

# Rapport ONLINE

for Fulton County School System employees

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## We're proud of...



- **FCS employees** for their hard work and cooperation during the East Point chemical spill in mid-December. Seven schools were closed for a day, with several serving as shelters.
- **Esther Jackson ES faculty and staff**—attended a USO “Stuffed with Hugs” party at the Build-A-Bear Workshop in Northpoint Mall. Each staff member made, named and dressed a bear to benefit the children of fathers and mothers deployed in the military. The bears were given to children of U.S. Marines serving in the 4th Low Altitude Defense Battalion and Marine Air Wing 42 from the Naval Air Station in Smyrna.
- **Kim Feldman, Roswell HS English teacher**—recently received an honorable mention in the Kate and Paul Farmer Award competition. These annual awards are given to two teachers who publish articles in the *English Journal*. **Kim’s** article, “Teaching As Learning in a Yup’ik Eskimo Village” was judged one of the most outstanding articles written by a secondary school teacher.
- **Brookview ES**—recognized as one of two 90-90-90 schools in Georgia, based on calculations by the School Improvement Division of the Georgia Department of Education. That means that last year 90% or more of Brookview students were eligible for free or reduced lunch, 90% or more were non-white and 90% or more met or exceeded standards for state assessments.
- **River Trail MS**—one of two schools in Georgia recently recognized as a “Lighthouse School to Watch.” River Trail was selected by the Georgia Middle School Association and the Georgia Alliance for Middle Level Excellence as a middle school that is excelling and is a model for other schools seeking to improve. The school was recognized for its academic excellence, responsiveness to the needs and interests of young adolescents, commitment to helping all students achieve

at high levels, leadership and teaching staff, positive school climate, and commitment to assessment and accountability.

- **The 23 Fulton schools that, between them, were awarded more than \$240,000 in Fulton County School Art Program grants**—funded by the Fulton County Arts Council and the FCSS. The schools and their special arts programs are:
  - **Alpharetta ES** – Native American history in 3rd grade
  - **Barnwell ES** – enhancing writing through poetry in 4th and 5th grades
  - **Bear Creek MS** – writing skills and empathy for others taught through role-playing and character development in playwriting workshops
  - **Camp Creek MS** – creative writing in 8th grade
  - **Chattahoochee HS** – teaching about history and literature through art
  - **Cogburn Woods ES** – Native American culture and history in 3rd grade
  - **College Park ES** – teaching reading and writing through drama in pre-kindergarten and 1st grade
  - **Creekside HS** – creating and painting a science mural
  - **Gullatt ES** – creative writing for 3rd grade
  - **Hapeville ES** – creative writing workshops for 4th grade
  - **Hembree Springs ES** – improving writing skills through poetry in 4th grade
  - **Hamilton E. Holmes ES** – professional development program for teachers teaching in and through the arts for 40 high-risk students
  - **Holcomb Bridge MS** – creating a mural on planets and researching the mural with 6th grade science students

- **Independence HS** – learning through movement and enhancing writing skills through poetry
- **Mimosa ES** – enhancing mapping skills, social studies and art in 4th grade
- **Love T. Nolan ES** – enhancing language arts and social studies skills in 3rd grade
- **Riverwood HS** – creating a mural to celebrate diversity
- **Roswell North ES** – using drama to improve writing and reading
- **Sandtown MS** – history of the Harlem Renaissance through visual arts in 6th and 8th grades
- **Shakerag ES** – infusing arts into the curriculum in 2nd, 3rd and 4th grades
- **Tri-Cities HS** – using choral, orchestra, drama and dance students to perform a musical on the history of African-American music
- **Paul D. West MS** – creative writing in 8th grade
- **Woodland ES** – creating an interdisciplinary curriculum with music in grades 2-5

## Fulton Cares

Fulton students and employees are showing their compassion through thoughtful contributions to the tsunami relief efforts. The Riverwood HS Junior Class has donated their prom money. Since they were freshman, the Riverwood Class of 2006 has worked to pay for this year's Junior-Senior Prom. That money has now been contributed to the relief efforts. The student body is hopeful that area businesses will help out and that the prom will still be held, but they also believe this is a wonderful legacy for their class. The Fulton Employees Charitable Fund also contributed \$20,000 to the American Red Cross. For more examples of generous giving, go to our website, [www.fultonschools.org](http://www.fultonschools.org).

The Charitable Fund donation was made possible through generous giving by Fulton employees. This year's campaign exceeded all previous fundraising efforts, with \$423,442 being contributed, 2.5% more than last year.

The five schools and five departments making the largest contributions this year were:

Schools	Departments
Centennial (\$11,240)	Information Tech. (\$7,338)
Webb Bridge (\$9,354)	North Transportation (\$5,433)
Chattahoochee (\$8,576)	Human Resources (\$4,787)
Northwestern (\$8,437)	Curriculum & Instruct. (\$4,731)
Conley Hills (\$8,435)	North Maintenance (\$4,061)



## On the move

### Congratulations to...

- New Esther Jackson ES principal **Connie Coles**. Connie, formerly Assistant Principal at Holcomb Bridge MS, takes the helm from retiring Jackson Principal **Beth Longshore**.



### Farewell to...

- **Lani Ray**, Student Discipline Coordinator, and **Jean Hickman**, Palmetto ES Assistant Principal, who are both retiring on March 31.

## Coming up...

**JANUARY 14 – FEBRUARY 11:** FCSS staff and parents are invited to review a textbook, "Those Who Can, Teach" for a new course to be piloted at Banneker, Creekside, Independence, Northview, Roswell and Westlake high schools in August 2005. The course, *Introduction to Teaching*, will focus on the role of the professional educator; social, historical and ethical perspectives of public education, and the use of current technologies related to effective teaching. The textbook will be on display at the Administrative Center and at Independence HS.

**JANUARY 27: The Governor Invites you to a Community Conversation**—Governor Sonny Perdue and State School Superintendent Kathy Cox want to know how you define "excellence" in education.

On January 27th, Governor Sonny Perdue and State Superintendent of Schools Kathy Cox will lead a statewide "Community Conversation" that aims to create Georgia's definition of educational excellence. Twenty public schools around the state, including Fulton's Tri-Cities High and Chattahoochee High, will simultaneously serve as sites for this landmark engagement that will have parents, business leaders, community members, educators and others talking about what makes a public school great. They'll also discuss the current state of public education in Georgia and what needs to be done to help Georgia lead the nation in improving student achievement.

### How You Can Participate

There are three ways to participate in the statewide Community Conversation:

1. **In Person** - by attending the event held locally at **Tri-Cities High or Chattahoochee High**. The event

takes place on January 27th from 6:45-9:00 p.m. Doors open at 6:15 p.m. for seating on a first come first served basis. An opening 30-minute program, featuring the Governor and Superintendent Cox, will be broadcast to all locations via Georgia Public Broadcasting. **So that we can have an idea of how many people to expect, we ask that you email [elliottl@fultonschools.org](mailto:elliottl@fultonschools.org) and let us know which location you will attend.**

2. **Online** - by visiting the [www.ie2.org](http://www.ie2.org) website to watch the conversation and email comments.
3. **By Mail** - after watching the broadcast on Georgia Public Television beginning at 7:00 p.m. More information will be shared during the telecast.

Every citizen has the opportunity to participate in this landmark discussion of what educational excellence means to Georgians. All input will be used as the Governor's Education Finance Task Force works to determine the future of financing education in Georgia.

**MARCH 12:** Parent University at Sandy Springs MS.

**MARCH 25** and **MAY 7:** Job fairs for prospective teachers at the Georgia International Convention Center.

## In the news...

- **Fulton's pass rate on the high school writing exam keeps climbing** – Our school system's trend of high scores on state-mandated assessments continued this year with a 96% overall



passing rate on the writing section of the Georgia High School Graduation Test (GHSGT). Eleven of our 14 high schools reported more than 90% of students passing the exam on their first try. One high school – Northview – reported 100% of its students passing the test.

Results show that 96% of our 4,496 test-takers passed the test in 2004, an increase of 1% from 2003. The mean scale score increased from 532 in 2003 to 534 in 2004, which exceeded the state's mean scale score of 526 and 94% pass rate.

Our county has consistently scored above the state and equal to or above the metro Atlanta average since 1994. There has been little change in the system scores over the past five years.

Eleventh grade students participate in the writing section of the GHSGT, which is a state requirement to achieve a high school diploma. Students are asked to write a response to one on-demand persuasive writing topic. The two-hour test requires students to write a composition

of up to two pages on an assigned topic. The test is administered several times a year so that students have five opportunities to take the test before the end of the 12th grade. However, the scores reported are for first-time test-takers.

School-by-school results of the fall 2004 GHSGT writing portion, and system and school scores 2000 through 2004 are available on our web site.

- **Fulton County in local magazines' "best of" lists** – *Atlanta* magazine and *Points North* magazine recently released editions highlighting education and the area's top schools – and the FCSS dominated both publications as leaders in education.

The January 2005 issue of *Atlanta* focuses on top high schools in the 13-county metro area. Of the 40 public and private schools profiled, six were from Fulton County – the most of any school system on the list.

The magazine named its Top 10 schools in five categories – Language Arts, Sports, Arts, Science/Math and All-Around (achieving in all four areas). To select the schools, the magazine analyzed SAT scores, magnet program/International Baccalaureate and Advanced Placement offerings, special facilities, clubs and extracurricular activities, and recent state and national awards.

**Chattahoochee HS** and **Northview HS** were profiled in the Language Arts category, and **North Springs HS** was named among the top schools in the Arts. **North Springs** and **Roswell** high schools were also named front-runners in the Science/Math category. **Centennial HS** and **Milton HS** were named All-Around schools.

*Atlanta* magazine also identified several middle schools as "Junior Achievers," junior schools that stood out in the same subjects. **Fulton Science Academy**, the only public middle school on the list, was named the Math/Science Junior Achiever.

In its January 2005 issue, *Points North* magazine, which serves communities north of Atlanta, named **Centennial**, **Chattahoochee**, **Roswell**, **Northview**, **North Springs**, **Milton** and **Riverwood** high schools to the magazine's list of "Top 27 High Schools in the Northside." The magazine used SAT and Georgia High School Graduation Test scores, as well as student-to-teacher ratios, to determine the list.

**Mountain Park**, **Esther Jackson**, **Dolvin**, **Shakerag** and **Crabapple Crossing** elementary schools and **Webb Bridge**, **Taylor Road**, **Haynes Bridge** and **Northwestern** middle schools were also named high achievers. The elementary and middle schools were cited for high scores on state standardized tests.

# Growing from good to great in Fulton County

**Editor's note:** One way for us—as individuals and as a school system—to move from good to great is to use our resources wisely. And one of the most important resources—and the one we can never change—is time. Following are tips for effective use of your time from the Nebraska Cooperative Extension Service.

1. **Spend Time Planning And Organizing.** Using time to think and plan is time well-spent. If you fail to take time for planning, you are, in effect, planning to fail. Organize in a way that makes sense to you.
2. **Set Goals.** Goals give your life, and the way you spend your time, direction. Set goals which are specific, measurable, realistic and achievable. Your optimum goals are those which cause you to "stretch" but not "break" as you strive for achievement. Goals can give creative people a much-needed sense of direction.
3. **Prioritize.** Use the 80-20 Rule originally stated by Italian economist Vilfredo Pareto who noted that 80% of the reward comes from 20% of the effort. The trick to prioritizing is to isolate and identify that valuable 20%. Once identified, prioritize time to concentrate your work on those items with the greatest reward.
4. **Use A To Do List.** Some people thrive using a daily To Do list, which they construct either the last thing the previous day or first thing in the morning. Such people may combine a To Do list with a calendar or schedule. Others prefer a "running" To Do list which is continuously being updated. Or, you may prefer a combination of the two previously described To Do lists. Whatever method works is best for you.
5. **Be Flexible.** Allow time for interruptions and distractions. Time management experts often suggest planning for just 50% or less of one's time. With only 50% of your time planned, you will have the flexibility to handle interruptions and the unplanned "emergency." When you expect to be interrupted, schedule routine tasks. Save (or make) larger blocks of time for your priorities.
6. **Consider Your Biological Prime Time.** That's the time of day when you are at your best. Are you a "morning person," a "night owl" or a late afternoon "whiz?" Knowing when your best time is and planning to use that time of day for your priorities (if possible) is effective time management.
7. **Do The Right Thing Right.** Noted management expert Peter Drucker says "doing the right thing is more important than doing things right." Doing the right thing is effectiveness; doing things right is efficiency. Focus first on effectiveness (identifying what is the right thing to do), then concentrate on efficiency (doing it right).
8. **Eliminate the Urgent.** Urgent tasks have short-term consequences while important tasks are those with long-term, goal-related implications. Work towards reducing the urgent things you must do so you'll have time for your important priorities.
9. **Practice the Art of Intelligent Neglect.** Eliminate from your life trivial tasks or those tasks which do not have long-term consequences for you. Can you delegate or eliminate any of your To Do list? Work on those tasks that you alone can do.
10. **Avoid Being a Perfectionist.** In the Malaysian culture, only the gods are considered capable of producing anything perfect. Whenever something is made, a flaw is left on purpose so the gods will not be offended. Yes, some things need to be closer to perfect than others, but perfectionism, paying unnecessary attention to detail, can be a form of procrastination.
11. **Conquer Procrastination.** One technique to try is the "Swiss cheese" method described by Alan Lakein. When you are avoiding something, break it into smaller tasks and do just one of the smaller tasks or set a timer and work on the big task for just 15 minutes. By doing a little at a time, eventually you'll reach a point where you'll want to finish.
12. **Learn to Say "No."** Such a small word—and so hard to say. Focusing on your goals may help. Blocking time for important, but often not scheduled, priorities such as family and friends can also help. But first you must be convinced that you and your priorities are important—that seems to be the hardest part in learning to say "no." Once convinced of their importance, saying "no" to the unimportant in life gets easier.
13. **Reward Yourself.** Even for small successes, celebrate achievement of goals. Promise yourself a reward for completing each task or finishing the total job. Then keep your promise to yourself and indulge in your reward. Doing so will help you maintain the necessary balance in life between work and play.

## F.I.Y. (Fulton Information for You)

### *Building program awaits audit findings*

At its January meeting, the Board of Education approved a moratorium on all new construction projects until the results of a forensic audit being conducted by Kessler International are received. The Board expects the audit to be ready by next month. Kessler is taking an extensive, comprehensive look at four projects—Alpharetta HS, Freemanville Road HS site, Sandtown MS, and North Springs HS—to determine if cost overruns could have been prevented and to make recommendations/suggestions for the future.

The Kessler audit is independent of another SLOST audit that also is underway by the firm of Clement and Wynn. The SPLOST audit is required by state law. Clement & Wynn presented their preliminary findings in January with the final report expected in February. Many of the recommendations made by Clement & Wynn, including changes in accounting procedures, have already been identified and are being addressed by Parsons, an internationally-recognized construction management firm that has been hired by the system to oversee its capital program.

Parsons has assured the Board that a 30-day moratorium will have minimal impact on our capital program; however, a longer-term moratorium would probably delay the completion of several projects.

## School Board in action

### *New Board officers, new member take seats at January meetings*

District 3 Board member **Gail Dean** was elected Board President for a two-year term at the pre-board meeting on January 11. Outgoing Board President



**Katie Reeves**, who represents District 2, was elected to a one-year term as Vice President.

The January 11 meeting also was the first official Board meeting for **Linda Schultz**, who replaces outgoing member **Ron Jackson** in District 1.

Linda Schultz is a past PTSA president for Roswell HS, Crabapple MS and Mountain Park ES, and a former legislative chair for the Georgia PTA and North Fulton Council of PTAs. She also has been a Local School Advisory Council (LSAC) member at Roswell HS and sat on several school system committees. She currently works as director of technology for the Georgia School Council Institute.

### *At its January 11 and 13 meetings, the Board of Education...*

- Approved personnel items (see *On the move...*, page 2)
- Established a moratorium on new construction projects (see *F.I.Y.*)
- Approved charter school petitions for Dunwoody Springs ES and Technology Enriched Accelerated Charter High (TEACH)
- Adopted new music, art and drama textbooks.

### *Upcoming Board meetings*

...**January 27, 4:30 p.m.**—Board roundtable, Administrative Center

...**February 8, 4:30 p.m.**—Pre-Board meeting, TBD

...**February 10, 5 p.m.**—Board workshop, Dunwoody Springs ES

...**February 10, 6:30 p.m.**—Board meeting, Dunwoody Springs ES

The 2004-05 calendar of Board meetings, workshops and roundtables can be found on the county web site under the Board button at the top of the front page. Please check the web site frequently for updates.

*Rapport ONLINE is produced every two weeks during the school year and once a month during the summer by the Fulton County Schools Communications Department. For comments, questions or to submit information: Mitzi Edge, 404.763.6830 or edgem@fultonschools.org.*

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