



Cherokee County School District (CCSD) is recognized as one of the top school districts in Georgia; and its students, schools and staff routinely receive state and national recognition for programs and performance. While the majority of students (90%) attend a neighborhood school, there are many opportunities for school choice in Cherokee County.

School Reassignment within CCSD

Parents in Cherokee County can apply for school reassignment between February 1 and March 1 each year. Information is posted on the CCSD website February 1 of each year, with all necessary documents and the list of schools with space available to accommodate additional students. Transportation is not provided for students who receive a reassignment. Parents should be aware that students at the high school level may lose eligibility under Georgia High School Association rules for Varsity-level athletics under this type of transfer.

Cherokee Academies

CCSD opened four STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics) Academies and two Fine Arts Academies at elementary schools across the County in 2012. Students at these schools have a more integrated curriculum focused on either STEM or Fine Arts; and all six academies are open to reassignment. **The next registration process for these Academies will occur March 15-31.** Transportation to the Academies is available to most students via a hub system. One of the STEM Academies, Clark Creek ES, earned State STEM Certification in 2015, the first school in Cherokee County (and the 11th elementary school in Georgia) to achieve this designation.



High School Options

While the majority of high school students complete diploma requirements in a traditional setting, CCSD offers multiple avenues and settings to earn credit toward graduation:

- **Polaris Evening Program**– students attend class on campus in the evening hours.
- **ACE Academy**– an alternative learning environment for middle and high school students to work at their own pace. ACE operates during regular school hours; transportation is provided.
- **Virtual Courses**– students can take courses for initial credit and credit recovery online. CCSD high school students can take advantage of the Georgia Virtual School (GaVS) and our local APEX Learning Program. In 2014-15, more than 3,500 courses were successfully completed by CCSD high school students in these two programs.
- **Move On When Ready (MOWR)**– Qualified high school students can earn high school and college credit simultaneously on a college campus through the Move On When Ready dual-credit program. [MOWR website](#)

Consult your child's school counseling office for more information on any of these options.

Other Options

- **Home School:** the State Department of Education now handles Home School enrollment and related paperwork. For information, please see the DOE website at <http://www.gadoe.org/Curriculum-Instruction-and-Assessment/Pages/Home-Schools.aspx>
- **Private School:** there are a number of private schools located in and near Cherokee County.
- **Charter School:** Cherokee Charter Academy is the only charter school with a campus in Cherokee County; there are several statewide virtual charter schools, as well. Cherokee Charter Academy was approved by the Georgia Charter School Commission and is not affiliated with CCSD.

School Choice: What Factors Should Parents Consider?

As parents know, every child is different. What works for one student may not work for another, even within one family.

Parents consider many factors when making a decision about school placement for their child. The priority for one child may be challenging academics; for another child, the learning environment may take precedence.

Some parents seek faith-based instruction in a private school setting. Some seek a specific emphasis within the curriculum to focus on their child's talents or interests. Transportation to and from home may be an essential consideration for some children, due to work and family schedules or extra

-curricular activities. Some parents seek a more diverse student body, reflective of the community where they live, realizing that their children must learn to function in a global society with a range of cultures and backgrounds.

No matter what a parent's decision in regard to school choice, the Cherokee County School District respects that parents make the ultimate decision for their child.

If school choice leads a family to consider options outside of CCSD, parents are welcome to re-enroll their child in the Cherokee County School District at any time.

How Do Cherokee County Schools Perform?

Cherokee County Schools consistently perform above State and National averages on all assessments. *Note... CCSD assessment data for all schools is posted on the CCSD website for the public to review and is updated throughout the year: <http://cherokeek12.net/open-ccsd/student-assessment-reports/>*

2016 ACT AVERAGE SCORES

- CCSD 23.1
- GEORGIA 21.1
- NATION 20.8

- Four-year graduation rate: 85%
- Five-year graduation rate: 89%
- HOPE eligible graduates: 56%
- Advanced Placement (AP) pass rate: 70%
- CCSD graduates in college remedial classes: 10%

2016 SAT AVERAGE SCORES

- CCSD 1577
- GEORGIA 1459
- NATION 1484

CCSD's district average SAT and ACT scores routinely rank it as one of the Top 5 school districts in GA

Do Private Schools Perform Better?

Private schools are not subject to transparency or open records requirements; so, it is up to the individual school whether it will release test results or other information. As a consumer, it is up to you to ask for comparative data and then use that information to determine if the school is a good fit for your child.

Do Charter Schools Perform Better?

Charter schools were conceived as incubators of innovation, envisioned as small schools where teachers were freed from bureaucratic restraints and empowered to utilize various teaching methods and techniques to increase student achievement. The best practices gleaned from charter schools were then intended to be introduced to traditional public schools so all students could benefit.

While the scope and purpose of charter schools has shifted now to being primarily a vehicle of school choice and/or privatization, the State still requires that charter schools be held accountable for increasing academic achievement. Results for charter schools both in Georgia and across the Nation have been mixed in this regard, with little concrete evidence that students are consistently performing better in charter schools. Start-up charter schools in Georgia continue to lag behind traditional public schools (source: Georgia Charter Schools Division 2015-16 Annual Report).

While knowing the state and national outlook is helpful, what can Cherokee County families determine? In 2013, the State of Georgia premiered its first index score of school performance, called the College and Career Readiness Performance Index (CCRPI), which is intended to be a more comprehensive measure of student achievement and progress than a mere set of test scores. Using the CCRPI for 2016, Cherokee Charter Academy (a State Commission-approved start-up charter school) ranked 14th among CCSD's 24 elementary schools and below six of seven CCSD middle schools. CCA's one year of high school performance in 2013-14 ranked last behind all six CCSD high schools. The overall score for CCSD of 81.6 exceeded the overall score for Cherokee Charter Academy, which was 77.6. The Georgia average overall score is 73.6.

Measuring CCA against the CCSD countywide average is not the most accurate comparison because of the significant difference in student demographics. CCA has a much smaller percentage of low-income families, few English Learner (EL) students, and the ratio of students with disabilities is lower at CCA. Using free and reduced lunch eligibility and comparing CCA to CCSD schools more similar in demographics reveals a wider gap in achievement between the charter school and similar traditional public schools.

| CCRPI | 2016 SCORE |
|--------------------------|------------|
| CCSD DISTRICT OVERALL | 81.6 |
| CHEROKEE CHARTER OVERALL | 77.6 |
| GEORGIA AVERAGE OVERALL | 73.6 |

| ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS (CCSD schools with close demographic comparison to Cherokee Charter Academy) | 2016 CCRPI SCORE | 2016 FREE/REDUCED LUNCH % |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------|---------------------------|
| SIXES ES | 83.3 | 12.81% |
| HICKORY FLAT ES | 88.4 | 12.95% |
| MOUNTAIN ROAD ES | 83.3 | 18.58% |
| AVERY ES | 87.1 | 19.53% |
| CHEROKEE CHARTER | 78.4 | 21.57% |
| ARNOLD MILL ES | 77.5 | 22.25% |
| LIBERTY ES | 81.3 | 23.34% |
| KNOX ES | 78.3 | 28.35% |
| INDIAN KNOLL ES | 78.8 | 31.97% |

| MIDDLE SCHOOL | 2016 CCRPI SCORE | 2016 FREE/REDUCED LUNCH % |
|------------------|------------------|---------------------------|
| FREEDOM MS | 80.6 | 15.31% |
| CREEKLAND MS | 84.4 | 16.86% |
| CHEROKEE CHARTER | 75.1 | 21.57% |
| DEAN RUSK MS | 82.1 | 26.21% |
| BOOTH MS | 86.4 | 28.6% |

CCRPI scores for all 37 CCSD schools can be found on the DOE website at

<http://ccrpi.gadoe.org/2016/>

PERCENTAGE OF STUDENTS READING AT OR ABOVE STATE GRADE TARGET

| 2016 | LEXILE TARGET | CCSD | CCA |
|-----------|---------------|------|-----|
| 5TH GRADE | 850 | 75% | 73% |
| 8TH GRADE | 1050 | 84% | 78% |

STUDENT GROWTH PERCENTILES (SGP)

| 2016 | CCSD | CCA |
|----------------|------|-----|
| READING | 54 | 48 |
| MATH | 60 | 49 |
| SCIENCE | 55 | 51 |
| SOCIAL STUDIES | 58 | 58 |

SGPs describe the amount of growth a student has demonstrated in one year relative to academically-similar students from across the state. State average is 50.

MIDDLE SCHOOLS FOCUSED ON ACHIEVEMENT

CCSD middle schools help students get a jump on high school credits by offering challenging classes for high school credit to eligible 8th graders. These courses (13 in all for 2016-17) include fine arts classes (band, drama, chorus, visual arts and orchestra); physical science; foreign language (Spanish, French, Latin, German and Chinese); algebra I and accelerated algebra and geometry; business technology; and drafting.

Measuring Student Growth

Georgia State University completed a study of the performance of State Charter Schools in Georgia for 2014-15 for the Governor's Office of Student Achievement (GOSA) and the State Charter Commission, published in May of 2016. The report notes that comparing charter schools to traditional schools is problematic because the conscious decision to attend a charter school could reflect the attributes of the students and their families, rather than the school they attend, giving an upward bias to the performance of some state charter schools. In order to compensate for such complexities, researchers utilized multiple methods of comparison, including the new Georgia Student Growth Model and a Value-Added model for a more accurate assessment of the actual effect of the school on student achievement. These measures are meant to mitigate the impact of a student's demographic and socio-economic background on his/her achievement level. The full report can be reviewed on the Charter Commission website [here](#).

P. 73— Key Findings for Cherokee Charter Academy

"In general, Cherokee Charter Academy's performance is strong in middle school ELA and social studies, but its performance in elementary school math is weak relative to both the district and the state."

A report on findings for 2016 should be released this spring.

For more recent information on Cherokee Charter Academy's performance, contact the Georgia Charter School Commission.

<https://scsc.georgia.gov/contact-commission>

Teacher Quality and Retention

Charter schools nationally have struggled with high teacher turnover. CCSD's teacher turnover rate is 7% annually, versus a Statewide average of 11%. The average CCSD teacher has 14 years of experience, holds a masters degree and earns a salary of \$59,711. The average teacher at Cherokee Charter Academy has a bachelor's degree, five years of experience and earns \$41,868, with annual turnover rates exceeding 30%.

Source: GOSA and CSUSA

Student Funding

State charter schools do not receive local funds, but they do receive a double allotment of state funds that in many cases exceeds what their revenue from local property taxes would be. In FY2016, Cherokee Charter received \$8,712 per student in total funding, compared to CCSD's receipt of \$8,437. View details [here](#).

| 2016 PER STUDENT FUNDING | STATE | LOCAL | FEDERAL | TOTAL |
|--------------------------|---------|---------|---------|---------|
| CCSD | \$4,597 | \$3,509 | \$ 331 | \$8,437 |
| CHEROKEE CHARTER | \$8,020 | \$ 426 | \$ 266 | \$8,712 |

Source: DOE online revenue reports

CCSD Public Schools Offer:

- ◇ Award-winning, high-achieving schools that consistently win region, state and national recognition and awards
- ◇ AdvancED accreditation as a Quality School System
- ◇ School Choice within the District
- ◇ Elementary STEM and Fine Arts Academies
- ◇ Professionally staffed and trained School Nurses
- ◇ Counselors at every school
- ◇ Transportation to zoned school, transportation hubs for Academies
- ◇ Certified School Police Department
- ◇ High school credit courses for advanced 8th graders, along with middle school foreign language
- ◇ Middle school band and chorus, plus intramural sports, basketball teams and cheer programs
- ◇ Affordable lunches and After School programs
- ◇ Nationally recognized classroom technology integration and teacher training
- ◇ Kindergarten paraprofessionals
- ◇ School-based Pre-K at select sites
- ◇ Character Education at all grade levels
- ◇ Full range of high school athletics, fine arts and academic competition teams/programs
- ◇ 31 AP courses offered; 70% of CCSD students achieved AP scores in 2016 to qualify for college credit
- ◇ AP STEM and STEM Achievement high schools
- ◇ 9th Grade Academies for freshmen
- ◇ Evening and online high school credit options
- ◇ Elected School Board members for fiscal/policy transparency, accountability and local control; accessible open meetings of the Board
- ◇ School Councils and PTAs at every school for parent input and participation
- ◇ Comprehensive website for parents and community, including online access to School Board agenda materials, financial reports, budget documents and test score reports
- ◇ BYLD initiative allowing students to bring and use their own technology in class
- ◇ Access to 21st century technology in every CCSD school. . . including desktops, tablets, laptops and mobile devices, student response devices, interactive whiteboards, high speed and filtered internet access, research and curricular digital resources
- ◇ Opportunities for students to explore technology-enriched careers and/or fields of study including video broadcast, robotics, engineering, 3-D modeling, architecture and design, computer programming, as well as app and game development
- ◇ Teachers who have had and continue to have extensive and ongoing professional development experiences and opportunities that enrich student learning, innovation and creativity
- ◇ Family Portal for online access to student grades and attendance
- ◇ Student Portal for online access, e-mail accounts, free software programs and Cloud storage
- ◇ Online MealPay program to make payments, check lunch account balances and monitor purchases
- ◇ Active, open social media outlets for news and information, including Facebook and Twitter
- ◇ General Administration costs that rank among the lowest in Georgia
- ◇ Senior Project initiative, launched in 2006, to add rigor and relevance to the senior year, in preparation for college
- ◇ Nationally recognized Parental Awareness for Safe Schools program (PASS) and Parent Emergency Response Team (PERT) programs available in each school and Innovation Zone
- ◇ High school foreign language options include French, German, Mandarin Chinese, Spanish and Latin. Additional 5th-year offerings include Honors/AP French, Spanish and Latin. American Sign Language is an additional option in some schools.
- ◇ Average classroom teaching experience: 14 years; 68% of CCSD teachers have earned a master's, specialist or doctoral degree; annual teacher turnover of less than 7%.
- ◇ STEM elective for eighth-graders in robotics and design
- ◇ 8th grade STEM partnership with Georgia Institute of Technology