

History of

Benefield Elementary School

Benefield Elementary School was named for J. W. Benefield, former Gwinnett School Superintendent of Schools. Mr. Benefield served in that capacity from 1967–77. He was born in the Dacula-Harbins area and graduated from the University of Georgia. He began his 26-year career in education in 1950 as an agriculture teacher at Bethesda High School and Central Gwinnett High School. In 1977, he was named “Outstanding School Superintendent of the Year” by the Georgia Association of Educational Leaders. Also, he is a member of the Gwinnett County Association of Educators’ Hall of Fame.

Benefield Elementary is located adjacent to Oakland Center at 970 McElvaney Lane in Lawrenceville. In fact, the lunchroom is actually shared by the two schools. The concept of its location was that it would be beneficial for the special education students at Oakland to associate with the regular education students at Benefield Elementary. Over the years, both student populations have profited from the joined school.

The school opened in August of 1982. It opened to relieve growth in the areas served by Lawrenceville Elementary, Gwin Oaks Elementary, Dyer Elementary, Bethesda Elementary, and B.B. Harris Elementary.

During the late 1980s (1987–88), Benefield had the

FAST FACTS

Address: 1221 Old Norcross Road
Lawrenceville, GA 30046

The following have served as principals of Benefield Elementary School:

1982–88	Allen Bower
1988–1994	Ann Adams
1994–2000	Larry Smith
2000–2005	Barbara Hopkins
2005–2010	Ronald Boyd
2010–Present	Dr. Melissa Walker

School Colors: White and Blue

School Mascot: Lighthouse

distinction of being the largest elementary school in Georgia. The enrollment in 1986–87 was 1,450 children in grades K–5. In 1987–88, the enrollment was 1,450 students in grades K–4. The fifth-grade students were housed at Richards Middle School during that school year, due to lack of space at Benefield.

Benefield’s staff has earned numerous awards over the years, including a staff member who was named Georgia Science Teacher of the Year.



The Benefield school mascot was changed in 2001 from the Buccaneer to a Lighthouse. The school colors were also changed from light and dark blue to red, white and blue to coordinate with other schools in the Berkmar cluster.

In August of 2007, Oakland School moved from the 970 McElvaney Lane address in Lawrenceville which it shared with Benefield students to a new location. The move offered Benefield Elementary students and staff additional facility space until the replacement school was completed for the 2008–09 school year.