News Release

Fulton County Schools Chief Information Officer wins international award

Serena Sacks, Chief Information Officer of Fulton County Schools (FCS), recently won the prestigious Woman of the Year Award, presented by Women in IT, a professional association for women in the technology industry. Part of a global award series, the event is one of the world's largest technology diversity events and was held in March at the 2019 Women in IT Summit in New York City. The award is given to a woman who "has demonstrated the highest degree of IT excellence, innovation and leadership in the last year, and (who has) shone a light on the great things women in IT can achieve." According to their website, candidates should not only have demonstrated outstanding business- and/or technology-focused achievements, but also acted as a positive role model and actively sought to bring more diversity to the technology industry.

Sacks joined FCS as the Chief Information Officer (CIO) in 2014, and under her leadership in just five years, the Technology Division has enabled the district to achieve significant gains in student achievement, graduation rates, and cultural synergy. An experienced business and technology professional with over 30 years of experience and a passion for personalized learning (customized learning to individual students' needs and skills), Sacks has taken the district's IT system to a whole new level. Her strategy to break old-school models and use new technologies contributed to retooling the infrastructure, student mobile devices, digital curriculum, online formative and summative assessments and real-time analytic dashboards to better engage students and extend teachers' reach. Working on dual paths, she bolstered the infrastructure to improve stability and scalability while implementing new instructional technologies for digital classrooms. Successful enhancements include 10,000 wireless access points, a new redundant-wide area network, a new virtualized fault-tolerant data center, 10 GB scalable pipes for each of our 100 schools, multiple layers and types of security to keep students and data safe, 8,000 interactive projectors, and 70,000 student mobile devices.

The IT Division is a major service provider to all stakeholders within the Fulton County School (FCS) system and supports mission-critical processes and technology services. As a bellwether district, Fulton's success translates into solutions for other districts across the country.

According to Women in IT, the percentage of female IT leadership globally remains at nine percent – a figure that has changed very little in the past few years despite one third of organizations claiming to have diversity initiatives. The Women in IT Awards series aims to tackle this issue and redress the gender imbalance by showcasing the achievement of women in the sector and identifying new role models.

"I was so humbled and honored to win 'Woman of the Year'!" said Sacks. "This recognition validates our team's work to support each and every student so they can find their individual gifts and achieve their dreams."

Sacks is also the recipient of the Georgia CIO Leadership Association's 2017 CIO of the Year, and the 2015 Woman of the Year award by the Women in Technology, a chapter of Technology Association of Georgia.

Additionally, as a cancer survivor, Sacks is a role model on a personal level. During the 40 weeks of chemotherapy, she never lost focus on her IT team nor the district's students, even using technology to attend meetings remotely via a "robot" when unable to travel. Her example has inspired hope, resiliency, and has firmly established the family culture of her 250-person team.

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.