

News Release

For Immediate Release

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Westlake High School to host social-emotional health forum tonight

Tonight, Westlake High School will host a special forum to educate parents and the community about the social-emotional health of students. The event is 6 – 8 p.m. in the school’s auditorium.

Designed to provide resources and information, the forum will feature guest speakers from local mental health organizations such as Chris 180, Family Ties, Inc., and Odyssey Counseling as well as licensed professional counselor Latricia Pitts who practices in the South Fulton area.

Keynote speaker Mark Lawrence from Stomp the Stigma also will share ways the community can collaborate to remove the negative associations surrounding mental health issues. Stomp the Stigma is a national organization that works to bring awareness to mental health challenges while finding solutions through open dialogue.

School Board President Linda Bryant and District 6 Board Member Kimberly Dove will open the forum, followed by remarks from South Learning Center Area Superintendent Gyimah Whitaker. Chelsea Montgomery, executive director of the school system’s Counseling, Psychological, and Social Work Services department, then will share information about Fulton’s approach to Social-Emotional Learning programs and introduce Mark Lawrence for the keynote address.

Social-Emotional Learning programs are in many Fulton schools to support students’ development as well as personal safety and good decision-making. Some of the supports include launching a “Text 4 Help” pilot where students can use an app to be connected anonymously with a licensed mental health professional; partnering with mental health agencies; offering specialized education and awareness training to those who work with children and youth; and employing counselors, school social workers, school psychologists and behavior specialists that are trained to identify and refer students who may be experiencing mental health, social or behavioral issues. This school year, 10 additional school social workers were hired to specifically work with schools in addressing students’ social-emotional learning needs.

Following Lawrence’s address, Montgomery will lead a panel discussion with Chris 180, Family Ties, Inc., Odyssey Counseling, and Latricia Pitts, LPC.

Westlake High School is located at 2400 Union Road SW in Atlanta.

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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.