has been proven to increase student academic achievement (Marzano & Waters, 2009).

The Clarke County School District 2018-2020 strategic plan is an audacious declaration that we are determined to increase student achievement through rigorous standards-based instruction, consistent progress on interconnected school growth plans, consistent focus on the social-emotional development of our students and constant attention toward equity practices for all students — especially historically underrepresented and marginalized student groups. The plan places educational equity at the center of our organizational culture. The journey to eventually accomplishing this plan will require professional discipline and focus, constant monitoring and a conviction from our community that the number one goal for our students and district is increased student achievement.

This strategic plan is radical in that it demands deep and intentional professional focus and changes in current practice, ways of thinking and being. It is a dynamic, evolving document that deserves our constant monitoring and support. It is a collection of interdependent actions at the classroom, school and district level that have been implemented to promote student growth and achievement. Ensuring the academic growth and achievement of every student, in every school, simply means all. The 2018-2020 strategic plan boldly enacts strategies to ensure this occurs for every child.

Sincerely,

Dr. Demond A. Means, Ed.D.  
Superintendent

# Educational Equity

In the Clarke County School District, we define equity as meaning that *every child gets what he or she needs in our schools — every child, regardless of where she or he comes from, what she or he looks like, who her parents are, what her or his temperament is, or what she or he shows up knowing or not knowing.*

*Every child gets what she or he needs every day in order to have all the skills and tools that she or he needs to pursue whatever she or he wants after leaving our schools, and to lead a fulfilling life. Equity is about **outcomes and experiences** — for every child, every day* (Aguilar, 2013). The concepts of equity and excellence are far from at odds (Blankstein & Noguera, 2015). A school district can attend to closing all achievement gaps among its academically neediest students while also expanding learning opportunities for students who have demonstrated mastery. This work is difficult, yet achievable.

**We have some of the best students, teachers, programs and schools in the state.**

We also have more underachieving schools than is acceptable, and significant disparities in student performance identifiable by race, ethnicity, disability, gender and English language status.

The disproportionately is glaring and a constant reminder of the historically unjust educational system that was constructed in this nation, state and county. This strategic plan boldly declares that we are prepared to disrupt and dismantle this unjust educational system to achieve equity for all our students. We believe that there is a symbiotic relationship between equity and systems change (Mosher-Williams, 2018). Equity work is not about blaming, shaming or judging anyone. It is about whole-system disruption on behalf of the system's most marginalized students.

Educational equity is both a long-term goal and a mechanism for system change. Systemic change is complex and requires strategic leadership. Our equity work is meant to transform and address some of the most uncomfortable educational and societal issues of the past and present generation. It is not a diversity workshop or a passing fad of educational practice. It is a way of being — a mindset that the staff and community are to adopt and implement for the sake of all our students. This task is forward thinking and grounded in the great tradition of civil rights work.

We can and must do better in serving all students. Educational equity is no longer a concept to discuss. We must implement strategies and action now. It is the intent of this strategic plan to place educational equity at the center of our organizational culture. We are committed to eliminating the opportunity and perception gaps in our district.

Intentional equity and systems change work requires us to conduct a thorough introspective review of how our schools are constructed to produce better outcomes and experiences. It is through this strategic plan that we plan to assess:

- Whether current instructional practices perpetuate inequity or advance equity.
- Whether access to all educational programming is representational and equitable.
- Whether instructional practices perpetuate low expectations and inequity or equitable, culturally relevant and rigorous learning/opportunities for all learners.
- Whether the organizational culture explicitly works to dismantle the dominant privilege in the system and ensures the focus of the district is on every child, in every classroom and in every school.

Equity work is connected to improvement science. Achieving quality outcomes reliably at scale is a socially just aim, around which we can all unite (Bryk, Gomez, Grunow & LeMahieu, 2017). The education field knows enough to achieve this goal. However, we have few school systems courageous enough to implement strategies, facilitate conversations and dismantle a historically unfair school system to execute equity. In the Clarke County School District, we run toward this goal with enthusiasm, fully understanding that this will be difficult, uncomfortable and transformational work. The famous abolitionist Frederick Douglas stated it well when he proclaimed: **“Where justice is denied, where poverty is enforced, where ignorance prevails and where any one class is made to feel that society is an organized conspiracy to oppress, rob and degrade them, neither persons nor property will be safe”** (Howard & Milner, 2017).





## OUR VISION

Building a culture of high expectations and equity in which all students grow academically and socially to improve our community and our world.



## OUR MISSION

The Clarke County School District is an ambitious community of learners in a diverse and culturally rich county. We are committed to equity and excellence through the implementation of rigorous standards in a safe and supportive environment — on every campus, in every classroom and for every child.

## OUR DRIVING FORCES



## OUR CORE BELIEFS

Public education is central to our democracy. To fulfill the promise of public education, the Clarke County School District has a fundamental set of beliefs that serves as a lens through which every decision is made and every action is taken.

These beliefs are the backbone of our organization. CCSD believes that:

Equity, access and progress towards excellence are basic rights that must be afforded to every individual in our system.

Mission-driven, diverse and creative staff make the critical difference in student achievement, and they must be successfully recruited and retained.

Students, families, staff and the broader community benefit mutually from active engagement with one another.

Safe, nurturing and well-maintained schools/campuses are required for optimal learning.

## Strategic Planning Committee

**Dr. Xernona Thomas and Dr. Demond A. Means**  
*Co-Chairs of the Strategic Planning Committee*

**Dr. Anissa Johnson** - Principal, Fowler Drive Elementary School

**Tad MacMillan** - Principal, Clarke Middle School

**Lawrence Harris** - CEO, Athens Community Career Academy

**Liz Demarco** - Parent, Clarke Central High School

**Roderick Platt** - Parent, Oglethorpe Avenue Elementary School

**Allison Niedzwiecki** - Teacher, Chase Street Elementary School

**Ian Altman** - Teacher, Clarke Central High School

**Dr. Chandra Power** - Teacher, Coile Middle School

**Bashie Ebron** - Teacher/Instructional Coach, J.J. Harris Elementary Charter School

**Dr. Sherri Freeman** - Associate Superintendent, Human Resources

**Dr. Monica Gant** - Associate Superintendent, Instructional Services

**Dr. Dawn Meyers** - Associate Superintendent, Policy & School Support Services

**Dr. Shannon Wilder** - UGA/Chamber of Commerce

**CJ Amason** - Community Member/Foundation for Excellence in Public Education

**Dr. Stacey Neuharth-Pritchett** - Community Member/UGA/PDSD

**Fred Smith** - Community Member/Gaines Elementary School LSGT

**Rev. Abraham Mosley** - Minister/Community Member

**Dr. Melissa Perez Rhym** - Teacher, Cedar Shoals High School

**Glenda Huff** - CCSD High School Curriculum Coordinator

**John Gilbreath** - CCSD Executive Director of District Services

**James Barlament** - CCSD Executive Director of Assessment & Accountability

**Fabian Jones** - CCSD Director of Transportation

**Michael Harris** - CCSD Executive Director of Teaching and Learning (High School)

**Larry Hammel** - CCSD Chief Financial Officer

## Theory of Action

IF the district deliberately works toward eliminating the marginalization of historically underrepresented groups through an organizational emphasis of increasing student achievement for all students through rigorous standards-based instruction, consistent progress on school growth plans, consistent focus on the social-emotional development of our students, constant attention toward equity practices and accomplishment of the strategic plan, **THEN** we will increase student achievement and sustain educational attainment in CCSD.



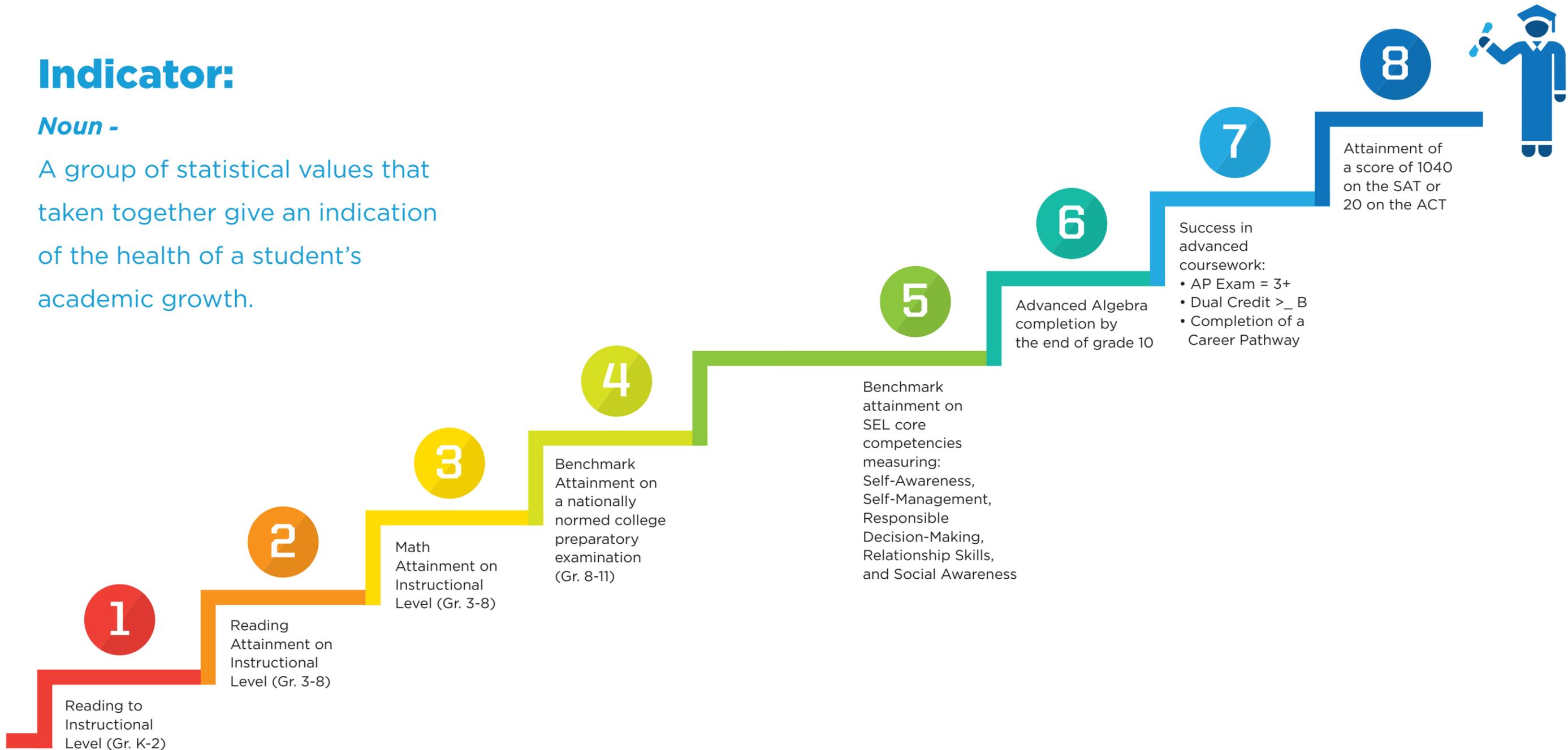
# Indicators of College & Career Success



## Indicator:

*Noun -*

A group of statistical values that taken together give an indication of the health of a student's academic growth.



# Strategic Priorities



## Priority #1 – Academic Growth

### Goal Statement:

By the end of the 2020 school year, CCSD will increase proficiency results in literacy and numeracy by 12 percentage points from the district's baseline performance in 2017-2018.

### Indicators of Success:

- A. Growth on the CCSD Indicators of College and Career Success by 12 percentage points over a two-year period. (See Indicators 1, 2 and 3).
- B. Growth on the Georgia Milestones assessments by 12 percentage points over a two-year period.
- C. Growth on NWEA MAP assessments by 12 percentage points over the baseline established in the Fall 2018 over a two-year period.



Tell me and I forget.  
Teach me and I remember.  
Involve me and I learn.

BENJAMIN FRANKLIN





## Priority #2 – Social Emotional Growth

### Goal Statement:

By 2020, CCSD will develop a positive school, district and community culture that supports the social-emotional growth of all students.

### Indicators of Success:

- A. Growth on Indicator #5 of the CCSD College and Career Success via the Georgia Student Health Survey.
- B. Growth on the College Board/AVID/CCSD Metacognition five-year study.
- C. Growth in student attendance rates in relation to student connections with their school environment.
- D. Reduction of incivility disciplinary rates across the district.



Let us remember: one book, one pen, one child  
and one teacher can change the world.

MALALA YOUSAFZAI





## Priority #3 – Organizational Effectiveness

### Goal Statement:

By 2020, the Clarke County School District will maximize its organizational effectiveness through the implementation of systems thinking strategies and improvement science structures to ensure educational equity and organizational excellence.

### Indicators of Success:

A. Every department will develop and implement core processes aligned to systems thinking and regularly monitor efficacy of the core processes by June 2019.

B. Create an organizational dashboard and document growth on organizational key performance indicators for the district by November 2018.

“  
Learning is not attained  
by chance; it must be  
sought for with ardour  
and diligence.

ABIGAIL ADAMS

”





## Priority #4 – Fiscal Health

### Goal Statement:

By 2020, the district will balance our budget annually, align resources to strategic priorities and areas of greatest need, and maintain innovative, contemporary and vibrant learning environments throughout CCSD.

### Indicators of Success:

- A. Maintain a fund balance of 15% or more annually.
- B. Achieve a balanced budget annually.
- C. Meet or exceed key performance indicators established in Business Services and District Services.
- D. Complete an analysis of efficient facility and space usage of all schools and buildings.



Education...is painful, continual and difficult work to be done in kindness, by watching, by warning, by praise, but above all – by example.

JOHN RUSKIN





## Priority #5 – Professional Capacity

### Goal Statement 1 (Professional Learning):

**By 2020, CCSD professional learning will build greater professional capacity in an effort of increasing student academic performance by 12% in literacy, numeracy, and social-emotional development by aligning to the professional learning themes of Data Literacy, Curriculum Revision and Alignment, Culturally Responsive Teaching and Equity, College and Career Readiness, and the Social Emotional Development of Students.**

#### Indicators of Success:

- A. Increase opportunities for professional reflection and self-awareness related to educators' roles in applying strategies gained through professional learning.
- B. Increase teacher-led professional learning opportunities that align to the district themes.
- C. Increase the staff application and delivery of instructional strategies and content knowledge gained through professional learning.
- D. Ensure that construction of the district calendar provides 38% of all professional learning to be coordinated by the district aligned to the district professional learning themes, 31% to be coordinated at the building level and aligned to the district professional learning themes and 31% allocated to teachers for professional reflection.



### Goal Statement 2 (Collegiality):

**By 2020, CCSD will improve professional collaboration, mission-driven inquiry, school culture and organization, teacher leadership, collective efficacy, and professional engagement to increase student academic performance by 12% in literacy, numeracy, and social-emotional development.**

#### Indicators of Success:

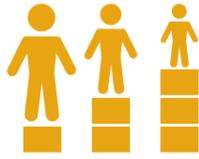
- A. Ensure opportunities for professional collaboration for the purpose of increasing student academic performance in literacy, numeracy, and social-emotional learning.
- B. Promote professional inquiry that is mission-driven focused on equity and excellence, which will result in the planning and delivery of rigorous instructional standards for all children.
- C. Establish school cultures of high expectations and equity where all students grow academically and socially in safe and supportive environments.
- D. Increase teacher leadership by improving how teachers work with, support and challenge their colleagues to serve all students to ensure mission-driven, large-scale transformation.

### Goal Statement 3 (Recruit, Hire & Retain):

**By 2020, CCSD will recruit, support, and retain highly effective, mission-driven, diverse and creative faculty and staff to make a critical difference by increasing student achievement in literacy, numeracy, and social-emotional development by 12%.**

#### Indicators of Success:

- A. Successfully recruit mission-driven and diverse faculty and staff to increase student achievement in literacy, numeracy, and social-emotional development.
- B. Implement formal induction, ongoing support and leadership development programs for the continuum of professional careers (transition throughout careers).
- C. Retain mission-driven and diverse faculty and staff by reducing resignations and other departures by 5% annually.



## Priority #6 – Educational Equity

### Goal Statement 1 (Access to Educational Programming):

By 2020, there will be a 6% decrease in disproportionality between students of color and white students in educational programming.

#### Indicators of Success:

- A. Minimize the use of pullout programming to serve special education and struggling academic students through the effective use of Tier 1 & Tier 2 instructional strategies.
- B. Ensure equitable access to Gifted and Talented and Advanced Placement programming for underrepresented students by 6% annually.

### Goal Statement 2 (School Discipline):

By 2020, disciplinary infractions with overrepresented student populations will decrease by 6% each year.

#### Indicators of Success:

- A. Reduce out-of-school suspension rate by 6% for students of color annually.
- B. Reduce out-of-school suspension rate by 6% for Special Education students annually.
- C. An increase of documented communication between classroom teachers and student families by 6% of the established baseline from the 2018-2019 SY.

### Goal Statement 3 (Access to Educational Programming):

By 2020, district disproportionality in student performance will decrease between student groups by accelerating underrepresented student performance above the district strategic goal by an *additional 6%*.

#### Indicators of Success:

- A. Accelerated growth on Strategic Priority #1 on the CCSD Indicators of College and Career Success by 6%.
- B. Accelerated growth on Strategic Priority #1 on the Georgia Milestones examinations by 6%.



# CCSD

## By the Numbers

With 21 schools and more than 13,000 students, the Clarke County School District offers students both diversity and a culture of academic excellence. Based in beautiful Athens, Georgia, CCSD serves Clarke County, which includes the communities of Athens and Winterville, and part of Bogart.



### Facilities

21 schools

14 Elementary

4 Middle

3 High

#### Special Programs:

- Athens Community Career Academy
- Office of Early Learning



### Faculty & Staff

Total Number of Employees: 2,289

Total Number of Teachers: 1,148

Teachers with Advanced Degrees: 837

Average Years of Experience: 11



### Students

Total Enrolled: 13,848

Elementary: 7,467

Middle: 3,008

High: 3,373

Enrolled in Gifted Education: 1,941

African-American: 49%

Hispanic: 25%

White: 20%

Multi-racial: 4%

Asian: 2%



Every child deserves a champion: an adult who will never give up on them, who understands the power of connection and insists they become the best they can possibly be.

RITA PIERSON



### Budget

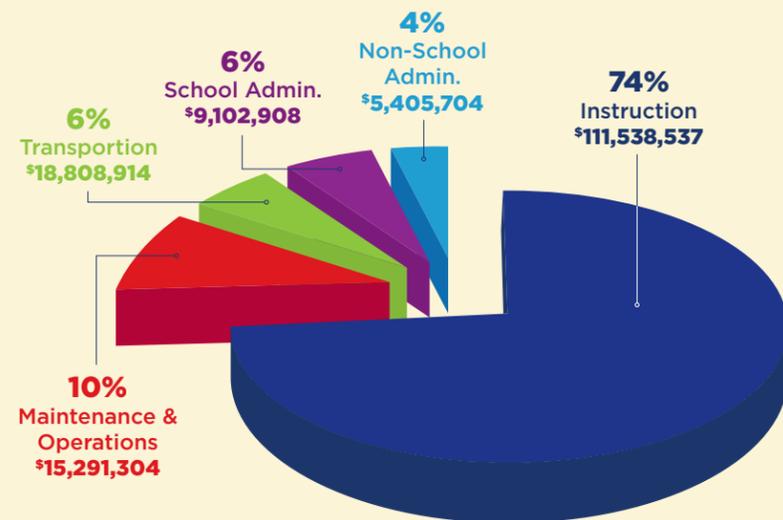
# \$150,147,367

(Includes other outlay)

#### Where money comes from:

- Ad Valorem Tax - \$77,918,084
- Other R/E Taxes - \$1,100,000
- Title Ad Valorem Tax - \$750,000
- State Funds - \$69,184,283
- Federal Funds - \$215,000
- Local Funds - \$980,000

#### How money is used:





# BETTER EVERY DAY





# Clarke County School District

Better Every Day

## STAY CONNECTED

CCSD APP | [www.clarke.k12.ga.us](http://www.clarke.k12.ga.us)



It is the policy of the Clarke County School District not to discriminate on the basis of age, sex, race, color, religion, national origin, marital status, disability or any other legally protected status in its educational programs, activities or employment practices. Para información en español, llame (706) 546-7721, ext. 18312

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