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News Release

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Fulton County School System is ready to open August 12

The 2019-2020 school year starts on Monday, August 12, for thousands of children in Fulton County.

The Fulton County School System continues to be the fourth largest school district in Georgia with a projected 2019-2020 enrollment of approximately 93,500 students. The system includes 106 schools – 59 elementary schools, 19 middle schools, 18 high schools and 10 start-up charter schools.

Photo Opportunities

Bus Driver Preparation. School buses are hitting the streets this week as drivers perform bus readiness checks and conduct 1,600+ practice runs to fine-tune delivery schedules.

Teachers' Pre-Planning Week. Also this week, teachers are reporting back to school to prepare for the new year. They will meet with their leadership teams, receive school-specific training, prepare class rolls and decorate their classrooms.

Personnel

New Superintendent. Dr. Mike Looney joined Fulton County Schools in June after recently serving as Superintendent of Williamson County Schools in Tennessee. He was named Superintendent of the Year in 2015 by the Tennessee Organization of School Superintendents and previously was superintendent of the Butler County School District in Alabama. A public educator since 1994, Dr. Looney has served in the roles of classroom teacher, assistant principal and principal, and before that was a finance manager for a privately held corporation in Alabama.

Dr. Looney is a military veteran, having served in the United States Marine Corps, and became a teacher after a chance substitute teaching job led him to find a passion for educating others. He often speaks of his challenges growing up – homelessness, dyslexia and ADHD – and how they help him connect with students. His experiences also have laid a foundation for how he believes educators should positively interact with students, their families, and each other.

Additional Teachers and New School Leaders. By the summer's end, Fulton County Schools will have welcomed more than 600 new teachers for 2019-2020. This will bring the district's total teaching force to approximately 7,000.

Retirements and promotions also have led to changes in school leadership:

New Elementary School Principals

Hamilton E. Holmes Elementary School.....	Adrienne Grainger-Smith
Love T. Nolan Elementary School.....	Latrina Coxton
Oakley Elementary School.....	Estella Cooke
Ocee Elementary School.....	Kerri-Ann Williams
Parklane Elementary School.....	Antwayne Sanders
Randolph Elementary School.....	Marissa Wilson
Vickery Mill Elementary School.....	Susan Walker

New Middle School Principals

Elkins Pointe Middle School.....	Damian Bounds
Northwestern Middle School.....	Joel Peterson
Sandtown Middle School.....	LaToya Miley

New High School Principals

Chattahoochee High School.....	Michael Todd
Langston Hughes High School.....	Charles Chester
Riverwood High School.....	Kindra Smith
Tri-Cities High School.....	Shateena Love
Innovation Academy (opens 2021).....	Tim Duncan

Academics

Media Center Renovations. Six middle schools – Camp Creek, Holcomb Bridge, Hopewell, Northwestern, Paul D. West and Webb Bridge – are debuting renovated media centers that incorporate the latest in innovative learning thanks to SPLOST, the one-penny education sales tax. Over the summer, the media centers were gutted and reimaged to fit with how today’s students work together, study, and interact socially.

With every FCS middle school student now issued a mobile device, the media centers have taken a page from the Apple playbook and added a ‘genius bar’-like station to the circulation desk. This becomes a place where students can go for help with their device or to find other resources. Books still fill the library shelves, but the racks themselves have become smaller since large collections – like encyclopedia sets – are quickly outdated. The leftover space is now used to create more collaborative spaces with soft and moveable furniture groupings, all more conducive to teamwork. Interactive whiteboards and wall-mounted interactive screens are placed throughout the space, and small break-out rooms allow students to work together or study independently.

Student Success Skills. Fulton County Schools is committed to preparing well-balanced students who are ready to succeed on their chosen path when they graduate. To support this commitment, FCS has developed a Social and Emotional Learning (SEL) approach, with one component of that approach being six research-based Student Success Skills (SSS) that will be integrated into student learning throughout the district over the next two school years. The skills are: Sense of Belonging, Self-Awareness, Self-Management, Social Competence, Collaborative Problem-Solving, and Reflective Learning Strategies.

Students First, Safety First Education Campaigns. FCS remains focused on identifying the needs of students and then developing resources that raise awareness, educate and provide intervention where needed. This school year, several “Students First, Safety First” education campaigns will focus on awareness and education for Vaping/E-Cigarettes and Sexting/Social Media.

Sight Words for Elementary School Buses. Bus drivers are helping young students learn to read by continuing a project started last school year. Each week, a magnetic sign containing a sight word – which is a word or phrase that new readers can memorize and recognize on sight – is posted at the front of the bus. Once the week is over, the word is moved to the ceiling of the bus and a magnetic sign with the next week’s sight word is posted. The project began with four schools but was so successful that it was expanded to include all elementary schools this school year.

Phonics Comparison Study. FCS is in the second year of a three-year study to determine the optimal way to teach young students how to read and write. Nearly 130 teachers at 10 schools completed two different phonics trainings and will be gathering data on the long-term student performance in each of two models – one developed by Fulton County Schools and the other created by the Orton-Gillingham Approach.

Flexible Learning Environments. FCS has re-envisioned its open-campus high schools, McClarin and Independence, to offer students more flexible learning options. Using a blend of face-to-face and online experiences, students now can take more time to work on a topic if needed or can move ahead if the standards are already mastered. These programs support students who wish to accelerate their graduation plans as well as those who need to get back on track for graduation.

Technology

Infinite Campus. Fulton County Schools is now using Infinite Campus, a trusted name in student information that serves more than 1 million students in Georgia alone. The Campus Parent and Campus Student components of Infinite Campus are replacing Home Access Center and the Student Access Center, that were used in FCS’ former student information system, eSchoolPlus. Over the summer, district and school teams seamlessly migrated all student records to the new system, but parents must create new accounts to access the Campus Parent portal and mobile app. Once signed up, parents can receive school announcements and view their child’s grades, attendance, assignments and class schedule.

New FCS Mobile App. Fulton County Schools is launching a new version of its popular mobile app. Last year, FCS began using a new platform to create school websites and also moved its district website, emergency notification messaging, and mobile app to the new system. The old app has been retired, so parents need to download the new version to find calendars, news, events and reminders in one convenient location. The app is available through the Apple App Store and Google Play Store.

Here Comes the Bus App. This is the first full school year that Fulton County Schools will offer “Here Comes the Bus,” a free app that allows parents and students to track their school bus using GPS technology. Similar to ride-sharing apps, the bus shows up as an icon on a map, and users can follow its progress as it moves toward the bus stop. The program is available on www.herecomesthebus.com or through the Apple or Google app stores. To sign up, parents enter their child’s last name and student ID number, which is available from the school and is the same number used to view their academic information online (Infinite Campus) and school meal programs (MyPaymentsPlus). Fulton County Schools’ code – 87428 – also is needed. After completing a brief user profile, the app is ready to use.

Safety

Additional Police Officers. Sixteen new police officers have been added to the FCS School Police Department to establish patrols at elementary schools. Although middle and high school assigned officers will still maintain

their elementary assignments, these additional patrol functions allow for overlapping coverage and an increased police presence in the school community.

New Safety Trainings. Through a grant awarded by Fulton County Government, officers from the FCS Police Department were trained this summer on adolescent mental health challenges. Hosted by the National Association of School Resource Officers, the two-day training gave officers skills to proactively spot the signs of distress as well as how to assist and respond to students needing help.

Social Media Monitoring. The school system's Department of Safety & Security monitors public information posted on social media through a solution known as Social Asset Management System (SAMS). This helps safety personnel assess any potential threats made to FCS schools or facilities and allows for monitoring of national events that might have an impact locally. Having this information in a timely manner better enables FCS emergency responders to investigate and react.

Emergency Operations Center now 24/7. The school system's Emergency Operations Center is now manned 24 hours a day by live personnel. Although the center was always functional after-hours through remote viewing of video surveillance systems, additional personnel have been added to increase monitoring. This is an extra level of security support and officer safety, as personnel can easily view security cameras at each school and other district facilities. Information is then relayed directly to any school police officers who are on duty and responding to a call for service.

Safety and Security Assessments. Using a portion of Governor Kemp's \$30,000 school security grant, all Fulton County schools and facilities are undergoing comprehensive, site-specific safety and security assessments to make emergency processes even better. Reports will not be shared publicly to protect details of the safety plans, but the overall assessments are anticipated to be formalized and returned to the school district this winter. The remainder of the grant will be used to implement recommended improvements as identified by the assessments.

Installation of Security Surveillance Systems. Seventeen additional schools are being outfitted this school year with Avigilon security surveillance systems. Cameras are being upgraded to Avigilon in every school over five phases, with 17 schools updated in Phase I, 18 in Phase II, and 14 in Phase III. All remaining schools will be added in Phases IV and V until each have the new system.

These Avigilon systems are a key part of creating a districtwide culture of safety by allowing leadership and security teams to be more proactive. Facilities can be monitored with laser sharp accuracy via desktop computers, monitoring stations and mobile devices, and the system's artificial intelligence component allows an "appearance search" function. This uses a physical description to search for a person by selecting certain specific characteristics, including clothing color and gender. It also can use the characteristics of a person's face, enabling the technology to search for the same person, even if items such as their clothing change over time. This type of technology is currently used at many of the nation's major airports as well as other highly secured environments.

Bag Tags for Elementary Bus Riders. To improve student safety, each elementary student will be given a tag for their bookbag as they are leaving their bus on the first day of school. This tag has their bus ID as well as an animal/color, so in the afternoons, the student can easily match it with the corresponding sign on the outside of their bus. Along with route sheets containing student names, this bag tag will help drivers identify that the right students are on the right bus.

SPLOST-Funded Construction and Maintenance Projects

This is the biggest summer renovation program in Fulton County Schools history, with projects completed this

summer estimated to be around \$90 million – an expenditure of about a million dollars a day. Thanks to SPLOST, the one-penny education sales tax, 40 schools received interior and exterior facelifts this summer as well as health and safety upgrades, security enhancements, and physical education improvements.

Construction and Maintenance Projects. Major renovation projects occurred at 10 schools with a few of the more intensive school-wide renovation projects including Campbell Elementary School, Webb Bridge Middle School and Roswell High School.

- Campbell Elementary School had sewer lines replaced in several hallways and new interior doors, classroom and corridor flooring, painting, replacement of acoustical ceiling tile, new plumbing fixtures, and some exterior lighting were completed.
- Webb Bridge Middle School’s media center was completely redesigned to be more technology- and collaboration-focused, and new ceiling tile, flooring and lighting were installed in selected classrooms and corridors. The HVAC system and emergency generator were replaced, and modifications were made to the sprinkler system. New bathroom fixtures, drinking fountains, and cabinetry were updated throughout the school, and in the gym, new bleachers were added. Outside, lighting was upgraded in parking lots and improvements were made to the grounds for better site drainage.
- At Roswell High School, 10 student restrooms were fully renovated, interior/exterior doors and door hardware were replaced, and new cabinets and countertops were mounted. Flooring and ceilings were replaced in some parts of the building as well as several window blinds, marker boards and tack boards. New flat roofing also was replaced, and in the auditorium, a new wooden stage floor, orchestra pit floor, track lighting and new seating were installed. Science labs were updated with new eye wash stations and the main gym received new bleachers.

Riverwood High School Construction. Riverwood High School is completing Phase II of a multi-year construction project to replace the school. This summer, construction crews are completing a new cafeteria, a new media center, and additional instructional spaces. With the addition of 41 new classrooms in Phase II, construction of the school’s core academic space is now complete. The final phase begins later this school year and will include the performing arts and health/physical education program.

Synthetic Turf and Track Replacements. Turf and track replacements occurred at five schools due to the natural lifespan of the existing materials coming to an end: Tri-Cities High School (track and turf replacement), Benjamin Banneker High School (turf replacement), Johns Creek High School (turf replacement), Milton High School (track replacement) and North Springs High School (track and turf replacement).

Playground Upgrades. Playground upgrades were completed at Cogburn Woods, High Point, Shakerag and Wilson Creek elementary schools.

Bus Transportation

Bus Fleet Ready to Roll. Fulton County Schools’ Transportation Department will have around 770 buses rolling out on the first day of school. Seventy-eight new drivers were hired to meet the staffing targets set for the new year, ensuring that every FCS bus has an assigned driver.

New Propane-Powered Buses with Seat Belts. With a total of 316 propane-powered buses, Fulton County has the largest propane school bus fleet in the nation. Over the summer, 121 aging, diesel-fueled buses were retired and replaced with the new propane models. These were funded through SPLOST, the one-penny sales tax for education, as well as federal and state DERA (Diesel Emissions Reduction Act) grants and rebates. The buses also are equipped with three-point seat belts and are 75% cleaner than current emission standards. An estimated annual maintenance cost savings of \$3,000 per bus allows the Transportation budget to be reduced by \$360,000 so those funds can be put back toward classrooms.

School Nutrition

School Kitchens Heating Up. The School Nutrition Program will have all 95 commercial kitchens operating on the first day of school so that students can receive breakfast, lunch, and snacks. Approximately 71,000 meals will be served every day this school year.

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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 93,000 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.