



Richard Woods, Georgia's School Superintendent
"Educating Georgia's Future"

Investing in Educational Excellence (IE²) System* Application

DISTRICT NAME

Whitfield County School System

DISTRICT ADDRESS

1306 South Thornton Avenue
Dalton, Georgia 30720

Richard Woods
State School Superintendent

MAY 2015

IE² SYSTEM APPLICATION COVER SHEET

Please enter the requested information in the gray boxes following each question. Thank you!

Proposed IE ² System Information			
1. Full Name of Proposed IE ² System Whitfield County School System			
2. Please indicate whether this is a: New Petition (<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>) or a Renewal Petition	3. How many schools in total are you proposing to include in your IE ² system? 23 schools and 1 Career Academy Program		
4. How many of each of the following schools are you proposing to include in your IE ² system? <div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-around;"> Primary School(s) 0 Middle School(s) 5 </div> <div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-around;"> Elementary School(s) 13 High school(s) 5 and 1 Career Academy Program </div>			
5. On July 1 of what year do you want your IE ² contract to be effective? 2016			
6. IE ² System Street Address 1306 South Thornton Avenue	7. City Dalton	8. State Georgia	9. Zip 30720
10. Contact Person Dr. Judy Gilreath		11. Title Superintendent	
12. Contact Street Address 1306 South Thornton Avenue	13. City Dalton	14. State Georgia	15. Zip 30720
16. Contact's telephone number 703.217.6723	17. Contact's fax number 706.278.5042	18. Contact's E-mail Address judy_gilreath@whitfield.k12.ga.us	

THE WHITFIELD COUNTY SCHOOL DISTRICT IE² PARTNERSHIP APPLICATION

INVESTING IN STRATEGIC WAIVERS SCHOOL SYSTEM/IE² CONTRACT

In accordance with the State of Georgia Article 4, O.C.G.A. § 20-2-84, it is the intent of the Whitfield County School System to operate as a Strategic Waivers School System/IE² through the development of the IE² partnership between our school system and the State Board of Education. The following components consist of the current planning for completing the application and developing the contract necessary to take effect on July 1, 2015.

WHITFIELD COUNTY SCHOOL SYSTEM OVERVIEW

Whitfield County is located in northwest Georgia at the southern end of the Appalachian Mountains, about 30 miles south of Chattanooga, Tennessee, and 80 miles north of Atlanta along the I-75 corridor. The county shares a northern border with Tennessee and covers nearly 290 square miles. Most government and industries are in the county seat, Dalton. Our community has been recognized as a top community for innovative commitment to strengthen education and increase literacy among young children. (*Georgia Trend*).

Whitfield County Schools (WCS) was established in 1872. The Whitfield County Schools began as numerous one-room school houses with the primary purpose of educating children when they were not needed on the family farm. It evolved to the current established system comprised of 13 elementary schools, five middle schools, three traditional high schools, one charter program (Northwest Georgia College and Career Academy), one special purpose high school (Phoenix), one alternative secondary school (Crossroads), and 11 Pre-Kindergarten sites. Of the system's 23 schools, 20 are Schoolwide Title I programs, a designation that addresses the educational needs of high poverty populations (71.83 percent Free and Reduced Lunch).

With a student enrollment of 13,410 (per the October 2, 2015 FTE Enrollment), the Whitfield County School System is currently the twenty-sixth largest of 180 systems in the state of Georgia. WCS has a high poverty population and a significant population of English Learners (ELs). Considering about two-thirds of ELs come from low income families and these students are at high risk for academic failure, the school system's leadership and community partners recognize the need for a long-term action plan.

STUDENT LEARNING

Student learning is the school system's focus. Whitfield County Schools adopted Non-Negotiable Instructional Practices in 2014. These practices are high impact research-based practices for high student achievement. To ensure that our students have the knowledge to be successful beyond the classroom, our students engage in learning through the GA Standards of Excellence (GSE). The GSE raise the bar for students in all grade levels, requiring teachers, students, and parents to work together to embrace the challenges of this curriculum.

Whitfield County students benefit from curriculum maps/pacing guides that have been adapted from the state documents. Students in grades K-12 experience an aligned mathematics curriculum with common expectations and practices. Number Talks is implemented in grades K-8 which helps students to develop number sense and strengthen mental math strategies through conversations.

Community and educational leaders identified literacy as a need; therefore, an initiative was implemented with the Governor's Office of Student Achievement titled Get Georgia Reading. This initiative focuses on state standards and high yield strategies. Teachers receive job-embedded support as they work with students to implement new learning.

Instructional technology is used to enhance student engagement. By adding new technology to meet the needs of the 21st century learner, several devices are used across the district: iPads, iPods, ActivBoards, tablets, Nooks, Chromebooks, and phones. Learning Odyssey is used from K-8 to enhance learning for students. Edgenuity is utilized at the high school level for first-time credit and credit recovery.

Students who require special services receive a high quality education as evidenced by Whitfield County Schools (WCS) English Learners (EL) consistently succeeding in state tests and the district meeting determination for IDEA compliance for the past six years. Project SEARCH assists some students with cognitive disabilities at the high school level to transition to the work force. The O.N. Jonas Foundation offers opportunities in fine arts. High achievement opportunities are offered through Advanced Learning Program for High Achievers (ALPHA), MOWR, Duke University Talent Identification Program (TIP), Governor's Honors, and Georgia Virtual School. Whitfield County Schools has enhanced existing AIMSweb progress monitoring by implementing Measures of Academic Progress (MAP) in grades K-8 in an effort to longitudinally evaluate and design instruction for students in reading and mathematics. This data is used to help determine if students might need RTI or remediation.

HUMAN RESOURCES

In Whitfield County Schools, 100% of all teachers and paraprofessionals are highly qualified as measured by the Georgia Professional Standards Commission and TII-A. WCS believes teachers are learners. This is evidenced by the following statistics: 24.89% hold a bachelor's degree, 41.76% hold a master's degree, 29.37% hold a specialist degree, and 4% hold a doctorate degree. Whitfield County Schools maintains a remuneration plan for all employees based on their job classifications, educational preparation, licensure, experience, and job duties. All certified

employees' compensation is based on the annual salary schedule approved by the State Legislature.

FINANCIAL OVERVIEW

Though Whitfield County was in an economic crisis, voters supported schools by approving an Education Special Purpose Local Option Sales Tax (ESPLOST) and the Local Board of Education raised the millage rate. Despite years of state funding cuts and reduced tax revenues, our District has never operated under a fiscal deficit. Whitfield County Schools continues to prioritize its educational programs and seek opportunities for efficiencies within its resources, and we are optimistic about our ability to maximize all of the financial resources to provide a quality education for our students. WCS also uses the following grants to supplement the learning opportunities for students: Striving Readers Grant, Birth to Five Grant, Elementary School Breakfast Grant, State Technology Grant, GOSA Innovative Grant, Georgia Federal Credit Union School Grant, Home Depot Grants, Lowes Grants, Target Grants, and several Whitfield Education Foundation Grants.

WHITFIELD COUNTY SCHOOLS "BUILDING THE CASE"

THE CASE

As we strive to improve the education of students, the partnership with local colleges is vital to the local community. This partnership is evident through the Literacy Initiative, various professional learning opportunities, and the Summer Feeding Program for all local children. Whitfield County Schools shares in the Archway Partnership which brings together the community to support children in the area of literacy from birth to work. "Schools 2 Go" is a school-based initiative to assist students with homework and test prep in their home communities. In a unique educational agreement for the Northwest Georgia region, WCS has agreed to host a facility for Georgia

Northwestern Technical College at its Northwest Georgia College and Career Academy campus. In addition to the college campuses, both Dalton State and Georgia Northwestern offer dual enrollment opportunities on our high school campuses. In 2013, WCS hosted the Region I Georgia Parent Engagement Network Conference in cooperation with the Georgia Department of Education to highlight the work of Parent Involvement Coordinators (PICs). The priorities below will continue to guide our school district in providing a variety of learning opportunities and experiences for students.

PRIORITIES:

1. **Goal Area 1: Student Achievement:**
Ensure that Whitfield County Schools can close the achievement gap for students in all sub categories as indicated by multiple student achievement measures.
2. **Goal Area 2: Stakeholder Engagement:**
Ensure that Whitfield County Schools continues to use all school and community resources to meet the unique needs of all students.
3. **Goal Area 3: Organizational Effectiveness:**
Ensure the financial stability of Whitfield County Schools despite unstable and unpredictable revenue.
4. **Goal Area 4: Learning and Growth:** Ensure that Whitfield County Schools can attract, develop and retain effective teachers, leaders, and professional personnel to support and maximize student learning.

1. What challenges is your school district facing?

The following serves as a description of four challenges Whitfield County School District includes in its application to become a Strategic Waivers School System.

Challenge: The Whitfield County School District faces the challenge of attracting and retaining highly-effective teachers, leaders and professional personnel to effectively meet the instructional program (and other) needs as deemed necessary.

Challenge: The Whitfield County School District faces the challenge of meeting the unique academic, resource and support needs of all students for the purposes of graduating from high school on time.

Challenge: The Whitfield County School District faces the challenge of maintaining financial stability in the current climate of unstable and unpredictable (Federal, State and Local) funding for K-12 public schools.

Challenge: The Whitfield County School District faces the challenge of increasing quality, rigor and technology utilization for all teaching and learning; and, meeting and/or exceeding all levels of contracted student performance measures.

2. What is the rank order priority of these challenges (from most to least important)?

The following serves as a rank order of four challenges the Whitfield County School District includes in its application to become a Strategic Waivers School System.

Challenge 1: The Whitfield County School District faces the challenge of meeting the unique academic, resource and support needs of all students for the purposes of graduating from high school on time.

Challenge 2: The Whitfield County School District faces the challenge of attracting and retaining highly-effective teachers, leaders and professional personnel to effectively meet the instructional program (and other) needs as deemed necessary.

Challenge 3: The Whitfield County School District faces the challenge of maintaining financial stability in the current climate of unstable and unpredictable (Federal, State and Local) funding for K-12 public schools.

Challenge 4: The Whitfield County School District faces the challenge of increasing quality, rigor and technology utilization for all teaching and learning; and, meeting and/or exceeding all levels of contracted student performance measures.

3. Which of these challenges will your school district be able to address by becoming a Strategic Waiver School System/IE² system?

If provided the requested flexibility Whitfield County Schools is confident we can address all the educational challenges.

4. What specific actions will your district take to address each of these challenges (listed in #3 above) during its five-year IE² term?

The requested flexibility would address the challenges (listed in #3) with the following:

Action Plan for Challenge #1: The Whitfield County School District and its individual schools recognize that not all students learn in the same manner or within the same time frames, and seek to improve graduation rates by implementing instructional and non-instructional programming supports for students at all levels, as initiated by comprehensive school improvement plans containing data-driven, standards-based professional development, balanced assessments and clearly-identified resources.

Action Plan for Challenge #2: The Whitfield County School District and its individual schools, in keeping with the school district's priorities, will develop and implement competitive salary/benefit packages, supplements and recognition programs so as to attract and retain the necessary personnel to provide quality educational programs for students.

Action Plan for Challenge #3: The Whitfield County School District and its individual schools will align spending priorities with the district's system priorities and Strategic Plan.

Action Plan for Challenge #4: The Whitfield County School District and its individual schools, in keeping with the district's system priorities and Strategic Plan, will develop and implement innovative educational programming to account for varied paces of student learning and unique student interests.

5. Provide a clear explanation of how each of these specific actions (listed in #4 above) will address the specific challenge(s).

The Whitfield County School District would implement the action plans, as supported by the following explanations:

Action Plan/Challenge #1: The district consists of different types of learning environments, diverse student populations and varied learning abilities. In addition, while documenting recent increases in the percentages of students graduating from high school on time, increased graduation rates are targeted.

Action Plan/Challenge #2: The school district is staffed with highly-qualified teachers and leaders, but experiences competition with neighboring districts for qualified personnel. The district needs to maintain and expand programs characterized by traditionally difficult-to-find qualified instructional staff (select Special Education programs, math, science, and various CTAE Career Pathways).

Action Plan/Challenge #3: The current K-12 public education budget does not adequately fund the cost of operating the school district. The flexibilities from the current financial rules will allow the system to design a budget based on the system's Strategic Plan.

Action Plan/Challenge #4: Through the increased use of digital resources, embedded courses, innovative instructional models and advanced learning opportunities, the district will facilitate engaging research-based, data-driven instructional opportunities, experiences and environments for student learning.

6. Please list the specific Georgia law or State Board rule that must be waived to allow your district to implement each specific action (listed in #4 above).

- **Please also list the waivers you have used during the past five years (including those granted to the entire state, e.g. class size) and what goals they helped you accomplish during those five years.**

- Per O.C.G.A. 20-2-82(e), the goal for each waiver and variance shall be improvement of student performance.
- Requested waivers must include at least one of the “Big Four” waivers of state class size, expenditure control, certification, or salary schedule requirements.

If provided the requested flexibility, the Whitfield County School District would implement each of the Action Plans (as listed above in #4), as supported by the explanations outlined in Table 1.

TABLE 1. SUMMARY OF CHALLENGES ALIGNED WITH NECESSARY WAIVERS

Challenges	Specific Action and Explanation	Waivers
<p>Challenge 1:</p> <p>Ensuring that Whitfield County School System can increasingly personalize the learning experience and environment for all students and advance student learning as indicated by student achievement measures.</p>	<p>The Whitfield County School System will address the challenge of closing the achievement gap for all students, and will pay specific attention to English Learners, students with disabilities, economically disadvantaged students and other subgroups through innovative course design that accounts for varied paces of student learning and unique student interests. Through the increased use of digital resources, classroom to work, embedded courses, innovative instructional models, transition programs and pathways, and advanced learning opportunities, the system will facilitate new thinking about engaging instructional experiences and real world applications for meeting the unique learning needs of its 21st century students.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ELL Program Requirements (O.C.G.A. § 20-2-156 and SBOE Rule 160-4-5-.02) • Educational Programs (O.C.G.A. § 20-2-153, 20-2-154, 20-2-154.1, 20-2-155 and SBOE Rule 160-4-2-.38) • EIP (IDDB Board Rule 160-4-2-.17) Remedial (IDDB Board Rule 160-4-5-.01) • Organization of Schools; Middle School Programs; Schedule (O.C.G.A. § 20-2-290) • Use of Counselor (SBOE Rule 160-4-8-.05) • Competencies and Core Curriculum, Online Learning (O.C.G.A. § 20-2-140.1, O.C.G.A. § 20-2-141.1, O.C.G.A. § 20-2-142, SBOE Rule 160-4-2-.48 and SBOE Rule 160-3-1-.07) • School Day and School Year for Students and Employees (O.C.G.A. § 20-2-151, 20-2-160, 20-2-168 and SBOE Rule 160-5-1-.02) • School Councils (O.C.G.A. § 20-2-85) • Statewide Passing Score (SBOE Rule 160-4-2-.13) • State Funded K-8 subjects and 9-12 courses for students entering ninth grade in 2008 and subsequent years. (SBOE Rule 106-4-2-.20)

<p>Challenge 2:</p> <p>Ensuring that the Whitfield County School System can attract and retain effective teachers, leaders, and professional personnel to meet the projected student growth for Whitfield County, the aging workforce, and current staffing deficits.</p>	<p>The Whitfield County School System highly regards the traditional preparation of school educators and intends to consider the additional value that could be added to classroom instruction and student supports by expanding employment practices to consider professional practitioners in specialty fields such as technology, science, math, engineering, and child support roles. Additionally Whitfield County desires to ensure that all employees are compensated at competitive rates while valuing prior non-teaching responsibilities associated with an employee's teaching or support assignment.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Categorical Allotment Requirements (Article 6 of Chapter 2 of Title 20 O.C.G.A § 20-2-182), 20-2-183, 20-2-184, 20-2-185, 20-2-186 and SBOE Rule 160-4-2-.14) • Instructional Extension (SBOE Rule 160-4-2-.14) • Multi-Year Contracts (O.C.G.A. § 20-2-211) • Personnel Required (SBOE Rule 160-5-1.22) • School Day and School Year for Students and Employees (O.C.G.A § 20-1-160, 20-2-151, 20-2-160, 20-2-161.1, 20-2-165, 20-2-168, and SBOE Rule 160-5-1-.01, 160-5-1-.02) • Class Size/Staffing and Reporting Requirements (O.C.G.A § 20-2-152, 20-2-182 and SBOE Rules 160-5-1-.08, 160-5-1-.22, 160-4-7-.14) • Use of School Counselors (SBOE Rule 160-4-8.05) • Salary Schedule Requirements (O.C.G.A. § 20-2-212, 20-2-212.1, 20-2-212.2 and SBOE Rule 160-5-2-.04 (3), 160-5-2-.05 (5)) • Certification Requirements (O.C.G.A. § 20-2-108, O.C.G.A. § 20-2-200, O.C.G.A. § 20-2-201, O.C.G.A. § 20-2-204, 20-2-161.2, 20-1-167, and SBOE Rule 160-3-3-.04, 160-4-3-.14) • Scheduling for Instruction/Program • Enrollment and Appropriation except to the extent it relates to funding (O.C.G.A. §20-2-160) • Employment Conditions of Employment as it relates to Duty Free Lunch (O.C.G.A § 20-2-218) • Paraprofessional and permitted personnel; classification of all certified or permitted personnel (O.C.G.A 20-2-204)
<p>Challenge 3:</p> <p>Ensuring the financial</p>	<p>The Whitfield County</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Class-size and Reporting

<p>stability of the Whitfield County School System despite the unstable and unpredictable revenue growth.</p>	<p>School System will align all spending priorities with the system's strategic plan to improve student achievement. The system will leverage the financial flexibility to support the core business of teaching and learning.</p>	<p>Requirements (O.C.G.A. § 20-2-182)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Direct Classroom Expenditures and Expenditure Controls (O.C.G.A. § 20-2-171 and O.C.G.A. § 20-2-167 and SBOE Rule 160-5-1-.29) • QBE Financing (O.C.G.A. § 20-2-160 and O.C.G.A. § 20-2-161) • Pay Schedule Requirements for Beginning Teachers (O.C.G.A. §20-2-212) • Program Enrollment & Appropriation (O.C.G.A. § 20-2-160, O.C.G.A. § 20-2-161, O.C.G.A. § 20-2-165, SBOE Rule 160-4-2.11 and SBOE Rule 160-4-2-.16) • School Day and School Year for Students and Employees (O.C.G.A. § 20-2-168 and SBOE Rule 160-5-1-.02) • Multi-year Agreements Related to Vendor Contracts (O.C.G.A. § 20-2-6) • Limited Public School Choice (SBOE Rule 160-5-4-.09 and O.C.G.A. § 20-2-2131)
<p>Challenge 4:</p> <p>Ensuring that Whitfield County can meet the unique academic, resource, and support needs of all students.</p>	<p>The Whitfield County School System is comprised of 23 schools, a Career Academy, and Pre-K programs. The system values the unique strengths and specific needs of each of the facilities and will leverage flexibility in order to best advance teaching and learning at every school.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Seat Time (SBOE Rule 160-4-2-.48) • School Attendance, Compulsory Attendance as it relates to the Attendance Protocol (O.C.G.A. § 20-2-690.2) • Comprehensive HPE Program (SBOE Rule 160-4-2-.12) • Twenty additional days of instruction (O.C.G.A. § 20-2-184.1) • Awarding Units of Credit (SBOE Rule 160-5-1-.15) • Graduation Requirements (O.C.G.A. § 20-2-131 and SBOE Rule 106-4-2-.160 and SBOE Rule 160-4-2-.48) • Minimum Direct Classroom Expenditures (SBOE Rule 160-5-1-.29) • Flexibility with Regards to Alternative and Traditional Educational Programs (SBOE Rule 160-4-8-.12)

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Class Size (SBOE Rule 160-5-1-08) • School Year (SBOE Rule 160-5-1-.01) • Instructional Extension (SBOE Rule 160-4-2-.14) • Promotion and Retention Requirements (O.C.G.A. § 20-2-283 and SBOE Rule 160-4-2.11) • Categorical Allotment Requirements (Article 6 of Chapter 2 of Title 20 O.C.G.A § 20-2-182 (h)), 20-2-183, 20-2-184, 20-2-185, 20-2-186 and SBOE Rule 160-4-2-.14 • Limited Public School Choice (SBOE Rule 160-5-4-.09 and O.C.G.A. 20-2-2131)
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7. Indicate the timeline for implementation of each specific action (listed in #4 above).

If provided the requested flexibility, Whitfield County School District will implement each of the four Action Plans (as listed in #4 above) within the following timelines:

Timelines Supporting Action Plan for Challenges 1-4:

SY15-16	Baseline Year:	Research and Data-Collection
SY16-17	Year One:	Substantial Implementation (50-80%)
SY17-18/SY18-19	Years Two/Three:	Full Implementation (100%)
FY19-20	Year Four:	Full Implementation (100%)

CONSEQUENCES

1. What consequences do you propose for nonperforming schools, including how you will ensure the implementation of appropriate consequences, both during and at end the end of your IE² contract term?

- **The SBOE shall mandate the loss of governance of one or more of an IE2 System’s nonperforming schools. Such loss of governance may include, but shall not be limited to:**
 - a. **Conversion a school to charter status with independent school level governance and a governance board with strong parental involvement;**
 - b. **Operation of a school by a successful school system, as defined by GOSA, and pursuant to funding criteria established by the SBOE; or**
 - c. **Operation of a school by a private entity, nonprofit or for profit, pursuant to a request for proposals issued by the Department.**

Three levels of sanctions and interventions will be designed if any school within the district fails to meet the performance goals of the contract:

Level I: If a school does not meet their performance goal at the end of the 2016-2017 and/or 2017-2018 school year, the annual school improvement plan will be targeted to improve specific deficiencies and will be closely monitored by district leadership.

Level II: If a school does not achieve three years of growth in academic goals as determined by 2018-2019 performance data, the school district will directly supervise improvement plans through a joint planning process with the school leadership team.

Level III: If a school does not achieve three years of improvement based on the performance data of 2020-2021, the district will apply the consequences as recommended by GOSA and approved by the State Board of Education.

- **In addition to the loss of governance options specified in the statute that could be imposed at the end of the IE2 contract term, the following options for loss of governance could be implemented during or at the conclusion of the IE2 contract term. Note that the numbering continues from the list above**
 - d. **Nonperforming schools could have governance reduced by being required to submit a remedial action plan for LBOE approval before the school can implement necessary changes**
 - **For this option, the District could specify the general requirements such a plan a must meet or let the school submit a draft based on its own analysis**

- e. **The school could be required to make leadership and faculty/staff changes, including replacing leaders/faculty/ staff and/or an aggressive professional development program**
 - f. **The school could be required to implement reconstitution if necessary to ensure performance improvements**
 - g. **The school could be required to develop individual student achievement plans and implement programs such as after school and/or Saturday tutoring programs that provide additional time on task in subject areas specified in the individual plans**
 - h. **Other options for loss of governance not listed above that address the specific reasons for a school's failure to meet its targets could be proposed in an IE2 application**
- **For any loss of governance option presented above, the LBOE would certify to the SBOE that such loss of governance had been imposed**
 - **Remedial action plans imposed on nonperforming schools by LBOEs as a loss of governance option must:**
 - **Address the specific reasons for a school's failure to meet its targets,**
 - **Be of sufficient duration to ensure time for necessary changes to be made at the school, and**
 - **Clarify the link between the amount by which a school target was missed and the severity of the remedial actions**

ASSURANCES FORM AND SIGNATURE SHEET

The law requires your school district to provide assurances that it will do certain things and comply with certain laws. This Assurance Form enumerates all of these requirements and, when you submit this signed Signature Sheet with this Assurance Form as part of your IE2 System Application Package, you are providing the legal assurance that your IE2 system understands and will do these things. This form must be signed by a duly authorized representative of the school system.

As the authorized representative of the applicant, I hereby certify that the information submitted in this application for an IE² contract for Whitfield County School System located in Whitfield County is true to the best of my knowledge and belief; I also certify that if awarded an IE² the school system:

1. Shall be nonsectarian in its programs, admissions policies, employment practices, and all other operations;
2. Shall not discriminate against any student or employee on the basis of race, color, ethnic background, national origin, gender, disability or age;
3. Shall be subject to all federal, state, and local rules, regulations, court orders, and statutes relating to civil rights; insurance; the protection of the physical health and safety of school students, employees, and visitors; conflicting interest transactions; and the prevention of unlawful conduct;
4. Shall be subject to the provisions of O.C.G.A. § 20-2-1050 requiring a brief period of quiet reflection;
5. Shall ensure that the IE² system is subject to the provisions of O.C.G.A. § 50-14-1 et seq. and O.C.G.A. § 50-18-70 et seq.;
6. Shall ensure that all teachers will be certified or highly qualified in compliance with No Child Left Behind;
7. Shall comply with the accountability provisions of O.C.G.A. § 20-14-30 through § 20-14-41 and federal accountability requirements, and participate in statewide assessments;
8. Shall adhere to all provisions of federal law relating to students with disabilities, including the IDEA, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1974, and Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, as applicable;
9. Shall provide state and federally mandated services for English Language Learners, as applicable;
10. Shall provide for supplemental educational services as required by federal law and pursuant to SBOE Rule 160-4-5-.03, and for remediation in required cases pursuant to SBOE Rule 160-4-5-.01;
11. Shall notify the state of any intent to contract with a for-profit entity for education management services;

12. Shall be subject to the requirement that it shall not charge tuition or fees to its students except as may be authorized by local boards by O.C.G.A. § 20-2-133;
13. Shall comply with federal due process procedures regarding student discipline and dismissal;
14. Shall be subject to all laws relating to unlawful conduct in or near a public school;
15. Shall have a written grievance procedure to resolve student, parent, and teacher complaints;
16. Shall comply with the provisions of O.C.G.A. § 20 -2-211.1 relating to fingerprinting and criminal background checks;
17. Shall ensure that if transportation is provided for its students, the system shall comply with all applicable state and federal laws;
18. Shall ensure that if the IE² system participates in federal school meals programs, then each participating system IE² school shall comply with all applicable state and federal laws;
19. Shall prepare a safety plan in accordance with O.C.G.A. § 20-2-1185 and submit and obtain approval from the Georgia Emergency Management Agency;
20. Shall comply with the state facility requirements regarding site codes, facility codes, the submission of architectural plans for any new facility that the system may build or occupy during the IE² term and all other facility requirements as established by the Department;
21. Shall be subject to all reporting requirements of O.C.G.A. § 20-2-160, subsection (e) of O.C.G.A. § 20-2-161, O.C.G.A. § 20-2-320, and O.C.G.A. § 20-2-740;
22. Shall be subject to an annual financial audit conducted by the state auditor or, if specified in the IE² contract , by an independent certified public accountant licensed in this state;
23. Shall acknowledge that all criteria used to calculate QBE funding may not be waived;
24. Shall follow any and all other federal, state, and local laws and regulations that pertain to the applicant or the operation of the IE² system; and
25. Shall ensure that all new principals and other school leaders, central office staff, superintendents, and Board of Education members receive a detailed orientation session on their IE² system commitments as part of their “on-boarding” process.

This IE² System Application, Assurance Form, and attached Exhibits were approved by the Whitfield County Board of Education on the 6th day of December 2015.

Superintendent

Date

Chair, Local Board of Education

Date

If an IE² contract is granted, all Petitioners assure that the proposed IE² system programs, services, and activities will operate in accordance with the terms of the IE² contract and all applicable federal, state, and local laws, rules, and regulations.

Superintendent

Date

Chair, Local Board of Education

Date

EXHIBITS

The following Exhibits are required to complete your Strategic Waivers School System/IE² Application Package. Please tab the Exhibits to match the item numbers below. Exhibits should be as limited in size as possible (no more than 5 pages per Exhibit). The only exceptions to this size limitation for Exhibits are your most recent annual audit and your most recent accreditation report.

1. Signed local Board of Education resolution approving the creation of the Strategic Waivers School System/IE² system.
2. Notice that was sent to each principal within the proposed Strategic Waivers School System/IE² system regarding required hearings on the Strategic Waivers School System/IE² system application.
3. A list of all schools to be included in the Strategic Waivers School System/IE² system, including new schools or college and career academies that will be formed throughout the life of the Strategic Waivers School System/IE², with an indication of which existing schools are currently in Needs Improvement status.
4. School plans using the template found on our website at <http://www.gadoe.org/External-Affairs-and-Policy/Policy/Pages/IE2.aspx>
5. A brief description of the Strategic Waivers School System/IE² system that includes the name, the mission, grades served, the focus of the curriculum, instructional methods to be used, including any distinctive or unique instructional techniques or educational programs to be employed, and other pertinent information.
 - Your description will be used by the Department to provide information to the public about applicants and new Strategic Waivers School System/IE² systems.
6. A brief description of the system's fiscal history and whether the system is or has ever operated under a fiscal deficit.
7. Online link to the school system's most recent annual audit.
8. Online link to the school system's most recent accreditation report.
9. Online link to the school system's most recent strategic plan.

EXHIBIT 1

1. Signed local Board of Education resolution approving the creation of the Strategic Waivers School System/IE² system.

A RESOLUTION OF THE WHITFIELD COUNTY BOARD OF EDUCATION, GEORGIA, AUTHORIZING THE LETTER OF INTENT FOR THE INVESTING IN EDUCATIONAL EXCELLENCE MODEL WITH THE GEORGIA BOARD OF EDUCATION

WHEREAS, the State of Georgia in Article 4, O.C.G.A. § 20-2-84 has mandated that each local school system must notify the Georgia Department of Education of its intention of operating as an Investing in Educational Excellence (IE²) School System, a Charter System, or a Status Quo System no later than June 30, 2015; nor, therefore be it.

RESOLVED, the Whitfield County Board of Education shall submit a Letter of Intent to the State Board of Education for the purpose of developing the Investing in Educational Excellence (IE²) Contract, and shall schedule and hold a public hearing for the purpose of listening to public input regarding said contract.

ADOPTED by the Whitfield County Board of Education on This THIRTEENTH day of APRIL, 2015.


Chairperson, Whitfield County Board of Education


Superintendent, Whitfield County Board of Education

EXHIBIT 2

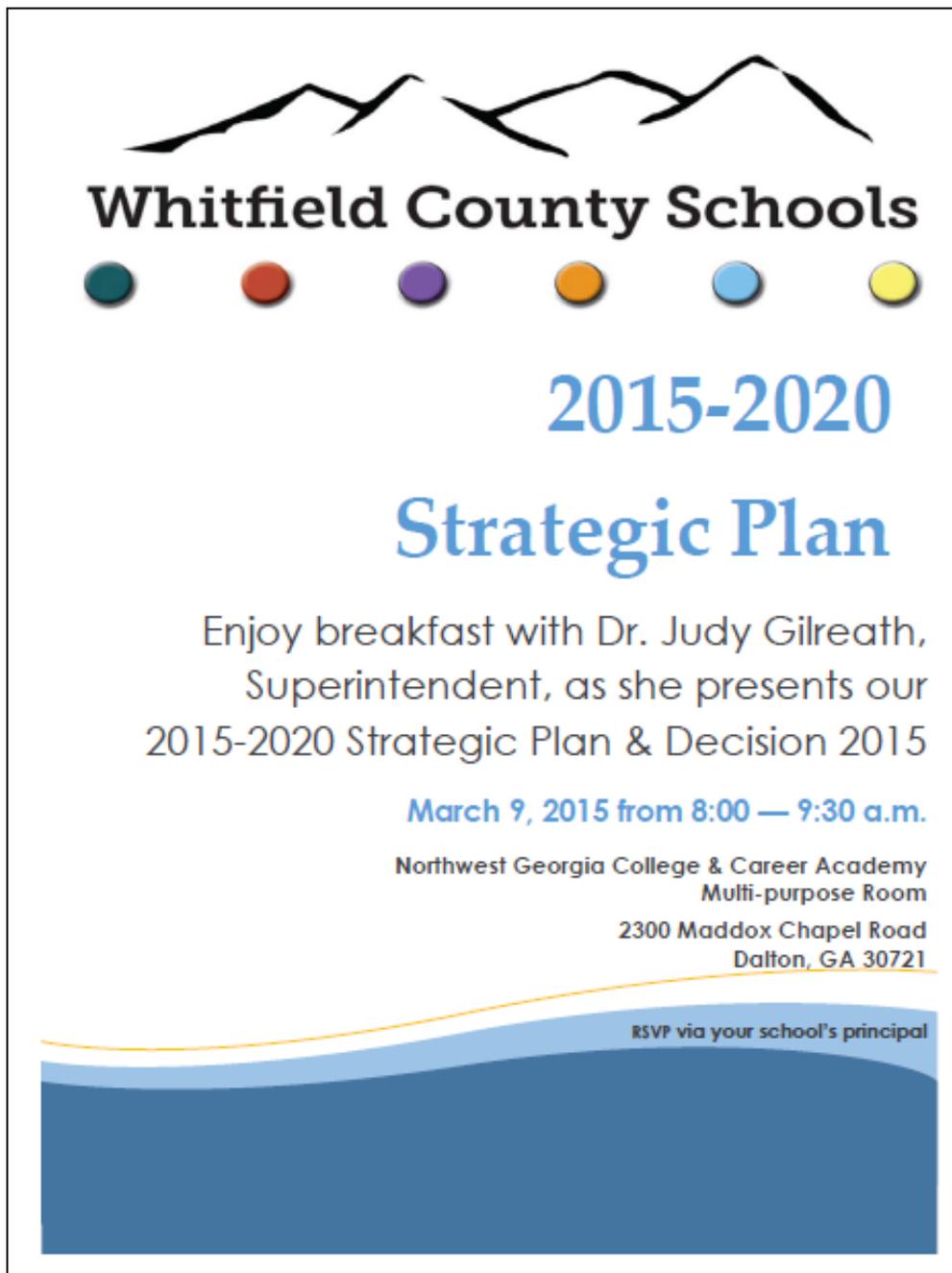
2. Notice that was sent to each principal within the proposed Strategic Waivers School System/IE² system regarding required hearings on the Strategic Waivers School System/IE² system application.

On the dates below Dr. Judy Gilreath, WCS Superintendent provided the opportunity to begin discussions of our intent to operate as an Investing in Educational Excellence (IE2), Charter, or Status Quo school system to our principals, assistant principals, teachers, staff, and parents. Description of these Georgia's Making the Choice Options were revealed and shared in all schools, our student services center, and operations.

	DATE	TIME	LOCATION
1.	Wednesday, January 14, 2015	8:30 AM	Northwest Georgia College & Career Academy and Phoenix High
2.	Wednesday, January 14, 2015	4:45 PM	Southeast High
3.	Thursday, January 15, 2015	3:45 PM	Dawnville Elementary
4.	Tuesday, January 20, 2015	3:45 PM	Cedar Ridge Elementary
5.	Wednesday, January 21, 2015	3:45 PM	Cohutta Elementary
6.	Thursday, January 22, 2015	3:45 PM	New Hope Elementary
7.	Friday, January 23, 2015	10:00 AM	Operations
8.	Monday, January 26, 2015	3:45 PM	Antioch Elementary
9.	Tuesday, January 27, 2015	4:45 PM	Northwest High
10.	Wednesday, January 28, 2015	3:45 PM	Beaverdale Elementary
11.	Thursday, January 29, 2015	3:45 PM	Eastside Elementary
12.	Thursday, January 29, 2015	4:45 PM	Crossroads
13.	Tuesday, February 3, 2015	3:45 PM	Pleasant Grove Elementary
14.	Wednesday, February 4, 2015	3:45 PM	Valley Point Elementary
15.	Wednesday, February 4, 2015	4:45 PM	Valley Point Middle
16.	Thursday, February 5, 2015	3:45 PM	Tunnel Hill Elementary
17.	Monday, February 9, 2015	8:30 AM	Coahulla Creek High
18.	Monday, February 9, 2015	3:45 PM	Westside Elementary
19.	Monday, February 9, 2015	4:45 PM	Westside Middle
20.	Tuesday, February 10, 2015	3:45 PM	Varnell Elementary
21.	Wednesday, February 11, 2015	3:45 PM	Dug Gap Elementary
22.	Thursday, February 12, 2015	4:30 PM	New Hope Middle
23.	Monday, February 23, 2015	4:30 PM	North Whitfield Middle
24.	Monday, March 23, 2015	3:30 PM	Eastbrook Middle
25.	Monday, April 20, 2015	9:00 AM	Student Services Center

EXHIBIT 2A (CONTINUED)

Dr. Gilreath also provided a time for members of our school councils to participate in the “Making the Decision” conversation.



The poster features a stylized mountain range at the top. Below it, the text "Whitfield County Schools" is written in a bold, black, sans-serif font. Underneath the school name are six colored circles: teal, red, purple, orange, light blue, and yellow. The years "2015-2020" are displayed in a large, blue, sans-serif font. Below the years, the words "Strategic Plan" are written in a large, blue, serif font. The main text of the poster, in a smaller blue sans-serif font, reads: "Enjoy breakfast with Dr. Judy Gilreath, Superintendent, as she presents our 2015-2020 Strategic Plan & Decision 2015". The date and time, "March 9, 2015 from 8:00 — 9:30 a.m.", are also in blue. The location information, "Northwest Georgia College & Career Academy Multi-purpose Room, 2300 Maddox Chapel Road, Dalton, GA 30721", is in black. At the bottom, a blue wavy graphic contains the text "RSVP via your school's principal" in white.

Whitfield County Schools

2015-2020

Strategic Plan

Enjoy breakfast with Dr. Judy Gilreath,
Superintendent, as she presents our
2015-2020 Strategic Plan & Decision 2015

March 9, 2015 from 8:00 — 9:30 a.m.

Northwest Georgia College & Career Academy
Multi-purpose Room
2300 Maddox Chapel Road
Dalton, GA 30721

RSVP via your school's principal

EXHIBIT 2B (CONTINUED)

On Monday, September 14, 2015 the Whitfield County Schools officials discussed status of its contract with the state Board of Education to become a strategic waiver school system.

9/15/2015 Whitfield school officials present state school waiver information - The Daily Citizen News

Whitfield school officials present state school waiver information

By Martin Martinez martinmartinez@daltoncitizen.com | Posted: Monday, September 14, 2015 11:32 pm

At Monday night's Board of Education meeting, Whitfield County Schools officials discussed the status of its contract with the state Board of Education to become a strategic waiver school system.

Audrey Williams, assistant superintendent of assessment and accountability, said the contract will not significantly change the way the system currently operates.

"It's in line with what we've been doing before," Williams said. "The waivers that we are requesting (for this contract) are waivers that we have used before."

In 2008, the state General Assembly passed a law which requires all Georgia school systems to decide one of three operating models it will follow.

School system spokesman Eric Beavers said board members voted earlier this year to send a letter of intent to the state declaring it would seek to become a strategic waiver school system, also known as an Investing in Education Excellence System.

The other two operating models are:

- Status quo: Continue to operate as a traditional school district, but give up flexibility from state accountability mandates like class size, how money is spent and more.
- Charter system: Gain freedom from most state mandates, but leadership is distributed among school governance councils, who set goals for respective schools.

By choosing to be a strategic waiver school, the system will be subject to performance assessments by the state Board of Education. The contract will outline what aspects of performance the state will monitor in order for the system to receive waivers for certain state laws and rules.

Williams said the contract will last seven years. She said the biggest difference for the system is that instead of waivers being requested every year, they will be requested once when the contract is submitted to the state.

http://www.daltondailycitizen.com/news/whitfield-school-officials-present-state-school-waiver-information/article_c59b299-5b5a-11e5-0094-0307f1176017f1...



News of Interest

News of Interest

9/15/2015 Whitfield school officials present state school waiver information - The Daily Citizen News

"Whatever waivers we think we may use, we have to put them in this application process," said Williams.

During the meeting, Williams said the system will include waivers for class size requirements, expenditure control, certification requirements and salary schedule requirements.

"We don't have to use every waiver we include, but if it's not in there we can't use them at all," she said.

Superintendent Judy Gilreath said with this law, the state is trying to streamline the waiver process for school systems.

"And of course we've just gone through a lengthy process of establishing our strategic plan, and we think this will go hand in hand with that," said Gilreath.

Currently the system is in the process of putting together a draft of the contract to present to the state. Williams said they hope to have contract ready to submit by December.

Also during the meeting, the board unanimously approved to relist an eight-acre property off Cleveland Highway in Varnell for sale. The listing has been renewed until February 2016.

EXHIBIT 3

3. A list of all schools to be included in the Strategic Waivers School System/IE² system, including new schools or college and career academies that will be formed throughout the life of the Strategic Waivers School System/IE², with an indication of which existing schools are currently in Needs Improvement status.

	<i>School</i>	<i>Grade Level</i>	<i>Needs Improvement Status</i>
1.	Antioch Elementary	PK-5	No
2.	Beaverdale Elementary	PK-5	Yes – Focus School
3.	Cedar Ridge Elementary	PK-5	No
4.	Cohutta Elementary	PK-5	No
5.	Dawnville Elementary	PK-5	No
6.	Dug Gap Elementary	PK-5	No
7.	Eastside Elementary	PK-5	No
8.	New Hope Elementary	K-5	No
9.	Pleasant Grove Elementary	K-5	No
10.	Tunnel Hill Elementary	K-5	No
11.	Valley Point Elementary	PK-5	No
12.	Varnell Elementary	K-5	No
13.	Westside Elementary	PK-5	No
14.	Eastbrook Middle	6-8	No
15.	New Hope Middle	6-8	No
16.	North Whitfield Middle	6-8	No
17.	Valley Point Middle	6-8	No
18.	Westside Middle	6-8	No
19.	Coahulla Creek High	9-12	No
20.	Northwest Georgia College & Career Academy	9-12	No
21.	Northwest High	9-12	No
22.	Phoenix High	9-12	No
23.	Southeast High	9-12	No
24.	Crossroads Academy	6-12	No

EXHIBIT 4

4. Elementary, middle, and high school plans can be found on our website at <http://www.whitfield.k12.ga.us/?DivisionID=18302&DepartmentID=20008&SubDepartmentID=10615&ToggleSideNav=ShowAll&TabNo=2>.

Documents are labeled as:

- Exhibits E – Elementary School Plan
http://images.pcmac.org/Uploads/WhitfieldCS/WhitfieldCS/Departments/DocumentsCategories/Documents/EXHIBIT%20E_Elementary%20School%20Plans.pdf
- Exhibit F – Middle School Plan
http://images.pcmac.org/Uploads/WhitfieldCS/WhitfieldCS/Departments/DocumentsCategories/Documents/EXHIBIT%20F_Middle%20School%20Plans.pdf
- Exhibit G – High School Plan
http://images.pcmac.org/Uploads/WhitfieldCS/WhitfieldCS/Departments/DocumentsCategories/Documents/EXHIBIT%20G_High%20School%20Plans.pdf

EXHIBIT 5

5. A brief description of the Strategic Waivers School System/IE² system that includes the name, the mission, grades served, the focus of the curriculum, instructional methods to be used, including any distinctive or unique instructional techniques or educational programs to be employed, and other pertinent information.

The Whitfield County Schools mission is to maximize student learning by providing challenging and engaging educational experiences in a safe and supportive environment. Comprised of 13 elementary schools, five middle schools, three traditional high schools, one charter program (Northwest Georgia College and Career Academy), one special purpose high school (Phoenix), one alternative secondary school (Crossroads), and 11 Pre-Kindergarten sites. Of the system's 23 schools, 20 are Schoolwide Title I programs, a designation that addresses the educational needs of high poverty populations (71.83 percent Free and Reduced Lunch).

Whitfield County Schools enhanced existing AIMSweb progress monitoring by implementing Measures of Academic Progress (MAP) in grades K-8 in an effort to longitudinally evaluate and design instruction for students in reading and mathematics. Learning Odyssey is used from K-12 to enhance learning for students and promote credit recovery in high school. We offer a variety of academic programs and support such as Gifted, Advanced Placement (AP), Career Technical Agriculture Education (CTAE), Move On When Ready, (MOWR), and Response to Intervention (RTI). Students who require special services receive a high quality education as evidenced by Whitfield County Schools (WCS) English Learners (EL) consistently achieve success in state tests and the district meeting determination for IDEA compliance for the past six years. Project

SEARCH assists some students with cognitive disabilities at the high school level to transition to the work force.

With all the accomplishments and achievements of Whitfield County Schools, the district is still concerned with the unknown changes that our community and state may encounter. In addition to the changing landscape of public schools in Georgia, it is difficult to plan and promote programs to enhance our students' education. By maintaining the flexibility that we have been receiving from the Department of Education and being granted additional flexibility, it is the hope of Whitfield County Schools that we can offer more innovative ways to inspire our students and create a better educational experience.

EXHIBIT 6

6. A brief description of the system's fiscal history and whether the system is or has ever operated under a fiscal deficit.

Despite years of state funding cuts and reduced tax revenues, our District has never operated under a fiscal deficit. Whitfield County Schools continues to prioritize its educational programs and seek opportunities for efficiencies within its resources, and we are optimistic about our ability to maximize all of the financial resources to provide a quality education for our students.

EXHIBIT 7

7. Online link to the school system's most recent annual audit.
<http://www.whitfield.k12.ga.us/Default.asp?PN=DocumentUploads&L=2&DivisionID=18302&DepartmentID=20003&LMID=825051&ToggleSideNav=ShowAll>

General Fund Budget

-  [FY 2013 Budget Summary](#)
-  [FY 2014 Budget Summary](#)
-  [FY 2015 Budget Summary](#)

ESPLOST

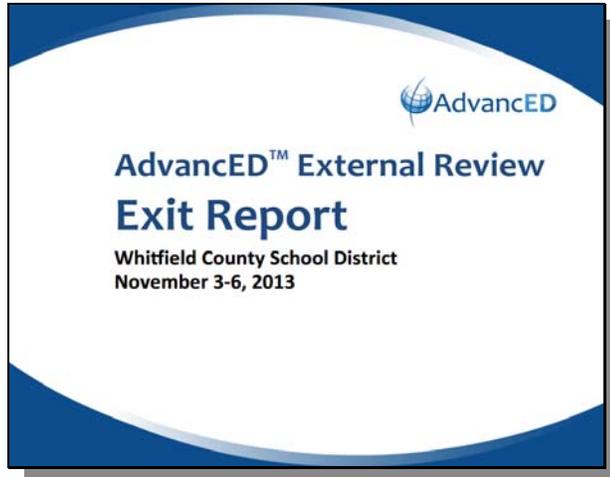
-  [FY2011 ESPLOST Report](#)
-  [FY2012 ESPLOST Report](#)
-  [FY2013 ESPLOST Report](#)
-  [FY2014 ESPLOST Report](#)
-  [FY2015 ESPLOST Report](#)

Audited Financial Statements

-  [FY2008 Audited Financial Statement](#)
-  [FY2009 Audited Financial Statement](#)
-  [FY2010 Audited Financial Statement](#)
-  [FY2011 Audited Financial Statement](#)
-  [FY2012 Audited Financial Statement](#)
-  [FY2013 Audited Financial Statement](#)

EXHIBIT 8

8. Online link to the school system's most recent accreditation report.



Documents Portfolio		
	Due	Status
Accreditation Report	September 29, 2013	Submitted
External Review Report	November 20, 2013	Approved
Accreditation Progress Report	December 1, 2015	Accepted

<http://files.whitfield.k12.ga.us/accreditation/2013/2013-11-advanced-exit-presentation.pdf>

EXHIBIT 9

9. Online link to the school system's most recent strategic plan.



<http://files.whitfield.k12.ga.us/comm/strategic-plan/wcs-strategic-plan-en.pdf>