

# History of

## R. D. Head Elementary School

R.D. Head Elementary School was founded due to the expanding growth occurring in late 1970's in the Snellville/Lilburn area. A combination of state earned funds and a bond referendum provided the money to build a relief school for this rapidly growing area. Gwin Oaks and Centerville Elementary Schools sent the largest number of students to Head with additional students coming from Britt and Knight Elementary.

The school first opened in August of 1979 with an enrollment of 850 students which surpassed the intended capacity of 750. Two portable classrooms were added that year to accommodate a 4th and 5th grade classroom. The leadership of Head Elementary first began with Hugh D. May, 1979–1984, and one instructional lead teacher, Jackie Perry. Mr. May was succeeded by the following principals: Virginia Crowley, 1984–1987; Betty Robinson, 1987–1993; Paula Deweese, 1993–1997; Mary Ray, 1997–December, 2000; Yvonne Frey, January, 2001–2003; and Michelle Farmer, 2003–present.

The school derived its name from a 35-year educator in the Snellville area, Ralph David Head. On August 19, 1915, Mr. Head was born on a farm in Jackson County, Georgia, one of 4 brothers and 2 sisters.

He graduated from Jefferson County High School in 1933 and then graduated from the University of Georgia

### FAST FACTS

**Address:** 1801 Hewatt Road  
Lilburn, GA 30047

The following have served as principals of R. D. Head Elementary:

1979–1984	Hugh D. May
1984–1987	Virginia Crowley
1987–1993	Betty Robinson
1993–1997	Paula Deweese
1997–Dec. 2000	Mary Ray
Jan. 2001–2003	Yvonne Frey
2003–2008	Michelle Farmer
2008–Nov. 2010	Leigh Westcott
Dec. 2010– Present	Christine Knox

**School Colors:** Gold and Maroon

**School Mascot:** Mustang

with a Bachelor of Science degree in Agriculture. Mr. Head later earned a Master's of Education degree in Administration. Mr. Head was a director of The Bank of Gwinnett, the first bank in Snellville. He also was an active member of the Snellville United Methodist Church, Lion's Club, past Master in the Mason's, and ran the cannery in Snellville during the summers. During



his 35 years of teaching he taught agriculture and shop at Grayson High School, Snellville High, and at South Gwinnett High School. On October 2, 1964, he became the principal of South Gwinnett after the sudden death of Victor Knight. He retired on July 1, 1973, and then decided to run for political office as a Representative in the Legislature. He won the primary election but died the day before the primaries on November 2, 1974. His wife, Mildred Head taught in Gwinnett until her retirement in 1981, and his only daughter, Katie Head, was a teacher at Head elementary until her untimely death in 1982.

R.D. Head continues to be an influential leader in the community for which it serves. Because of strong parental involvement, the Head Elementary PTA has been recognized many times as an outstanding PTA both in its region and the state. The PTA also was extremely instrumental in establishing the Gwinnett Children's Shelter, which provides a safe environment for abused and neglected children in Gwinnett County. Academic expectations are set high for the staff and students of R.D. Head. The school was named a Georgia School of Excellence in 1990–1991 then went on to be recognized as a National Blue Ribbon School of Excellence in 1991–1992. R. D. Head was recognized again as a Georgia School of Excellence in 2006–2007. R.D. Head continuously is recognized as one of the top performing schools on local, state, and national assessments.

Originally, the symbol of a hurricane was used to represent Head Elementary along with the colors of blue and silver. After the addition of Brookwood Elementary and the creation of the Brookwood Cluster concept, the mustang was adopted as the school's mascot with the colors maroon and gold.

"A Tradition of Excellence" was established the day the doors of the school opened and permeates throughout the building still today. Every staff member, parent, and student lives the school vision each and every day. Our mission is to provide a safe and supportive environment, which challenges and fosters life-long learning while developing responsible and effective members of our global community. Head Elementary is "Where Learning Comes First."

