



A Stewardship Report from the Gwinnett County Board of Education

'The Plan'

Providing Classrooms and Technology for Gwinnett Students...

*Quality public education is a point of pride in Gwinnett County. Time and again, Gwinnett County Public Schools' (GCPS) reputation for academic excellence is cited as a reason why people choose to live in Gwinnett. As more families make their home here, the need for classrooms and new schools grows. It is important for parents and citizens to understand these needs, as well as how GCPS manages its growth. The facts show that GCPS is **accountable** to taxpayers, **responsible** in its planning, and **successful** in meeting the classroom and technology needs for students... providing all that was promised, plus more.*

Gwinnett's SPLOST success story

For every taxable dollar spent in Gwinnett County, a penny goes toward building classrooms and providing technology for students and teachers. From July 1, 1997, to June 30, 2002, SPLOST I provided 947 classrooms built in seven new schools and 25 school additions. Funding from SPLOST II, approved in November 2001, funded the 2002–2007 building program, which provided 23 new schools and 40 additions totaling 2,125 classrooms— more than originally promised.

Delivering on its promises... A closer look at the 2002–2007 building program

- All 23 new schools opened on time and within budget— two high schools, four middle schools, 14 elementary schools, and three replacement facilities (two middle schools and a special education center.) Included among the new schools are three extra elementary schools not originally part of the building program.
- Additions at 40 existing schools eased overcrowding in fast-growing areas across the county.
- Technology for new schools and additions, high school technology upgrades and improvements, implementation of the first phase of a systemwide business and human resource enterprise system, and media centers for new schools were included in the program.
- SPLOST II included land for nearly 30 new schools.

Accountable to the community

Citizens have consistently supported critical school funding initiatives, including multiple bond and sales tax referenda. The taxpayers' trust in the school system has been well-placed, based on findings from external audits of GCPS' building programs. In its recent audit, MGT of America commended GCPS on the management of its construction program. MGT found GCPS in full compliance in all areas audited, noting that the school system effectively met its SPLOST II objectives. GCPS also was commended for implementing processes that resulted in lower construction costs than those in neighboring counties.

The need and 'The Plan'... The numbers tell the story

- 59 of Gwinnett's 111 schools are over capacity in 2007–08.
- 82 campuses have trailers due to overcrowding and to house special, smaller classes.
- 14 of those schools use more than 30 trailers.
- Thousands of new students enroll each year— about 4,000 in 2007–08.
- Technology has been upgraded in middle and high schools, but most elementary schools have outdated computers and operating systems.

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In the summer of 2006, GCPS rolled out “The Plan,” its three-phased strategy for bringing the system’s building needs in check and making technology improvements.



Phase I of ‘The Plan’

Phase I of “The Plan,” funded by SPLOST III, includes:

- 19 new schools and additions at two schools;
- Land for future schools; and
- New technology and upgrades (including technology for new schools and additions, upgrades for all middle schools, continued implementation of the enterprise system for human resource and business functions, modernization of the system’s student information system, and increased access to technology through a portal).

Phase II of ‘The Plan’

Money generated from the sales tax is helping to keep “The Plan” on track. However, without funding for Phase II, the building program will soon come to a halt. GCPS will fall further behind in meeting its need for classrooms and technology improvements. Phase II calls for

- Eight new schools and additions at 10 existing schools;
- Land for future schools; and
- Technology improvements (including upgrades for elementary schools)

From the outset, Phase II of “The Plan” called for an alternate source of funding. On February 5, 2008, voters will decide on a general obligation bond referendum presented by the Gwinnett County Board of Education. No tax increase will be needed to service the bonds. The current tax rate is sufficient to cover the bond payments because past debt is being paid down each year. Building classrooms without the need for new taxes... that’s Phase II of “The Plan.”

Phase III of ‘The Plan’

Phase III of “The Plan” will begin in 2012, contingent on an extension of the current sales tax. Already, the school system has cited a need for at least 11 new schools and additions at eight existing schools as part of this phase. Future projects will be considered as enrollment figures are updated each year.

The Plan: Bringing Gwinnett’s building needs in check by 2014 and providing technology to support students instructionally

Phase I 2007–2009	Phase II 2010–2011	Phase III 2012–2014
<p><i>Funding: SPLOST III and State Capital Outlay. Projects will be constructed based on the availability of SPLOST funds. Therefore, the list is subject to revision by either the addition or deletion of projects planned for Phase I based on the revenue actually collected from the one-cent sales tax and the State Capital Outlay funds.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 16 new schools • 3 replacement schools • 2 additions at existing schools 	<p><i>Proposed funding: 2008 General Obligation (GO) Bonds. Referendum on February 5, 2008, ballot.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 8 new schools • 10 additions at existing schools 	<p><i>Proposed Funding: SPLOST IV. This preliminary list will be revised as updated enrollment figures are available in future years.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 11 new schools • 8 additions at existing schools
<p>Phase I is underway, funded by SPLOST III, approved by voters in 2006.</p> <p>Phase II is contingent on funding. On February 5, 2008, voters will be asked to decide on a GO bond referendum that will allow the school system to provide new classrooms and new technology without raising taxes. If approved, no tax increase will be needed to service the bonds.</p> <p>Phase III is expected to be funded by another extension of the SPLOST.</p>		

Look for more on “The Plan” and Gwinnett County Public Schools’ efforts to provide needed classrooms and technology for students at www.gwinnett.k12.ga.us.