GCS Communications Standards Guide

GCS Logo Standards
Please refer to the GCS Brand Book.
All publications must bear the district's logo.

District Stationery
Please refer to the GCS Brand Book.
All stationery must bear the district's logo.

Publication Standards
All publications (brochures, newsletters, flyers, etc.) produced by GCS schools and central offices must conform to the district standard in the use of fonts, colors and district logo.

All publications must include the district's non-discrimination statement:

In compliance with federal laws, Guilford County Schools administers all educational programs, employment activities and admissions without discrimination because of race, religion, national or ethnic origin, color, age, military service, disability or gender, except where exemption is appropriate and allowed by law.

All publications must bear the district's logo.

Electronic Mail

Font
Arial, 11-point type for text in the body of the e-mail is recommended.

E-mail signatures
To keep a consistent and professional appearance, all Outlook e-mail accounts must bear a signature, which will appear at the left-hand bottom portion of the e-mail. The signature should include employee's first name, last name, position title, department, telephone number, fax number, e-mail address and the district's Web address. You may also include social media icons in your signature line.

Please set up your e-mail signature so that it appears similar to the example below:

Wanda E. Mobley
Director of Communications
Guilford County Schools
712 North Eugene Street
Greensboro, NC 27401-0880
336-370-8997 (office)/336-669-8138 (cell)
336-574-3863 (fax)
mobleyw@gcsnc.com
www.gcsnc.com

Please do not include photos or other graphics. E-mail wall paper should be white with no additional graphics included. You may use a color font in your e-mail signature; however, the color must conform to the color palate listed in the Brand Book.

Editorial Style

Acronyms
Upon first reference, spell out the word or title and follow with the acronym in parentheses. You may use simply the acronym after the first reference.
Guilford County Schools (GCS) strives for excellence. GCS is located in central North Carolina and serves more than 73,000 students.

Administrative Departments
Department names should be capitalized when using the name of the department. Upon second reference, you may omit the word "Department," but capitalize the first letter of the name.
District Relations Department
Maintenance Department
The Transportation Department has 600 buses. Transportation also has a number of trucks and vans.

Committees and Teams
Capitalize when part of the proper name. Use lowercase when referring to a generic version.
The Employee of the Month Committee met yesterday.
The Dudley High School Project Team met twice. The project team gave its recommendations to the board.

Course Names
Use lowercase when referring to generic course names. Capitalize the proper name of languages.
She taught math, English, social studies and French.

District and School Names
Guilford County Schools should be spelled out upon first reference. You may use the following substitutions upon second reference:
- GCS

- the district (lowercase)
- the school system (lowercase)

The *Guilford County Board of Education,* or the *Board of Education* should be spelled out upon first reference. Second references using "the board" should be in lower case.

The *Board of Education* or *Board* is considered a collective noun. Collective nouns take on a singular verb and a singular pronoun <u>when it refers to the collection as a whole.</u>

The Board held its (not "their") annual retreat last weekend.

The Board of Education was (not "were") given an award.

Grade levels

Hyphenate when used as an adjective, but not as a noun.

She is a fifth-grade student.

She is in the fifth grade.

Hyphenate the word "grader" when it is used as a noun.

He is an 11th-grader.

Numbers

Spell out numbers below 10, use numerals for 10 and above. Spell out numbers at the beginning of a sentence. Spell out a number when it appears at the beginning of a sentence.

They had two sons and three daughters.

Wade had 15 marbles and two toy cars.

Forty people attended the seminar.

> Some exceptions:
> Age: *She had a 3-year-old daughter.*
> Ratios: *The measure passed by a 2-to-1 vote.*
> Names: *3rd Annual Road Race*
> Course numbers: English 2
> Channels: Channel 2
> Dates: July 4, 2006
> Page numbers: Page 1
> Percents: 2 percent; 15 percent
> Temperatures: 2 degrees
> Weights: 9 pounds
> *(See AP Stylebook for more exceptions)*

Percentages

One word. If your document references percentages three or more times (e.g. a budget), use the percent symbol, %. If your document references percentages under three times, spell out the word "percent." Use the percent symbol, %, in charts or budgets. (***For press releases or other media-targeted communications, always spell out the word "percent.")**

Always use numbers: 1 percent; 10 percent 2.5 percent (use decimals rather than fractions)

If a decimal is less then 1 percent, precede the decimal with a zero.
The prime rate rose 0.6 percent.

Repeat percent with each individual percent.
Employers experienced a 10 percent to 15 percent increase in productivity.

School Names
First reference of any school within GCS should include the school's name along with the appropriate grade-level designation. You may omit the word *school* after the name.

Southwest High is located in High Point.
Dudley High is located in Greensboro.

Upon second reference, you may drop the grade-level designation.
Southwest students volunteered at the fair.
Dudley has a drum line.

Schools can be considered collective nouns. Collective nouns take on a singular verb and a singular pronoun <u>when it refers to the collection as a whole</u>.
<u>Shadybrook Elementary</u> will sponsor <u>its</u> (not "their") annual fair this weekend.
<u>Cone Elementary</u> <u>was</u> (not "were") given an award.

State Names
Spell out the names of all 50 states when they stand alone in text.
She was born in Pennsylvania.

When combined with a city or town, use the U.S. postal service format to abbreviate.
Greensboro, NC (no periods between the letters N and C)
High Point, NC

Postal Codes
Alabama (AL); Alaska (AK); Arizona (AZ); Arkansas (AR); California (CA); Colorado (CO); Connecticut (CT); Delaware (DE); Florida (FL); Georgia (GA); Hawaii (HI); Idaho (ID); Illinois (IL); Indiana (IN); Iowa (IA); Kansas (KS); Kentucky (KY); Louisiana (LA); Maine (ME); Maryland (MD);
Massachusetts (MA); Michigan (MI); Minnesota (MN); Mississippi (MS);
Missouri (MO); Montana (MT); Nebraska (NE); Nevada (NV),
New Hampshire (NH); New Jersey (NJ); New Mexico (NM); New York (NY); North Carolina (NC); North Dakota (ND); Ohio (OH); Oklahoma (OK);
Oregon (OR); Pennsylvania (PA); Rhode Island (RI); South Carolina (SC);
South Dakota (SD); Tennessee (TN); Texas (TX); Utah (UT); Vermont (VT); Virginia (VA); Washington (WA); West Virginia (WV); Wisconsin (WI);
Wyoming (WY)

*For press releases or other media-targeted communications, use the following state abbreviations:

| Ala. | Ariz. | Ark. | Calif. | Colo. | Conn. | Del. | Fla. | Ga. | Ill. | Ind. |
| Kan. | Ky. | La. | Md. | Mass. | Mich. | Minn. | Miss. | Mo. | Mont. | Neb. |

Nev.	N.H.	N.J.	N.M.	N.Y.	N.C.	N.D.	Okla.	Ore.	Pa.	R.I.
S.C.	S.D.	Tenn.	Vt.	Va.	Wash.	W.Va.	Wis.	Wyo.		

*Eight states that should always be spelled out include: Alaska, Hawaii, Idaho, Iowa, Maine, Ohio, Texas and Utah (Memory tip: Just remember to spell out names of the two states that are not part of the contiguous United States, and each of the continental states which have five letters or less.)

Time
Use numerical figures except for "noon" and "midnight."
6 p.m. or 6:30 a.m. or 6-7:30 p.m. or 7:30-9 p.m.

Titles
Titles are lowercase and spelled out after the person's name.
Jane Doe, program administrator

Capitalize a title if it precedes a person's name and is not set off by commas.
Superintendent Maurice Green announced today….

Use lowercase for terms that are job descriptions and not formal titles.
When teacher Joan Smith entered the room, everyone cheered.
The superintendent, Maurice Green, will attend the board meeting.

Punctuation

Ampersand
The ampersand symbol, &, should not be used in place of the word **and**. The ampersand symbol, &, should only when it is a part of a name.
Joe & Bob's Hoagie Shop

Bullets and Numbers
Bullets or numbers can generally be used when items appear in a list. Items that are dependent on the words that introduce them often begin with a lowercase letter and end with a comma or semicolon just as in a run-in series in an ordinary sentence.
Do not use a colon to introduce the list if it separates an item in the introductory sentence from its complement.

Among the courts that are limited to special kinds of cases are
1. *probate courts, for the estates of deceased persons;*
2. *commercial courts, for business cases; and*
3. *juvenile courts, for cases involving children under 18.*

We must examine (no colon)
- *the background of campaign,*
- *the goal of the campaign, and*
- *the objectives of the campaign.*

Omit periods after items in a vertical list unless they are complete sentences. If listed items are complete sentences, end with a period.

This style guide covers the following:
- *Grammar*

- *Punctuation*
- *Spelling*

(You can use a colon in this example because it does not separate an item in the intro sentence from its counterpart.)

Colons
Capitalize the first word after a colon if it starts a complete sentence or is a proper noun.

Commas
Omit the comma before the conjunction when the last two items in a series are joined by a conjunction, especially where it would not result in ambiguity.
The colors on the American flag are red, white and blue.

Place a comma before the concluding conjunction in a series if an integral element of the series requires a conjunction:
I had juice, toast, and <u>ham and eggs</u> for breakfast.

Do not place a comma between the month and year when the date is not mentioned.
July 2006

Hyphens
Hyphens are generally used when two words are combined as a descriptor.
Exception: Adverbs that end in –ly:
African-American (hyphen)
A highly sophisticated girl (no hyphen)
Jane is a first-grader. (hyphen)
Sue is a first-grade teacher. (hyphen)
Her son attends an after-school program. (hyphen)
Meet me after school. (no hyphen)
Jane is in the first grade. (no hyphen)
The make-up day is July 1. (hyphen)
We will make up the day on July 1 (no hyphen)
She teaches first-, second- and third-grade students. (In this example, hyphens are used with *first-* and *second-* because it implies the word *grade*.)

Use hyphens when writing out numbers between 41 and 99.
Forty-two people requested to speak at the seminar.

Hyphenate a compound when one component is a number and the other is a noun or adjective
Wade is a 3-year-old boy.
10-mile run

Do not hyphenate the words *vice president* and words beginning with *non*, except those containing a proper noun.
vice president
nontechnical

Parentheses
Punctuation appears outside the parentheses.
John went to the ball with Joan (his neighbor).

Possessives
Use an apostrophe for singular proper names that end in s.
GCS' student body exceeds 7,000.
Dickens' novels

Quotation Marks
Quotation marks enclose direct quotations. Punctuation goes inside the quotation marks.
Donald Trump said, "You're fired!" (Punctuation goes inside the quotes.)

Single quotation marks replace double quotation marks when the quoted material occurs within quoted material.
Benjamin exclaimed, "I heard mother say, 'I love you,' to Daddy!"
The witness said, "I distinctly heard him say, 'Don't be late.'"

When used in text, put quotation marks around the titles of the following: books (except the Bible), movies, operas, plays, poems, songs, television episodes, lectures, speeches, works of art.
Her favorite book was "A Tale of Two Cities."
She watched "Gone With the Wind" with her boyfriend.

Semicolons
Use a semicolon in place of a comma to separate phrases or items when the phrases or items themselves contain commas.
She lived in Philadelphia, PA; Haddon Heights, NJ; Jamestown, NC and High Point, NC.

GCS Style for commonly used words:
website
email (no hyphen)
Internet (uppercase "I")
end-of-grade testing (EOGs)
dropout (when referred to as a noun)
master's degree (lower case unless the word "master's" is at the beginning of a sentence)
annual (Not "first annual")
regardless (Not "irregardless")
water heater (Not "hot water heater")
She attends a *middle college* (lower case)
The Middle College at GTCC (upper case because it's a proper name)
noon (not *12 noon*)