

2005-2006 No Child Left Behind - Blue Ribbon Schools Program

U.S. Department of Education

Cover Sheet Type of School: (Check all that apply) Elementary Middle High K-12 Charter

Name of Principal Mr. Rick Brown
(Specify: Ms., Miss, Mrs., Dr., Mr., Other) (As it should appear in the official records)

Official School Name Dawson County High School
(As it should appear in the official records)

School Mailing Address P.O. Box 129 - 1665 Perimeter Road
(If address is P.O. Box, also include street address)

Dawsonville Georgia 30534-1665
City State Zip Code+4 (9 digits total)

County Dawson State School Code Number* 0198

Telephone (706)265-6555 Fax (706)265-3936

Website/URL www.dawson.k12.ga.us E-mail rbrown@dawson.k12.ga.us

I have reviewed the information in this application, including the eligibility requirements on page 2, and certify that to the best of my knowledge all information is accurate.

(Principal's Signature) Date _____

Name of Superintendent* Mr. Michael Lupo
(Specify: Ms., Miss, Mrs., Dr., Mr., Other)

District Name Dawson County Tel. (706)265-3246

I have reviewed the information in this application, including the eligibility requirements on page 2, and certify that to the best of my knowledge it is accurate.

(Superintendent's Signature) Date _____

Name of School Board
President/Chairperson Mr. Will Wade
(Specify: Ms., Miss, Mrs., Dr., Mr., Other)

I have reviewed the information in this package, including the eligibility requirements on page 2, and certify that to the best of my knowledge it is accurate.

(School Board President's/Chairperson's Signature) Date _____

**Private Schools: If the information requested is not applicable, write N/A in the space.*

PART I - ELIGIBILITY CERTIFICATION

The signatures on the first page of this application certify that each of the statements below concerning the school's eligibility and compliance with U.S. Department of Education, Office for Civil Rights (OCR) requirements is true and correct.

1. The school has some configuration that includes grades K-12. (Schools with one principal, even K-12 schools, must apply as an entire school.)
2. The school has not been in school improvement status or been identified by the state as "persistently dangerous" within the last two years. To meet final eligibility, the school must meet the state's adequate yearly progress requirement in the 2005-2006 school year.
3. If the school includes grades 7 or higher, it has foreign language as a part of its core curriculum.
4. The school has been in existence for five full years, that is, from at least September 2000 and has not received the 2003, 2004, or 2005 *No Child Left Behind – Blue Ribbon Schools Award*.
5. The nominated school or district is not refusing the OCR access to information necessary to investigate a civil rights complaint or to conduct a district-wide compliance review.
6. The OCR has not issued a violation letter of findings to the school district concluding that the nominated school or the district as a whole has violated one or more of the civil rights statutes. A violation letter of findings will not be considered outstanding if the OCR has accepted a corrective action plan from the district to remedy the violation.
7. The U.S. Department of Justice does not have a pending suit alleging that the nominated school, or the school district as a whole, has violated one or more of the civil rights statutes or the Constitution's equal protection clause.
8. There are no findings of violations of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act in a U.S. Department of Education monitoring report that apply to the school or school district in question; or if there are such findings, the state or district has corrected, or agreed to correct, the findings.

PART II - DEMOGRAPHIC DATA

All data are the most recent year available.

DISTRICT (Questions 1-2 not applicable to private schools)

1. Number of schools in the district:
- | | |
|---|---------------------|
| 3 | Elementary schools |
| 1 | Middle schools |
| 0 | Junior high schools |
| 1 | High schools |
| 1 | Other |
| 6 | TOTAL |

2. District Per Pupil Expenditure: 7,918.53

Average State Per Pupil Expenditure: 7,425.53

SCHOOL (To be completed by all schools)

3. Category that best describes the area where the school is located:

- Urban or large central city
 Suburban school with characteristics typical of an urban area
 Suburban
 Small city or town in a rural area
 Rural

4. 4 Number of years the principal has been in her/his position at this school.

 If fewer than three years, how long was the previous principal at this school?

5. Number of students as of October 1 enrolled at each grade level or its equivalent in applying school only:

Grade	# of Males	# of Females	Grade Total		Grade	# of Males	# of Females	Grade Total
PreK					7			
K					8			
1					9	142	126	268
2					10	110	131	241
3					11	108	94	202
4					12	82	102	184
5					Other			
6								
TOTAL STUDENTS IN THE APPLYING SCHOOL →								895

6. Racial/ethnic composition of the students in the school:
- | | |
|-------------------|----------------------------------|
| <u>96</u> | % White |
| <u>1</u> | % Black or African American |
| <u>3</u> | % Hispanic or Latino |
| <u>0</u> | % Asian/Pacific Islander |
| <u>0</u> | % American Indian/Alaskan Native |
| 100% Total | |

Use only the five standard categories in reporting the racial/ethnic composition of the school.

7. Student turnover, or mobility rate, during the past year: 22 %

[This rate should be calculated using the grid below. The answer to (6) is the mobility rate.]

(1)	Number of students who transferred <i>to</i> the school after October 1 until the end of the year.	61
(2)	Number of students who transferred <i>from</i> the school after October 1 until the end of the year.	127
(3)	Total of all transferred students [sum of rows (1) and (2)]	188
(4)	Total number of students in the school as of October 1	873
(5)	Total transferred students in row (3) divided by total students in row (4)	.2153
(6)	Amount in row (5) multiplied by 100	21.53

8. Limited English Proficient students in the school: less than 1%
8 Total Number Limited English Proficient
 Number of languages represented: 1
 Specify languages: Spanish

9. Students eligible for free/reduced-priced meals: 25%
 Total number students who qualify: 226

If this method does not produce an accurate estimate of the percentage of students from low-income families or the school does not participate in the federally-supported lunch program, specify a more accurate estimate, tell why the school chose it, and explain how it arrived at this estimate.

10. Students receiving special education services: $\frac{11}{83}$ % Total Number of Students Served

Indicate below the number of students with disabilities according to conditions designated in the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act. Do not add additional categories.

<u>4</u> Autism	<u> </u> Orthopedic Impairment
<u> </u> Deafness	<u>8</u> Other Health Impaired
<u> </u> Deaf-Blindness	<u>48</u> Specific Learning Disability
<u>13</u> Emotional Disturbance	<u> </u> Speech or Language Impairment
<u> </u> Hearing Impairment	<u> </u> Traumatic Brain Injury
<u>9</u> Mental Retardation	<u>1</u> Visual Impairment Including Blindness
<u> </u> Multiple Disabilities	

11. Indicate number of full-time and part-time staff members in each of the categories below:

	Number of Staff	
	<u>Full-time</u>	<u>Part-Time</u>
Administrator(s)	<u>4</u>	<u> </u>
Classroom teachers	<u>51</u>	<u> </u>
Special resource teachers/specialists	<u>14</u>	<u> </u>
Paraprofessionals	<u>6</u>	<u> </u>
Support staff	<u>22</u>	<u>1</u>
Total number	<u>97</u>	<u>1</u>

12. Average school student-“classroom teacher” ratio, that is, the number of students in the school divided by the FTE of classroom teachers: 18

13. Show the attendance patterns of teachers and students as a percentage. The student dropout rate is defined by the state. The student drop-off rate is the difference between the number of entering students and the number of exiting students from the same cohort. (From the same cohort, subtract the number of exiting students from the number of entering students; divide that number by the number of entering students; multiply by 100 to get the percentage drop-off rate.) Briefly explain in 100 words or fewer any major discrepancy between the dropout rate and the drop-off rate. Only middle and high schools need to supply dropout rates and only high schools need to supply drop-off rates.

	2004-2005	2003-2004	2002-2003	2001-2002	2000-2001
Daily student attendance	92%	93%	93%	93%	92%
Daily teacher attendance	96%	95%	95%	96%	96%
Teacher turnover rate	0%	5%	9%	10%	10%
Student dropout rate (middle/high)	6%	6%	7%	8%	12%
Student drop-off rate (high school)	13%	19%	15%	16%	20%

14. (**High Schools Only**) Show what the students who graduated in Spring 2004 are doing as of September 2004.

Graduating class size	<u>152</u>
Enrolled in a 4-year college or university	<u>26%</u>
Enrolled in a community college	<u>26%</u>
Enrolled in vocational training	<u>8%</u>
Found employment	<u>23%</u>
Military service	<u>0%</u>
Other (travel, staying home, etc.)	<u>15%</u>
Unknown	<u>2%</u>
Total	100 %

PART III - SUMMARY

Located along the rapidly growing Georgia 400 corridor, Dawson County is a rural region that becomes more a part of the Atlanta metropolitan area with each passing day. The community is a hybrid of deeply rooted traditional values coupled with a newly emerging progressive mentality. There is only one high school in Dawson County. DCHS has grown from a single log building in 1878 to a 150,000 square foot contemporary structure valued at \$11 million dollars in 1997. Currently, we accommodate approximately 900 students, coming from all economical walks of life. 25% of the student body comes from economically disadvantaged families and receive free or reduced lunch while 10% is qualified as special education, and 3% of the population is minority. Though tradition is a staple at DCHS, it does not hinder our students. Watching students utilize today’s technological advances without forgetting their Appalachian culture is a most satisfying endeavor.

Dawson County High School continually strives to improve student services. The key factor in this process is the dedicated faculty. The total number of certified staff is 68, including 1 principal, 2 assistant principals, 1 technology/career education director, 2 counselors, 1 media specialist, and 61 teachers. 71% of the teachers hold a masters degree or higher; there is also 1 National Board Certified Teacher, 2 technical education state teachers/advisors of the year, 1 Fulbright Memorial Fund Scholar, and 1 Anne Sullivan Award recipient. The faculty is committed to integrating the newly developed Georgia Performance Standards into its curriculum. Teachers have attended workshops during the past two years to ensure that standards are correctly implemented. All department heads are engaged in a SREB training module entitled “Leading Assessment and Instruction” which complies with what the Georgia DOE is doing in terms of assessment training and adopting the new GPS standards. Faculty members also participate in weekly “Wednesday Workshops” during their planning periods for professional development activities including study and implementation of Eaker and Dufour’s Getting Started: Reculturing Schools to Become Professional Learning Communities. The faculty also participates in school study, improvement plans for SACS, and in monthly advisement activities.

The greatest priority of DCHS is that “no child is left behind.” We take great pains to meet the needs of all our students: gifted, college prep, career/technical, and special education. All students are given predictor tests during their sophomore year to gauge how well they will perform on the GHSGT, and, based on the outcome of the assessment, are placed in either mandatory tutorial sessions or in special classes taught throughout the regular school day. All junior students taking the GHSGT are placed in study sessions one week prior to the GHSGT. For the past three years, DCHS has offered a SAT prep

class during the school day and we have seen significant improvement in the scores of enrolled students. In fact, they consistently score at or above the state and national levels. Another tactic we employ is that of co-teaching. There are numerous co-teaching/inclusion classes offered throughout the day in all subject areas to ensure that all student needs are met.

Due to efforts to “leave no child behind,” we have received three accolades during the past school year. We received the Governor’s Platinum Award for gains in test scores, received recognition for high achievement on EOCTs, and were nominated as a Blue Ribbon School by the state superintendent. We will continue to recognize individual learning styles, promote opportunities to assume responsibility, and meet and exceed state and federal guidelines, and will continually evaluate, revise, remediate, and enrich the learning process to meet the needs of each and every student who enters DCHS.

PART IV – INDICATORS OF ACADEMIC SUCCESS

1. Meaning of the school’s assessment results in English/language arts and mathematics:

State assessments for Georgia high schools include the Georgia High School Graduation Tests (GHSGT) in English/language arts, math, science, and social studies; the Georgia High School Writing Test (GHSWT); and the End-of-Course Tests (EOCT) in eight content areas. The EOCT are criterion-referenced tests which assess the statewide curriculum of these specified high school courses to insure that high academic standards are met. Grades on these tests are reported as percentages and constitute 15% of a student’s final grade in the course, and the student’s final grade must be at or above 70 to earn course credit. The graduation tests are criterion-referenced tests which are administered in grade eleven for graduation purposes. Each student must achieve a scaled score of 500 or above to pass each test in order to earn a high school diploma.

For comparison purposes, GHSGT results are reported as percent of students passing for all first-time examinees and for regular program, first-time examinees. Scores are also disaggregated via special education, gender, ethnic, limited English proficient, Section 504, Title I, and migrant subgroups. Upon examination of DCHS’ scores in applicable subgroups, the general trend of the previous five years is continual improvement in the subgroups. An occasional dip in scores can be seen in both English/language arts and math when each year from spring ’01 through spring ’05 is examined; however, percentages show an increase when comparing spring ’01 scores to spring ’05 scores. In English/language arts; the “All” subgroup’s percentage increased from 96% to 100%, and the “white” subgroup’s percentage increased identically from 96% to 100%. For the same two years, the “All” subgroup’s math percentage increased from 92% to 97%; and the “White” subgroup’s percentage rose from 91% to 97%.

Due to the inevitable ability differences among students in any classroom, it can be a difficult task to maintain a straight line of increasing achievement year after year, unless scores/results begin at the bottom of the scale (where DCHS scores did not begin). An examination of the GHSGT English/language arts results from the spring of 2001 through the spring of 2005 reveals an increase from 97% passing for all eleventh-grade, first-time examinees to 100% percent passing. Likewise, the math achievement for the same category of examinees during the same five-year period rose from 92% passing to 98% passing. It is a significant testimony to the quality of the school when scores begin at such high percentages and continue to rise to perfect and near-perfect scores.

During the past three years in which AYP has been measured under Georgia’s school accountability

standards, DCHS has met that challenge on the basis of the same GHGST results. According to federal law, the state of Georgia has determined the percent of students in each of the two content areas whose scores must meet or exceed the state standard in order to satisfy AYP requirements. The percent is calculated by combining the percent of students whose scores are “proficient” (meet the standard) with the students’ scores which are “advanced” (exceed the standard). As is typical, disparity in subgroups’ scores exist. An examination of the results of the applicable subgroups reveals the same positive trend in AYP data as evidenced in GHSGT data. In math, the economically disadvantaged subgroup English/language arts percent passing increased from 95% IN ’02-’03 to 97% in ’04-’05. Similarly, SWD percentages increased from 90% to 100% during the same three years. In math, a decrease from 90% passing to 74% in the economically disadvantaged subgroup occurred while SWD percentages held at 90%.

As for disparity among subgroups, research consistently shows that SES is a strong factor of student achievement; and SWD students typically perform below grade level usually due to their particular exceptionalities. Nothing unique exists here to cause disparity.

Note: Additional information on DCHS’ state assessment results can be found at <http://www.doe.k12.ga.us>.

2. How the school uses assessment data to understand and improve student and school performance:

Many of the gains made in recent years at Dawson County High School can be attributed to teachers utilizing data to refine what is being taught in the classroom, design new courses where needed, provide remediation and enrichment opportunities, and place students in appropriate level classes.

During the 2003-04 school year, all sophomores took the Georgia High School Predictor Test in science and social studies. Based on these results, study skills classes were created to assist students who were borderline or predicted to fail the GHSGT in either of these subject areas. The courses are taught during the regular school day by teachers certified in social studies and science. Seniors who have not yet passed these two sections are placed in the study skills classes in the fall. Students who cannot get into one of the scheduled study skills classes have the option of leaving their elective classes during the last 30 minutes for extra tutoring with science teachers who have planning.

The Summary of Answers from the PSAT has provided a valuable tool in placing students in appropriate level classes. The “AP Potential” list, based on PSAT data, is used each year in assisting students to make the best course choices during the registration process for the upcoming school year. Teachers, as advisors, are trained to assist students in examining these scores and discuss areas of defined weaknesses and possible solutions.

Teachers and the administrative team evaluate the data received from End-of-Course Test (EOCT) scores each semester. Scores are compared across the department, by subject and category, and from year to year. The category scores have been particularly useful in defining areas of weakness in the curriculum, allowing teachers to revise classroom strategies and pacing as necessary.

3. How the school communicates student performance, including assessment data, to parents, students and the community:

Much of the current student assessment data is now a matter of public record and can be found at the Georgia DOE website. DCHS communicates with parents through letters accompanying individual score sheets that are mailed home for the GHSGT and EOCTs. An annual forum is held in January to

discuss PSAT and SAT scores. Information is presented on a regular basis to the Board of Education, the School Council, and in district-wide leadership team meetings. Parents receive progress reports every three weeks, in addition to phone calls and emails as necessary, concerning classroom performance. Parents also have 24-hour access to their child's academic performance through our web-based student information system, PowerSchool. The public is invited into the school often for fine arts performances, including band concerts, choral concerts, drama productions, and art shows. Students showcase their talents on the academic bowl team, electric vehicle competitions, various club competitions, and in the athletic arena. Successes are celebrated by posting such information on the marquee sign and on "Future Vision", a kiosk-style slide show that runs on a large screen in the school's commons area from lunch until the end of the day.

4. How the school has shared and will continue to share its successes with other schools:

Success at Dawson County High School has been shared in a number of ways. Our teachers have made presentations at our state Tech Prep conference and at state and national science conferences. Our school was named a "Platinum School" by GADOE for its success in improving test scores in the 2005 school year. This accomplishment was shared through state-wide announcements. Communication of opportunities and information to students is crucial and a number of strategies are used including an up-to-date school website with links to school activities, schedules and information. A large screen presentation, known as "FutureVision" is updated each day, delivered during the students' lunch, showing examples of student, school and staff success, scholarship and career opportunities and other school related information. This presentation greets parents and visitors each day. As teachers attend state-workshops, they share their effective practices with other teachers. Our agriculture education teacher was recognized by his professional organization as the state agriculture teacher of the year. School leadership members attend leadership meetings such as GASSP, GAEL, HSTW, etc. and share with leadership members from other schools. Locally, various advisory groups meet and share student successes. During each weekly faculty meeting, staff members are recognized for their extra efforts on behalf of our students. School and system level staff frequently share DCHS data, strategies, and successes at regional meetings, conferences, and training events hosted by the area's regional service agency (RESA).

Dawson County has been identified as a model county for implementing change and regularly hosts visiting systems in order to assist in common objectives and planning for students with disabilities. The Dawson County High School staff members serve on statewide committees for both the Department of Education and the Department of Human Resources. Two are also on the Governor's panel for Developmental Disabilities/Transition. The district has hosted Transition Fairs for the Northeast Georgia region coordinating services for families with state and private agencies. Staff have presented at state and national conferences for topics in special education and school counseling presenting the innovative programs that have resulted in success for students with disabilities.

One high school science teacher conducts a series of workshops for middle and elementary level teachers. This effort has helped teachers in earlier grades become more comfortable with teaching science material, and it has opened up lines of communication among all levels of teachers.

PART V – CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION

1. How students are engaged with significant content based on high standards:

DCHS is a comprehensive high school offering program options whether students have special needs, plan to go directly into the work force, or desire to go to a technical college, small community college, or a large university with advanced degree offerings. The school is on a 4x4 block schedule, allowing students to take four classes each semester. All courses are derived from the Georgia Quality Core Curriculum or from the Georgia Performance Standards. The high school has a close relationship with local colleges and technical schools and students who are qualified for Joint Enrollment/Dual Enrollment may take courses at either Gainesville College or North Georgia College and State University. This allows students to earn credits at both the high school and college levels. Teachers at DCHS have been working closely with Lanier Technical Institute to continue the implementation of the widely acclaimed Tech Prep process. Currently, the Lanier Tech faculty teach courses in Certified Nursing Assistance, and Graphic Arts on the DCHS campus.

The academic program at DCHS has increased in the number of courses offered at the Advanced Placement and Honors level over the past five years. Honors and AP classes are available in all four core academic areas in each grade level. Remedial level courses are also available in math and language arts. Regardless of level of placement, teachers work diligently to help students succeed. Teachers have adopted a “failure is not an option” policy, having students redo work that is not of the quality expected or retake tests after additional tutoring has been received. Currently three levels of foreign language, Spanish, are available. Recently, a group of Spanish students spent time in a high school in Mexico. There are plans in place for this group of students to return for a more extensive study during the summer months. Students may also take classes in Latin, and other foreign languages, on-line during the day.

The fine arts department is one of the most rapidly growing departments in the school. The drama department can boast a growth from 60 students in 2003 to its current enrollment of 160 students. The band is growing at a steady pace, as well. Three years ago, DCHS was fortunate to add a full-time band director’s position. Since that time courses in music appreciation, guitar, and percussion ensemble have enriched the curriculum. Students actually compete to get into the visual arts program. The art teacher has put together a program that rivals some of the top art magnet schools in the state, offering beginning to advanced courses in painting, drawing, sculpture, and photography. Several students have received scholarships to art schools across the state. The choral department has grown to over 185 students, with one period throughout the year dedicated to the “audition only” choir. This group, in particular, has competed in and won several different state and national competitions. The fine arts program is also very pleased that they can serve students of all ability levels. Visually impaired students, those with diseases such as Muscular Dystrophy and Cystic Fibrosis, and those with mild to severe learning disabilities have found a way to showcase their talents through the fine arts department at DCHS.

The Career Technology Education Program offers courses in Agriculture, Automotive Service Technology, Business and Information Technology, Construction Technology, Family and Consumer Sciences, Technology Education, and Health Care Science Technology. Related Vocational Instruction and Project Success serve students with specific needs. Work-based learning opportunities, internships, and Youth Apprenticeships offer juniors and seniors jobsite experience using information learned from the career/technology course work.

2. English Curriculum:

At Dawson County High School, the English language department has made a conscious choice to use literature to teach a variety of English language skills, from grammar and writing to literary analysis. The 9th and 10th grade curriculum utilizes the study of World Literature to teach MLA writing style, grammar, business communication, verbal communication, research, and vocabulary. The 11th grade curriculum uses American Literature to continue the development of these skills. On the 12th grade level, British literature provides the base to fine-tune these skills before graduation. Every grade level puts an emphasis on applying skills learned in literature to a wide range of career and post-secondary educational endeavors. In addition to these basic skills, each grade level covers 2 novels minimum, completes a research paper, and employs vocabulary emphasizing Greek and Latin roots.

The department supplements this base curriculum by offering a variety of class levels and electives. Honors level core courses are offered in the ninth, tenth and eleventh grades, providing a higher standard of rigor for students looking to increase their skills in preparation for greater challenges after graduation. In the 12th grade, students have the option of taking an AP course for college credit instead of the Honors level class. In order to bolster the core academic offerings, DCHS extends opportunities to students to participate in classes in yearbook, Latin II (in a virtual environment), and SAT preparation. Additionally, beginning next year, students will be able to work on a school newspaper as an elective.

To assist students with difficulties in the core English class, all English staff members offer different stages of support. Every teacher offers tutoring appointments when needed. Teachers also provide CDs/audiocassettes of readings and adapted readers to aid in comprehension. In classes with many struggling readers, the English department teams with the Special Education department in the form of co-teachers. This co-teaching allows students to receive more one-on-one instruction, and it also reduces the overall teacher/student ratio, as two teachers are present instead of just one. As a final support, computers are used in all classes to help students conduct research and write.

As proof of the success of the program, the department has achieved a 100% pass rate on the Georgia High School Graduation Test, earned a Platinum Award from the state government, and achieved a 97% pass rate on the Georgia High School Writing Test. The department will continue to improve as new state-mandated Georgia performance standards focus the assessment and unit design of each course. Teachers are currently meeting weekly or monthly in order to complete adoption of these new standards.

3. Social Studies Curriculum:

The social studies department at DCHS is on the forefront of making changes to better suit the needs of students. Well before they are required to teach “performance” standards, this group of teachers is already finding innovative ways to keep students involved and meet individual needs. The instructional use of technology is evident in all of the social studies classrooms. PowerPoint presentations created by students are commonplace, including subject matter such as human rights and world religion. Web quests are also popular among the student body. Students work cooperatively to create timelines, dioramas, political cartoons and dramatizations. Students also lead class discussions and conduct independent research. Citizenship classes hold mock legislative meetings. They are divided into the house and senate, according to current percentages in current congress. The students introduce bills, and carry out the proceedings to make the bill a law. Economics classes play the web-based stock market game. They also must create a product, present it to an “ad agency”, and create and video a commercial to sell the product. Teachers take the time on a daily basis to discuss current events with the students, and often relate when is going on in today’s world to historical events. Co-teaching occurs throughout the grade levels to provide extra assistance for those students who require it.

Teachers have analyzed test data from the EOCT and the GHSGT and made curriculum changes as needed. For example, economics was changed from a 9-week course to a semester course to allow for more in-depth studies. The priorities given to certain areas of the curriculum have changed due to careful analysis of test scores and discussion of who is teaching what and when. Teachers meet on a regular basis to collaborate and discuss curriculum to ensure that repetition is kept to a minimum. They also discuss student performance with the guidance office to ensure that students are appropriately placed in advanced level classes. Several of the teachers use a "GHSGT question of the day" as a warm-up activity in their classrooms. The efforts of the department appear to be paying off in that DCHS test scores on the social studies section of the GHSGT increased by 16 percentage points over the previous school year. The department also saw a marked increase in the EOCT scores for economics this semester.

4. Different instructional methods the school uses to improve student learning:

Dawson County High School uses a number of different instructional methods to meet the varied needs of its students. Technology use in instruction is an important factor in providing effective communication and instruction. The DCHS campus is completely "networked" providing internet access to every area of our school through Ethernet connections as well as wireless connections. Every certified staff member is provided an Apple iBook that is used to provide a number of different services related to instruction. Teachers also use an internet accessed lesson plan system that publishes the daily and weekly lesson plans of all teachers, again providing student and parental access through the internet. All classrooms have at least one student computer providing internet access and Microsoft "Office" applications as well as subject specific software tools. Many classrooms have multiple student-designated computers. The DCHS campus has five computer labs for student use, including a "laptop lab" with wireless internet capability.

Teachers use a number of computer applications to provide many different instructional strategies for their student's varied styles of learning. Communication of opportunities and information to students is crucial and a number of strategies are used such as an up-to-date school website with links to school activities, schedules and information.

All teachers structure their courses around state standards, paying close attention to pacing while incorporating technology, cooperative groups, projects, games, etc. to give every student a chance to learn in a meaningful way. The science department has developed common rubrics for projects and differentiated instruction has been practiced more intensely. Opportunities are given to students to work with teachers after school, participating in remediation and retesting. Teachers use contextual learning strategies, relating knowledge to skill and performance. The art program offers two art shows each year, showcasing student efforts across the span of experience and talent. Each year the Construction Technology students build a house, directly applying skills and knowledge learned in the classroom. The house is then sold to provide funds for building a new house the next year. Software simulations are used in Business Education classes to give students experience in using knowledge to successfully run a business. Parent, business and community leaders provide input to instruction through advisory committees in order to provide the most effective instructional strategies. All teachers participate in weekly staff development focusing on assessment and its' relationship to instruction.

5. The school's professional development program and its impact on improving student achievement:

The school's professional development program is comprehensive in nature providing training for administration, faculty, and staff. The professional development program focuses on goals for improving assessment, curriculum and instruction, while providing an environment encouraging teacher participation in professional learning communities. A shift has occurred over the past several years to on-site training

and problem-solving through professional collaboration among administration and faculty. The goal of having training become job-embedded is foremost in the school's vision for professional development.

To promote the vision of the school in becoming a true professional learning community, the entire faculty has participated in guided book studies and discussion including Professional Learning Communities at Work by Dr. Eaker and Dr. DuFour. The faculty benefits from having 71% with Masters Degrees or higher that they can draw from while working collaboratively.

Each year, a detailed needs assessment is provided to all faculty to determine professional development goals for the next school year. This year, the needs assessments indicated that best practices in assessment be given priority. To address these focus areas, the department heads have participated in intense training to enable them to provide on-site training to the entire faculty. The administration adjusted the scheduled planning times of teachers to ensure that time was available during the school day for training and discussion of assessment.

As the state of Georgia has adopted an internationally recognized curriculum (Georgia Performance Standards), the school has been actively involved in the training process and implementation of the new curriculum. There has been a change in paradigm from content standards to performance standards. To meet the challenge of this drastic shift, teachers have been actively involved in unpacking standards, determining methods by which students will be assessed, and designing units and lessons.

Special emphasis has been given to providing students with an accelerated, enriched curriculum. To accomplish this desire, teachers have participated in gifted endorsement and Advanced Placement training. As a result of this training initiative, the school is now able to provide Advanced Placement through six courses covering each of the four academic areas. Due to the number of teachers who have received or are in the process of receiving the gifted endorsement, the school is able to provide an Honors-Level curriculum in every grade level and in each of the four academic areas. In addition, by the end of the 2005-2006 school year, all teachers will be certified as being proficient in instructional technology.

PART VII - ASSESSMENT RESULTS

GEORGIA HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATION TEST

Subject English/LA
Grade 11

	2004-2005	2003-2004	2002-2003	2001-2002	2000-2001
Testing month	March				
SCHOOL SCORES*					
% At or Above Meets State Standards*	100%	93%	96%	97%	97%
% At Exceeds State Standards*	75%	64%	65%	66%	60%
Number of students tested	165	137	153	144	118
Percent of total students tested	97%	98%	97%	*	*
Number of students alternatively assessed	5	3	4	*	*
Percent of students alternatively assessed	3%	2%	3%	*	*
SUBGROUP SCORES					
1. <u>Female</u> (specify subgroup)					
% At or Above Meets State Standards	100%	96%	98%	96%	98%
% At Exceeds State Standards	76%	65%	71%	70%	59%
Number of students tested	94	72	86	73	61
2. <u>Male</u> (specify subgroup)					
% At or Above Meets State Standards	100%	90%	94%	96%	94%
% At Exceeds State Standards	67%	55%	49%	56%	58%
Number of students tested	82	80	85	82	67
3. <u>Economically Disadvantaged</u>					
% At or Above Meets State Standards	37%	42%	52%	*	*
% At Exceeds State Standards	60%	42%	43%	*	*
Number of Students Tested	35	19	21	*	*
4. <u>Students with Disabilities</u>					
% At or Above Meets State Standards	60%	33%	90%	*	*
% Exceeds State Standards	40%	8%	0%	*	*
Number of Students Tested	10	12	10	*	*

*Denotes further data not available from state department

GEORGIA HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATION TEST

Subject Math
Grade 11

	2004-2005	2003-2004	2002-2003	2001-2002	2000-2001
Testing month	March				
SCHOOL SCORES*					
% At or Above Meets State Standards*	98%	93%	93%	93%	92%
% At Exceeds State Standards*	61%	53%	45%	42%	41%
Number of students tested	179	152	175	156	130
Percent of total students tested	97%	98%	98%	*	*
Number of students alternatively assessed	5	3	4	*	*
Percent of students alternatively assessed	3%	2%	2%	*	*
SUBGROUP SCORES					
1. <u>Female</u> (specify subgroup)					
% At or Above Meets State Standards	96%	94%	92%	92%	93%
% At Exceeds State Standards	53%	55%	40%	39%	27%
Number of students tested	96	71	87	74	62
2. <u>Male</u> (specify subgroup)					
% At or Above Meets State Standards	98%	89%	90%	93%	90%
% At Exceeds State Standards	68%	42%	41%	39%	46%
Number of students tested	83	81	88	82	68
3. <u>Economically Disadvantaged</u>					
% At or Above Meets State Standards	23%	26%	81%	*	*
% At Exceeds State Standards	51%	32%	10%	*	*
Number of students tested	35	19	21	*	*
4. <u>Students with Disabilities</u>					
% At or Above Meets State Standards	40%	25%	90%	*	*
% At Exceeds State Standards	50%	8%	0%	*	*
Number of students tested	10	12	10	*	*

*Denotes further data not available from state department

GEORGIA HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATION TEST

Subject Social Studies

Grade 11

	2004-2005	2003-2004	2002-2003	2001-2002	2000-2001
Testing month	March				
SCHOOL SCORES*					
% At or Above Meets State Standards*	92%	76%	86%	86%	76%
% At Exceeds State Standards*	50%	34%	33%	21%	24%
Number of students tested	182	152	178	168	130
Percent of total students tested					
Number of students alternatively assessed					
Percent of students alternatively assessed					
SUBGROUP SCORES*					
1. <u>Female</u> (specify subgroup)					
% At or Above Meets State Standards	88%	73%	83%	81%	73%
% At Exceeds State Standards	40%	24%	32%	17%	16%
Number of students tested	99	71	90	83	63
2. <u>Male</u> (specify subgroup)					
% At or Above Meets State Standards	93%	77%	82%	84%	76%
% At Exceeds State Standards	54%	36%	26%	22%	27%
Number of students tested	83	81	88	85	67

*Further subgroup scores are not reported for this subject area.

GEORGIA HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATION TEST

Subject Science

Grade 11

	2004-2005	2003-2004	2002-2003	2001-2002	2000-2001
Testing month	March				
SCHOOL SCORES*					
% At or Above Meets State Standards*	77%	67%	70%	71%	60%
% At Exceeds State Standards*	17%	10%	15%	4%	3%
Number of students tested	200	163	180	165	141
Percent of total students tested					
Number of students alternatively assessed					
Percent of students alternatively assessed					
SUBGROUP SCORES*					
1. <u>Female</u> (specify subgroup)					
% At or Above Meets State Standards	67%	56%	65%	62%	52%
% At Exceeds State Standards	11%	9%	14%	3%	1%
Number of students tested	110	78	89	80	71
2. <u>Male</u> (specify subgroup)					
% At or Above Meets State Standards	76%	68%	66%	74%	60%
% At Exceeds State Standards	20%	17%	13%	5%	4%
Number of students tested	90	85	91	85	70

*Further subgroup scores are not reported for this subject area.

GEORGIA HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATION TEST

Subject Writing

Grade 11

	2004-2005	2003-2004	2002-2003	2001-2002	2000-2001
Testing month					
SCHOOL SCORES*					
% At or Above Meets State Standards*	96%	92%	94%	88%	96%
% At Exceeds State Standards*					
Number of students tested	177	128	167	145	124
Percent of total students tested					
Number of students alternatively assessed					
Percent of students alternatively assessed					
SUBGROUP SCORES*					
1. _____ (specify subgroup)					
% At or Above Meets State Standards					
% At Exceeds State Standards					
Number of students tested					
2. _____ (specify subgroup)					
% At or Above Meets State Standards					
% At Exceeds State Standards					
Number of students tested					

*Further subgroup scores are not reported for this subject area.