

# Wise County Public Schools



## Division Profile And Comprehensive Plan

Wise County Public School Division Profile  
Updated October 2017

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## **Wise County Public School Division Profile**

Wise County, in the heart of the beautiful Appalachian Mountains, is a rural community of approximately 39,228 residents in far Southwest Virginia. Wise County Public Schools consists of eleven schools, a Career Technical Center and an Alternative Education Center. Elementary schools also house the Pre-Kindergarten and Virginia Preschool Initiative programs. The school population is 95% white and 5% minority students. Fifty-one percent of the population is male with 49% being female. Wise County Schools has a total of 5,629 students and a free/reduced lunch rate of 62.7% as of May 2017.

The Wise County School Division is committed to excellence in education, equality of educational opportunity, and the recognition of each student's individuality. Inasmuch as students differ in their rate of physical, mental, emotional and social growth and vary in their needs and abilities, learning opportunities shall be provided that are consistent with personal development and potential. Programs shall emphasize diagnostic and prescriptive instruction, allowing an individual approach to each student's learning style and educational needs.

The purpose of the educational program is to introduce each student to a variety of interests and areas that offer exposure to the range of opportunities available in later years. These experiences produce the basis for further education and future employment. As students demonstrate increased maturity, they may assume more responsibility for the decisions regarding their education.

### **Comprehensive Plan**

The Comprehensive Plan for Wise County Schools establishes the orderly frame-work for the continuous growth of educational programs and services for the students. Wise County Schools will continue to provide educational leadership for Southwest Virginia through innovative educational programs. We are dedicated to providing the best possible learning opportunities for all students who attend our schools. We shall work to prepare our students to be successful in their post-secondary endeavors. The goals for the Wise County Public Schools are contained in the following:

#### **1. Mission, Vision and Goals**

It is critical to the success of our school division to develop and implement a clear and realistic mission, vision, and set of goals which will help guide the division's efforts, energy and focus. We must develop a clear understanding of our core values and what we hope to accomplish both short term and long term. We will create the necessary strategic plans to successfully achieve the goals established in this plan. The school division will wander aimlessly and fail to reach its potential without a clear mission, vision, and goals. Our mission, vision and goals will consist of the following.

- a. We shall discuss and evaluate the vision statement and goals of the school division on an annual basis and make necessary revisions.

- b. We shall ensure all stakeholders have an opportunity to comment and provide input on the vision statement and goals of the school division.
- c. We shall ensure the vision statement and goals of the school division are posted on the division website and in a prominent place in each school.
- d. We shall ensure an updated school division profile is posted on the division website.
- e. We shall ensure the office of the superintendent works collaboratively with the directors and principals to develop the academic goals and objectives for the school division on an annual basis and share that information with the school board.
- f. We shall maintain the support, assistance, and effectiveness of the central office to ensure we keep a strong focus on curriculum and instruction.
- g. We shall maintain effective communication lines to address potential issues and to respond to the needs of our buildings.
- h. We shall allocate, or reallocate, resources (materials, supplies, personnel, etc.) to wherever they are most needed to accomplish our primary goals and objectives.
- i. We shall monitor student demographic data to determine where resources are needed the most, and we shall provide our most at-risk schools with additional support.

## **2. Planning and Assessment**

School division must effectively develop and implement a wide range of initiatives, programs, strategies, and procedures to be successful. This type of success requires significant planning and organization. It also requires a considerable amount of data collection and analysis to ensure we have developed an effective instructional program. We must create a valid and reliable assessment system that will provide us with the necessary data and information to guide our efforts. To ensure we properly plan and assess student progress, we will do the following.

- a. We shall ensure all school board policies are current, relevant, and compliant with all federal, state, and local statutes.
- b. We shall ensure all school board policies facilitate the adoption, maintenance, and implementation of our vision statement and goals.
- c. We shall ensure the school board maintains adequate insurance and access to appropriate legal counsel.
- d. We shall ensure that all schools and the school division annually analyze student performance and utilize that data to drive our instructional program.
- e. We shall ensure that our efforts, time, resources, and energy are guided by the division's Comprehensive Plan and that we maintain a sharp focus on improving student achievement.
- f. We shall consistently model professionalism, respect, and a cooperative spirit on the school board and within the central office.
- g. We shall ensure that the school board is provided the necessary information and data to ensure it can make educated decisions on issues presented to them.
- h. We shall ensure the school board is kept updated on all current issues through the use of emails, individual monthly meetings prior to the regular board meetings, and a detailed monthly board packet.
- i. We shall ensure the school board has ample time, preparation, and access to factual information before decisions are made.

### 3. Instructional Leadership

The primary goal of each school division should be focused on improving student achievement and ensuring each child is reaching his or her potential. It is important to provide instructional leadership to ensure we have created the best possible educational opportunities for our students. We should be relentless in our efforts to maintain high academic standards and do everything within our power to ensure students are performing at a high level. We should create an atmosphere of collaboration, teamwork, and dedication to high professional standards to create an exemplary instructional program.

- a. We shall improve student achievement and this shall be our primary objective with the bulk of our time, energy and resources devoted to this initiative.
- b. We shall update, implement, and maintain common/benchmark assessments as needed.
- c. We shall ensure that the division implements adequate pacing guides and common/benchmark assessments each year.
- d. We shall protect instructional time within the buildings by limiting required divisional meetings, by creating a school calendar conducive to learning, and by emphasizing the necessity of teachers and administrators remaining in the classroom.
- e. We shall develop, implement, and evaluate effective educational programs for at-risk students in all schools.
- f. We shall focus a majority of our reading literacy efforts on ensuring our students are reading on grade level by the end of third grade.
- g. We shall ensure students with a deficit in reading will demonstrate more than one grade level growth in reading on an annual basis from grade 3 through grade 8.
- h. We shall have the vast majority of our students performing math on grade level by the end of fifth grade.
- i. We shall provide quality professional development opportunities to staff in order to help meet division goals in student achievement.
- j. We shall develop and maintain a detailed, appropriate, and effective academic/career plan for all students as they enter 7<sup>th</sup> grade.
- k. We shall ensure each student graduates from high school with a college-ready rating and/or industry certification in the career and technical field.
- l. We shall ensure our graduation rates exceed those prescribed by state and federal regulations.
- m. We shall ensure students have adequate access to dual enrollment opportunities.
- n. We shall develop a highly challenging and rigorous curriculum for our most academically competent students.
- o. We shall develop and implement an exemplary early childhood education program.
- p. We shall insure that student achievement goals are conveyed through division, school, and individual employee goals.

#### 4. Organizational Leadership and Safety

We must create a professional atmosphere and environment that is conducive to teaching and learning. The instructional day must be organized and free from interruptions and distractions. Our schools must be organized, clean, safe, and led in an effective manner to maximize student's opportunities to learn. It is our responsibility to create a learning and teaching environment which promotes success. To accomplish this mission, we shall adopt the following goals.

- a. We shall work with support personnel, teachers, building level administrators, central office staff and school board to develop a clear organizational support system and chain of command to ensure the success and safety of each school.
- b. We shall ensure that we maintain an open-door policy and that all stakeholders have an opportunity to share comments, suggestions, and recommendations for improvement.
- c. We shall provide the necessary staff development/training to ensure all personnel have access to the most current training, data, and research to ensure our students have the best possible educational opportunities and that our schools are safe.
- d. We shall ensure that the instructional day is a priority for all schools and that we limit interruptions, interference, or other issues that may prevent teachers from being successful in the classroom.
- e. We shall ensure that all schools are staffed with the appropriate personnel needed to maintain a high level of academic performance and we create a recruiting system that allows us to hire and retain the most effective educators.
- f. We shall require the development of crisis management plans from each of the individual schools on an annual basis.
- g. We shall meet regularly with local/state law enforcement officials to review, discuss and improve safety and crisis management plans within the schools.
- h. We shall continue to utilize the Blackboard-Connect system to keep our parents and community informed.
- i. We shall continue to utilize our county and school websites to keep our parents and communities informed.
- j. We shall continue to utilize Home Access Center to keep our parents informed.
- k. We shall investigate the mutual benefits of collaborating with other school divisions and county government to create educational, financial, curricular, and operational advantages.
- l. We will conduct and evaluate all safety and evacuation drills as required by the state and federal governments.
- m. We shall conduct an annual school safety inspection of each school within the division to identify any potential safety issues and develop an appropriate course of action to address those issues.
- n. We shall utilize technology to more effectively integrate various aspects of the division, which will help us to be more effective and efficient.
- o. We shall develop and implement an effective alternative school program for our high and middle schools to ensure that our most at-risk students are receiving

appropriate instruction and that the instructional program is not disturbed by inappropriate behavior.

## **5. Communication and Community Relationships**

All stakeholders play a critical and important role in our school divisions. To promote and encourage support of the school division, it is essential for us to develop and maintain effective communication with our staff, parents, students, and community members. This open, honest, and transparent communication will help us to create positive and productive relationships throughout our schools and communities. To create effective communication and to foster positive community relationships, we shall do the following.

- a. We shall utilize technology to improve parent communication and specifically target grades and attendance.
- b. We shall utilize the Parent Advisory Committee to solicit input from our parents on major initiatives and programs.
- c. We shall update all websites to ensure that they are current and that they provide the most relevant and necessary information.
- d. We shall continue to utilize the Blackboard-Connect system to keep our parents and community informed.
- e. We shall continue to utilize our county and school websites to keep our parents and community informed.
- f. We shall continue to utilize Home Access Center to keep our parents informed.
- g. We shall investigate the mutual benefits of collaborating with other school divisions and county government to create educational, financial, curricular, and operational advantages.
- h. We shall work with our Superintendent Advisory Committee to solicit input from our teachers on major initiatives and programs.
- i. We will maintain a transparent and open philosophy of conducting business to ensure our community is informed of any major projects, initiatives, or programs to help promote communication and trust.
- j. We shall maintain an open-door policy and strive to effectively communicate with all stakeholders within the school division and community.
- k. We shall utilize formal and informal means to communicate the goals, objectives, and new initiatives to our staff members and to the community at large.

## **6. Professionalism**

It is important that all staff members adopt and maintain high professional and personal standards. We should constantly strive to create an atmosphere of mutual trust, respect, and appreciation for others. We should understand that we hold an office of trust and that we serve the communities. We are held to a higher standard than most other professions and we should be conscientious in all actions. We should also model an example of a life-long learning and consistently engage in initiatives to improve ourselves as professionals. We should further adopt a servant leadership philosophy and utilize our skills to advance our schools, our school divisions, other school divisions, and our profession.



- a. We shall require all staff members to model and maintain a professional demeanor at all times.
- b. We shall collaboratively work with all staff members and the community to promote open communication and trust.
- c. We shall constantly engage in professional development opportunities to become aware of the most current research associated with improving student achievement and to maintain a high degree of effectiveness.
- d. We shall collaborate and participate with other schools and school divisions to share instructional strategies, practices, curriculum, and ideas.
- e. We shall develop a philosophy of servant leadership and provide service to the profession, the division, and the community by participating in civic organizations, presenting at various state conferences, sharing strategies, practices, and procedures which have led to our academic success, and serving as mentors to others who enter our profession.
- f. We shall work with all stakeholders to develop and maintain a spirit of trust, collaboration, and cooperation.
- g. We shall assume full responsibility for developing, maintaining, and implementing a meaningful and continuous process of staff development and school improvement which results in the enhancement of student learning.
- h. We shall constantly strive to keep current and knowledgeable of best practices and strategies which promote student achievement.
- i. We shall develop, implement, and evaluate all practices and procedures to ensure we meet all state and federal accreditation/academic standards.
- j. We shall constantly reevaluate our facilities which will provide us with the necessary facilities that are highly conducive to learning in the most cost effective manner.
- k. We shall maintain an effective maintenance and custodial program that will maintain our buildings in a way that creates a safe, clean, and orderly environment.
- l. We shall maintain an effective and technology-driven human resource/payroll system that will streamline the finance department.
- m. We shall maintain an effective mentoring program to help our new teachers.
- n. We shall provide an additional focus and emphasis on improving compensation for our staff members by being financially responsible in order to provide our staff members with adequate compensation.

## **7. Division-Wide Academic Progress**

We should constantly devote the majority of our time, effort, energy, and resources to ensure our students are successful. We should consistently evaluate several data sources to determine where we are successful and the areas needing attention. We should develop and implement the necessary initiatives, programs, and interventions to improve our instructional program and to better align the curriculum. We should ensure that the overall, and each of the subgroup areas, are experiencing academic growth. To ensure academic progress, we shall do following.

- a. We shall maintain and update the division's Comprehensive Plan on an annual basis.

- b. We shall develop an annual plan of improvement to address issues gleaned from data collection and other relevant sources.
- c. We shall conduct a technology audit annually to determine strengths and needs.
- d. We shall analyze each cabinet department annually to determine how we can better serve our schools.
- e. We shall evaluate and revise our curriculum on an annual basis.
- f. We shall analyze data from a variety of sources to determine the effectiveness of the current curriculum and instructional program.
- g. We shall meet with appropriate directors and building level administrators on a frequent basis to ensure we are focused on improving student achievement.
- h. We shall collaboratively work with all stakeholders to develop and implement effective school improvement plans to improve student achievement.
- i. We shall focus on student performance overall and within each of the subgroups to ensure all students are performing at an acceptable level.
- j. We shall focus on graduation rates and ensure that our students are graduating on time and with the necessary skills to be successful.
- k. We shall develop and utilize effective data analysis tools, software, and programming.
- l. We shall ensure data is collected and analyzed from a variety of sources and not focus on one single data source.
- m. We shall ensure that data is utilized in the development of school improvement plans.
- n. We shall ensure that data connected with student achievement is part of the evaluation system for all employees.
- o. We shall develop a more effective assistance program to help our teachers who are struggling within the classroom.
- p. We shall collect and utilize data from various sources to help drive our instructional program to ensure the success of all students.

## **Schools**

The Wise County School Division is comprised of four elementary/primary schools, one combined school, three middle schools, three high schools, an alternative school, and a career-technical center. The thirteen school sites offer a full range of K-12 programs serving over 5629 students. All schools in Wise County are fully accredited by the Virginia Department of Education. Aggressive leadership by administrators, teachers and coaches has made Wise County students highly competitive, both academically and athletically, with students in other school divisions throughout the state.

### **Primary Schools**

In Wise County, primary schools consist of those schools which have a grade span of Pre-K through fourth grade. The communities of Coeburn, Big Stone Gap, and Wise house the three primary schools located within Wise County. In addition to instruction in the core academic areas of mathematics, English, science and social studies; Coeburn Primary (457 students), Union Primary (788 students) and Wise Primary (668 students) offer learning opportunities in health, physical fitness, art, music, technology, library, special education,

Title I, and Reading Resource. Additional activities include gifted and talented programs, clubs and opportunities for on-stage performances by the students.

### **Elementary Schools**

St. Paul Elementary School is the only elementary school in Wise County. The community of St. Paul houses St. Paul Elementary School (236 students) which has a grade span of PreK through 8<sup>th</sup> grade. In addition to instruction in the core academic areas of mathematics, English, science and social studies; St. Paul Elementary offers learning opportunities in health, physical fitness, art, music, band, technology, library, special education, Title I, Reading Resource, and STEM. Additional activities include gifted and talented programs, student government, clubs, news teams, academic competitions, and middle school sports.

### **Combined School**

Located in Pound, J. W. Adams Combined School serves 461 students from Pre-K through eighth grade. In addition to core academic areas, program offerings include art, music, chorus, band, health, physical education, foreign language, technology, and family and consumer science. Additional activities include gifted and talented programs, student government, clubs, news teams, academic competitions, and middle school sports.

### **Middle Schools**

Students in grades five through eight are served by three middle schools in Wise County. These are Coeburn Middle School (356 students) located in Coeburn, Union Middle School (606 students) in Big Stone Gap, and L. F. Addington Middle School (495 students) in Wise. Central to the middle school program is the belief that young adolescents have academic, emotional, social, and physical characteristics and needs unique to their age. Educational programs in the middle grades are developed to support students as they make the transition from young adolescence into early adulthood and to prepare them to succeed in high school and beyond.

In addition to instruction in the core academic areas of mathematics, English, science and social studies; middle school students have learning opportunities in foreign language, health, physical fitness, art, music, chorus, band, technology, library, special education, careers, and family and consumer sciences. Additional activities include gifted and talented programs, drama, student government, honor societies, clubs, news teams, academic competitions, and interscholastic middle school sports.

### **High Schools**

The secondary program in Wise County is made up of three high schools: Eastside High School (431 students) in Coeburn, Union High School (684 students) located in Big Stone Gap, Central High School (659 students) located in Wise. All of these high schools are fully accredited and offer college preparatory opportunities for students. The high schools offer a variety of advanced classes allowing students the option of taking numerous college classes for dual credit. Along with academics, the high schools offer a wide variety of extracurricular activities. Each secondary school offers a range of courses suitable for students who plan to continue education after high school or who plan to enter directly into the workforce.

### **Alternative Education**

The Wise County Alternative Education Center offers competency based educational opportunities for youth who have difficulty succeeding in the traditional school

environment. A focus on direct instruction is enhanced with a multi-media approach, a focus on individual learning styles, and the use of other research-based strategies.

### **Career-Technical Center**

The Wise County Career Technical Center, often referred to as the “blue building”, opened in August of 1978 and serves students enrolled in Wise County and the City of Norton. WCCTC is an extension of the local high schools and features a variety of learning opportunities that assist young people in making the transition from school to a career. Seventeen Career and Technical programs are offered as electives to 9th thru 12th grade students. Students completing a sequential course of study are offered the opportunity to test in order to obtain an industry certification or a license. In addition, students attending the Wise County Career Technical Center may opt to take classes in any of the core areas such as History, Math, Science, English, or Physical Education and Driver’s Education. Mountain Empire Community College partners with the school to offer students the option of obtaining both college and high school credit in many of the Career and Technical classes as well as some of the core area classes. Instruction primarily emphasizes the project based hands-on method of instruction that is guided by competency skill requirements established by the Virginia Department of Education. A special education teacher is on staff to ensure all students are provided with the necessary accommodations and to provide assistance for both students and teachers.

The Wise County Career Technical Center offers training in trade and industry and technical and information technology fields while keeping abreast of current educational trends and industry demands. Our goal is to provide students with the knowledge and skills necessary to compete in the career and technical fields of employment. We strive to make sure that upon completion of a program, students will have the skills necessary for employment or the base skills required to further their education. The faculty and staff of WCCTC are committed to the well-being of their students as well as providing excellence in Career and Technical and academic education.

### **Instructional Services**

The Wise County Public School Division offers a wide range of instructional services to meet the diverse needs of our students. Specific programs include gifted education, distance learning, special education, student services, and Title I programs. Gifted education programs strive to meet the needs of gifted students. Distance learning programs provide a wide range of learning opportunities to the students of Wise County that would be otherwise unavailable due to limitations in access. We offer higher level courses for our students including a wide range of Dual Enrollment courses. Special Education and Student Services offer a variety of programs and support services to promote student achievement and successful school completion. The Wise County Title I program provides supplemental services in early literacy, pre-kindergarten, and K – 4 classrooms throughout the county. The K-4 Title I program focuses on reading and mathematics. Our three primary schools completed a year of preparation and are now Schoolwide Title I Schools. The one elementary and one combined school are Targeted Assistance Title I Schools. Each of the five Title I schools have a full time Family Engagement Coordinator that

works to encourage parent and family engagement in the schools and in the education of the children.

### **Gifted Education**

The Wise County School Division recognizes the importance of gifted education in its total instructional program. Wise County has approximately 780 identified gifted students. In an effort to provide a high quality education to its students, the school division strives to provide instruction, enrichment, acceleration and performance opportunities to gifted students in grades K-12 in a variety of disciplines and settings.

Wise County Schools is committed to excellence in education, equality of educational opportunity, and the recognition of each student's individuality. Gifted students are those students in kindergarten through twelfth grade who demonstrate high levels of accomplishment or who show the potential for higher levels of accomplishment when compared to others of the same age, experience, or environment. Their aptitudes and potential for accomplishment are so outstanding that they require special programs to meet their educational needs. These students will be identified by professionally qualified persons through the use of multiple criteria as having potential or demonstrated aptitudes in one or more of the following areas:

1. General intellectual aptitude. Such students demonstrate or have the potential to demonstrate superior reasoning; persistent intellectual curiosity; advanced use of language; exceptional problem solving; rapid acquisition and mastery of facts, concepts, and principles; and creative and imaginative expression across a broad range of intellectual disciplines beyond their age-level peers.
2. Specific academic aptitude. Such students demonstrate or have the potential to demonstrate superior reasoning; persistent intellectual curiosity; advanced use of language; exceptional problem solving; rapid acquisition and mastery of facts, concepts, and principles; and creative and imaginative expression beyond their age-level peers in select academic areas. Specific academic areas include English, history and social science, mathematics, and science.
3. Visual and performing arts aptitude. Such students demonstrate or have the potential to demonstrate superior creative reasoning and imaginative expression; persistent artistic curiosity; and advanced acquisition and mastery of techniques, perspectives, concepts, and principles beyond their age-level peers in visual or performing arts.

**Identification:** Wise County Public Schools will use appropriate screening, identification, and placement procedures to ensure that the needs of the gifted student will be met. Coordinate meetings with school gifted coordinators and guidance counselors on the issue of appropriate identification of gifted students

Instruct principals on gifted identification

Review procedures for placement with the school placement committee

Provide relevant materials to teachers on the identification process

**Delivery of Services:** Wise County Public Schools will provide appropriate services for all identified gifted students.

Each school in the county will have a gifted coordinator

In-service sessions will be conducted for the school gifted coordinators

A differentiated instructional program will be used in the regular classroom

Provide advanced courses

**Curriculum and Instruction:** Wise County Public Schools will use appropriate differentiated instruction to meet the needs of the gifted student.

Ensure instructional staff uses differentiated instruction

Develop differentiation documentation reports to give to parents on a regular basis

**Professional Development:** Wise County Public Schools will offer regular in-service opportunities to address the needs of any identified student and on the identification of students.

School gifted coordinators will work with their school's staff to better identify gifted students

School gifted coordinators will educate their school's staff on referral tools and the placement process

In-service opportunities on differentiated instruction and enrichment strategies

**Equitable Representation of Students:** Wise County Public School will not discriminate against students for whom accurate identification may be affected because they are economically disadvantaged, have a limited English proficiency, or have a disability.

Utilize assessments for nonverbal communication

Test scores from special education testing can be used by the placement committee

**Parent and Community Involvement:** Wise County Public Schools will actively strive to increase parent and community involvement.

Meet with and gather input from the Local Advisory Committee

Parents and members of the community are encouraged to participate in gifted activities

Gifted programs will be publicized

To address the needs of gifted learners, Wise County Public Schools will use a variety of strategies, including:

- Modification of regular curricula and instruction by the classroom teacher (in-class differentiation)
- Separate classes
- Accelerated placement
- Independent Study
- Dual enrollment programs
- Extracurricular credit and non-credit activities
- Small and large group magnet projects
- Field experience

Open-ended tasks are an essential component of the gifted curriculum. Projects stress innovation, self-direction, and real-world application. Students are encouraged to develop products that create new knowledge and use a variety of techniques, media, and forms in both independent and group

work. Processes emphasized include higher level thinking, inquiry, creativity, abstraction, reasoning, and decision making.

To assess the academic growth in gifted students, the Wise County Public School Division will examine a variety of student product demonstrations, including:

- Oral presentations
- Visual representations
- Written products
- Technological presentations
- Multimedia projects
- Performances

Successfully completed works will reflect the use of inquiry-based and creative processes and incorporate higher-order thinking skills, problem solving, scientific inquiry, decision making, and research processes in the humanities, arts, and sciences.

Assessment of student products will include evaluations by educators, adjudication by competent professionals in the field, and student self-assessment.

The Wise County School Division is committed to providing unique, advanced, and challenging educational programs to address the academic, emotional, and aesthetic needs of gifted and talented students. Students who have outstanding potential or abilities require differentiated educational services or curriculum modification to foster the development of their unique areas of giftedness. In keeping with the position of The Association for the Gifted (2005), it is accepted that no single program fits the needs of all students, "particularly gifted students whose characteristics include rapid rate of learning and development in some domain, advanced knowledge in areas related to that domain, and a seriousness about learning." Our goal is to actively promote and develop an appropriately differentiated educational program for gifted students in order to facilitate the development of their potential. Through our gifted education program, we seek to instill self-discipline, self-esteem, critical and creative thinking skills, and motivation in our students.

The primary focus is on providing rigorous curriculum and instruction appropriate to the needs of gifted learners. Gifted instruction is built upon the recognition that it requires a diverse array of approaches to curriculum and instruction to address the needs of gifted learners (Renzulli, 1997; Tomlinson, 2005). Tomlinson (1996, 2005) emphasized that the best educational practices for gifted learners begin with those practices that will best serve all learners. Toward this purpose, we emphasize the development of conceptual understandings of content, organization of learning, and integration of new and previously learned knowledge. Gifted education is built upon this foundation of effective curriculum and instruction. Tools for extending the learning opportunities for gifted students include adjusting pacing of learning (Tomlinson, 2005), matching the level of challenge to the learner (National Research Council, 2000; Vygotsky, 1986), and providing enrichment opportunities to support self-directed exploration and learning (Renzulli, 2005; Renzulli & Reiss, 1997). It is the goal of the Wise County School Division to provide instruction that extends beyond the classroom and beyond Standards of Learning Objectives.

Specifically, the Wise County School Division seeks to provide sequential learning opportunities that address the diverse needs of gifted learners in disciplines that include core academic areas, music, visual arts, creative writing, media arts, and theatre. Gifted education provides students with activities that (1) enhance knowledge about content and about careers, (2) promote creative expression, (3) foster skill development, and (4) provide opportunities for public exhibition or performance.

To ensure a multifaceted, academically rigorous program characterized by high quality practices in curriculum, instruction, and assessment; the gifted education program of Wise County draws upon the theories of Bandura (Social Learning and Modeling), Bloom (Critical Thinking), Bruner (Learning Theory), Gardner (Multiple Intelligences), Marzano (Instructional Strategies), Renzulli (School Enrichment), Tomlinson (Differentiation), and Vygotsky (Learning Theory).

Wise County offers annual training that addresses the characteristics and needs of gifted learners. This training includes:

- In-school and division-wide professional development opportunities on differentiation
- Regional summer professional development opportunities (Speaking for the Gifted)
- Attendance at state and national gifted conferences
- In-school training by the Gifted Site Coordinator on the county gifted program
- Frequent meetings with the Gifted Site Coordinators to discuss current issues and trends in gifted education
- Region 7 Gifted Consortium meetings

### **Distance Learning**

The Virtual Virginia Advanced Placement School provides a variety of advanced placement courses, using distance learning technologies. Advanced placement courses follow the College Board curriculum. Foreign language courses are open to students from the eighth grade and higher. Wise County has students to participate in Spanish 101 and 102 through Mountain Empire Community College for dual enrollment credit.

Additionally, academically advanced students may enroll in courses offered through the A Linwood Holton Governor's School. Courses offered during the 2016-17 academic year include Astronomy I & II, Engineering & Robotics I & II, Human Anatomy and Physiology I & II, Advanced Multimedia Applications, Introduction to Engineering Methods and Computer Programming, Methods of Research, Probability and Statistics I & II, Western Civilization I & II, World Civilization I & II, Appalachian History, and Principles of Physics I & II. The courses are designed for juniors and seniors but do not exclude academically advanced sophomores who have completed the necessary pre-requisites. Classes are offered in both 55 minute and 90 minute formats to best fit the schedules of the schools served. All courses have been approved for dual enrollment through the Virginia Community College System.



## **Special Education and Student Services**

Students with special needs comprise approximately 14% of the total student population. Students with disabilities and are served through an inclusive education program that provides a continuum of services from collaborative/co-teaching in the general education classroom to self-contained classrooms for students with more significant disabilities. A wide variety of professionals, paraprofessionals, and specialists are employed by Wise County Schools to meet the individual needs of students with disabilities, as well as other at-risk students.

Students with special needs between the ages of 2-5 are served by Early Childhood Special Education Teachers in a variety of settings to include homes, daycares, private schools, and Head Start programs within the county. Most students between the ages of 4-18 are serviced in a collaborative classroom setting where they receive instruction with their non-disabled peers. High school students with special needs can attend the Career-Technical Center, which offers diverse programs of study, including Air Force JROTC. Those students with more significant disabilities are served through the Vocational Pathways programs, especially designed for students with significant disabilities, to prepare them for independent living and job skills.

Special Education and Student Services staff offers direct instruction and support services for all students. The variety of services provided by staff members include: nursing, psychological, educational, attendance, counseling, hearing, vision, occupational therapy, physical therapy, speech/language, and social work. A licensed and certified BCBA autism specialist assists teachers and administrators in behavior analysis and instructional strategies and planning for students with autism spectrum disorder. Instructional coaches support both general and special education teachers in the area of explicit instruction, evidence-based practices, and the co-teaching models.

A transition coordinator functions as a support and resource to staff, students, families, and community agencies. She assists students with transition planning, vocational assessments and career inventories, employment opportunities, and interagency and/or business linkages. Students who plan to attend college are well prepared due to collaboration between the two colleges located within Wise County, the University of Virginia's College at Wise and Mountain Empire Community College, which allows expanded learning and dual enrollment opportunities.

Technology plays a key role for staff and students. IEP Online was purchased in 2003 and is updated frequently. This software for special education administration allows teachers to create or update their students' individualized education plans from any networked computer with a Web browser. IEP Online also accommodates Section 504 plans, service plans, and behavior plans. Each special education teacher has a personal computer to access IEP Online and for email purposes, since most communication between the Central Office and the schools is by this method. Most special education teachers also have a wireless laptop which can be used for meetings, for work at home, and in conjunction with SmartBoards. Students have access to desktop computers with software programs specifically designed for students with special needs. A variety of assistive technology devices such as iPads, AlphaSmarts, Tablets, Reading Pens, and various

communication devices are also available as needed. Several teachers have scanners and digital cameras to assist with instruction and documentation purposes for alternative and alternate assessments. Each year staff identifies technology and training needs.

Special transportation is provided for students with the most significant disabilities who may need more supervision or support than can be provided with general transportation. Special transportation is used to transport students throughout the county to their home school and to centrally located programs.

Wise County also provides specialized vocational programs (Vocational Pathways) for high school students with disabilities who are unable to participate in the general vocational program and are working toward an Applied Studies Diploma. Living in the Functional Environment (LIFE) provides students an opportunity to improve functional academics and daily living skills in preparation for further vocational training. Practical Assessment and Evaluation System (PAES) provides specialized training using a variety of vocational modules to provide instruction and reinforcement in work behaviors, social skills, and safety awareness in a variety of vocational interests. Duds 'n Dough is a post-graduate program providing students age 18-22 on-site training in a school-based business. Students have the opportunity to work two years in the business and then progress to working in the community under the supervision of a job coach.

The Special Education Advisory Committee meets four times per year and is made up of parents, adults with disabilities, community members, and agency representatives. The purpose of the committee is to (1) advise the school division of unmet needs in the education of students with disabilities (2) assist in the formulation and development of plans for improving performance of students with disabilities (3) participate in the development of priorities and strategies for meeting the special needs of students with disabilities (4) submit periodic reports and recommendations regarding the education of students with disabilities to the superintendent for transmission to the school board (5) assist in interpreting plans to the community for meeting the special needs of students with disabilities for educational services and (6) review the policies and procedures for the provision of special education services prior to submission to the school board and the Virginia Department of Education.

## **Federal Programs**

### **1. Title I – Improving Basic Programs**

### **2. Title IIA –Supporting Effective Instruction**

Teacher, principal, and paraprofessional professional development and Class Size Reduction- This program offers strategic college classes to Wise County teachers and administrators in identified areas of need. Workshops, conferences, and training events are funded to enhance teacher, principal, and paraprofessional skills. A portion of these funds are used to support 4 teachers' salaries for the Class-size Reduction Program.

### **3. Title III – Limited English Proficient (LEP) or EL (English Learners)**

No federal funds are provided for the identified EL students within the district. One full-time ESL teacher provides services to the children through local and state funds.

### **4. Title IV—Student Support and Academic Enrichment (SSAE)**

The purpose of the SSAE grants program is to improve students’ academic achievement by increasing the capacity of states, school divisions, schools, and local communities to: provide all students with access to a well-rounded education; improve school conditions for student learning; and improve the use of technology in order to improve the academic achievement and digital literacy of all students.

### **5. Title V B – Rural & Low-Income School Program**

Funds provided to a few of Virginia’s LEA’s. Through this program, Instructional Improvement Tutors and Instructional In-School Resource Tutors provide services to all Third and Fourth Grade children throughout the division.

### **6. Title X – McKinney-Vento Project Hope**

Funds are utilized to provide needed school supplies and clothing to the divisions identified homeless children. Wise County no longer receives funding but we do provide services and supplies for our homeless students by utilizing Title I funds. Most of the identified homeless population in our area lives in doubled-up conditions out of necessity.

## **TITLE I PROGRAM AND SERVICES**

The Title I Program is a federally funded program which provides effective intervention and support for children who are below expected levels of achievement based on grade level expectations in the areas of reading, early literacy, and math. Priority is placed on parent and family engagement in their child’s education through send-home materials, training in techniques for improving children’s learning, using technology, and school visitation.

### **THE TITLE I FAMILY OF PROGRAMS AND SERVICES INCLUDE:**

**New Beginnings for Early Literacy:** The mother of every child born in a Wise County Hospital receives a literacy-tote filled with information about the importance of reading to children and two read-aloud books. Follow-up programs are offered to parents and their children within each school served by the Title I Program (CPS, JWA, SPE, UPS, WPS).

**Pre-Kindergarten (Pre-K) Program for Four-year-olds:** This program utilizes the Frog Street Press Pre-K curriculum where children are active learners. There are 3 Title I classrooms that serve 54 students in a cheerful and nurturing atmosphere. This year, through the Virginia Preschool Initiative we have 9 additional classes serving 162 children. This brings the total of Pre-K children served to 216.

**iSPIRE (Grades K-4):** iSPIRE is a highly effective diagnostic, intervention and remediation approach which is based on the simple premise that children learn to read and learn to read better by becoming actively involved in reading and reading related tasks. The program serves over 70 students in targeted assistance programs (JWA and SPES) and serves the entire school population of our school-wide programs (CPS, UPS, and WPS).

**Parental Engagement:** The Parental Engagement Program assists parents in working with their children to optimize achievement levels and empower parents to become contributing partners in their child's education. Activities include parent meetings at school locations where parents can receive assistance in locating materials, check out materials for use with children at home, seek advice on problem areas, or just get to know more about the school. Each Title I school has a newly stocked Parent Resource Center with lots of new, up-to-date materials that parents may check out to take home and work with their children.

**Toddler Time:** The Family Engagement Coordinator (FEC) for each Title I school hosts a monthly toddler story time for children, ages birth to four and their parents. Each child in attendance receives a free book to take home. Activities to do at home are also demonstrated.

**Technology to Inspire Learning:** Workshops are offered at each School in which parents and family members learn how to operate and use technology such as digital cameras, scanners, laptop computers and tablets through hands-on activities. These activities are designed to promote parent and child interactions at home by developing learning materials and activities that support children's learning.

**Before and After School Programs:** These programs target students in elementary schools who need extra support and remediation in the core subjects of reading and math. A variety of instructional approaches are used that include homework assistance, reading with family members in a weekly reading event, instruction in math and reading skills and use of instructional technology.

**Reach Out and Read Program:** Family Engagement Coordinators (FECs) distribute free age-appropriate books at local food banks and the homeless shelter. FECs also provide pamphlets that they review with families.

## **TECHNOLOGY**

The primary goal of the Wise County Technology Department is to provide a reliable, state of the art technology infrastructure to include instructional and administrative software, hardware, support, and training for all staff and students. It is our belief that this is essential in order to provide a 21st century education and in doing so prepare our students for the future.

Specific key initiatives include:

- 1. A high speed fiber and wireless network to allow for web based instructional and management systems.** Examples of this include streaming video, video

conferencing, online library programs, Governor's School, Advanced Placement Virtual Classroom, and supporting the use of technology devices in the classroom, etc. This includes support for web based applications and includes improvements for supporting state required online testing.

**2. Installing the key components for 21st Century classroom.** These components include high speed internet access, multiple classroom computers, an IP based phone system, mounted data projectors and/or LCD projection systems, wireless tablets or smart boards, quick response systems, document cameras, and sound systems, as well as other content specific software and hardware. All Title I and PreK classrooms as well as all classrooms in the 3 high schools are equipped with 72 inch flat screen TVs with interactive overlays that are used as interactive boards similar to smartboards.

**3. Keep students connected securely.** One key to a quality education is access to information with a strong wireless network; students will be able to learn from any location on our school campuses. Integrate multiple communication networks into a single, unified system to enable more effective communication and collaboration with faculty, staff, and students for improved teaching and learning. The wireless network will be enhanced and complimented by the implementation of a strong wired backbone.

- a. Wireless Campus – Access Points, Outdoor Networking, WAN Optimization, Wireless Routers
- b. IP Telephone – Distance Learning, Telephone and VoIP, Phones, Gateways, Voice/Video Conferencing
- c. Wired Backbone – Routing, Switching, Network Devices

Planned (on-going) initiatives: To fully support streaming video, voice over IP (VoIP), high speed data, and future growth, the following network infrastructure is necessary (not all inclusive),

- 1. High density layer 3 switches in MDF (Main Distribution Frame) rooms
- 2. Fiber runs between MDF and IDF (Intermediate Distribution Frame) areas and to all floors
- 3. Cat 6 cabling to the desktop

Successful schools today must learn to exist outside traditional boundaries. Deployment of technological tools for Wise County teachers and students must continue to improve our ability to compete in an ever-expanding and changing global economic market to meet the demands of a global economy. The educational program operating in Wise County Public Schools must meet the challenge of serving a diverse student population. The Technology department will continue to support the Wise County School Division's curriculum by supporting the development of new instructional strategies, participatory curriculum decisions, with the infusion of advanced technology into all content areas.

To meet global challenges, the technology department strives to provide the leadership and the support to enable educators to provide learners with equitable access to worldwide information through state-of-the-art technologies and networks. The Wise County School's educational program, with the support of the technology department, must meet the challenge of serving a diverse student population.

In turn, the effective use of technology by the instructional staff will complement more traditional pedagogies to create an environment that better meets the needs of today's students. Finally, the successful integration of technology within the curricula will improve opportunities for Wise County students to compete confidently in an ever-changing, complex world, as well as to enhance the quality of life for all citizens.

## **Support Services**

### **Finance**

From a 2016-2017 budget of \$59,477,500, the school division funded approximately 1,100 full and part-time positions. Including 520 faculty/instructional positions, 135 teacher aides, and 250 administrative, service, and support personnel. The beginning salary for teachers is \$34,660. The per pupil expenditure was approximately \$9,200 for fiscal year 2017.

### **Transportation**

Wise County Public Schools Transportation Services Department maintains and operates approximately 84 school buses for the transportation of students who attend Wise County Public Schools. Approximately 706,000 miles are traveled each year on daily regular runs with another 76,000 miles being accumulated on field trips and other special activities. At the beginning of each new school year, students and parents fill out an online form of safety rules and regulations for all students who ride Wise County Public Schools buses. Parents are encouraged to discuss these safety rules with their children.

### **Maintenance**

The Maintenance Department is responsible for the upkeep of equipment, buildings and grounds of all facilities in Wise County. The department includes a staff of ten-- 8 technicians and 2 who handle all functions relative to acquisition and distribution of school supplies. The central warehouse staff distributes supplies to the schools. All are under the direction of the Supervisor of Maintenance. In addition, each school has a custodial staff that is responsible for day-to-day maintenance. The goal of the Maintenance Department is to provide safe, clean, well-maintained and well-supplied schools.

### **Information Management Systems**

The Wise County Public School Division's Student and Finance Information Systems are provided by Sungard K-12.

Administrative users at all schools use the web-based eSchoolPLUS application to maintain the demographic, scheduling, attendance, mark reporting, and state reporting information for their students. This information is maintained in a district-wide centralized database allowing for real-

time reporting and data analysis. Custom reports are made available online through Cognos Reporting. Teachers use another web-based application that is integrated with eSchoolPLUS called Teacher Access Center to maintain student grades and view student demographic and attendance information.

Through the web based Home Access Center, parents and guardians can view information about their child, grades, discipline, and more.

Central Office personnel and limited users at each school use the [web-based](#) eFinance PLUS application to process leave transactions, payroll, accounts payable, and other financial responsibilities. This system also utilizes a centralized database and custom reports are provided using Cognos Web Reports.

### **Food Services**

In 11 cafeterias 65 school nutrition employees work each day to serve approximately 1600 breakfasts and 3400 lunches to students. All meals and items served in the cafeterias meet USDA guidelines.

## Student and Community Demographic Characteristics

Population 2015 Estimate	39,228
Persons under 18 years old	20%
Female persons	47.9%
White persons (non-Hispanic)	92.6%
Black or African American persons	5.6%
Persons of Hispanic or Latino origin	1.2%
Combined Other (reporting two races)	0.6%
High School Graduates, percent of persons age 25+	74%
Bachelor's Degree or higher, persons age 25+	14%
Median household income 2011-15	37,407
Per capita money income 2011-15	20,321
Persons below poverty 2011-15	22.7%

## Participation and Achievement Data

The Wise County School Division is committed to providing quality education for all students. This commitment includes keeping the parents and community informed of the progress of our schools in raising student achievement and enhancing the learning environment. The following link will provide information regarding enrollment; school safety; student achievement; attendance, drop out, and graduation rates; completion rates for diploma types; student participation in advanced programs (A.P. and Dual Enrollment); completion rates for career and technical programs; and teacher qualifications. Please click on the following link for detailed information:

<http://schoolquality.virginia.gov/divisions/wise-county-public-schools>

If you don't have internet access, a copy will be provided for the asking.

## Strengths of the Wise County School Division

Strengths of the Wise County School Division include the quality of Wise County educators. There is a strong commitment to academic excellence and the instructional focus of the school division. Wise County Schools have academically outperformed the majority of school divisions in the Commonwealth. Of the 132 school divisions in the Commonwealth, WCPS was 3<sup>rd</sup> overall in SOL scores for the 16-17 school year.



## Top 10 State Rankings

Line	Description	Ranking
1	Overall Math	2 <sup>nd</sup>
2	Overall Reading	5 <sup>th</sup>
3	Overall History	3 <sup>rd</sup>
4	Overall Science	10 <sup>th</sup>
5	Overall Writing	2 <sup>nd</sup>
6	7 <sup>th</sup> Grade Reading	10 <sup>th</sup>
7	8 <sup>th</sup> Grade Reading	6 <sup>th</sup>
8	8 <sup>th</sup> Grade Writing	9 <sup>th</sup>
9	3 <sup>rd</sup> Grade Reading	7 <sup>th</sup>
10	4 <sup>th</sup> Grade Reading	8 <sup>th</sup>
11	6 <sup>th</sup> Grade Reading	9 <sup>th</sup>
12	11 <sup>th</sup> Grade Writing	3 <sup>rd</sup>
13	11 <sup>th</sup> Grade Reading	3 <sup>rd</sup>
14	8 <sup>th</sup> Grade Math	2 <sup>nd</sup>
15	Algebra II	3 <sup>rd</sup>
16	4 <sup>th</sup> Grade Math	8 <sup>th</sup>
17	6 <sup>th</sup> Grade Math	3 <sup>rd</sup>
18	7 <sup>th</sup> Grade Math	10 <sup>th</sup>
19	Algebra I	3 <sup>rd</sup>
20	World History	6 <sup>th</sup>
21	World Geography	10 <sup>th</sup>
22	Science 8	8 <sup>th</sup>
23	<b>Overall State Ranking</b>	<b>3<sup>rd</sup></b>

## Quality and Qualifications of Our Educators

The quality and qualifications of the educators of Wise County are identified as strengths. In particular, our parents and community members praise our teachers and administrators for their focus on children and learning. “Caring and Nurturing” is a phrase used to describe our educators in many communities. This sentiment was best represented by many teachers who indicate that they believe what makes them most effective is that they are focused on meeting the needs of all students, but that even more importantly, their main goal for improvement is to “be focused on meeting the needs of all students.” This is not a one-time strategy for improvement; it is an all-time strategy for success.

School administrators point to the effectiveness of classroom teachers in terms of student achievement, classroom instruction, and discipline. Many administrators indicate that the percentage of fully credentialed, highly qualified teachers and paraprofessionals that truly care about the students are the strengths of their schools.

### **Commitment from All Stakeholders Promoting Academic Excellence for All Students**

The commitment to raising student achievement and promoting academic excellence for all students is evident in all our schools. This commitment is demonstrated by teachers, administrators and paraprofessionals who identify raising student achievement as a priority goal for the school division. This commitment is also evident in discussions that focus on providing resources and support to ensure that every child can learn and succeed, including students with disabilities, students from backgrounds of economically disadvantaged, struggling learners, and gifted learners. While students may come from different backgrounds with differing abilities and learning needs, we feel we must continue to work toward academic excellence for all students.

### **Focus on Instructional Excellence and High Expectations for Academic Achievement**

Related to the principle of “Academic Excellence for All” is the need for high expectations. This is identified as an area of strength in Wise County. In particular, central office and school-based administrators are recognized for maintaining a focus on instructional issues. Cited examples of this focus includes the use of data-driven decision making in planning, revision of the evaluation system to drive instructional improvement, and the implementation of a Comprehensive School Improvement Model that helps educators set specific targets for raising student achievement.

### **Advanced Course Offerings**

There are a number of opportunities and options available to high school students which allows parents and students to develop courses of studies to meet individual student needs. The Virtual Virginia Advanced Placement School provides a variety of advanced placement courses, using distance learning technologies. Advanced placement courses follow the College Board curriculum. Foreign language courses are open to students from the seventh grade and higher. Wise County has students to participate in Spanish 101 and 102 through Mountain Empire Community College for dual enrollment credit. Additionally, academically advanced students may enroll in courses offered through the A Linwood Holton Governor’s School. Courses offered during the 2016-17 academic year include Astronomy I & II, Engineering & Robotics I & II, Human Anatomy and Physiology I & II, Advanced Multimedia Applications, Introduction to Engineering Methods and Computer Programming, Methods of Research, Probability and Statistics I & II, Western Civilization I & II, World Civilization I & II, Appalachian History, and Principles of Physics I & II. The courses are designed for juniors and seniors but do not exclude academically advanced sophomores who have completed the necessary pre-requisites. Classes are offered in both 55 minute and 90 minute formats to best fit the schedules of the schools served. All courses have been approved for dual enrollment through the Virginia Community College System.

### **Collaboration with and Access to Institutions of Higher Education**

Central office administration view the collaboration with and access to Mountain Empire Community College and the University of Virginia’s College at Wise as an area of strength for Wise County Schools. Beyond providing opportunities for our students to take college level courses, the two institutions also partner with the school division to implement professional development programs to address specific division needs, provide continuing education courses for our teachers, host regional summer Governor’s

school programs, and partner in our Summer Arts Program. The Wise County Public School Division strives to work with the local institutions of higher education to address current needs, ensure continuous improvement, promote innovation and reform and meet the increasing legislative demands. Particular attention focuses on raising student achievement through regional coordination of educational initiatives, teacher preparation and support, curricular programming, and higher education outreach to K-12 students.

### **Team Approach to Improving Instruction**

The team approach to instructional improvement is an area of strength for Wise County. In particular, the implementation of a comprehensive school improvement processes as an effective means of involving classroom teachers in collaborative data analysis, instructional decision-making, and improvement planning. Within the central office, the Division Leadership Team, made up of program directors from all aspects of governance, meets continually to maintain a focus on improvement of all programs and to ensure alignment of resources to support instruction. Within the schools, the teachers indicate that they benefit from increased professional interaction during common planning times. Teacher relationships are very positive. Fostering these professional relationships will drive instructional improvement as our schools become ever more collegial professional learning communities.

### **Professional Development**

Access to quality professional development is an area of strength. There are programs designed specifically to meet the instructional needs of the teachers by the Center for Teaching Excellence at UVA Wise. Local school administrators have been asked to survey their staffs for specific needs. If the professional development needs are for specific schools, those services are provided at the school. However, if there are teachers over the county requesting specific needs, those are provided at the county level. Programs have been designed specifically to meet the instructional needs of our teachers by the Center for Teaching Excellence at UVA-Wise. We firmly believe we have some of the most talented teachers in the Virginia. Therefore, we use our own teachers to help others. We specifically allow and encourage our teachers who need support to network with and visit high performing teachers within our own division. We trust our own to help our own which has proven beneficial and cost effective. Teachers and administrators have many opportunities to participate in programs developed locally and to attend regional and national conferences.

### **Community and Parental Involvement**

The quality of community and parent involvement in the schools of Wise County is identified as an area of strength, particularly in the elementary grades where parents and community members serve as volunteers, participate in parent-teacher organizations, and assist with special projects. At the secondary level, parents and community have demonstrated involvement through participation in school board meetings and especially at extracurricular events. In all schools, and at the division level, parents and community members serve on advisory committee (Superintendent's Advisory Committee, Parent Advisory Committee, etc.). Administrators recognized community members for these roles and community members recognized the administrators for being "open and accessible."

### **Broad Based Support for Fine Arts Programs**

Every community indicates fine arts programs should be an important part of the educational program. In communities where programs such as band, chorus, art, and drama are available; parents, teachers, and administrators recognized them as contributing significantly to their students' education. We would like to provide more of these programs in our schools but funding limits our ability to do so.

### **Technology Available to Support Student Learning**

The access to technology for students and teachers is an area of strength in Wise County. The number of computers and chromebooks available, the young age at which students are introduced to technology, the use of interactive whiteboard (SmartBoard) and large flat screen TVs with interactive overlays as well as Smart TVs and iPads are used for instruction. The use of technology for data analysis and improvement planning are factors that positively impact student learning. Although keeping pace with the rate of technological change is difficult, recent accomplishments indicate that we are well prepared to meet the challenge. Wise County Public Schools continues to commit many resources to the development of an infrastructure to support effective classroom instruction.

### **Special Education and Student Services**

The quality of our special education services is an area of strength. In particular, teachers and administrators indicate that collaborative classrooms which allow students with disabilities to receive instruction and to interact with their nondisabled peers are having a positive impact on the achievement of students with disabilities. The quality and variety of support services are recognized as areas of strength. Some specific examples are the school nurses in all schools; school resource officers (SROs) in the high schools and some elementary and middle schools; access to a violence prevention specialist (bullying prevention); substance abuse awareness, counseling, and prevention programs. Wise County also maintains a regional alternative education center that serves the needs for alternative programs for neighboring school divisions. In addition to these programs, the Wise County School Division maintains personnel and resources to support families and students that include student assistance programs, homebound services, crisis intervention, physical therapy, and occupational therapy. Through these programs, the student services department of Wise County Schools serves to meet the physical and social needs of our students so that they can be better equipped to learn.

### **Title I, Pre-Kindergarten Programs, and Early Reading Instruction**

Early literacy programs are recognized as important aspects of the Wise County educational program. In particular, the focus on reading instruction in the early grades is an area of focus. Small group reading instruction continues to be of utmost importance to us.

### **Recent Accomplishments**

Wise County has dealt with the issue of school consolidation for many years. With the beginning of the 2011-12 school year, our three small high schools (Pound, Appalachia, and St. Paul) were closed. The three larger high schools were renamed and housed all our high school students until

new schools were built. We are very excited that funding was approved and plans were developed to build two new high schools for Union and Central and to renovate and add on to Eastside High School. The Eastside renovation project has been completed and students have occupied that facility. Construction is complete on both Central and Union high schools. Students began classes in those new schools beginning in January of 2014. We are also excited that a new gym has been constructed at Appalachia Elementary School. During the spring and summer of 2017, the Wise County School Board voted to close Appalachia Elementary School and move those students to Powell Valley. Powell Valley Primary is now Union Primary housing students from both the Appalachia and Big Stone communities in grades PreK-4 and Powell Valley Middle was renamed to Union Middle housing students in grades 5-8 from both the Appalachia and Big Stone communities. UMS and UPS began classes in August of 2017 with more students and new names. The transition went very well. Wise County Schools is proud of a wide range of recent accomplishments including the academic achievement of students.

### **Academic Achievement of Students**

All Wise County Schools are Fully Accredited and continue to improve student achievement to go above and beyond mastering of the Standards of Learning. Wise County students did really well in the 2016-17 school year. In the area of Reading, Wise County ranked 5<sup>th</sup> in the state. We were even more proud of our Math scores. Wise County ranked 2<sup>nd</sup> in the state in Math. We ranked 3<sup>rd</sup> in History, 10<sup>th</sup> in Science and 2<sup>nd</sup> in Writing. All these rankings are calculated based on 132 school divisions in the Commonwealth of Virginia. In overall SOL scores, of the 132 school divisions in the Commonwealth, WCPS was 3<sup>rd</sup> overall for the 16-17 school year.

### **School Improvement Planning**

- Developed and Implemented Comprehensive School Improvement Model
- Demonstrated Commitment to Data-Driven Decision Making
- Continued use of an Evaluation System to include student growth and achievement as 40% of each teacher's evaluation.

### **Communication**

Home Access Center  
Parent Advisory Committee  
Superintendent's Advisory Committee  
Blackboard Connect phone notification system  
School Improvement Focus Groups  
Wise County School Facebook Page  
Public Forums and Hearings

### **Limiting Conditions that May Impact the School Division**

Stakeholders indicate a belief that local economic conditions could pose barriers to school personnel raises and financial support for our schools. Specifically, the limited local employment opportunities and the high percentage of students who are economically disadvantaged definitely give us reason for concern. Approximately 23% of the population of

Wise County is living in poverty and over 62% of the students are identified as economically disadvantaged. These data have the potential to impact education in three ways. First, the economic conditions may limit the amount of finances that can be generated locally to support the educational programs in Wise County. Second, limited career opportunities may lead to emigration of our graduates to other localities further depressing economic conditions. Third, economic disadvantage can negatively impact the education achievement levels of students because of the additional needs that must be met to support learning.

### **Enrollment Decline**

The declining enrollment may be a limitation for Wise County Schools. Since 1995, enrollment in Wise County Schools has declined excessively. Enrollment decline can impact funding, staffing, and programming options.

### **Increase in Nontraditional Family Composition**

There has been a rise in the number of students who are coming from nontraditional homes including single-parent households, foster families, and families where the primary caretaker is a grandparent. This can make family involvement in the schools more challenging.

### **Utilization of Health Care Services**

Stakeholders indicated concerns that many students may not be receiving health care services on a regular basis. This may impact the readiness to learn and the attendance of these students.

### **Increasing Numbers of Students with Autism**

Administrators and statistics indicate that there has been an increase in the number of students who are presenting with autism spectrum disorders and developmental delays. This is a population of students that needs specific early intervention and support. Wise County Schools received the ACE grant and is receiving lots of support and training as a result of this opportunity. We are far ahead of the curve in this area as a result of the ACE grant and have requests from parents of other counties asking to bring their children with Autism to our division.

### **Challenges Facing Wise County Schools**

The Wise County School Division has the opportunity to grow in its improvement efforts. With the consolidation effort behind us, we have improved the uniformity of our high school curriculum, and we are very excited to have moved into 2 new high schools in January 2014. We are pleased with the combining of the Alternative Education Center and the Career/Technical Center. That change was effective with the beginning of the 16-17 school year. During the spring and summer of 2017, the Wise County School Board voted to close Appalachia Elementary School and move those students to Powell Valley. Powell Valley Primary is now Union Primary housing students from both the Appalachia and Big Stone communities in grades PreK-4 and Powell Valley Middle was renamed to Union Middle housing students in grades 5-8 from both the Appalachia and Big

Stone communities. UMS and UPS began classes in August of 2017 with more students and new names. We continue to look for ways to increase parental involvement on the academic side of high schools but we are fortunate to have lots of support with extracurricular and athletic activities. We will continue to try new ways to increase awareness and participation in our career and technical programs. With the idea of offering more single block academic classes at the career/tech center, we hope to be able to recruit more students for the program. We continue to offer more in the broad spectrum of gifted services. We have begun a middle school scholastic bowl competition and each individual school is offering a wide variety of activities for their gifted students. We will continue to work on a variety of items to keep pace with the rapid changes in technology and in the changes needed for our students to be ready for changing workplace demands. We will work to meet the new state standards and graduation requirements as set forth by ESSA. As those guidelines are approved, we will make sure we keep up-to-date to stay ahead of new requirements including growth models, portrait of a graduate, and new attendance stipulations. Most importantly, we will continue to work to improve student achievement. Within this spectrum we are working very hard at our primary, elementary and middle schools to improve reading instruction which in turn will improve comprehension and overall scores on more rigorous state tests.

Wise County Schools will continue to strive for excellence putting our students first. Our teachers are the backbone of our division and will continue to provide the best for our students. The central office staff will continue to work to provide the support needed by the school administrators, teachers, and students.