



GCPS SCENE

School-to-Community Education News, Etc.

June 2012

FY2013 budget approved

At its May 17 meeting, the Gwinnett County Board of Education adopted the Fiscal Year 2013 **budget in the amount of \$1.73 billion**. The next step in the budget process comes in June with the scheduled adoption of the proposed millage rate— 19.25 mills for maintenance and operations and 1.30 mills for debt service— to support the FY13 budget. This marks the eighth straight year that GCPS was able to balance the budget without increasing local taxes.

GCPS improves already high passing rate on Grade 5 writing test

Gwinnett County Public Schools (GCPS) 5th graders have consistently excelled on the **Grade 5 State Writing Test**, ranking Gwinnett elementary schools among the top in the state. More than 12,600 Gwinnett students took the test in March of 2012. Overall, the school system's average passing rate was 93%, which is an increase over last year's average. Of particular interest is the success of Gwinnett students in scoring at the highest performance level. With an increase of 2 percentage points, 24% of Gwinnett students scored in the "Exceeds" performance level compared to 11% statewide.

435 employees retire from GCPS



As the 2011–12 school year comes to a close, GCPS thanked **435 veteran educators and support staff members for dedicating their careers to Gwinnett children**. The 2011–12 retirees contributed a collective 11,233 years of their lives to education, and a total of 8,471 years to Gwinnett schoolchildren. In fact, more than 43% (186) of the retirees have worked their entire careers in this school system. Among this year's retirees, 180 have 30 or more years of service in education, 15 have invested 40 or more years in education, and one retiree has 50 years in education. "I would like to personally thank each of our retiring employees for their service to GCPS, to our community, and most importantly to our students," said CEO/Superintendent **J. Alvin Wilbanks**.

State uses new method to calculate graduation rate



After years of inconsistent state-by-state reporting, a **new method** will be used to calculate the percentage of students graduating from the nation's high schools. Based on requirements from the U.S. Department of Education, the new four-year graduation rate is calculated using the number of students starting high school together who graduate within four years with a regular education diploma. The new calculation includes summer graduates and those who graduate early, but does not include students who don't earn enough credits to graduate on time with their peers. Special education students and non-English-speaking students are included in a school's starting cohort but are not considered on-time graduates if they earn anything other than a regular education diploma or if they take more than four years to graduate. With the more narrow parameters of the new calculation, graduation rates will decline even though the number of graduates hasn't changed. Students who do not complete high school in the traditional four years are not considered on-time graduates for the purpose of graduation rates, but they are not considered dropouts either. According to the Governor's Office of Student Achievement, GCPS has a dropout rate of 3.3%, an indication that the vast majority of Gwinnett students graduate but it takes some students longer than the traditional four years.

Students explore alternative energy in FLARE competition

In May, GCPS students participated in the **3rd annual Gwinnett FLARE competition at the Instructional Support Center in Suwanee**. Students from 73 schools engineered solar-heated ovens and solar-powered sprint cars to demonstrate that solar energy can be used to cook food and as a power source for transportation. Students applied engineering and scientific concepts that they learned from their classes to this real-world challenge.

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Questions? Call GCPS Department of Communication & Media Relations at (678) 301-6020.



Online Campus registration reopened

Gwinnett County Online Campus (GOC) reopened registration for the 2012–13 school year through **June 21** for students in grades 6–12. GOC is Gwinnett’s full-time online learning option. Learn more at www.gwinnettonlinecampus.com/goc/.

Leadership appointments

Dr. Susan Bearse	Principal, Berkeley Lake Elementary
Tonya Burnley	Principal, Gwin Oaks Elementary
Crystal Cooper	Principal, Sycamore Elementary
Phyllis Dartt	Principal, Cedar Hill Elementary
Toni Ferguson	Principal, Knight Elementary
Angie Pacholke	Principal, Freeman’s Mill Elementary
Dr. Michael Zinn	Principal, Berkmar High

Key GCPS dates



June 11–July 10 High School Online Summer Classes (July 4 holiday, M–Th schedule, no Friday classes)

June 11–July 19 Local schools will follow a four-day work week (Monday to Thursday) between June 11 and July 19. A five-day schedule resumes on July 23.

June 12–July 11 High School Face-to-Face Summer Classes (July 4 holiday, M–Th schedule)

June 18–July 12 K–8 Academic Summer School for qualifying students (July 4 holiday, M–Th schedule)

June 21 School Board Meeting, 7 p.m., Instructional Support Center (ISC)

July 4 All GCPS schools and offices closed for Independence Day

July 16–19 **Phoenix High** hosts summer retests for Georgia High School Graduation Tests and the Georgia High School Writing Test

July 19 School Board Meeting, 7 p.m., ISC

August 6 First day of school

The 2012-13 calendar is available on the web.

Good news from GCPS

- A **Parkview High** student won \$2,500 in scholarships and 3rd place in the Medicine and Health Sciences category at the International Science and Engineering Fair.
- Gwinnett teams from **Chesney Elementary, Duluth Middle, Duluth High,** and **Meadowcreek High** advanced to international Destination Imagination competition.
- A total of 13 **GCPS** students from **Brookwood, Central Gwinnett, Collins Hill, Mountain View, Parkview,** and **Peachtree Ridge** high schools were awarded college-funded National Merit Scholarships. (So far, 23 students have been named National Merit Scholars.)
- Thirty **GCPS** students have been awarded Hispanic Scholarship Fund Georgia Opportunities Scholarships of \$10,000.
- The wax mono-type work of **Shiloh High** art teacher **Eleanor Neal** has been selected for national exhibition in the Center for Contemporary Printmaking Biennial Footprint International in Norwalk, Connecticut, through June.
- A **Duluth High** student had the highest score to tie for 1st place in the nation in the National Geography Challenge. The **Duluth High** team placed 2nd nationally.
- The **GCPS** Farm-to-School nutrition program earned USDA regional recognition with a Best Practice Award.
- Eight **GCPS** seniors were awarded \$1,000 Georgia Association of Educators Foundation scholarships.

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More good news from GCPS

- **GCPS** foreign language students earned high honors on several national exams. A total of 10 students scored 1st or 2nd highest in the state on the National Spanish Exam. Five students had perfect papers on the National Latin Exam and seven students received book awards for having four years of gold *summa cum laude* scores or higher. In addition, 562 Latin students earned awards including, 113 gold *summa cum laude*, 150 silver *maxima cum laude*, 134 *magna cum laude*, and 165 *cum laude*. Three students won 1st or 2nd place in state on the National German Exam, with 34 students scoring at or above the 90th percentile. Three students earned 1st or 2nd place in state on the National French Exam, with 47 students ranking in the top 10 nationally.
- **GCPS** has 12 educators among the Master Teachers certified by the state in 2012.
- **Brookwood High's** boys track and field team, **Collins Hill High's** boys soccer team, and **Parkview High's** baseball team all won 1st place in state AAAAA competition.
- The Georgia School Counselors Association Region 2 winners are **Robin Zorn, Mason Elementary**—Elementary School Counselor of the Year; **Brandee Appling, Bay Creek Middle**— Middle School Counselor of the Year; **Tinisha Parker, Gwinnett Online Campus**— Secondary School Counselor of the Year; **Dr. Michelle Stangline, Sycamore Elementary**— Writer of the Year; and **Dr. Paul Johnson, Peachtree Ridge High**— Advocate of the Year. All five winners move to state level competition.
- **Chesney Elementary** and **Rosebud Elementary** students won honors from Japan's Consulate-General for their entries in the Cherry Blossom Drawing Contest.
- 40 **GCPS** educators have been selected to participate in the 2012–13 Teachers As Leaders Class.
- **Grayson High** and **Peachtree Ridge High** students were awarded Gwinnett Alliance for Gifted Education scholarships at an annual event. In addition, several staff members were recognized, including Gifted Program Teacher of the Year: **Lisa Vaughn, Riverside Elementary**; **Dot Poss, Lovin Elementary**— Gifted Cluster Teacher of the Year; Principal **Clayborn Knight, Nesbit Elementary**— Outstanding Administrator of the Year; and **Sandi Gollmar, Chesney Elementary**—Hughes Award Winner.
- A **Meadowcreek Elementary** student designed the winning logo for the 2012 Gwinnett Great Days of Service event.
- Seventeen **GCPS** students won recognition in the Duluth "Barefoot in the Park" student art exhibit.
- A total of 14 **GCPS** students from six different high schools were awarded \$4,000 scholarships from Walton Electric Membership Corporation.
- The Gwinnett County Bar Association awarded a \$1,000 scholarship to a student from **Gwinnett School of Mathematics, Science and Technology** for his winning essay. In addition, teacher **Mary Anne Meeks** of **Duluth High** was honored as Outstanding Teacher of the Year and a **Duluth High** student was recognized as Outstanding Law Student of the Year.
- Participants from all **GCPS** schools and offices raised \$443,090 in the 2011 United Way campaign. Top school fundraisers by level were **Lilburn Elementary, Richards Middle, and Norcross High**.
- Ninety **Gwinnett** school custodians earned the district's top honor for exemplary achievement at the 24th Annual Head Custodian Appreciation Breakfast.
- **Dacula High** teacher and coach **Jason Guzzardo** was named Gwinnett County Goal Club Coach of the Year.
- A team of 4th and 5th grade students from **White Oak Elementary** won 1st place in the 2012 Gwinnett Witzzle Pro® Tournament.