

RESPONSES TO 1-38:

Gwinnett County Schools has experienced substantial growth in the past two decades. Our strategic plan has been to construct new schools to accommodate the new growth as well as handle the existing overcrowded conditions at schools. From the year 2000 through 2006 our enrollment grew by 53,260 students which is larger than nearly every school system in the state. This growth figure alone is over 15 times as large as the average size school district in this state of 3500 students. These 53,260 new students needed over 2130 new classrooms or the equivalent of 76 new 700-student elementary schools. These classroom needs were required just to accommodate the new growth without even considering the new classrooms needed to move students out of temporary classroom trailers. In 2003 we were using 1572 trailer classrooms which would house approximately 39,300 students or approximately 30% of our total enrollment of 129,014 at that time. Since 2002 we have reduced the number of trailers from 1572 to 575 or an approximate 64% reduction which we are proud of. And while growth has slowed, GCPS is still growing. No school system in Georgia has experienced this type of growth for this long and not many could have managed the building construction programs that we have completed to accommodate our students.

Our 2002 SPLOST program (2002-2007) was very successful as we were able to construct even more classrooms than we promised the voters. We completed our proposed projects in this SPLOST and with the leveraging of the ISC were able to build 3 additional new schools that were proposed to be the initial 3 projects planned in our next SPLOST of 2007-2012. By efficiently planning and managing our building programs we have used the SPLOST revenues wisely to meet the needs of the student population. Overall, the management of Gwinnett County Public Schools is still playing a large part in the economic development of our County and will continue to do so in the future. We have continued to grow during this recession and when the economy recovers the growth will again increase. Our school system's building program was among the largest building programs in the nation during this time period and has been a model in the industry. We have a very successful track record of building on time, within budget and at 30% less cost than the metro average.

Questions & Answers:

- 1) What factors made the Lawrenceville East building the best place to move the GIVE East program?
- 2) Were there no other buildings that the district could have moved the GIVE East program to?
- 3) Why didn't you move all the GIVE students into the old Norcross High School (2595 Beaver Run Road), instead of just moving the GIVE West students there?
- 4) How do you currently determine which students attend GIVE East and which attend GIVE West? Is it as simple as sending students who came from schools on the west side of the county to GIVE West, and students on the east side of the county to GIVE East?
- 5) Before the school district opened the GIVE West location at the old Norcross High School, were all GIVE students located in the same place, at the Hooper Renwick building (56 Neal Blvd, Lawrenceville)?
- 6) If so, when there was only one location for GIVE students, how did the district transport students from all over the county to the single location? Did the district have to make any special accommodations to transport students who lived the farthest from the school location?

Answer for 1-6: The GIVE Centers are alternative schools that serve students who are on long-term suspension. Best practices for alternative schools suggest that it is best for these types of schools to serve smaller numbers of students. In addition, due to the students' past behavior issues, the schools implement a number of interventions, including smaller class sizes, to provide an effective learning environment. One of the keys to a successful alternative school is access. As transportation is not provided to regular education students who attend the GIVE Centers, it is ideal to have the two sites separated geographically. The two facilities selected were determined to be the best options at the time. The location of GIVE West was considered ideal at the time as it is located in a different area of the county. In addition, it has a transit bus line that runs in front of it. By having two centers we are able to serve more students than we had been able to in the past... an important point as numbers of students requiring the GIVE option have increased. The county is divided geographically and students from clusters in the eastern portion of the county go to GIVE East and others are assigned to GIVE West. The lines are drawn as closely as possible to those that are East and West of I-85. Sometimes adjustments are made based upon enrollment; but, in general it is that simple.

Prior to the opening of GIVE West, the GIVE Center used a staggered start system so they could accommodate the large number of students. As of March 17, 2003, GIVE East could no longer enroll new students as it had reached capacity. Approximately 150 students had to attend in June and July and were out of school March, April, and May.

7) You said that you had \$210,000 in rental expenses in the 2006 fiscal year. Can you give me a breakdown of which properties you were leasing that amounted to the \$210,000 in rent? For each property that you were leasing, could you tell me the specific purpose that the district used the property for?

Furniture, fixtures & equipment storage facility at 4301 Winer Industrial Way, Lawrenceville, GA.

8) You said that rental expenses went down to \$85,570 by fiscal year 2007. Are you saying that the reduction in rental costs from \$210,000 to \$85,570 was a direct result of the school district's move into the ISC? How so?

The storage facility lease was terminated in 2007 due to no longer needing the additional space. Additional space in the Service Center was freed up with the ISC opening.

9) What was the remaining \$85,570 in rental expenses for? Can you tell me the specific properties that the district was renting that amounted to \$85,570 in rent? For each of those properties, can you tell me the specific purpose that the district used the property for?

Same property as #7 only for a partial year.

10) What was the total amount of the district's rental expenses for the current fiscal year? No facility rental.

11) What was the total cost of building Mulberry Elementary School? Construction costs Fund 205 = \$13,670,529

12) What was the total cost of building Lovin Elementary School? Construction costs Fund 205 = \$14,849,253

13) What was the total cost of building Patrick Elementary School? Construction costs Fund 205 = \$12,943,021

14) Why didn't you include those three schools – Mulberry, Patrick and Lovin – in your SPLOST II program?

At the time of planning for SPLOST II, other projects were a higher need/priority.

15) Why didn't you use some of the \$300 million in COPS money to build Mulberry, Patrick and Lovin? COPS was primarily used as a funding source to offset the SPLOST II revenue shortfall, i.e. to complete projects originally planned for SPLOST II.

16) You said that the old Norcross High School building, which houses GIVE West, also houses the district's online campus program. When did the online campus program move into that building? 2001

17) What is the current student enrollment of the GIVE West program at the old Norcross High School? Ended the current school year serving 381 students.

18) How many total students could the old Norcross High School house? 1900

19) How many people involved in the online campus program are housed in the old Norcross High School building? Who are they – teachers, IT staffers? I'm assuming that online campus students don't physically attend this campus, but wanted to confirm that with you, too. 25 full-time staff members (Principal, Asst. Principal, teachers, office staff, counselors, and local school technology coordinators) and up to 71 adjunct staff determined by student needs. While students do not attend the campus on a day-to-day basis, face-to-face/on-site meetings are required for all of courses in one of the following ways testing,

labs, fitness testing. In addition, students meet with their counselor at various times throughout their academic career. Teachers also are available to meet with students at the school as needed.

20) You said that GIVE West opened in 2003. Can you give me the specific date that it opened? The school officially opened in August of 2003. The first day of school that year was August 11.

21) Why did the district need to buy a new facility for the GIVE West program? What prompted the property purchase?

The concept of intervention schools has worked well for our school system. The Superintendent, backed by the Board, has made it very clear that our district will not allow one or two percent of the students to disrupt a school or for that matter, a classroom occupied by students who are there to learn. If a student insists on attempting to disrupt the regular school, the GIVE Center intervention school becomes an option.

There is a track record of success showing that with the special help provided at the intervention schools, many students get back on track and earn the right to go back to their regular school. The ultimate goal as the school system continues to grow is to have an intervention school in the west, north, south & central portion of the county. The GIVE West Center is currently housed in the old Norcross High School facility in Norcross. With the GIVE move to the new facility, the district is considering plans in its next building program, which is under development, that will call for the old Norcross facility to be used differently maximizing the space.

22) When GIVE students were sharing space with North Metro students, what was the total number of GIVE students that could be accommodated by the Hooper Renwick building? In other words, what was the maximum capacity of GIVE students at that location?

23) What was the yearly enrollment of GIVE students at Hooper Renwick for the five consecutive years before the GIVE West facility opened at the old Norcross High School?

24) You said the GIVE West facility opened in 2003. What were the yearly GIVE West student enrollment numbers at that facility for that year, as well as each year that followed up to the present date?

25) What were the yearly GIVE student enrollment numbers at Hooper Renwick for each year from the time that the GIVE West facility opened (2003) to the time that the GIVE students moved into the Lawrenceville East building (2006-2007 school year)?

Answer for 23-25: Below are the enrollment figures for the GIVE Centers based on the two enrollment counts conducted by the state. Note that enrollment at the GIVE Centers fluctuates throughout the year as students are paneled out of their home schools and then later return to their home schools.



26) On what date did the school district sign a contract with a builder to build Mulberry Elementary School?

[Please see attached.](#)



27) On what date did the school district sign a contract to build Lovin Elementary School?

[See attachment in 26 above.](#)

28) On what date did the school district sign a contract to build Patrick Elementary School?

[See attachment in 26 above.](#)

29) What was the maximum number of students that could be housed at Dacula Elementary School at the time the school contracted with a builder to build Mulberry Elementary School?

[Land was purchased for the proposed Mulberry ES in the spring of 2005. At this time the capacity of Dacula ES was 936 and we had 1487 students or 551 over capacity with 32 trailers. When we contracted to build Mulberry ES in the spring of 2006 our capacity at Dacula ES was 1705 due to an addition we opened in August, 2005. We had an enrollment of 1757 students or 52 students over capacity. Our Planning Department knew of the planned growth in this area as the enrollment grew to 2043 students by August, 2006 which necessitated the use of 18 trailers as we were now 338 students over capacity. The new Mulberry ES relieved Dacula ES in August, 2007 which reduced the enrollment at Dacula ES to 1660 students and allowed us to remove all trailers.](#)

30) What were the yearly student enrollment numbers at Dacula Elementary School for the five consecutive years before the district contracted to build Mulberry Elementary School?

[2002 - 1244 students \(936 capacity or 308 over capacity, 16 trailers\)](#)

[2003 - 1364 students \(936 capacity or 428 over capacity, 24 trailers\)](#)

[2004 - 1487 students \(936 capacity or 551 over capacity, 32 trailers\)](#)

2005 - 1757 students (1705 capacity or 52 over capacity, 0 trailers)
2006 - 2043 students (1705 capacity or 338 over capacity, 18 trailers)

31) What was the maximum number of students that could be housed at Cooper Elementary School at the time the school contracted with a builder to build Lovin Elementary School?

This school had a capacity to house 770 students and at the time we had 1158 students. The 388 students that were over capacity were housed in the 45 trailers that were being utilized to handle the overload.

32) What was the maximum number of students that could be housed at Grayson Elementary School at the time the school contracted to build Lovin Elementary School?

This school had a capacity to house 1019 students and at the time we had 1375 students. The 356 students that were over capacity were housed in the 23 trailers that were being utilized to handle the overload.

33) What were the yearly student enrollment numbers at Cooper Elementary School for the five consecutive years before the district contracted to build Lovin Elementary School?

2002 - not opened yet

2003 - 1218 students (770 capacity or 448 over capacity, 23 trailers)

2004 - 1358 students (770 capacity or 588 over capacity, 35 trailers)

2005 - 1158 students (770 capacity or 388 over capacity, 45 trailers)

2006 - 1749 students (1705 capacity or 44 over capacity, 0 trailers)

34) What were the yearly student enrollment numbers at Grayson Elementary School for the five consecutive years before the district contracted to build Lovin Elementary School?

2002 - 1729 students (1019 capacity or 710 over capacity, 30 trailers)

2003 - 1133 students (1019 capacity or 114 over capacity, 7 trailers)

2004 - 1274 students (1019 capacity or 255 over capacity, 14 trailers)

2005 - 1375 students (1019 capacity or 356 over capacity, 23 trailers)

2006 - 1498 students (1019 capacity or 479 over capacity, 29 trailers)

35) What was the maximum number of students that could be housed at Ivy Creek Elementary School at the time the school contracted with a builder to build Patrick Elementary School?

This school had a capacity to house 770 students and at the time we had 1186 students. The 416 students that were over capacity were housed in the 21 trailers that were being utilized to handle the overload.

36) What was the maximum number of students that could be housed at Harmony Elementary School at the time the school contracted to build Patrick Elementary School?

This school had a capacity to house 728 students and at the time we had 1151 students. The 423 students that were over capacity were housed in the 24 trailers that were being utilized to handle the overload.

37) What were the yearly student enrollment numbers at Ivy Creek Elementary School for the five consecutive years before the district contracted to build Patrick Elementary School?

2002 - not built yet

2003 - 852 students (770 capacity or 82 over capacity, 5 trailers)

2004 - 985 students (770 capacity or 215 over capacity, 11 trailers)

2005 - 1186 students (770 capacity or 416 over capacity, 21 trailers)

2006 - 1274 students (770 capacity or 504 over capacity, 27 trailers)

38) What were the yearly student enrollment numbers at Harmony Elementary School for the five consecutive years before the district contracted to build Patrick Elementary School?

2002 - 1358 students (728 capacity or 630 over capacity, 28 trailers)

2003 - 829 students (728 capacity or 101 over capacity, 5 trailers)

2004 - 972 students (728 capacity or 244 over capacity, 15 trailers)
2005 - 1151 students (728 capacity or 423 over capacity, 24 trailers)
2006 - 1357 students (728 capacity or 629 over capacity, 34 trailers)

Additional Questions Sent:

YOU SAID THE THREE ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS -- MULBERRY, PATRICK AND LOVIN -- WERE PAID IN WHOLE OR PART WITH THE MONEY THAT WAS FREED UP THROUGH THE ISC SALE-LEASEBACK. I WANTED TO CONFIRM THE SOURCE OF THE MONEY THAT WAS FREED UP AND SPENT ON THOSE SCHOOLS -- WAS IT SPLOST 2 MONEY? IF NOT, WHERE DID IT COME FROM? As referenced in our answer to question #8 on May 13, 2011, the funds "freed up" through the ISC sale-leaseback were in the SPLOST II program.

WHERE DID THE REST OF THE MONEY COME FROM TO COMPLETE THOSE SCHOOLS -- SPLOST 2, SPLOST 3 OR SOME OTHER SOURCE? The construction of the three schools was funded by a combination of SPLOST II and State capital outlay funds.

SUPERINTENDENT WILBANKS TOLD ME THAT, PRIOR TO THE ISC SALE-LEASEBACK, THE DISTRICT HAD ORIGINALLY BUDGETED AND SET ASIDE \$25 MILLION FOR THE ISC PROJECT. DOES THAT INCLUDE THE \$12.5 MILLION SPENT ON BUYING THE LAND, OR IS THAT IN ADDITION TO THAT \$12.5 MILLION? WHAT WAS THE SOURCE OF THAT \$25 MILLION -- WAS THAT SPLOST 2 MONEY? The \$25 million originally budgeted in SPLOST II included the \$12.5 million used to purchase the ISC land and buildings.

WHAT SOURCE OF MONEY DID YOU USE TO PURCHASE THE LAND FOR THE THREE ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS (MULBERRY, PATRICK AND LOVIN) -- SPLOST II, COPS BONDS MONEY, ETC.? The land for these three schools was purchased with COPS proceeds.

WHY DIDN'T YOU SPEND SOME OF THE \$300 MILLION IN COPS MONEY ON BUILDING MULBERRY, PATRICK AND LOVIN? COPS was primarily used as a funding source to offset the SPLOST II revenue shortfall, i.e. to complete projects originally planned for SPLOST II.

OF THE FIVE BUILDINGS THAT ISC STAFFERS MOVED FROM -- 1) LAWRENCEVILLE EAST, 2) LAWRENCEVILLE WEST, 3) 52 GWINNETT DRIVE, 4) SERVICE CENTER AND 5) OAKLAND SCHOOL -- WHICH OF THOSE WERE OVERCROWDED? FOR THOSE THAT WERE OVERCROWDED, COULD YOU PROVIDE STATISTICS TO SUPPORT THAT? As has been shared these facilities were overcrowded-- we had staff sharing offices, meeting in hallways, and housed in trailers.

HOW DOES THE SCHOOL DISTRICT PLAN TO PAY FOR THE ISC PROPERTY WHEN IT BUYS IT BACK? WITH SPLOST 4 MONEY (ASSUMING THAT VOTERS APPROVE IT)? With proceeds from the 2008 G.O. bond authorization.

I wanted to confirm that the contracted price for buying back the ISC property on July 1, 2013 is \$52,038,916.

Correct

From what date to what date do your fiscal years run?

July 1 - June 30

Could you confirm that July 1, 2013, would be the end of your 2013 fiscal year?

No. June 30, 2013

My calculations show that the school district will have paid a total of \$25,912,025 in rent for the ISC property by July 1, 2013. Is that correct?

\$26,021,360
FY06 - \$670,625
FY07 - \$3,052,500
FY08 - \$3,644,500
FY09 - \$3,753,835
FY10 - \$3,644,500
FY11 - \$3,644,500
FY12 - \$3,644,500
FY13 - \$3,966,400