

GSPRA

Georgia School Public Relations Association

Publications, Photography, and Electronic Media Awards

Baldwin County School District



4 Gold: Photography, Website, Newsletter/Magazine, Calendar

2 Silver: Social Media, Special Event

6 Bronze: Image/Identity, Excellence in Writing, Videography/Electronic Media, Handbook, Marketing, Crisis Communication

Banks County Schools



1 Gold: Excellence in Writing

Bibb County School District



8 Gold: Newsletter/Magazine,
Photography, Social Media, Marketing,
Special Event

1 Bronze: Videography/Electronic
Media

Burke County Public Schools



2 Gold: Crisis Communication,
Excellence in Writing

2 Silver: Calendar, Image/Identity
Package

1 Bronze: Newsletter/News magazine

Cherokee County School District



14 Gold: Special Event, Crisis Communication, Excellence in Writing, Photography, Handbook, Newsletter/Magazine, Special Purpose Publication, Special Event, Social Media, Annual Report, Website

3 Silver: Website, Special Purpose Publication, Photography

3 Bronze: Special Purpose Publication, Photography, Marketing

Clayton County School District



1 Bronze: Videography/Electronic
Media

Cobb County School District



9 Gold: Social Media, Excellence in Writing, Marketing, Videography/Electronic Media, Photography

3 Silver: Videography/Electronic Media, Excellence in Writing

Columbia County School District



1 Gold: Newsletter/Magazine

Dalton Public Schools



2 Gold: Marketing, Social Media

1 Silver: Handbook

Douglas County School System



8 Gold: Calendar, Excellence in Writing, Marketing, Newsletter/Magazine, Annual Report, Image/Identity Package

4 Silver: Excellence in Writing, Videography/Electronic Media, Photography

1 Bronze: Videography/Electronic Media

Dublin City Schools



4 Gold: Photography

3 Silver: Videography/Electronic
Media, Photography

4 Bronze: Videography/Electronic
Media, Photography

GADOE – School Nutrition Division



2 Gold: Website,
Videography/Electronic Media

1 Silver: Social Media

Gordon County Schools



2 Gold: Website, Image/Identity
Package

1 Silver: Newsletter/Magazine

Griffin-Spalding County School System



5 Gold: Calendar,
Newsletter/Magazine, Image/Identity
Package, Special Event, Videography

1 Silver: Special Purpose Publication

Gwinnett County Public Schools



10 Gold: Website, Special Event,
Videography/Electronic Media,
Photography, Excellence in Writing

5 Silver: Photography, Excellence in
Writing, Videography/Electronic Media

1 Bronze: Photography

Houston County School District



6 Gold: Website, Marketing,
Image/Identity Package, Special Event,
Videography/Electronic Media

1 Silver: Photography

Lee County Schools



1 Gold: Handbook

1 Silver: Crisis Communication

Liberty County School System



3 Bronze: Photography,
Videography/Electronic Media

Monroe County Schools



1 Gold: Newsletter/Magazine

2 Silver: Website,
Videography/Electronic Media

Newton County School System



3 Gold: Marketing, Excellence in Writing

11 Silver: Annual Report, Calendar,
Excellence in Writing,
Videography/Electronic Media,
Image/Identity Package

16 Bronze: Videography/Electronic Media,
Excellence in Writing

Professional Assoc. of GA Educators (PAGE)



2 Gold: Newsletter/Magazine,
Videography/Electronic Media

1 Silver: Videography/Electronic Media

1 Bronze: Special Event

Richmond County School System



5 Gold: Videography/Electronic Media,
Image/Identity Package, Special Purpose
Publication

2 Silver: Videography/Electronic Media,
Photography

Rockdale County Public Schools



1 Silver: Special Event

1 Bronze: Website

Troup County School System



1 Gold: Special Purpose Publication

2 Silver: Annual Report, Calendar

1 Bronze: Special Event

Walton County School District



2 Gold: Videography/Electronic
Media, Special Purpose Publication

Whitfield County Schools



1 Silver: Special Event

GSPRA

Georgia School Public Relations Association

Best in Category Awards

Best in Category: Annual Report

**Douglas County School
System**
“Annual Report”



"This is the Best of Category winner! The colorful layout is eye-catching and refreshing. Let the text breathe even if it means expanding the publication."

TOGETHER, WE SHAPE THE FUTURE.



VISION

Our VISION is to build a community of lifelong learners who become responsible individuals, independent thinkers and productive citizens in a global society.

MISSION

We will SERVE our community with excellence by...

- Helping our students reach their potential as we prepare them for college and career in a safe and supportive environment
- Recruiting, cultivating and retaining the best teachers, staff and administrators
- Providing a challenging curriculum and relevant learning opportunities
- Providing the highest quality instructional resources and tools
- Fostering a culture of continuous improvement

BELIEFS

We BELIEVE that we must...

- Understand how children and adults learn and continue learning
- Build communities of lifelong learners
- Cultivate the leadership potential of every employee, student and parent in our school system
- Be creative, energetic visionaries who respond quickly to diverse and evolving issues
- Meet the needs of all stakeholders (students, parents, employees and community)
- Maintain efficient and effective administrative processes for instruction, operations, human resources and sound fiscal management

DOUGLAS COUNTY SCHOOL SYSTEM

P.O. Box 10777, Douglasville, GA 30133
770-651-2000 | dcssga.org

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Engineers, students and the general public are hereby notified that the Douglas County Board of Education does not discriminate on the basis of sex, race, national origin, handicap or age in its education programs, activities or employment practices.

2021 Douglas County School System Annual Report

The goal of this Annual Report for the Douglas County School System (DCSS) is to provide our stakeholders with an overview of the 2020-2021 school year.

The year was unprecedented in many ways. Due to the global pandemic, all school buildings and offices in the Douglas County School System were closed beginning March 16, 2020. Students and school staff worked from home through online platforms for the remainder of the 2019-2020 school year.

On June 30, 2020, the school system announced a reopening plan for 2020-2021. The plan included three learning options: traditional learning at school; school-based digital learning; and FLEX Academy online learning.

In July 2020, the spread of COVID-19 in Douglas County became substantial. DCSS made the decision to begin the 2020-2021 school year with all students learning remotely. To allow time for schools to distribute a Chromebook or laptop to every student and plan for remote learning, the first day of school was postponed from August 5 to August 17.

Schools were reopened for in-person learning on a staggered schedule in September. Elementary students who signed up for traditional learning began attending in person on September 8, middle school students on September 14 and high school students on September 21. Students attended in person Monday through Thursday, with digital learning at home for all students on Fridays. Approximately 50% of students elected to attend school in person.

Due to federal guidance, the State Board of Education reinstated mandatory state testing for spring 2021, including the Georgia Milestones (GMAS) End of Grade (EOG) and End-of-Course (EOC) assessments. However, virtual students were not required to report to their school building for testing, and many parents in Douglas County and across the state elected for their children not to participate.

Recognizing the learning challenges COVID presented during the 2020-2021 school year, the Georgia Department of Education reduced the percentage that End-of-Course tests counted in a high school student's final grade to 0.01%, and End-of-Grade assessments for grades 3-8 were not utilized for student promotion and retention decisions. The Georgia Department of Education also waived the College and Career Ready Performance Index (CCRPI) for 2021 due to low testing numbers and concerns about instruction and learning during the pandemic. Because of the unprecedented challenges students and teachers faced during 2020-2021 and the low percentage of students who tested, Georgia Milestones data for DCSS is not included in this report.

We hope this 2021 Annual Report conveys the significant accomplishments of our students and staff during a most unusual year. Our staff worked together to provide the best possible education under ever-changing circumstances.

DCSSGA.ORG

2020-2021 ANNUAL REPORT

DCSS STUDENTS AND STAFF

20 Elementary Schools
8 Middle Schools
5 Traditional High Schools
1 Charter School

4 Nontraditional Schools and Programs
Technical College and Career Center offer high school and college credit for students. The Center also offers a dual enrollment program through West GA Technical College. Douglas County Behavioral Center offers a variety of services for students with emotional and behavioral needs. The Center also offers a dual enrollment program through West GA Technical College.

FLEX Academy is an alternative program for middle and high school students who are unable to attend traditional school due to the pandemic. FLEX Academy students attend school from home and receive instruction through online platforms. FLEX Academy students also receive a Chromebook or laptop to use at home.

FLEX Academy students also receive a Chromebook or laptop to use at home.

Average Number of Students
Per Traditional Staff
Elementary: 12.0
Middle: 12.9
High: 16.3

DCSS STUDENTS AND STAFF

Students: 25,917
Employees: 3,247
Certified Staff: 2,097
Largest School District in Georgia
70% of Employees Reside in Douglas County
Student Expenditure Per Pupil: \$11,331

DCSSGA.ORG

DCSS FINANCIAL STATEMENT

EXPENDITURES FY 2021	
Instruction	\$20,700,000 67.4%
School Administration	\$20,700,000 67.4%
Instructional Materials and Supplies	\$1,700,000 5.3%
Student Transportation	\$1,700,000 5.3%
General Administration	\$1,700,000 5.3%
Plant Services	\$1,700,000 5.3%
Staff Services	\$1,700,000 5.3%
Total	\$30,700,000 100%

DCSS REVENUES 2019-2021	
State	\$16,800,000 58.0%
Local	\$16,800,000 58.0%
Federal	\$16,800,000 58.0%
Total	\$49,600,000 100%

OPERATING FUND RESOURCES FY 2021	
Local Sources	54.75%
Federal Sources	11.00%

Students Demographics
Black 55%
White 35%
Hispanic 10%
Two or More Races 5%
Other 1%
Male 50% Female 50%



LETTER FROM THE SUPERINTENDENT

It is my pleasure to provide the community with a glimpse of the 2020-2021 school year for the Douglas County School System. Over the past year, we have seen a year like no other in our history. We have seen a year of challenges, but we have also seen a year of growth and opportunity. We have seen a year of students who have shown resilience and determination. We have seen a year of teachers who have shown dedication and commitment. We have seen a year of staff who have shown support and collaboration. We have seen a year of parents who have shown involvement and partnership. We have seen a year of a community that has shown unity and strength. We have seen a year of a future that is bright and full of promise. We have seen a year of a school system that has shown excellence and achievement. We have seen a year of a school system that has shown the power of education to change lives. We have seen a year of a school system that has shown the power of education to shape the future. We have seen a year of a school system that has shown the power of education to create a better world for all of us.

I am extremely proud of our students and staff who have shown resilience and determination during this unprecedented year. We have seen a year of students who have shown growth and achievement. We have seen a year of teachers who have shown dedication and commitment. We have seen a year of staff who have shown support and collaboration. We have seen a year of parents who have shown involvement and partnership. We have seen a year of a community that has shown unity and strength. We have seen a year of a future that is bright and full of promise. We have seen a year of a school system that has shown excellence and achievement. We have seen a year of a school system that has shown the power of education to change lives. We have seen a year of a school system that has shown the power of education to shape the future. We have seen a year of a school system that has shown the power of education to create a better world for all of us.

We are grateful for the support of our community during this challenging year. We are grateful for the dedication and commitment of our students and staff. We are grateful for the involvement and partnership of our parents. We are grateful for the unity and strength of our community. We are grateful for the future that is bright and full of promise. We are grateful for the school system that has shown excellence and achievement. We are grateful for the power of education to change lives. We are grateful for the power of education to shape the future. We are grateful for the power of education to create a better world for all of us.

We hope this 2021 Annual Report conveys the significant accomplishments of our students and staff during a most unusual year. Our staff worked together to provide the best possible education under ever-changing circumstances.

DCSSGA.ORG

2020-2021 ANNUAL REPORT

Best in Category: Calendar




**Douglas County School
System**

**“2022 DCSS Academic
Planner”**

"A great planning tool and resource for all! Room to add personalization too and keep track of what is happening on a broader level. Great work in showing the need and addressing it!"


2022-2023
Douglas County School System

Academic Planner



BUILDING FOR THE FUTURE

Construction is underway on the new Alexander High School Performing Arts Center. When complete, the state-of-the-art facility will feature seating for 800, gallery space, an orchestra pit, and a lobby large enough for intimate performances.



"We shape our buildings; thereafter, they shape us."
- Winston Churchill

Best in Category: Crisis Communications



**Cherokee County
School District**
“Challenges to Curriculum”



The most important tactic we employed was our Fact vs. Fiction webpage. Several years ago, we began using “Fact vs. Fiction” as a headline on website posts to combat rumors on a case-by-case basis. During the pandemic, so many rumors circulated that we set up a dedicated Fact vs. Fiction webpage on our website. When we needed to correct misinformation, we could post accurate information on this webpage and direct stakeholders to it. When the curriculum challenge crisis began in January 2022, this page became an even more important tool for us. It provided us with the perfect platform for correcting misinformation and posting large amounts of content that we could then link to from newsletters to parents and employees, posts on social media, direct responses to emails, responses to media requests and more. Our school board members, employees and community supporters also all could use the Fact vs. Fiction webpage in the same way, ensuring consistency in our message.

Best in Category: Excellence in Writing



**Cherokee County
School District**

**“CCSD Surprises District's Teacher
of the Year Four Finalists”**

"This article did a fantastic job of highlighting all four Teacher of the Year finalists and showing the high quality of teaching that exists in the district and the powerful, emotional connection that develops between teachers and students. Great job!"

Little River Elementary School art teacher Emily Mickel

Cherokee County School District art teachers craft lessons that cross curriculum, blending history and literature with techniques that span time and culture. And Little River Elementary School Teacher of the Year Emily Mickel is a master.

One such lesson is based on a book by a contemporary African American artist, connecting art, literature and imagination through story quilts. After listening to the artist's book, students discuss its meaning and then design a quilt reflecting their own dreams. Within that square, students use pastels, paint, crayon, marker, colored pencil to share their dream in full color.

Some draw their future selves, while others choose designs -- like gears to illustrate the dream of becoming an engineer. Ms. Mickel assembles the squares into a class quilt.

"Students see the finished product of putting each quilt square together to make a beautiful, collaborative piece of artwork," said Ms. Mickel, who earned bachelor's and master's degrees in her field. "There are so many valuable life lessons that students learn with this project."

Ms. Mickel brings art to the entire community by organizing a school art show for which she frames a piece of artwork by each of the school's nearly 1,400 students. Her efforts in and out of the classroom have earned the respect of colleagues and parents and the adoration of her students.

She recognizes students for excellence with plastic rainbow pieces to display on their desk, a colorful reminder of how much she values them. "She is truly kind," one student shared, "She is highly creative and talented .. she is always there to help me."

Sequoyah High School math teacher Andrew Oberlies

Sequoyah High School Teacher of the Year Andrew Oberlies teaches brilliant students incredibly challenging lessons.

Example: his favorite lesson is "the derivative in calculus is the rate of change of a function."


The 17-year teacher has mastered the science of teaching the rigorous -- Advanced Placement calculus, pre-calculus and multi-variable calculus -- to gifted learners who will, in turn, challenge him. And he's refined the art of reaching through the equations to build relationships with

Best in Category: Handbook






Lee County Schools
“2021-2022
COVID Protocols”

"Best in Category winner! You were able to take the complicated information related to COVID-19 and get it into a concise, understandable, and useable format. All of the information is pertinent. I hope your parents, employees, and supervisor appreciated your work on this. It is an effective piece in helping your stakeholders understand your protocols."



LEE COUNTY SCHOOL SYSTEM



COVID-19 PROTOCOLS




COVID-19 PROTOCOLS AND CONTINUUM OF
MULTI-LAYERED MITIGATION STRATEGIES

* Information contained herein is subject to change.

Working in concert with federal, state, and local governments and health agencies, Lee County Schools will monitor the most up-to-date information, instructions, and best practices to promote a school plan that provides the safest learning environment for all students and staff.

The Lee County School System has adapted teaching, learning, and operations to keep students and employees (staff) safe.

This document is designed to inform stakeholders of the ways LCSS is modifying practices to keep students and staff safe while providing them the opportunity to learn and work. The district expects to continue providing the best possible education even as the challenges of COVID-19 are met.





QUARANTINE GUIDELINES





LEE COUNTY SCHOOL SYSTEM

Lee County Schools has a plan to advance layered mitigation strategies if local conditions of community health warrant adjustments. LCSS will continue daily monitoring of community health conditions and school impact - along with consultation and coordination with medical authorities - as the district responsibly keeps schools open and proceeds through the year. As always, Lee County Schools will adhere to any applicable federal or state executive order as required.

Current level denoted in **RED**

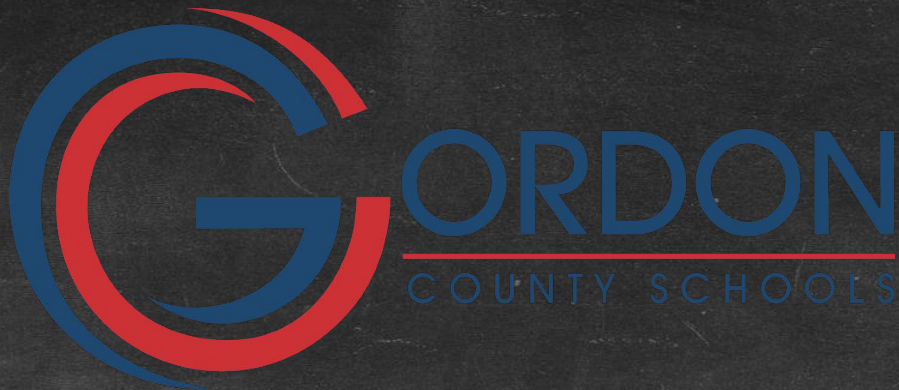
MULTI-LAYERED MITIGATION STRATEGIES	LEVEL 1	LEVEL 2*	LEVEL 3*	LEVEL 4*
LEVEL 1 STRATEGIES <ul style="list-style-type: none">In buildings there will be:<ul style="list-style-type: none">Prominent signageIncreased cleaning schedulesDisinfection of high-touch surfacesIncreased air filtration maintenanceHand sanitizer stations in high traffic locationsA commitment to respect the space of othersFace coverings are optional but strongly encouraged	LEVEL 1 STRATEGIES PLUS <ul style="list-style-type: none">Visitors and volunteers on campus limitedIndoor capacity for athletic events, performances, and public meetings reduced	LEVEL 2 STRATEGIES PLUS <ul style="list-style-type: none">Increased spacing in large classroom spacesVisitors and volunteers on campus limited; field trips pausedLarge employee meetings move to virtualFace coverings required indoors for LCSS staffIndoor community facilities use limited	LEVEL 3 STRATEGIES PLUS <ul style="list-style-type: none">Outdoor capacity for athletic events, performances, and public meetings reducedFace coverings required for students indoors (with the exception of eating)Modifications to the lunch routineOutdoor community facilities use limitedPossible modified in-person school schedules	LEVEL 4 STRATEGIES PLUS <ul style="list-style-type: none">Outdoor capacity for athletic events, performances, and public meetings reducedFace coverings required for students indoors (with the exception of eating)Modifications to the lunch routineOutdoor community facilities use limitedPossible modified in-person school schedules
TARGETED RESPONSE <p>Temporary and isolated closures could be directed based on conditions concerning rates of new positive cases, hospitalization rates, or superspreading events in a school, or superspreading of students in a school due to quarantine.</p>	Targeted closures could occur based on specific conditions for any of the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none">ClassroomHallwayGrade LevelSchool	Targeted closures could occur based on specific conditions for any of the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none">ClassroomHallwayGrade LevelSchool	Targeted closures could occur based on specific conditions for any of the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none">ClassroomHallwayGrade LevelSchool	Targeted closures could occur based on specific conditions for any of the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none">ClassroomHallwayGrade LevelSchoolCluster or District

*Level advancement is applied as conditions warrant per school and community numbers. Medical professionals have indicated that the best layer of protection and prevention for individuals 5+ is the COVID-19 vaccine. Vaccines are widely and readily available. For more information to learn more about receiving the vaccine, contact your local health department or pharmacy.

Best in Category: Image/Identity Package



Gordon County Schools
“Gordon County Schools New
Logo & Branding Materials”

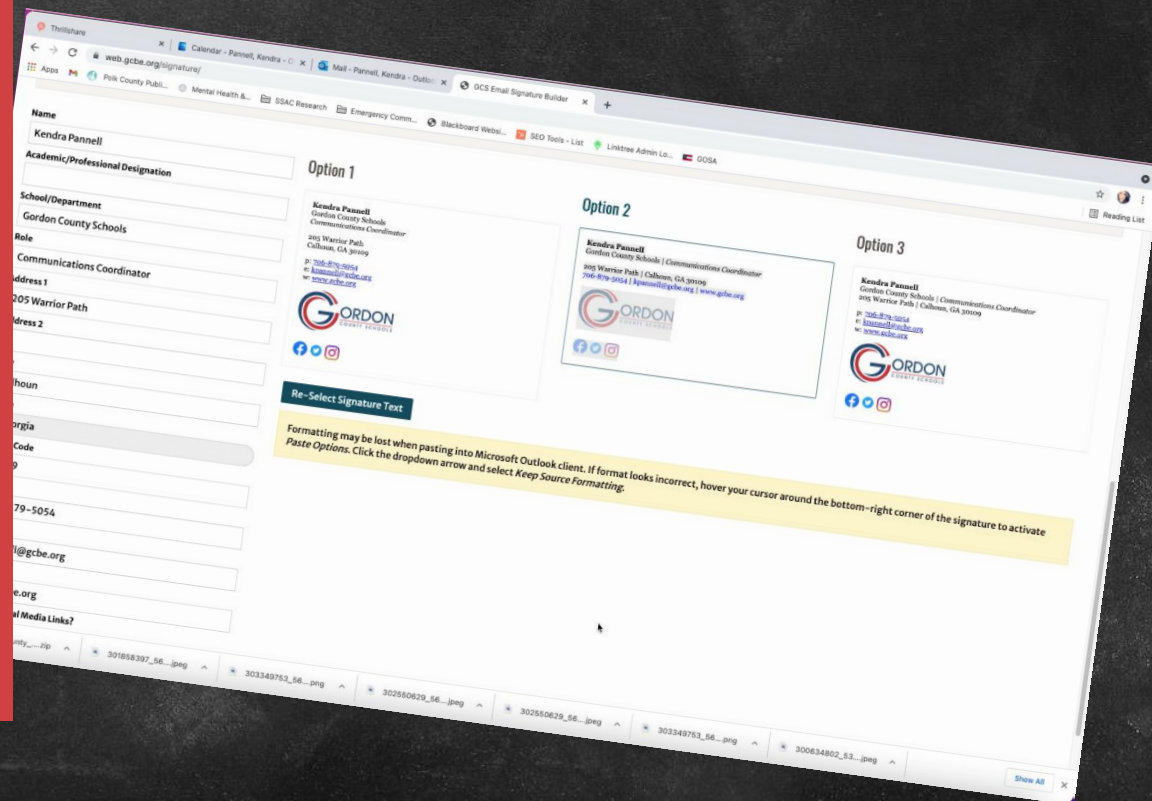


Nicely Done! A design guide with brand guidelines is a huge undertaking, but it unites an entire district. Nicely done!



Brand Guidelines

2022 RELEASE



Best in Category: Marketing Campaign



**Douglas County School
System**

“Together, we shape the future.”

DOUGLAS COUNTY SCHOOL SYSTEM

TOGETHER, WE SHAPE THE FUTURE.



One size doesn't fit all when educating our children. That's why we offer options and programs that allow our students to excel and reach their potential every day.

- One-to-One Technology
- Online Learning Options
- Magnet Programs at All High Schools
- Dual Enrollment
- Career Pathways
- Computer Science K-12
- Dual Language
- Partnerships with Global Industries
- International Baccalaureate (IB)
- JROTC
- Award-Winning Fine Arts
- State-Ranked Athletics



COME SHAPE THE FUTURE WITH US »

DCSSGA.org
THE STANDARD of EXCELLENCE

"Knocked it out of the park! Just gorgeous."

ADDITIONAL STUDENT OPPORTUNITIES

ADVANCED PLACEMENT (AP)

The College Board offers specific AP courses students may elect to take during their high school career. These courses are more rigorous than regular high school courses and prepare students for college science, math, and history. At the end of the school year, students may choose to participate in the AP exam. Students may earn a score ranging from 1 to 5, with scores of 3 or above being accepted for college credit at most colleges. The percentage of exams earning a score of 3 or above has increased every year for the past seven years.

DCSS	SALUDA SCHOOLS	GLOBAL
2021	47.0%	54.0%
2020	46.0%	64.3%
2019	41.7%	61.6%

DUAL ENROLLMENT

Through Dual Enrollment, students in grades 9-12 who qualify to participate may enroll on a part-time or full-time basis to take college courses. Students receive high school and college credit simultaneously when attending and completing approved college classes. Students participating in Dual Enrollment may graduate with college credits or with an associate degree from a college, university, or technical college. Students who take technical college classes may also graduate from high school with a certificate or diploma in a particular area.

DCSS	SALUDA SCHOOLS	GLOBAL
2021	87%	87%
2020	87%	79%
2019	65%	77%

INTERNATIONAL BACCALAUREATE (IB)

The IB program was established at Douglas County High School in 2007 as a magnet program. The IB Diploma Program is recognized and respected by the world's leading universities. The chart reflects the percentage of IB students who earned the IB Diploma.

GRADUATION RATE

The DCSS Class of 2021 four-year high school graduation rate of 87.7% once again surpassed the graduation rate for Georgia. Graduation rate is defined as the percentage of students who graduate from secondary school with a regular diploma in the standard number of years.

Graduation Rates	2021	DCSS	STATE
2020	87.7%	83.7%	83.8%
2019	87.4%	82.0%	

DCSSGA.ORG

TOGETHER, WE SHAPE THE FUTURE.

LETTER FROM THE SUPERINTENDENT

It is my pleasure to provide the community with a synopsis of the 2020-2021 school year for the Douglas County School System. Once again, it was a year like no other as we adjusted to our first full school year during the pandemic.

I could not be more proud of the performance of our teachers during 2020-2021. Most of them applied teaching online and in person all at the same time. They learned and mastered technology they had never encountered before to reach all of their students. They modified lessons and persevered to provide a quality education for all children, whether the students were in front of them in the classroom or at home on a screen. I will be forever grateful for their dedication.

I'm also extremely proud of our Board of Education and technology department. With their foresight, we ordered enough additional Chromebooks very early in the pandemic so that we could meet our goal of One-to-One technology and provide an electronic device to every student at the beginning of the 2020-2021 school year.

With guidance from Cobb & Douglas Public Health, we created a plan for conducting school during COVID-19. We followed the data and established protocols to keep everyone as safe as possible. Our contact tracing procedures were effective, and I am proud to say that we did not close a single school or classroom due to a high transmission rate of COVID.

We were able to restore the non-academic activities for our students that are such an important part of the educational experience. We carried on with athletics, school teams, and state sports in football, softball, volleyball, cheer, cross country, esports, swimming, wrestling, basketball, tennis, soccer, baseball, boys' and girls' basketball. Our high schools held their spring musicals, with the actors singing and dancing in masks. Some of our extracurricular competitions were held virtually, including spelling bees and reading and math competitions. We even learned some innovative new ways to do things that will continue long past the pandemic!

I was especially grateful that the Class of 2021 experienced a traditional graduation in May at their school stadiums.

We recognize that for some of our students, instruction was less than ideal during 2020-2021. Around half of our students elected to participate completely online, which is not the best way for most students to learn. To help offset the learning loss, we held summer school on every campus during the summer of 2021 with a focus on reading and math. We are happy that 94% of our students are learning to read five days a week for 2021-2022, and we are working hard to restore rigor and accelerate our students.

Thank you to our students and families, who studied so to make the best decisions possible under very difficult circumstances. Parents and staff members may not have agreed with every decision, but they cooperated, and we made it through a year like no other.

Our new tagline is especially relevant in light of the past two years: **TOGETHER, WE SHAPE THE FUTURE.**

Our children are our future, and we have important work to do in education. We can accomplish anything if we work together. We have much to celebrate from 2020-2021.

With heartfelt thanks for your support,
Just North
TRENT NORTH, SUPERINTENDENT

DCSS HONORED AND PROUD

The Douglas County Board of Education was one of 50 school boards in the state honored by the Georgia School Boards Association as a 2021 Exemplary School Board. The designation reflects a high level of commitment from the school board and individual members. There are 187 school districts in Georgia.

ACCREDITATION

The Douglas County School System received its most recent accreditation in June 2017 from the Southern Association of Schools and Colleges (SACSCOC) as an Internationally Recognized Accredited School System. The school system undergoes accreditation every five years and is looking forward to going through the process again in March 2022.

Best in Category: Newsletter/Magazine



**Cherokee County
School District**
“District Delegate”



District Delegate

CCSD's Monthly Employee Newsletter

April 2022

And the Winner Is ... Jonathan Gustin, 2022 CCSD Teacher of the Year!



On March 31, 2022, after an evening of celebrating and honoring the Teacher of the Year (TOTY) for every CCSD school, including our four finalists, Dr. Hightower opened the sealed envelope at the conclusion of the Oscar-inspired themed event to reveal the much anticipated name of CCSD's 2022 Teacher of the Year — Cherokee High School environmental science teacher Jonathan Gustin!

Beginning with the 2019 TOTY program, CCSD implemented a finalist level of recognition. Each year, a TOTY selection committee is formed, comprised of retired educators, community leaders and sponsors; they are given the difficult task of first selecting four CCSD TOTY finalists. The committee spends a day reading through the 39 applications and letters of recommendation. Using a rubric, based off of the State's TOTY program, the committee selects the four CCSD finalists. Those four teachers are then asked to create a video for the judges to come back together and review before voting on CCSD's overall Teacher of the Year. The winner is announced at the annual Legacy Makers Event.

Cherokee High School has had a CCSD TOTY finalist named for three out of the four years since the finalist level was implemented ... and now, they have an overall winner!

"When my name was announced, I was filled with joy," Jonathan said. "I could not begin to explain how humbled I was walking up to the stage, surrounded by so many great educators. I had a thought — 'We did it!' And, it is such a collective 'we' ... everyone who has supported and guided me went through my head. It was such an amazing moment! I have never been more proud of our school and county and everything we have done!"

A 13-year educator, Jonathan teaches environmental science classes and has assisted at the district level, as well as the State level, in developing argument-driven inquiry lessons and environmental science curriculum. As a master science teacher and building leader, he is skilled at creating and teaching material to students in all

continued on page 5 ...

Ask Dr. Hightower ...

(Click [here](#) to submit questions to the Superintendent)

What can you tell us about this year's bonuses and the pay raises for next year?

I'm very fortunate to be able to share good news! Yesterday, we published the agenda for next week's School Board meeting. That agenda includes my recommendation in regard to the Governor's one-time supplemental pay of \$2,000 for specific full- and part-time employees. We have an additional 798 full-time and 31 part-time outstanding employees who would not receive these payments, according to the state guidelines. I strongly believe that all full-time and part-time employees should receive the supplemental pay, so I am recommending the School Board use \$1.6 million in state funds (available now due to the reversal of state "austerity budget cuts") to provide the additional pay to these employees as well. Additionally, I believe that our substitute teachers and temporary employees (lunchroom monitors, ASP workers, etc.) also should be thanked, so I'm recommending the restored funds also be used to provide them with one-time supplemental pay of \$500. I believe that our School Board, based on their longtime appreciation of your work, will approve these payments for our April payroll, and we will keep you updated. I also plan to begin discussions with the School Board about the Governor's fulfillment of his promise to give teachers a \$2,000 permanent raise. In the past, we have used local funds to extend such raises to all full-time employees, and that is a decision the School Board members will need to weigh as we prepare next year's budget (to be presented in May for a vote in June). Annual "step" longevity raises also are under consideration to thank you for continued service and account for cost of living increases. I appreciate all you do every day to serve our students!



District Delegate

CCSD's Monthly Employee Newsletter

December 2021/January 2022

Congratulations to the 2022 Teachers of the Year!



Left: Jennifer O'Connell, Clayton Elementary School 2022 TOTY; Middle: Henry Oglesby, Jr., Woodstock High School 2022 TOTY with wife and daughter; and Right: Julie Miles, Ball Ground ES STEM Academy 2022 TOTY

A Teacher of the Year (TOTY) has been selected by each CCSD school and center! School staff nominated, and then voted for, their 2022 school TOTY. These teachers will now compete to become CCSD TOTY finalists. The four finalists will be selected in February 2022 by a panel of retired educators and community partners. The District TOTY will be announced in March 2022.

Below is a list of each TOTY from each school. Congratulations on this prestigious honor!

ACTIVE Academics: Whitney Robinson; Arnold Mill Elementary School: Alisha Talley; Avery Elementary School: Heather Massey; Ball Ground ES STEM Academy: Julie Miles; Bascomb Elementary School: Rhonda Ryder; Boston Elementary School: Debbie Howell; Carmel Elementary School: Jessica Million; CCSD Preschool Centers: Catrina Wilson; Cherokee High School: Jonathan Gustin; Clark Creek ES STEM Academy: Kim Harrison; Clayton Elementary School: Jennifer O'Connell; Creekland Middle School: Jennifer Camp; Creekview High School: Janet Baggett; Dean Rusk Middle School:

DeLaney Campbell; E.T. Booth Middle School: Lori Salvinio; Etowah High School: Margo Kemmerer; Free Home Elementary School: Kristin Davis; Freedom Middle School: Kim Hester; Hasty ES Fine Arts Academy: Allison Hawkins; Hickory Flat Elementary School: Gina Haggerty; Holly Springs ES STEM Academy: Karen Schnell; Indian Knoll Elementary School: Tara Costello; Johnston Elementary School: Paige Chandler; Knox ES STEM Academy: Christina Parker; Liberty Elementary School: Heather Juras; Little River Elementary School: Emily Mickel; Macedonia Elementary School: Barbara Scharich; Mill Creek Middle School: Amanda Carter; Mountain Road Elementary School: Kristin Covington; Oak Grove ES STEAM Academy: Ally Potter; RM Moore ES STEM Academy: Lesley Carmichael; River Ridge High School: Tara Dugan; Sequoyah High School: Andrew Oberlies; Sixes Elementary School: Lauren Grimsley; Teasley Middle School: Kerry Voytek; Tippens Education Center: Margie Pullen; Woodstock Elementary School: Danielle Cooley; Woodstock High School: Henry Oglesby, Jr.; and Woodstock Middle School: Justin Brown.



District Delegate

CCSD's Monthly Employee Newsletter

March 2022

Hicks Named CCSD 2022 Media Specialist of the Year!



Media Academy media specialist Leslie Hicks started Read Across America week in an exciting way: finding out that she had been named the CCSD 2022 Media Specialist of the Year.

Leslie stood out for her vision and philosophy for her library, as well as her use of technology. She believes the media center is ever-changing and should move and shift to meet the needs of its patrons.

It is the largest classroom in every school with the largest class size: the entire student and staff population," Leslie said. "The library is not just a place for books; it's a place for learning!"

Leslie spends a great deal of her time integrating technology into her lessons, as she believes it is essential in preparing them to be "future ready." She teaches lessons in how to use resources for research and best practices for digital citizenship and effective use of technology. This school year, she took on new goals including: helping all students earn Microsoft Kids certification by increasing their technology literacy skills, and promoting reading through Beanstack app reading challenges with incentives and rewards for dedicated readers.

According to Knox ES STEM Academy Principal Jennifer McIntosh, "the media center is the heartbeat of our building, and Mrs. Hicks creates this engaging environment for our students because she is dedicated to the mission to cultivate curiosity, critical thinking and create real world connections. Once inside, a child has an opportunity to anchor our daily news, collaborate with a group of friends in the Lightbulb Lab, research and investigate problems, become engulfed in one of the thousands of books and so much more! Mrs. Hicks is a risk taker, trail blazer and innovator. Her enthusiasm for both books and learning are contagious."

ool media specialists were eligible for the award, and elected as the winner from a pool of outstanding nominating committee of retired educators and community

Best in Category: Photography



**Bibb County School
District**

“Rutland Graduation”



"When I envision a graduation photo to use for a school district, this is what comes to mind! It's the perfect representation of every student succeeding, and the smile on the student's face says it all. Wonderfully captured shot!"

Best in Category: Social Media



**Cobb County
School District**

**“Cobb Schools Kindergarten
Registration Campaign”**

"This campaign was powerful and I enjoyed that you used each social media platform to your advantage as far as targeting your audience. The data reflects the engagement, which is also a powerful metric."



Best in Category: Special Event



**Cherokee County
School District**
“Support Staff Employees
of the Year”

"This is such a great idea! Making everyone feel seen is so important"

Evaluation:

We received significant positive feedback during and after the event, as well as several emails and phone calls of appreciation from the winners and their supervisors. We believe that the event achieved its goal of honoring the hardworking support staff employees who primarily work behind the scenes to support the important work happening in the schools and at the district level. We wanted them to know how important they are to the overall success of our school district. As planned, we did use their information and photos taken from the event to create website stories and social media posts on a weekly basis over the school year. Based on the traction of these posts, it's apparent that our community feels the same way.

Best in Category: Special Purpose Publication




**Cherokee County
School District**
“2021 Class Act Magazine”



CLASS ACT

AUGUST 2021
VOLUME 2

 Cherokee
County
School
District

AUGUST 2021
VOLUME 2

"Loved the pictures
throughout."

Fine Arts are a key piece of the curriculum for CCSID students. In elementary school, students receive both art and music instruction every week. In middle school, students can choose visual arts, music (band and/or chorus) and theater as a Connections class. Band and chorus classes for high school credit are offered in CCSID middle schools for eighth-graders so students can get a head start on earning credits and be prepared for higher level fine arts courses once in high school.

CCSD has a district theater program, Academy Street Theatre Group, that holds auditions throughout the year for its multiple productions, open to students K-12.

At the high school level, students can choose electives from theater arts, visual arts, chorus, band and orchestra. Those students who wish to pursue a Fine Arts Pathway as part of their diploma completion can do so by completing three units of credit from eligible fine arts courses. Advanced Placement (AP) courses in visual arts and music are also available for advanced students.

CCSD high schools also have extensive extra-curricular programs for students, with marching band, as well as various orchestras and ensembles. High schools have active drama programs as well that stage multiple productions each year, including musicals in the spring.

Right: Visual arts instruction is available to students beginning in kindergarten. Middle and high schools offer art classes as electives. Creeksview HS student Paige Nash won first place in the Congressional Art Competition for her drawing, "Hidden Behind the Mask."

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ment of Agriculture's National Institute of Food and Agriculture (USDA-NIFA) and Farm Credit each year together recognize the top teachers in pre-kindergarten through 12th grade for innovation in using agricultural concepts to teach across the curriculum.

Free Home Elementary School teacher Keith Furstenberg was named the 2020 Georgia winner of the national Sanford Teacher Award, which includes a \$10,000 prize. The winners from each state were selected based on Sanford Programs' five key traits of an inspiring educator: Reflects on Teacher Practice to Maximize Student Engagement; Builds Student Confidence and Student Resiliency; Creates an Inclusive, Respectful Learning Environment; Maximizes Assessment Results for Student Growth; and Motivates Students to Succeed; Sets High Expectations while Promoting Student Choice and Student Voice.

For the third year in a row, CCSD's School Nutrition program earned the highest honor in the State for providing fresh, healthy meals to students: the Golden Radish Award at the Platinum Level presented by Georgia's Departments of Agriculture, Public Health, Education and Georgia Organics. CCSD's School Nutrition program also earned the Georgia Department of Education's 2020 Vision District award for its outstanding efforts to use Georgia grown foods on school cafeteria menus.

CCSD again earned National recognition for communications by bringing home 2021 National School Public Relations Association Awards. The awards included the Golden Achievement Award for CCSD's COVID-19 pandemic communications; CCSD is one of only 55 school districts nationwide to win this top honor. CCSD also earned three of the eight 2020 awards presented to Georgia school systems for excellent publications: an Award of Merit for the CCSD Connections parent newsletter, and two awards for CCSD's annual Class Act magazine.

CCSD earned the highest total number of awards presented for excellence in communications and community engagement in 2020 by the Georgia School Public Relations Association, with 15 Gold Awards and three "Best in State" awards among its numerous honors. The "Best in State" awards honored CCSD's communications in regard to the COVID-19 crisis; its monthly CCSD Connections parent e-newsletter; and its Instructional Framework handbook designed to explain and guide implementation of new practices to further improve teaching and learning.

DATE	CHEROKEE	CREEKVIEW	ETOWAH	RIVER RIDGE	SEQUOYAH	WOOD-STOCK
AUG 20	CORKY KELL CLASSIC AUG 18 vs MAYS	ETOWAH	@ CREEKVIEW	LASSITER	@ WOODSTOCK	SEQUOYAH
AUG 21			FORSYTH CENTRAL	@ WOODSTOCK	CHEROKEE	RIVER RIDGE
AUG 22			RIVER RIDGE	@ ETOWAH	@ CASS	@ CREEKVIEW
AUG 23			@ NORTH FORSYTH	BYE	BYE	@ CAMPBELL
AUG 24			NORTH COBB	CHATTA-HOOCHEE	JOHN'S CREEK	CALHOUN
AUG 25			BYE	BYE	BYE	BYE
AUG 26			@ ROSWELL	RIVERWOOD	@ CREEKVIEW	CHEROKEE
AUG 27			MILTON	CREEKVIEW	@ CAMBRIDGE	@ ALPHARETTA
AUG 28			@ CHEROKEE	@ CENTENNIAL	CHATTA-HOOCHEE	BYE
AUG 29			WOODSTOCK	@ SEQUOYAH	RIVER RIDGE	@ ETOWAH
AUG 30			BYE	JOHN'S CREEK	RIVERWOOD	@ MILTON
SEPT 1			@ ALPHARETTA	@ CAMBRIDGE	@ CENTENNIAL	ROSWELL

AS 4

Best in Category: Video/Electronic Media



**Gwinnett County
Public Schools**
“Team GCPS”



"This is STRONG.
Great concept and
impeccable
execution."



Best in Category: Website



**Houston County
School District**
“www.hcbe.net”

