

RACE to the TOP **ics for you to know**

As a partner in Georgia's Race to the Top application, Gwinnett County Public Schools is committed to keeping its stakeholders updated on this initiative and how it will impact the students, teachers, and schools in Gwinnett County.

Why did GCPS choose to be a partner in Georgia's RT3 application?

Gwinnett County Public Schools (GCPS) is one of the 26 partner school districts in Georgia's Race to the Top (RT3) application. Locally there will be many benefits to this partnership. Still some may ask why Gwinnett's very successful school system would sign on to be a part of this state initiative?

The answer is simple. GCPS has been and strives to continue to be an outstanding school district. There is clear alignment between the reform focus areas in Race to the Top and the GCPS initiatives that have long been a part of the school district's success story.

- GCPS has been a state and national leader in establishing a standards-based curriculum and in improving how student learning is assessed.
- GCPS has instituted effective practices to recruit, prepare, reward, and retain the highest-quality teachers and leaders.

- GCPS has a rich history of using data to drive instructional decisions and of building data systems that support students, teachers, and leaders.
- GCPS does not have any schools designated as "low achieving," but the district is committed to continuous improvement of its schools and instructional programs.

The RT3 partnership with the state was a perfect fit for Gwinnett County Public Schools. The district's initiatives and priorities were identified before the advent of RT3 and they are not dependent upon RT3 funding. With the RT3 grant, however, GCPS will be able to move more quickly in implementing its planned improvements. In addition, this partnership allows Georgia's largest school district to be at the table as state and federal policy is made that will affect students, teachers, and the school system as a whole.

The RT3 focus areas align well with GCPS' initiatives and priorities:

Race to the Top Focus Areas	GCPS Initiatives & Priorities
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Great Teachers and Leaders – Recruit, develop, reward, and retain effective teachers and principals, especially where they are needed most. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Accountability at all levels – Transparent effectiveness measures for teachers, school leaders, districts, and teacher and leader preparation programs – Real changes in incentive structures – Bold evaluation and pay for performance plan 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leadership Development – Expand the Quality-Plus Leader Academy Programs, increasing the number and effectiveness of existing leaders throughout GCPS. • Personnel Evaluation System– Implement in 2012-2013 an improved system that focuses on performance, not behaviors or attributes.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Turn Around Lowest-Achieving Schools – Emphasize what is going to be different. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Focus on Strategic Priorities for 2010-2020 to improve Gwinnett schools. • Continue working on Student Achievement, focusing on closing the achievement gap and improving performance at all schools.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Data Systems to Support Instruction – Build data systems that measure student growth and success, and inform teachers and principals about how they can improve instruction. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The district will support its focus on teaching and learning through technology improvements that provide teachers accessibility to content and resources.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Standards and Assessments – Adopt standards and assessments that prepare students to succeed in college and the workplace and to compete in the global economy. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Align GCPS' Academic Knowledge and Skills (AKS) curriculum with the Common Core State Standards.



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Learn more about RT3 on the GCPS website or in upcoming issues of this RT3 newsletter.