

Gulf Shores City Schools

Programmatic changes reported in the stakeholder-supplied overview

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Below are some programmatic changes we have made as a city school system. This list is not comprehensive but provides a general overview.

The following information might be helpful in clarifying our expenditures:

We have a total of 15 locally funded teachers across the district.

- The central office provides a total of \$470,000 (local funds) annually to the schools to purchase equipment, supplies, and professional development for academics, the arts, STEAM, and athletics.
- Please note that grant funding doesn't always cover the entire cost of a program. Also, some grants only provide start-up costs, and then other funding sources are needed to sustain the program. Some grants are provided by the Alabama State Department of Education; some are federally funded, and others are privately funded.

GSCS Programs

Academics

No Additional Funds Required

- Offer free classes in the summer for students who want more space in their schedule the following year

Funded Primarily by Grants

- Created Science by the Shore (Place-based science program for PreK-12)
- Created financial literacy courses (grades 6-12)
- Provide iPads with keyboards for grades PreK-8
- Provide MacBooks for grades 9-12
- Created Coastal Connections (Place-based social studies program for PreK-12)
- Expanded PreK from two classes to five classes
- Expanded afterschool and summer programs for grades PreK-8
- Created a virtual academy for grades K-12 that includes a “blended” option so students can take some classes in person and online.
- Added transitional opportunities for exceptional education students

Funded by State

- Purchased new textbooks for grades K-12 that align across all schools

Additional Educators Funded by State or Local Revenues

- Added face-to-face Spanish classes for students in grades PreK-8
- Added a math coach for grades PreK-5
- Added an instructional coach for grades 6-8
- Added an English Language Learner (ELL) teacher to increase frequency of ELL classes

Career and Technical Education

- Developed a PreK-12 vertical alignment of career academies so that students are introduced to career fields in elementary school through a variety of instructional experiences, field trips, and courses. These opportunities continue at a deeper level throughout middle and high school. Many of these programs operate in specialty labs that have been upgraded with industry-standard equipment.

No Additional Funds Required

- Added more hands-on experiences and shadowing opportunities for Bio-Medical Program
- Expanded Culinary Arts and Hospitality & Tourism programs by partnering with guest chefs, hosting an annual Farm to Table Dinner, and catering events
- Expanded internship opportunities and business partnerships for most career academies

Funded by Grants

- Enhanced Agrisciences program by improving greenhouse, adding a hydroponics system, and growing herbs/vegetables for the cafeteria as well as trees for the city
- Expanded JROTC program
- Created lifeguard certification program
- Created scuba diving certification program
- Added summer career academy programs that include credit bearing courses and paid internships

Additional Educators Funded by State or Local Revenues

- Sports Medicine
- Aviation- includes flight instruction and aircraft construction and maintenance
- Construction/Heavy Equipment Operator
- STEAM-includes engineering, makerspace, 3D printing, laser printing, etc.
- Computer science/Robotics/Drone Certification Program

College Preparatory Programs

No Additional Funds Required

- Began hosting college admissions/essay writing workshops
- Added more Advanced Placement classes
- Created Applied Design Program (advanced academics pathway)
- Added more advanced course opportunities (grades 6-12)
- Host an annual Gulf Shores college and career fair for students in grades 8-12
- Expanded dual enrollment by partnering with Alabama, Auburn, and the University of South Alabama in addition to Coastal Community College

Funded by Grants

- Added afterschool, summer, and during the school day ACT prep through Huntington Learning Center
- Created National Merit Scholars prep program (Grades 7-11)
- Expanded A+ College Ready Program
- Added Saturday study sessions/mock exams for AP
- Provide visa gift cards as incentives for students and their teachers for qualifying scores on AP exams (partially funded by grant and partially funded by local resources)
- Offer annual guided college bus tours

Additional Educators Funded by State or Local Revenues

- ACT Prep
- College Advisor (part-time)

The Arts

- The new Gulf Shores High School will have a performing arts facility that includes an auditorium with a fly tower, a scene shop, a costume shop, a green room, etc. It will also have two art rooms with a kiln and an outdoor courtyard specifically for art instruction and shows. The choir room, piano lab, and band room have large and small practice areas as well as music and instrument storage spaces. The Music Production Studio has a stage and recording booth. The primary courtyard of the school has an outdoor stage for concerts and performances.

No Additional Funds Required

- Increased frequency of PreK-5 art classes
- Increased frequency of PreK-5 music classes
- Added musical theatre (PreK-12)
- Added introduction to marching band (Grade 5)

Funded by Grants

- Purchased new uniforms and instruments for band
- Created Music Production course (Grades 6-12) and Music Production Lab with sound booths and a stage
- Added specialty instructors for band (Grades 6-12)
- Added introduction to classical music for PreK-12 (visiting musicians series)
- Added a Steel Drum Program

Additional Educators Funded by State or Local Revenues

- Theatre (Grades 6-12)
- Choir (Grades 6-12)
- Video Production (Grades 9-12)

Wellness & Character Education

No Additional Funds Required

- Established active Nutrition & Wellness committee to encourage healthy eating and physical activity. This committee has implemented Eat the Harvest, Eat the Rainbow, quarterly “tastings” and recipes, healthy snack guidelines, physical activity challenges, and promoted sourcing local ingredients for the cafeteria.
- Created the Dolphin Walk (outdoor walking trail) to encourage physical activity.
- Increased frequency of AltaPointe school-based therapy
- Established monthly bike train
- Implemented small group behavior and emotional regulation counseling sessions
- Hired a clinical psychologist to provide school-based therapy for students and staff
- Provide monthly mental wellness education sessions for parents
- Expanded Leader in Me (PreK-5)
- Added Ron Clark Academy House System (Grades 6-8)
- Expanded Peer Helpers (Grades PreK-12)

- Created Gulf Shores Gives Back (A Community-Wide Day of Service, Grades PreK-12)
- Increased opportunities for community leaders to serve as guest speakers
- Created Make Waves of Kindness week
- Added Kids Hope Mentoring Program (Grades PreK-8)

Funded by Grants

- Purchased fleet of bikes to encourage biking field trips, placed-based learning, and interdisciplinary education (Grades PreK-12)
- Purchased fleet of kayaks and sailboats to encourage active field trips, placed-based learning, and interdisciplinary education (Grades 6-12)
- Developed daily walking school bus

Additional Educators Funded by State and Local Revenues

- Board Certified Behavior Analyst
- Clinical Psychologist to serve as Mental Health Coordinator
- Nutritionist (Part-Time)

Athletics

No Additional Funds Required

- Sports psychology education
- Nutrition education for athletes
- Added Exceptional Education Cheer Program

Additional Educators Funded by State and Local Revenues

- Athletic Director
- Specialty Coaches

Teacher and Staff Benefits

- Free membership at city gym if average annual attendance is twice per week
- Clinical Psychologist on staff for mental wellness consultation and therapy
- Part-Time nutritionist on staff for nutrition consultation and education
- Quarterly district-wide health/physical activity challenges
- Salary schedule above state requirements
- Bereavement Leave
- Expanded Maternity/Paternity Leave
- The Dolphin Foundation for Education and Arts funds the cost of the National Board Teacher Certification program for GSCS teachers. When GSCS opened in 2019, we had one National Board Certified teacher; today we have 24 NBCTs. Research shows that students taught by NBCTs learn more than students taught by non-NBCTs. All NBCTs receive an annual \$10,000 supplement (state and local funding).