

History of

North Gwinnett High School

North Gwinnett High School was established in 1958, and is located at 20 Level Creek Road between the cities of Sugar Hill and Suwanee on the site of a former cotton field. It was built to consolidate Suwanee High School and Sugar Hill High School. It was named North Gwinnett High School because of its location in the northern part of the county. Several sites for the school were considered before the final selection was made from land donated by the Tom Robinson estate. A special ceremony was held prior to the North Gwinnett-Buford football game in 1981 to dedicate the field. At that ceremony, the football field became the “Tom Robinson Memorial Stadium.”

The original North Gwinnett High School had 13 classrooms. Staff members included a principal, a librarian, and 11 teachers. The principal was John W. Bagwell, the librarian was Frances Parsons and the teachers were O. L. Vickery, Mrs. M. C. McDaniel, Kenneth McDaniel, Mary White, Hugh Alexander, Geneva S. Stewart, Dewey Bailey, Garnet Craig, Helen Converse, Evelyn Walden, and Alice Jordan.

In 1960, the school had 328 students in grades eight through 12. There were 67 seniors. Lanier Middle School was completed during the 1973–74 school year, and the eighth grade transferred there from North Gwinnett.

FAST FACTS

Address: 20 Level Creek Road
Suwanee, GA 30024

The following have served as principals of North Gwinnett High School:

1958–69	John W. Bagwell
1969–73	Kenneth McDaniel
1973–98	Dr. Franklin Lewis
1998–2008	Dr. John Green
2008–Present	Ed Shaddix

School Colors: Red, Black, and White

School Mascot: Bulldogs

During the 1973–74 school year, North Gwinnett had a total of 606 students and 144 graduating seniors. Growth has been steady at North Gwinnett over the years. In 1988–89, the school enrollment topped 1,000 and there were 234 graduating seniors. Today, North serves more than 2,800 students with an estimated senior population of approximately 500.

The capacity of the physical plant has increased over the years with the growing number of students. There was a small wing addition in 1962 with six classrooms. A larger wing with seven classrooms and two laboratories



was completed in 1965. In 1977, a new addition was completed at the front of the school. This addition included four offices, a new media center, expanded cafeteria facilities, and six classrooms. Prior to the 1981-82 school year, air conditioning was installed in all classrooms, and a new football field, track, and press box were built. A new field house was completed during the 1984-85 school year.

A significant addition was made to North Gwinnett High as part of a 1988 school bond issue. A new theater, expanded band and choral rooms, and three classrooms were added. Later, seven new classrooms, a home economics lab, a business education lab, art classrooms, offices, and expanded dining facilities were added. Since that time the school has had two major additions, with a total of 75 new classrooms in a two-story addition at the corner of Level Creek and Suwanee Dam Road.

The Bulldog mascot was originally suggested by the North Gwinnett cheerleaders and senior class officers, and was approved by the principal. The first cheerleaders also wrote and composed the first fight song and the Alma Mater. These cheerleaders included Shirley Higgins, Becky Higgins, Trellis Browning, Melissa Johnson, Sybil Moulder, Gwen Garner, Beulah Anglin, and Emily Kennedy. The cheerleaders and senior class officers also selected the school colors red, black, and white.

North Gwinnett has had only four principals in its school history. The first was John W. Bagwell, who served from 1958-69. He was the head girls' basketball coach from 1958-67. The late Mr. Bagwell's last few years were spent in the county office.

The second principal was Kenneth McDaniel, who served from 1969-73. He came to North Gwinnett when the school opened as a teacher and served as the boys' basketball and baseball coach. He served in this capacity from 1958-68. He left North Gwinnett in 1973 to work full-time with the Georgia National Guard. He retired as Brigadier General, and served as Assistant Adjutant General for the state of Georgia and commander of the Army National Guard.

The school's third principal, Franklin F. Lewis, served from 1973 until 1998. He received his doctorate in education from the University of Georgia in 1977. A large majority of the growth and the building programs were experienced during his tenure.

Dr. John Green became the fourth principal of North Gwinnett in 1998 and opened a new two-story addition at the school that same year. Dr. Green received his undergraduate degree from the University of Tennessee,

and his graduate level degrees from Georgia State University, and the University of Georgia. In 2005, a new theater and an addition to the two-story building were added, bringing the total number of classrooms on the North Gwinnett campus to more than 130 plus 20 trailers.

Many changes have occurred during the years since North Gwinnett High School opened in 1958.

- At one time, the assistant principal and math department chair also served as the school custodians.
- Up until 1973, North Gwinnett had only one custodian for the entire school and campus. In 2006-07, the school has 16 custodians.
- The original sports program consisted of girls' and boys' basketball and baseball. The school now offers football, cross country for girls and boys, softball, basketball, wrestling, baseball, track, tennis, soccer (girls and boys), volleyball, swimming, and golf. NGHS students also participate on a non-school sponsored equestrian team, fencing and ice hockey. The football program was started in 1961 with a JV schedule. Coach Clark Hill was the first football coach at North Gwinnett.
- NGHS has two Gwinnett County Public Schools' Teachers of the Year. Nathan Smelley was the first teacher ever named Gwinnett County Public Schools' Teacher of the Year, and Wendell Jackson was named Gwinnett County Public Schools' Teacher of the Year in the early 80's.
- From 1964 to 1971, the high school junior-senior prom was held in the gymnasium.
- In the beginning, the principal had to mow the grass at the school-- there were no county crews to take care of this task.

The school is now experiencing a very positive growth in standardized test scores, advanced placement test scores, student success rates, and the number of graduating seniors who are opting to enter post-secondary education.