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News Release

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Spalding Drive Elementary School students learn science core concepts with science author and educator

Spalding Drive Elementary School students were encouraged to do some fun and risky science experiments at home - under adult supervision, of course. After a presentation called “Try this at Home: Discover the Science Hidden in Everyday Materials!” by renowned science author and presenter Jodi Wheeler-Toppen, students realized science is fun and experiments can safely and easily be done at home. From demonstrations on chemistry basics such as how heat from a flame interacts with gases (in a balloon) to the physics behind motion when a basketball is dropped, students were exposed to foundational concepts that can kickstart science literacy.

Wheeler-Toppen, who has a doctorate in physics and is also a mother of two, has a passion for helping young people become confident science readers and writers. As a promoter of science literacy, she educates students and teachers alike through her engaging school assemblies, workshops and staff development. Her goal is to boost excitement about core science concepts. “It is important to me that my shows are not magic shows. I want the kids to understand the science behind why the cool thing happened.”

Spalding Drive students learned how to do simple experiments that will build a foundation of conceptual learning in preparation for middle and high school science courses as well as create more scientific curiosity. The tie-ins to Fulton County Schools’ Strategic Plan for increasing Student Achievement as well as Spalding Drive’s strategic goals are a perfect fit.

Spalding Drive Principal Lynn Johnson said, “The great thing about having an author who supports literacy is that it ties to two areas of focus for our school. As an elementary school, we want to first work on the foundations of learning, especially reading. We also have a fantastic STEM Lab and clearly a need for our students to be prepared with STEM strategies in order to be prepared for their future. Combining literacy with science is a fantastic way to bring both focus areas together.”

An author of numerous research-based, science activity books and curriculum guides, Wheeler-Toppen is known for her series “Once Upon a Science Book,” which provides teacher resources on integrating reading and science in conjunction with the National Science Teachers Association.

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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.