

**North, South, East and West and all points in between – Georgia’s public schools are doing great things. School districts across the state submitted the following “good news” items for August 2009.** Click on the school system name below (in alphabetical order) to go to their website and learn more.

### [Burke County Schools:](#)

- SGA Elementary School has been named to the Georgia Public Policy Foundation's (GPPF) "No Excuses" list.
- Three Burke County Schools were the only schools in Georgia to receive the HealthierUS School Challenge Award (HUSCC). USDA established the HealthierUS School Challenge as a way to recognize schools that are creating healthy school environments by promoting good nutrition and physical activity. Schools have the opportunity to become certified as Bronze, Silver, Gold, or Gold of Distinction Schools, depending on meeting certain criteria. Waynesboro Primary School, Blakeney Elementary School and Sardis-Girard-Alexander Elementary School all have achieved GOLD certification.

### [Candler County Schools:](#)

- Metter High School Exceeds Graduation Goal. They set a goal of 70 percent graduation rate. But MHS Principal John Jordan proudly announced to Board of Education members that the high school graduation rate was 78.9 percent, 8.9 percent above the target for 2008-'09 and 14.5 percent higher than the 2007-'08 academic year. At the conclusion of the 2008-'09 school year, Jordan said that the 9th-grade class had 86.86 percent of students on track for graduation, while 81.56 percent of the 10th grade students were on track, having successfully achieved the required credits for their grade level.
- The release of the 2009 state CRCT scores show substantial improvement in several grades in Candler County.
  - In Metter Elementary School, all grade levels tested (1st through 3rd) met or exceeded the state pass rates in all subjects.
  - Reading scores surpassed the state average by 6 percent in 1st grade, 3 percent in 2nd grade and 5 percent in 3rd grade.
  - English/language arts scores in 1st grade exceeded the state by 11 percent, while 3rd grade exceeded by 7 percent. The 2nd grade performed at the same level as the state. "Math results were equally impressive," reported Dr. Evelyn Campbell, curriculum director. First grade exceeded the state by 10 percent, 2nd grade by 6 percent and 3rd grade by 9 percent. And in a comparison of the current third grade class to the previous year's third grade class, math scores increased dramatically by 27 percent.
  - At Metter Intermediate School, both 4th and 5th grade classes showed gains in reading and in English/language arts. When compared to 2008, the 5th grade math results were noteworthy, posting a 12 percent increase.
  - Metter Middle School math results exceeded the state average in both 7th and 8th grades by 3 percent and 14 percent respectively. Pass rates in English/language arts were slightly behind state averages in 6th and 7th grades. However, the 8th grade exceeded the state in all subjects, with the exception of science.
  - Social studies and science scores in 3rd, 4th and 5th grades at MES and MIS exceeded the state pass rates.
  - The 11th grade spring 2009 Georgia High School Graduation Test results revealed that math and science exceeded the state average by 3 percent, while English/language arts and social studies were below the state average by 11 percent and 5 percent respectively.

- Candler County teachers Monicca Bohannon and CaDeisha Cooper were selected to participate in the PRISM Teacher Leader Program at Georgia Southern. The two will receive a Teacher Leader Endorsement from the PSC on their teaching certificates. They will begin their teacher leader work in their schools in the 2009-2010 school year. As part of the PRISM Teacher Leader program, the teachers are to be awarded an additional \$10,000 for teacher leader work in the upcoming school year and again in the 2010-2011 school year, funded by PRISM.
- Two members of the Metter High School Future Business Leaders of America (FBLA) organization recently traveled to Anaheim, CA, to compete at the National Leadership Conference. Xing Lin and Jessica Spaid both qualified at the State Leadership Conference in March for the national competition in June. Donations from the local community and civic organizations transformed dreams of public speaking skills and their ability to work as a team in the presentation. The team placed ninth in the nation and was rewarded with trophies and checks from the National Federation of Independent Business Young Entrepreneur Foundation. Xing Lin also competed in the Spreadsheet Applications national competition. Before travelling to California, Xing completed a skills test where he demonstrated his knowledge in Microsoft Excel. He was required to create spreadsheets that performed various functions. Then, once in California, he completed an objective test. These two scores were combined to place him in the top ten in the nation in Spreadsheet Applications. Jessica and Xing were two of 7,864 national delegates at the National Leadership Conference.

### Cherokee County Schools:

- Cherokee County School District (CCSD) made Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) as a district in 2009 for the third consecutive year.
- CCSD ranked third in the state on this year's Georgia High School Graduation Tests, with 94% of students passing all four subject areas on the first attempt.
- CCSD will open another new middle school, Mill Creek MS, for the 2009-10 school year, as well as substantial classroom additions at Etowah HS and Macedonia ES. The School District currently has a high school and three elementary schools under construction. All of the projects are funded through the 2006 Special Purpose Local Option Sales Tax.

### Coffee County Schools:

- GW Carver Freshman Campus had a student who placed 9th in the nation this summer at the FBLA competition in Introduction to Technology Concepts. The student's name will be listed as a national winner in the Georgia FBLA Chapter Planning guide for the year as well as on the FBLA website.
- Additionally, the school received the Hollis & Kitty Guy Gold Seal Chapter Award of Merit for the year. This is only awarded to the top 15% of chapters nationwide. The competition was held in Anaheim, CA.
- The GW Carver Freshman Campus FCCLA students bring home their first National title from the National Leadership Conference in Nashville, TN. They received the following medals:
  - Gold medal in Chapter Showcase Display
  - Silver medal in Focus on Children
  - Bronze medal in Teach and Train.
  - Bronze medal in Promote and Publicize FCCLA
- One student was also selected to serve as a student leader in the competitive events. While at the conference, these students also participated in several hours of leadership training.

### Columbia County Schools:

- Evans, GA was named one of the top ten Best Towns for families in the Augusta issue of Family Circle, giving high marks for A-plus schools in Columbia County. The issue highlighted Raymond Gibbs, a Greenbrier High School graduate, who was admitted to the U.S. Naval Academy.
- Newsweek's 2009 list of America's Top Public High Schools named Lakeside High School one of the best high schools in the nation. Its ranking moved up from 1177 out of 1500 in 2008, to 318 out of 1500 in 2009.
- In 2008-2009, Columbia County School System received from system-wide business partners more than \$134,000 (\$49,400 cash and \$84,952 in-kind) for employee recognition programs.
- Columbia County celebrated the opening of its fifth high school – Grovetown High with a ceremony honoring Fort Gordon soldiers and the school mascot "Warriors".
- Grovetown High. Thanks to SPLOST, this high school opens without any debt to taxpayers! Of the \$39 million cost to build this new school, \$23 million was funded from local taxes.

### DeKalb County Schools:

- DeKalb County Schools is proud to announce that five of its schools were honored in Newsweek's, "Top of the Class", a ranking of the top 1,500 high schools across the country.
  - Tucker High School
  - Dunwoody High School
  - DeKalb School of the Arts
  - Lakeside High School
  - Chamblee High School
- Brian Seifried of Chamblee High School was one of four United States students chosen to compete at the International Chemistry Olympiad. Brian placed 37th in the world!
- Three DeKalb teachers were selected to participate in the 2009 Oxford Institute for Environmental Education, a prestigious professional development program for teachers in the biological and environmental sciences. Congratulations Ella Davis, Diedre Watkins, and Cheryl Whitefield!
- DCSS will implement the America's Choice comprehensive school reform program in 40 elementary, middle and high schools. DeKalb will utilize the Intensive Design and Rigor and Readiness programs, which are both designed to promote higher levels of critical thinking in under-performing students.
- DeKalb County School System (DCSS) will open two new schools in the 2009-2010 school year. Dunwoody Elementary School will serve 4th and 5th grade learners from three feeder elementary schools, and Arabia Mountain High School will host the Environmental and Engineering and Medical Magnet programs for students.
- The United States Department of Education awarded DCSS with a Teaching American History Grant totaling \$999,527. The grant will be used to support the SHIFT partnership, which consists of DCSS, Georgia State University, the Atlanta History Center, the Jimmy Carter Library and Museum, the Martin Luther King, Jr. National Historic site and others, in assisting in teaching the latest techniques and practices in American History education to DeKalb teachers.
- In July 2009, DeKalb County Schools released electronic copies of its one-stop shop for parents, the Parent Resource Guide. The guide gives comprehensive information on services and initiatives available to DeKalb students for all grade levels with topics ranging from HOPE Scholarship requirements to homebound instruction.
- The school system has completed updates on its Strategic Plan for 2009. The plan has been modified to address current trends and issues. The school system has set its objectives to address meeting AYP, ensuring financial stability, professional development and promoting a risk-free and effective learning environment.

- This year DCSS will begin its Parental Involvement Framework, which aims to get parents more involved in their child's education and school. The framework includes the Parent Resource Guide, e-Parent telecommunications notices, and a community resource website.
- Astronaut Shane Kimbrough visited Fernbank Science Center to speak with campers at Lockheed Aviation Camp and the general public. Lt. Col. Kimbrough presented experiences from his space shuttle mission and took time to talk with students, teachers and parents.
- Roger Gay, an environmental science and oceanography teacher at Dunwoody High School, completed training on sea turtles at the Sapelo Island National Estuarine Research Reserve. Mr. Gay learned about sea turtle conservation, management and research techniques and will use his knowledge to enhance learning in his classroom.

### Forsyth County Schools:

- All Forsyth County Schools and the district made AYP for 2009. This is joint accomplishment is the first in four years for FCS.
- The Forsyth County Board of Education voted to keep the district's millage rate at 15.395 mills for M&O and 1.418 for debt services on July 16, 2009. Even with the opening of five new schools and continued student enrollment, the district was able to cut costs to still maintain the lowest millage rate in metro-Atlanta. The current millage rate is even lower than it was 5 years ago.
- Forsyth County Schools is expanding educational opportunities for all students with the opening of the Academies of Creative Education. Housed behind the Board office, A.C.E. is home to Forsyth Academy, the district's non-traditional charter high school, Academy@Night and Gateway Academy, the system's restructured alternative program.
- The Forsyth County Board of Education approved the iQ Academy of Georgia charter petition to open the state's first K-12 virtual school serving students of Forsyth County and Georgia beginning 2010-2011 (pending State Board of Education approval). In partnering with a local newspaper, the district was able to produce a 52-page full color magazine for a third of the cost.
- 98 new educators have joined the Forsyth County Schools family for the new school year. Down from the 302 hired last year, the district was able to staff schools with over 400 internal transfers and reassignments of staff.
- Forsyth County Schools' first day of schools was August 10. The district, home to 35 schools, opened five new schools (three elementary, one middle and one high), the most in the history of the system. FCS has grown to 33,848 students, an increase of 1,364 from last year.

### Fulton County Schools:

- This school year, the Fulton County School System is launching a new initiative aimed at integrating science, technology, engineering and mathematics. The Fulton Institute of Technology – or FIT (pronounced like MIT, as in the Massachusetts Institute of Technology) – is a technical high school program that fuses practical and virtual learning opportunities to create a technology-rich learning environment. The first program offered through FIT is the Cisco Networking Academy.
- Fulton County Schools' Safety and Security Department was one of two school systems in Georgia to receive \$606,000 in federal funds from the Readiness and Emergency Management for Schools (REMS) discretionary grant program of the U.S. Department of Education.

### Houston County Schools:

- As of August 2009, Houston County's high school students will register for seven classes instead of six. The school day has been revised to better meet the State requirement that students must earn an additional credit to graduate.
- Beginning with the 2008-2009 freshman class, the State of Georgia increased from 22 to 23 the required credits to graduate. With a six-period day, students have the chance to earn 24 credits over four years in high school. A seven-period schedule allows students to earn as many as 28 credits by the end of their senior year.
- All 35 of Houston County's schools made AYP!

### Pelham City Schools:

- The Pelham Rotary Club recognized Pelham High School Secretary-Bookkeeper Carlos Sealy as the recipient of the Club's 2008-2009 Public Sector Courtesy Award.

### Rockdale County Schools:

- Rockdale County Public Schools has made AYP for its 4th consecutive year with 100% of its schools making AYP this year as well.
- Rockdale County Public Schools has achieved its highest graduation rate of 81.3% since NCLB accountability began. In addition, RCPS dropout rate is 2.7% and continues to decrease.

### Telfair County Schools:

- Mr. Cary A. Clark, Superintendent of Telfair County Schools, has announced that ALL Telfair County Schools attained AYP status in 2009.

### Washington County Schools:

- The Washington County School System closed three very old schools and opened Ridge Road Primary/Elementary School in July. Approximately 1400 students will enter the new facility August 10. The new school is the first to be built with ESPLOST money in the history of the county.
- Washington County High School Language Arts Teacher Stephanie Shelton was selected to teach at the Governor's Honors Program this summer. Ms. Shelton was also the 2009 STAR Teacher and was 2008 Teacher of the Year. Also, WCHS junior Taylor Sims was a student participant at Governor's Honors in the Communicative Arts program.