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# News Release

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## Fulton County Schools embraces buses as “rolling classrooms”

Literacy, as always, is a big push for Fulton County Schools (FCS). The Transportation Department, eager to help the district meet its goals, has developed an intriguing new “rolling classroom” approach. The literacy goal supporting the Student Achievement pillar of FCS's Strategic Plan is for third-grade students to recognize 250-300 words by sight by the end of third grade. For the new school year, School Nutrition and Transportation have started a sight word program to help boost students' reading ability.

Each week, a new sight word will be chosen from a list suggested by High Point Elementary principal Carrie Pitchford, and signs will be posted. Magnetic signs with the week's word will be posted at the front of the bus for each week, then moved to the ceiling of the bus as the next week's word is posted. The same sight word will also be posted in cafeteria serving lines. Bus drivers and School Nutrition staff will interact with students on sight word recognition.

The weekly sight words are broken up into three 12-week periods, with the words getting slightly more complicated as the year goes on. Sight words at the beginning of the year include *the*, *and*, *it*, *you*, and *me*; the final 12-week period includes words like *walk*, *above*, *mother*, and *think*. “The sight words are good, especially for the younger students. But it's also a good way for the older kids to prove what they already know,” said Samantha Thomas, FCS bus driver.

For now, this pilot version of the program covers four elementary schools: High Point, Esther Jackson, Mimosa, and Asa Hilliard. A survey will be done in November to get feedback on the program from teachers and students.

Vickie Cross, Director of Transportation Operations, was inspired to start the program while reading Nancy Drew with her grand-daughter, and the idea was quickly embraced by her colleagues. “Buses are the hallways to the classroom,” said Sam Ham, Executive Director of Transportation Services. “This initiative dove-tails naturally with student achievement.”

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**About the Fulton County School System.** The Fulton County School System is the fourth largest school system in Georgia. More than 95,000 students attend 106 schools in the cities of Alpharetta, Chattahoochee Hills, College Park, East Point, Fairburn, Hapeville, Johns Creek, Milton, Mountain Park, Palmetto, Roswell, Sandy Springs, South Fulton and Union City.