



News Release

**For Immediate Release
October 28, 2019**

For More Information Contact
Brian Noyes or Shumuriel Ratliff, Communications Department
470-254-6830 or communications@fultonschools.org

News to Know for the week of October 28 - Nov 1

Special Observances for October

National Principals Month, an opportunity to recognize and celebrate principals for their hard work and dedication, concludes in October. It's not too late to tell your favorite Principal that you appreciate them.

Fulton County Schools Outshines State on CCRPI and Climate Star Results

The annual **College and Career Ready Performance Index (CCRPI)** is compiled by the Georgia Department of Education (GADOE) using scores on a 0 to 100 scale from multiple indicators within five main components: Content Mastery, Progress, Closing Gaps, Readiness and Graduation Rates (high school only). According to data released by the state October 25, Fulton County Schools' overall score in 2019 increased to 83.8, which is 7.0 points above the state average. Fulton County Schools ranked above the state average in all grade levels. "This is a dramatic achievement with gains in all levels and across the district. Our CCRPI and Climate Star rankings reflect great work by our professional teachers, principals and staff," said Cliff Jones, Chief Academic Officer. Driving the growth was an overall improvement across the district with a total of 67 schools showing increases; 19 schools posting double-digit gains. The biggest gains were accomplished by Cliftondale Elementary School, which increased 23.3 points, and Woodland Middle School with an increase of 21.2 points.

FCS to Expand Text4Help to Middle Schools

Text4Help, a program for teens in crisis to anonymously find resources and support, will be expanded to Fulton County Schools (FCS) middle schools. Launched in 2018 in cooperation with Fulton County Government, the

program is an anonymous crisis text line aimed at providing a valuable resource for students seeking support or an outlet to share concerns. The program allows teens facing stress or in crisis to reach a licensed clinician who will respond within three minutes, 24 hours a day, seven days a week. The program was initially launched in FCS high schools now, one year after its launch, the program will be expanded to students in middle schools. Fulton County Government and FCS were the first in the Southeast to launch the Text4Help program.

Save the Date

College Park Elementary will present Candy Land Literacy Night October 29 at 5:30 p.m. All parents, friends and families are invited. For more information contact simmonss@fultonschools.org or 470-254-8040.

Red Ribbon Week, a reminder to stay drug free, is October 23-31. The theme this year is "Send a Message. Stay Drug Free." Fulton County Schools counselors, psychologists and social workers are sending a message by providing buttons, pins and information on making healthy and safe choices. Students will be able to participate in campaigns to bring awareness, from wearing a certain color of clothing to video contests to canned food drives ("I CAN, You CAN, Be Drug Free"). For more information on this national initiative, [click here](#).

October 31 is a costume day in many FCS elementary schools but with a literary twist. **Heards Ferry, Woodland, Ison Springs and High Point elementary Schools** will celebrate Storybook Character Day by dressing as their favorite book character. Character Day parades will be held at **Spalding Drive** and **Summit Hill**, the latter of which **Dr. Mike Looney** will serve as grand marshal. Joining Dr. Looney at Summit Hill to help lead the parade will be Board Members Katha Stuart and Katie Reeves as well the Northwest Learning Community Area Superintendent Kibbey Crumbley. Teachers and students will be dressed as characters. Dr. Looney and his team will award the grade level that best represents their characters. For extra spirit, the Cambridge High School pep band will play, and Milton High School cheer leaders will be energy producers. The parade is scheduled from 8 a.m. - 9 a.m.

The Legacy of Excellence Awards, a recognition luncheon for Fulton County Schools teachers, principals, professionals, and partners of the year, is Friday, November 1, at 11:30 a.m. at the Georgia World Congress Center. [Find more information and a list of our honorees here on our website.](#)

Centennial High School will host Raising Resilient Kids - A Community Symposium 2019, Saturday, Nov. 2, 8:30 a.m. – 4 p.m. in partnership with Emory Johns Creek Hospital and Georgia PTA. The community is invited to a day of workshops, discussions, and seminars designed to support families in their desire to raise successful, resilient, and healthy people. Keynote speakers include a teenager who will share his struggle with addiction and subsequent path to recovery as well as a mental health expert who will discuss the addiction recovery process. A free continental breakfast and lunch

will be served. Workshop and presentation topics include Alcohol and Drug Abuse, Vaping, Signs of Depression, Suicide Awareness, Anxiety, Bullying, Recognizing Your Child's Needs, Help Managing Social Media, Positive Parenting Techniques and Skills, Working with Your Exceptional Child, Study Habits, Looking Beyond Your Test Scores, Goal Setting, the College Application Process, Alternative Career Paths, Adulting and Financial Literacy, and more. [Link here for more information and to reserve a spot.](#)

On Monday, November 4, **River Trail Middle School** sixth grade students will participate in an event called "Spy Day", part of Red Ribbon Week for drug prevention. At the PTO-supported event, students will be able to interact with representatives from federal agencies including the Secret Service, the U.S. Marshal Service, the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms and the Postal Inspection Service. With a focus on drug prevention and anti-vaping, volunteers from each agency will share experiences and educate River Trail students on the importance of staying drug-free. An event highlight will be a helicopter landing on site. Students will be able to watch the helicopter arrive, and groups will have access to speak with the pilots. Secret Service agents will provide another exciting opportunity for participants to have their pictures and fingerprints taken as a part of an initiative known as "Operation Safe Kids." *Operation Safe Kids* is an intensive, community-based case-management and monitoring program and was established by the Forensic Services Division of the service to increase public safety awareness. Parents are provided with a document containing the biographical data, a current photograph, and digitized inkless fingerprints. Media is invited.

As part of their Parent University, **Johns Creek High School** PTSA is presenting a three-part conversation that addresses students' mental and emotional wellness. This conversation is based on the documentary "Race to Nowhere," a piece that highlights systemic pressures and how to tackle them. The first session has concluded, and the second and third events will be held on Thursday, Nov. 21 and Friday, Dec. 6 from 11:30 a.m. to 1 p.m.

Cliftondale Elementary celebrates 10 years of excellence with a Family Gala November 16 at **Westlake High School**, at 6 p.m. For more information [click here](#).

Awards and Honors

Evoline C. West Elementary was given an award at the Georgia STEM/STEAM forum for their leadership and exemplary practices in STEM. The award was presented to Principal Jennifer Burton and her team by the Georgia Department of Education.

Dr. Gyimah Whitaker, Area Superintendent, South Learning Community; Chelsea Montgomery, Executive Director of Counseling, Psychological, and Social Work; Langston Hughes High Principal Charles Chester; Creekside High Principal Frankie Pollock, and Banneker AP Ramon Garner have been accepted into the Harvard Institute's Proving Ground Multi-Day Summit held November 19-22.

The initiative is part of the Center for Education Policy Research at Harvard University. The learning opportunity will provide strategies toward solving one of the most pressing problems educators face: chronic absenteeism.

River Trail Middle School eighth graders Anusha Kanagaraj and Vaishnavi Tammali won “Best Overall Middle” in the Bright Spark Invention Challenge competition in October. Bright Spark is the education arm of design consulting firm, Bridge Innovate; and the Invention Challenge is a 30-day competition for students in fourth grade through college. Entrants are challenged to create a new service or product that solves an existing problem.

Anusha and Vaishnavi went through a Design Thinking process to create their design for a rain gutter system to produce electricity and fresh water. Through researching the need, they built empathy for those experiencing the problem. Inspired by the desire to help others with less, they created their pitch on video and posted their design on the Bridge Innovate website. All prototypes were voted on publicly, and sponsors and business consultants served as judges for awards. Their award was announced at the Invention Challenge Awards Program in Chattanooga, TN.

McNair Middle School sixth grader **Jaidah Bienaime** won First Place in her category in the Governor’s Red Ribbon Poster Contest. She also was the Overall Winner out of hundreds of entries in the competition.

Cool Kids (and Schools) Doing Cool Things

McNair Middle School had an installation of graphics featuring Ronald McNair this week. The school is named for Ronald McNair, who was an American NASA astronaut and physicist. He died tragically during the launch of the Space Challenger mission.

Findley Oaks Elementary School recently received a check for \$1,000 from Delta Community Credit Union (DCCU) to support the school’s STEM lab, which opened in 2015 with start-up funding from the school’s PTA. DCCU sought out a partner in the Johns Creek area that offered STEM programs, and Shannon Ferguson, Findley Oaks’ STEM teacher, applied for the program grant. DCCU has been donating for three years. The STEM lab serves to nurture skills in problem-solving and design-thinking. Students utilize a variety of tools to understand and incorporate standard mathematical practices, begin to understand the principles of engineering, and enrich their vocabulary. Using Lego Education tools, the students explore new and creative ways to approach, strategize, and solve problems. Ms. Ferguson also encourages her students to consider STEM-related careers.

With DCCU’s donation, Findley Oaks has purchased Lego Education WEDO2 and Mindstorms Robots, Little Bits electronic circuits, Squishy circuits, Osmos, and storage containers.

Chattahoochee High School students who study French have said goodbye to the exchange students from Lycee Saint Jean Hulst, a French high school in Versailles, outside Paris. The French group spent 10 days in the U.S. attending CHS and staying with American host families. Organized through Forum

Language Experience, the exchange partnership began before American and French students met in person. CHS students connected with their French counterparts via WhatsApp and social media to ease the introduction process. CHS French teacher Ellen Walter reports all the students, American and French, had a great time learning about each other's culture. Many positive and humorous memories were made in navigating language and culture challenges as well as messages lost in translation. Breakfasts of fried chicken biscuits were a first for the French visitors, and they were impressed with reclining chairs at the movie theatres. The American customer service business model in department stores came as a surprise to the exchange students. Also, CHS students have enjoyed newfound privacy of speaking French with exchange students in hallways and classes without their peers understanding. The two groups held enriching discussions on global issues such as diversity, the environment and collaborative strategies to eliminate waste and perceptions of each other's country. Negative assumptions sparked engaging dialogue that made for better mutual understanding. On the issue of immigration, CHS students shared positive perspectives reflecting their school's diversity and how businesses and churches around Atlanta support and assist immigrants and refugees. Such conversations helped expand both group's larger worldviews and how a global perspective can impact day-to-day decisions. CHS students are grateful for the exchange experience, and already miss their new friends.

Roswell North Elementary School (RNES) will be benefitting soon from the \$10,000 grant given to the Roswell North Elementary Foundation (RNEF) to fund a covered outdoor classroom to complement their existing open outdoor garden. At the recent annual Roswell Wine Festival, the foundation was given the opportunity to host the festival's Wine Pull and become the beneficiary of the fundraiser proceeds. School parents and local businesses donated more than 200 bottles of wine for the Wine Pull to raise an additional \$3,850. With this profit, the foundation will fund the school's outdoor learning initiative, which has an estimated total cost of \$40,000. The festival has a history of sharing its success with local charities, offering them a portion of the event's profits.

The foundation was selected as the beneficiary in part because of the work RNES science and gardening teacher Liz Rains is doing with students. Ms. Rains teaches students at all grade levels to plant, nurture, and harvest vegetables. She then guides them in preparing the vegetables in the Chef's Lab, an extension of the school's Licata Science Lab. The covered classroom will have benches and allow teachers to conduct class in a shaded area outside. It will be available for all the teachers for any subject but is primarily used by Ms. Rains during Science Lab "Specials," which include P.E., Art, Music, Science Lab, and Media Center.

Stonewall Tell Elementary, a Georgia PBIS Distinguished School, will receive a visit from Swiss educators October 29. The international guests will spend the day at the school making observations, engaging in dialogue with stakeholders and enjoying the Stonewall Tell experience.

In Case You Missed It

FCS' Bus Drivers closed out National Bus Safety Week with their 36th annual Bus Safety Competition (formerly called the Bus Road-E-O) at the North Transportation Center. Teams of 12 from north Fulton and south Fulton faced off to determine highest proficiency in driving skills and knowledge of the laws. Winners will go to the state competition in June.

FCS affinity partner, Sandy Springs Education Force (SSEF) held sixth annual Footprints for the Future 5k/10k Road Race. Proceeds from the race and sponsor contributions support SSEF's targeted literacy programs in **Fulton County Schools in Sandy Springs** such as "Reading Buddies" and Mini Libraries. Nearly all the principals in the Sandy Springs area plus students, parents, teachers and administrators participated in the race. Heard's Ferry Elementary School won the Spirit Cup trophy for most sign-ups.

Taking an important step toward the August 2021 opening of the new **South Fulton STEM School**, the Fulton County School Board recently awarded Winter Construction a \$40.7 million construction contract. The yet-to-be-named school will be located adjacent to Campbell Elementary School in Fairburn. The contract includes construction services, sitework, parking lots and landscaping for the 147,000-square-foot school, and funding is being provided through **SPLOST** (Special Purpose Local Option Sales Tax), the one-penny education sales tax. Hallmarks of the innovative school include an integrated curriculum with a focus on STEM education, an emphasis on design thinking, and partnerships with STEM-focused corporations.

Students **Sheridan Hernandez Cruz, Bear Creek MS; Jasmin Guadalupe Segura, Camp Creek MS; Belen Verence Montalvo Vedia, Elkins Point MS; Itzel Acevedo-Pena, Holcomb Bridge MS; Ivanna Rojas, Hopewell MS; Teresa Nichole Lopez, Renaissance MS; Gabriella Ava's Horton, Sandy Springs MS; Tiffany Clementine Lajj, Taylor Road MS** and **Daniel Dwight Williams, Woodland MS** became **REACH Scholars** on **REACH Georgia Signing Day**. The event included a taped message from Governor Brian Kemp and an inspirational message from Superintendent Looney. **REACH Georgia** is a needs-based scholarship program that begins in eighth grade. Scholars are paired with a mentor and an academic coach through high school and must maintain good grades, behavior and attendance through middle and high school. Those who successfully complete the program and graduate from high school are awarded a \$10,000 scholarship to be used at any HOPE-eligible institution in Georgia.

Flu Season Update - Georgia is experiencing the onset of an early flu season with confirmed cases already reported by local health providers. The Centers for Disease Control (CDC) and the American Academy of Pediatrics have stressed the importance of children receiving flu vaccines and the danger of the flu to children. According to the CDC, a flu vaccine offers the best defense against getting flu and spreading it to others. The American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) states that the flu can cause 10 days of fever and lead to serious complications even for healthy kids. Therefore, we are sharing this

information to remind everyone to take precautions and to work together to help prevent the spread of the flu. To ensure the safety and health of students, staff and parents, we encourage everyone to take proactive measures that can help reduce the spread of flu and other communicable illnesses. For more information, please visit: <https://bit.ly/2lPZauv>.

###

About the Fulton County School System. The Fulton County School System is the fourth largest school system in Georgia. More than 93,500 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.

