

Investing in Our Students Today For Tomorrow

Fortunately, GCS was already working to combat these inequities and challenges before schools closed, and therefore already had plans to improve the educational experience for everyone.

Much of this work began in 2016, when Superintendent Dr. Sharon L. Contreras arrived and launched a [Listening and Learning Tour](#), where she sought input and ideas from more than 2,000 parents, students, school volunteers, educators, businesses, community leaders and elected officials.

She then established a [transition team](#), made up of more than 95 local, state and national advisors with a wide range of perspectives as well as a deep knowledge of K-12 education, GCS, the local community and the state.



These advisors conducted a thorough review of student achievement, school choice, equity and excellence, talent development, and organizational effectiveness for optimal learning. They identified long-standing challenges and inequities, as well as successes.

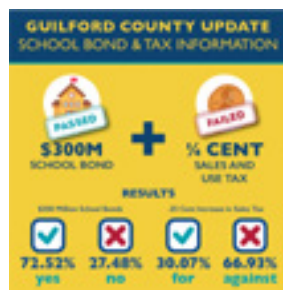
That work assisted in the development of the district's current strategic plan, [Ignite Learning](#), which focuses all resources in the district on the core business of teaching and learning. The plan aims to improve:



- the percentage of students reading proficiently by the end of third grade
- the percentage of incoming sixth grade students passing NC Math I (Algebra I)
- the percentage of graduating seniors completing a rigorous career pathway
- the number of schools meeting or exceeding growth and decreasing the achievement gap between black and Hispanic males with their white counterparts.

Bond 2020

Then, in 2018, the district and county conducted a [facility condition assessment](#), which rated more than half of the district's facilities in poor or unsatisfactory condition. The average school in GCS was built in 1966, prior to the advent of the first lunar landing, personal computing and the invention of the internet.



Working off the assessment, GCS created a comprehensive, [\\$2 billion facilities master plan](#) that calls for safety and technology upgrades to all district schools, rebuilding 22 schools on existing sites and fully renovating 19 schools.



In 2020, voters of Guilford County approved a [\\$300 million bond](#), an important first step in completing the facilities master plan.

Reopening Schools

At the same time, GCS, like the rest of the world, was trying to survive through the COVID pandemic.

GCS was one of the first large school districts statewide and nationally to bring PreK-5 students back to school in-person. With more than [20,000 GCS PreK-12 students attending in-person since November of 2020](#), the district's reopening plan has served as a state and national model for other school districts.

GCS was able to respond so quickly, in part, thanks to a [local task force](#) consisting of more than 150 principals, teachers, parents and elected officials county-wide.



The task force [developed recommendations](#) throughout the district's COVID response efforts, including how the district could best use our federal funding.