

Gaston County Schools



House Select Committee on School Safety
October 12, 2018
Gaston College – Kimbrell Campus

Celebrate! Gaston County Schools



Gaston County Schools

Introduction

W. Jeffrey Booker

Superintendent

Physical Security

Gary F. Hoskins

Associate Superintendent for
Finance and Operations

Mental Health Services

Dr. Melissa Balknight

Associate Superintendent for
Academic Services

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Safety is Priority #1



Gaston among state's safest large school districts

By Eric Wildstein ewildstein@gastongazette.com

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Gaston's public schools continue to rank among the safest large districts in the state.

According to new reports from the N.C. Department of Public Instruction and State Board of Education, Gaston had the lowest school crime and violence rate of the 10 largest school districts statewide in 2015-16.

The school crime rate for Gaston's public schools has been significantly lower than that state rate for the past seven years. Gaston also has the lowest school crime rate compared to neighboring school districts.

"We are extremely pleased to see a decrease in our school crime rate for the third consecutive year," said Superintendent of Schools Jeff Booker, in a media release. "The school crime data is an indication that our on-going, concentrated focus on comprehensive school safety and security is paying off."

The reports are based on enrollment in public schools statewide. Gaston's public schools enrolled slightly fewer than 31,300 students last year.

The school system's acts of crime dropped slightly over the previous year, though remained far below the statewide rate, which includes public school districts in North Carolina's 100 counties. The state's report calculates incidences of 16 reportable crimes.

Gaston had 117 total incidents for acts of crime. More than half those reported crimes were possession of a controlled substance. Other crimes included assault on school personnel, bomb threats, possession of an alcoholic beverage, possession of a weapon other than a gun, and two incidents of possession of a firearm.

Though not specified in the report, crimes can include incidents that were committed on school grounds that did not involve school personnel or students.

Booker attributed Gaston's low school crime rate to the district's strong partnership with law enforcement, investment in security equipment and safety initiatives, and school employees being mindful of safety practices.

Gaston among state's safest large school districts

*School crime and
violence rate is lower
than the state rate for
seventh year*

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Five Year Strategic Plan



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Five Focus Areas



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Gaston County Schools

Physical Security



Gary F. Hoskins

Associate Superintendent for
Finance and Operations

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What Makes our Schools Safe?

Strong partnership with local law enforcement

- Belmont
- Bessemer City
- Cramerton
- Cherryville
- Dallas
- Gaston County
- Gastonia
- Stanley
- Lowell
- Mount Holly
- Sheriff's Office



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What Makes our Schools Safe?

Secure exterior perimeters
and visitor check-in
systems at all schools

Fencing of detached wings

Identity management system for
all visitors



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What Makes our Schools Safe?

Secure exterior perimeters and visitor check-in systems at all schools

Helios front door management system



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What Makes our Schools Safe?

Full –time School Resource Officers (SROs) serving at all schools

Expectations for all of our SROs - Build relationships with students and staff and work together with different roles and responsibilities

Written SRO job description and required training for all SROs



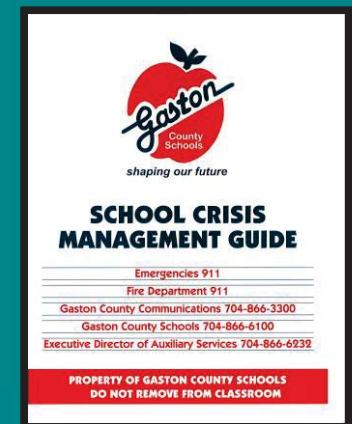
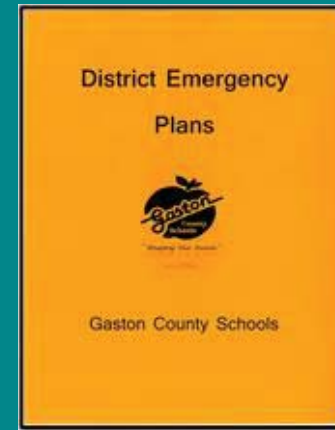
What Makes our Schools Safe?

A comprehensive safety plan for every school

A School Crisis Management Guide is located in **every** classroom

Reviewed with all faculty/staff, including substitute teachers

Covers evacuations, bomb threats, lock downs, shelter in place, severe weather, etc.



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What Makes our Schools Safe?

Surveillance cameras at all schools and on all school buses

All yellow buses and activity buses have two cameras.

School cameras can be remotely viewed by authorized personnel



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What Makes our Schools Safe?

Other - Metal detection screenings in middle and high schools, alarms and communication systems

Walk-through and wand metal detectors

Panic alarms in all schools

Upgraded school-wide intercoms and two-way radios for school personnel



2013 Security Task Force

Membership:

- Parents
- Teachers
- Community Leaders
- Law Enforcement
- School Principals
- District Staff



Task Force Recommendations

- Improve front lobby containment
- Add full-time elementary school SROs
- Enhance exterior door security and secure movement to detached wings - fencing
- Improve school communication – intercom and two-way radios
- Add a panic alarm system for each school

Task Force Recommendations

- Additional mental health clinicians
- Classroom security - door hardware, blinds, classroom light controls
- Surveillance equipment replacement
- School Security Associates at secondary schools

Safety and Security

Major Accomplishments

- SROs for all schools beginning this year
- Full-time Security Compliance Manager
- Regular school safety audits
- Helios front door management system
- Identity Management System (check in/out)
- Upgraded camera systems and fire alarms
- Replaced older intercom systems
- Two-way radio upgrades/replacements

Safety and Security

Major Accomplishments (continued)

- Mental health awareness and training
- Safety Teams/Committees for schools and departments have been implemented
- Implementation of new critical response procedures
- Expanded use of metal detectors and wands
- Law enforcement emergency entry
- Minimum standards for security equipment

Safety and Security

Additional Items to be Addressed

- More front lobby containment
- Enhanced interior door security (hardware)
- Continued fencing for detached wings
- Continued upgrades/replacements for security alarms, fire alarms, cameras and intercoms
- Panic alarm sound enhancement
- Additional exterior lighting
- Additional Mental Health Clinicians

Gaston County Schools

Mental Health Services



Dr. Melissa Balknight
Associate Superintendent for
Academic Services

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Mental Health Initiatives

- In 2003, Gaston County Schools started expanding its focus on creating safe and supportive environments for students.
- GCS collaborated with local partners to further support the physical, mental, and emotional well being of all students.

Mental Health Initiatives

2003

Suicide
Intervention
Protocol

2004

Recognizing
Signs and
Symptoms
Training for
Staff &
Students

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Mental Health Initiatives



Mental Health Initiatives

2012

Introduction
of School
Based
Therapy

2014

Expansion
of School
Based
Therapy

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Partner Services

School Based Therapy

- Four Agencies

Day Treatment

- Three Agencies



Partner Services

School Based Therapy

- Therapy Sessions
- Conducted In School Setting
- Increased Accessibility For Families
- Supports An Academic Focus

Partner Services

Year	Students Receiving School Based Therapy
2015-2016	828
2016-2017	945
2017-2018	1174

Partner Services

Day Treatment

- Full Day Therapy
- Conducted Off-Site
- Focus On Improving Mental Health

Partner Services

Year	Students Receiving Day Treatment Services
2015-2016	86
2016-2017	104
2017-2018	98

Mental Health Initiatives

2015

Youth
Mental
Health
First Aid
Grant

2015-
2016

Youth
Mental
Health
First Aid
Training

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Mental Health Initiatives

2016 -
2017

Hosted
Mental
Health
Awareness
Week

2016 -
2017

Non-Suicidal
Self-Injury
Protocol
Training for
School
Counselors

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Mental Health Initiatives

2017

STAND UP
Gaston
Campaign
Kick-Off

2017 -
2018

Healthy
Relationship
Workshop
for Students

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GCS Personnel

- Two Licensed Mental Health Clinicians
 - District-wide support
 - Assist with referrals
 - Consult with parents
 - Provide input on mental health services
- Mental Health Professionals

GCS Personnel

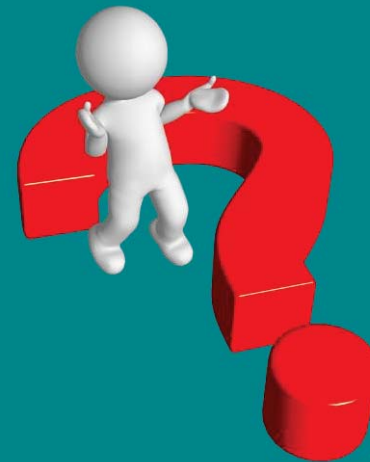
Personnel	Gaston County Personnel to Student Ratio	Wake County Personnel to Student Ratio	NC Average Personnel to Student Ratio
School Psychologists	1:1403	1:15900	1:1857
School Nurses	1:1113	1:1725	1:2315
School Social Workers	1:1067	1:1860	1:1427
School Counselors	1:367	1:451	1:350

What's Next

- 10 Additional Mental Health Clinicians
- Sustainability



Questions



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