



# **Executive Summary**

**Waynesboro Primary School**

**Burke County School System**

**Dr. Renee Sasser, Principal**

**352 Southside Dr.**

**Waynesboro, GA 30830**

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

|   |    |
|---|----|
| Description of the School .....                     | 2  |
| School's Purpose .....                              | 5  |
| Notable Achievements and Areas of Improvement ..... | 8  |
| Additional Information .....                        | 10 |

## Description of the School

**Describe the school's size, community/communities, location, and changes it has experienced in the last three years. Include demographic information about the students, staff, and community at large. What unique features and challenges are associated with the community/communities the school serves?**

The students of WPS are residents of a rural county. According to the 2010 census report, Burke County has a population of 23,316. Waynesboro Primary School is one of four facilities in Burke County that serve students in grades Pre-K through Second. Two of the four facilities are privately funded. When disaggregated by race, the 2010 population of the county is 49.5% black, 47.5% white, 2.6% Hispanic and Latino, and less than one percent other races. Approximately 40% of the households in Burke County are single parent homes. The average income in Burke County is \$33,815, while the median household income is \$24,141. The estimated per capita income is \$11,925. Poverty level for a family of three in Burke County is \$15,000 or less. Slightly more than 32% of household incomes reported for the city and county fall into this category.

There are approximately 520 (registered) businesses in Burke County. The community has a diverse economic base that includes service industry, manufacturing, retail businesses, and agriculture. Agriculture is an integral part of the total economy of Burke County, however, the Burke County Board of Education is the county's major source of employment. This area contains some of the most productive soils in eastern Georgia. Burke County is ranked number ten in total lands reserved for farming and third in harvested cropland acres in Georgia. Burke County ranks in the top ten in production of cotton, soybeans, oats, rye, and wheat. Industry is beginning to make an impact on the county's economy. Plant Vogtle, a nuclear power facility located in the county, has been a tremendous asset for this area. Vogtle's impact has been felt both in terms of job opportunities for Burke County residents and in terms of its economic boost to the school system by way of property taxes.

Waynesboro Primary School is a public school located in Waynesboro (Burke County), Georgia. WPS was originally named Waynesboro Elementary School and served grades K-3. The third grade relocated to Blakeney Elementary School many years ago, and Waynesboro Elementary School subsequently served grades K-2. On January 4, 1999, students and staff moved into a new, state-of-the-art building, and the school's name changed to Waynesboro Primary School. Pre-Kindergarten students joined us in the new building at that time. In 2003, a new wing was added to our building to accommodate all Pre-Kindergarten classrooms. WPS now serves 1033 students in grades Pre-K through 2. That number includes 234 Pre-K students, 253 kindergarten students, 278 first grade students and 268 second grade students. The total also includes 14 self-contained special education students and 18 Early Intervention students (3 year olds) as identified through the Head Start program.

Waynesboro Primary School has 82 full-time, certified faculty members; a principal, two assistant principals, an instructional coordinator, an instructional coach, a media specialist, two counselors, 58 classroom teachers, 7 Special Education teachers, an art teacher, a music teacher, two physical education teachers, 2 Speech/Language Pathologists, a gifted teacher, and a school nurse. There are 71 full time, noncertified personnel; 60 paraprofessionals, 3 tutors, 3 lab paraprofessionals, a Title I Parent Coordinator, a Pre-K Parent Coordinator, a secretary, a Student Information Specialist, and an Office Manager. There are also 21 full-time personnel that serve our children: 12 cafeteria staff members and 9 custodial staff members.

At Waynesboro Primary School, we take much pride in the educational opportunities we are able to provide for our children. Our teachers and staff members work very hard to meet the needs of all students. We know that students are learning and are making progress. Student achievement is considered our single most important indicator of success. Our only state mandated test, at this grade level is GKIDS, and while our scores experienced a

slight decrease, we still believe that we are on the right track. Our scores dropped slightly during the 2011-2012 school year in both ELA (90.2% to 87.9%) and Math (94.6 to 93.7%). Students whose promotion is in danger are identified in the Fall. These students are then placed in tutoring sessions during the school day. First and Second grade students are tutored one-on-one by our trained tutors for 30 minutes each day. Each student's progress is monitored throughout the tutoring sessions and is transferred out when he/she has reached his/her goal.

WPS began March Madness in the Spring of 2012. Teachers choose to remediate or accelerate their students based on data. Teachers can team teach with another teacher or group of teachers. The teachers that choose to team teach divide their students into groups based on ELA/Reading needs (remediation/acceleration) and math needs (remediation/acceleration). Teachers and paraprofessionals use innovative, research-based strategies and differentiation to provide instruction for these students.

In the Spring of 2011 and 2012, the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Afterschool program provided students with snacks, homework help, tutoring, extension activities, dinner, and transportation. The funding for the program ended in 2014, but the school was able to provide a similar afterschool program for at risk students for 6 weeks. Summer school was also offered for four weeks each summer from 8 am to 1 pm. Transportation, breakfast, and lunch were provided.

We are so proud of the diligence of the WPS staff and the dedication to success.

# School's Purpose

**Provide the school's purpose statement and ancillary content such as mission, vision, values, and/or beliefs. Describe how the school embodies its purpose through its program offerings and expectations for students.**

## **Vision Statement**

Burke County Schools will exemplify a quality system that is respected for high standards, outstanding performance, and excellence in student achievement.

## **Mission Statement**

The mission of the Burke County School System is to ensure that all students will graduate with the necessary skills to function successfully in a global society.

## **Belief Statements**

### 1. Student Performance

- We believe students can develop academically, socially, physically, and emotionally.
- We believe high expectations increase individual student performance. (Also 2-4)
- We believe that students learn best when they are actively engaged in the learning process. (Also 2-4)

### 2. Stakeholder Engagement

- We believe positive relationships and mutual respect enhance a student's self-esteem.
- We believe that every stakeholder plays an important role in the ultimate learning of all students.

### 3. Organizational Effectiveness

- We believe the unique learning styles of students should be considered when planning and implementing learning activities. (Also 1, 2, & 4)
- We believe a nurturing school climate fosters the development of the student's potential so that he/she may become a responsible, educated citizen. (Also 1, 2, & 4)

### 4. Continuous Improvement

- We believe a supportive and challenging learning environment promotes the development of appropriate decision making skills. (Also 1-3)

Waynesboro Primary School's mission is to ensure that all students will graduate with the necessary skills to function successfully in a global society. WPS's vision is to exemplify a quality system that is respected for high standards, outstanding performance, and excellence in student achievement.

The Better Seeking Team (BST) was formed in 2007. The BST meets twice a month to discuss achievement, attendance, and behavior data that is presented and makes plans to improve in any areas that are highlighted. The BST drives the school improvement effort. Parents are members of the School Council and the Title I Committee. Having parents on these committees affords parents the opportunity to contribute to the development of the School Improvement Plan. Professional Learning Communities (PLC) are created each year for teachers to share weekly/monthly units of instruction, skills being taught by the specific grade level, and data that is collected. Connections teachers (Art, Music, and PE) also integrate vocabulary words and skills where appropriate in their area of instruction but also units of study from each of the grade levels.

Our reading program is based upon Patricia Cunningham's Four Blocks Model for Literacy Instruction. It requires four segments of reading and writing instruction each day. Each grade level has a bookroom with class sets of books for our teachers to use with their students during Guided Reading and Unit Theme. During the 2014-15 school year, our school adopted the reading basal series Reading Horizons Discovery phonics program. It is an explicit, systematic, research-based program using multi-sensory techniques via direct instruction. The Accelerated Reader Program allows our students to practice reading and comprehension skills by taking quizzes and monitoring their progress. Students

who meet their goal receive incentives in the classroom, as well as, school wide at the end of the year. Our media center provides in excess of 18, 442 books for our students to use. All of our Kindergarten through second grade students are afforded the opportunity to visit the Waterford Reading Computer Lab.

Our school also uses GO! Math as our math series. This series was adopted in 2012. Along with the student activity books, our teachers use Think Central which is an online program that compliments the series. For the past several years, our students also used SuccessMaker Computer Math Lab to enhance their math instruction. This program provided individual assessments and lessons for students. The data from the program was used to provide incentives for students as they advanced through the program.

WPS has participated in several Data Retreats. Professional development is designed based on the results of our recent Data Retreats, feedback from recent Rigor Walks by representatives from the Central Office staff, and discussion during BST meetings. Faculty and staff are also being trained to use Edivate/PD360 which allows for individual, small group, and large group professional development.

Students in Tier 2 and above in the Response to Intervention (RTI) process are provided with assistance through individual tutoring and progress monitoring. The Pyramid of Intervention assists struggling students, academically, socially, emotionally and behaviorally, as well as, provides strategies in the area of need. Parents of students in the RTI process are invited to a minimum of three conferences during a school year.

The WPS Title I Parent Coordinator works with parents to assist with their child's school experience. She schedules monthly workshops and provides instructional material in order to support the school and community connection.

## **Notable Achievements and Areas of Improvement**

**Describe the school's notable achievements and areas of improvement in the last three years. Additionally, describe areas for improvement that the school is striving to achieve in the next three years.**

Waynesboro Primary School has met Adequate Yearly Progress for the past thirteen years and has been recognized as a Title I Distinguished school every year since 2004. Our teachers and staff members work very hard to meet the needs of all students. We know that students are learning and are making progress. This is considered our single most important indicator of success. Collaboration, effective professional learning communities, as well as, paraprofessionals and tutors contribute to the ongoing success at WPS. As we strive to raise the level of achievement of all students in the areas of reading and math, we continue to place particular emphasis on raising the academic performance of our students with disabilities in the areas of reading and math. WPS has implemented a system of supports using the RTI Pyramid of Interventions, which allows us to target those high impact students who are performing below grade level and below standards. Teachers use formative and summative assessments for the placement of these high-impact students. WPS has had a successful tutoring program for at least 10 years. The tutors play a key role in the progress of our students in Tier 2 and Tier 3 of the RTI process and progress monitoring. They help students who are performing below grade level to acquire the skills they need to meet the standards. The students are able to move in and out of these interventions based on the results of their frequent ongoing formative assessments.

Some of our biggest accomplishments include:

- ✓ WPS has had a CCRPI score about 90 for the past three years and most recently earned a 5 Star climate rating for the 2014-2015 school year.

- ✓ WPS is very involved in raising funds for Relay for Life. The school has been a top fundraiser in the county for the past few years.
- ✓ We have also increased the amount of extracurricular opportunities for our students through the introduction of the Art Club and Second Grade chorus. Our Pre-K through second grade students have the opportunity to compete in School-wide STEM challenges which are initiated by our gifted teacher.

Waynesboro Primary is an excellent school due to highly qualified leadership and staff, a history of successful academic performance, and a modern facility where technology is evident. The future is a bright one for WPS students! WPS takes pride in its professionalism and high standards. Our motto, “A Positive Place for Positive People” emphasizes this continued excellence.

One of our areas of improvement has been in our discipline numbers. For the last three years, our discipline referral numbers have significantly decreased each year. Much of this can be attributed to the work of our PBIS team and the efforts of our administrative team to build a rapport with the teachers and students. Our PBIS team has implemented Panda Perks. Our students earn a perk each day based on positive behavior choices. A collection of these perks allows students to visit the PBIS store and make “purchases” and it also allows them to attend the PBIS parties that are held each nine weeks. Our school has also implemented Panda Pay in which the administrators award a Panda Pay of a paper dollar to a class when they are seen in the hallway, classroom, cafeteria, bathroom, playground, computer lab exemplifying our positive character traits. The class may exchange their Panda Pay for lunch outside, extra recess, movie and popcorn, etc. We are also being trained to use Educator’s Handbook. It was adopted by WPS this school year. Educator’s Handbook will provide individual discipline records for each child, each teacher, and the school. This program will supply the administrators and staff with detailed discipline data.

Another concern has been attendance. We have addressed that through our Panda STARS (Students Taking Attendance Really Seriously) program. Students receive an incentive each month for perfect attendance.

## **Additional Information**

**Provide any additional information you would like to share with the public and community that were not prompted in the previous sections.**

Parents of students at WPS receive communications on a regular basis. In fact, since the beginning of the 2015-2016 school year, we have welcomed our parents and community into our building with over 2500 signed in visits! This number included Thanksgiving/Christmas lunches, parent workshops, volunteer sign-ins, PTO meetings, grade level activities, and classroom visits. WPS constantly updates information on the school web site. Parents receive other notifications via the Tuesday Take Home Folders that are provided for each student. Classes that return 100% of their folders on each Wednesday, receive Panda Pay to add to their class "bank". This Panda Pay can be used to "purchase" incentives like a movie and popcorn, extra recess, etc. Teachers send newsletters informing parents and the community of activities and academic work. The school provides internet resources where students may access their teachers' website and retrieve information about the class, homework assignments, and special events. The web page also includes a contact form that parents may use to email the teacher. Through these services, teachers may post educational information for parents. An informational system newsletter, The System Stuffer, is sent home with every report card each nine weeks to inform the community of specific dates and events in our school system. Teachers communicate regularly with parents

via phone, conferences, written messages in students' planners, emails, progress reports, and report cards. Early release days are provided by the county for parents conferences. Student agendas are also used by teachers and parents for communication purposes. Blackboard Connect, an automated phone system, is used to notify all parents of special events or school emergencies as needed. Parent compacts are present to the parents of all students. Additionally, parents are encouraged to visit the school to volunteer, observe in classrooms, and participate in school-related activities. Direct parent and community involvement are an important component of the WPS school improvement plan. Waynesboro Primary has a reputation for being the "jewel of Burke County."