

STUDENT SERVICES REPORT



Continuously growing...and highlighting one of our Transition Academy students, Markel Kemp. Markel earned all of his graduation requirements from Houston County High School. He has been attending the Transition Academy since 2022, learning job skills and volunteering at our community partner sites. He is a hardworking young man who always puts forth great effort when working at job sites. Markel has recently obtained employment through Houston County School District's Nutrition Department and is working in the cafeteria at Bonaire Middle School. Markel's long term goal is full time employment with the District. His School Nutrition Manager at BMS, Tevita Wood, stated "Markel is a very hard worker and everyone loves working with him". We celebrate Markel for all of his accomplishments and wish him continued success!



WELCOME
January
HAPPY NEW YEAR!

ASPIRE AWARDS

Celebration

Houston County Sharks Supporters

Several Houston County Sharks supporters recently received awards from the American Association of Adapted Sports Programs (AAASP). The Adapted Sports Programs in Recreation and Education (ASPIRE) Awards recognize individuals who serve as role models and advocates for adapted sports. Adapted sports programs allow students with physical disabilities to reap the physical, social, emotional, and academic benefits of competitive athletics, resulting in personal and social empowerment. Forty-three nominees across the United States were recognized at the 2023 Aspire Awards held earlier this year. Sharks' nominees were named the winner in three categories. Dr. Zabrina Cannady, Assistant Superintendent for Student Services and Past President of the Georgia Association of Educational Leaders (GAEL), accepted the Eli Wolff Award for Advocacy for her role in promoting adapted sports through the GAEL organization. Anthony Cuti, a 10th grade student from Houston County High School, received the Male Scholar Athlete of the Year Award. This award is presented to a male athlete who showed leadership not only on the court, but also in the classroom. He currently maintains a 4.0 GPA while participating in 4 sports: wrestling, Sharks Basketball, Sharks Handball, and Sharks Football. Michael Leverett, a Sharks supporter from Disability Connections, received the Media Hero Award for providing conscientious coverage and visibility to AAASP's sports leagues.

Pictured below (left to right): Dr. Zabrina Cannady and Buddy Costley, Executive Director of GAEL; Anthony Cuti with Jeremy Downing, Sharks Coach and teacher at C.B. Watson Primary School. Not pictured: Michael Leverett.



Other Houston County Sharks and supporters who were nominated included:

- Jeremy Downing, Coach of the Year – Varsity
- Stephen Robertson, Coach of the Year – Varsity
 - Bryan Watts, Coach of the Year – Varsity
- Benito Alejandro, Gail Hendrick Award for Volunteerism
- Bobby Ryals, Gail Hendrick Award for Volunteerism
- Ca'ron Harris, Power Chair Athlete of the Year
 - Josh Cruz, Male Athlete of the Year
 - Laila Kindness, Female Athlete of the Year
- Ashlyn Stevens, Female Scholar Athlete of the Year



OPERATION SANTA

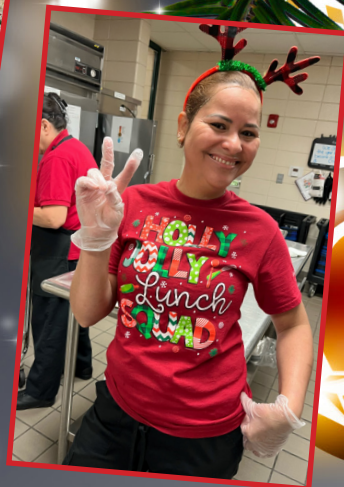


Houston County School District Social Workers facilitated a gift drive to ensure 163 students and their families had a memorable Christmas. Several community sponsors made Operation Santa possible by donating toys, clothes and other gift items. Optimist Club members and their families delivered the gifts to the homes of our students. The Student Services Department greatly appreciates the partnership with the individuals and organizations that helped to provide such a joyous holiday for our students and families!

2023 Operation Santa Sponsors:

Optimist Club
Jimbo Farr - Tidal Wave
Jason Maxwell - Tidal Wave
HCSD Warehouse Personnel
HCSD Board Office Personnel
Kings Chapel Elementary PTO
Tahseria Club
Sean Rollins - RCI
Crossfit Carnivore
Buzzell Heating & Air
Inspire Pilates Studio





It's the most wonderful time of the year, and to celebrate we hosted our annual Christmas Dessert Day in cafeterias across the county! Students couldn't decide between confections like cake pop snowballs, reindeer brownies, rice crispy ornaments, and Santa themed treats to put on their trays. Cafeterias transformed into winter wonderlands as each school added their own fun flare with holiday décor and photo backdrops! Teachers and staff joined in on the fun by dressing up, and one school even selected student helpers to add the finishing touches to the cakes served in their lunchroom. It was a holly, jolly good time!



MERRY Christmas FROM SCHOOL NUTRITION

SCHOOL NUTRITION PROUDLY PRESENTS

Sadie Surber

Youth Apprenticeship Program

Meet Sadie Surber! Sadie is our student worker through the Youth Apprenticeship Program. Hard work and drive define Sadie, as she not only works for us during the week, but also is employed at Andersonville National Historical Site on the weekends. This doesn't hinder her academics in any way, as she is currently ranked 18th in her senior class at Perry High. In her spare time, Sadie plays varsity soccer, shoots muskets, and is an involved member of Grace Church of Perry. Her favorite part of working for school nutrition is honing her communication and customer service skills at the front desk. Sadie wants to pursue a degree in History and is looking forward to attending college in the fall!



Students from King's Chapel Elementary School brought donations to the Lindsey Student Support Center and received a tour of the building. Students and teachers enjoyed a full tour of the Literacy Center, Food Pantry, Resource Room, and walk-in refrigerator! Students' favorite stop was the Sensory Room where they were able to explore, touch, jump, swing, and play!



Happenings @ the LSSE

May this month be filled with beauty, snow, and love!

In partnership with Houston Healthcare and the Houston County Sheriff's Department, the Lindsey Student Support Center was pleased to present Family Cyber Safety Night. Families from across the district learned the basics of social media safety, online etiquette, password protection, cyber awareness, financial security, and AI basics. Ms. Jennifer Altman of Houston Healthcare and Sgt. Ben Lashley of the Houston County Sheriff's Department were the presenters for the event. The presentation was followed by a Q&A session, all of which was translated by the District's translator, Ms. Rosalin Rodriguez. The most exciting part of the evening was the demonstration from Sgt. Lashley's K-9, Jobi. Jobi is trained to find electronic devices at crime scenes which are then used as evidence in cyber criminal activity. Sgt. Lashley chose four children in attendance to hide cell phones in the room which Jobi was able to sniff-out and find. It was a fantastic event where everyone left with a smile on their face and new knowledge to protect themselves and their families from cyber crime.



The Lindsey Student Support Center holds a monthly Growing Together series hosted by our Parent Mentor, Marina Jones, and supported by community partners. This series is focused on supporting our special education parents and caregivers. The latest series educated families on the IEP. Attendees learned all about the process of developing an Individualized Education Plan (IEP). All components of the IEP were reviewed in detail, along with an overview of terms and acronyms. The IEP process can be overwhelming for families. The goal of this series is to better equip parents, increase involvement of families, and provide better outcomes for our students.

LSSC

The WIN Academy got into the Christmas Spirit! Students and faculty joined hands to collect canned goods, non-perishables, and hygiene items to restock shelves at the Lindsey Student Support Center. Items were collected December 1st through the 15th. Upon opening the LSSC in April of 2023, the District knew having food and clothing assistance was a high priority for our community. However, the expectations have been far exceeded which is why WIN Academy's support, and the support of many community partners has been essential to the success of the LSSC! Thank you, WIN Academy, for helping "Spread the Joy" this holiday season!

Join Us For

WIN Christmas Food Drive

Spread holiday cheer and make a difference in our community by packing the pantry at the Lindsey Center

WHERE: WIN ACADEMY, 215 SCOTT BLVD

WHEN: 12/1 TO 12/15, 7:00AM - 3:00PM, WEEKDAYS ONLY

HOW CAN YOU HELP?

DONATE NON-PERISHABLE FOOD ITEMS

- CAN GOODS
- BEANS
- NOODLES
- RICE

Spread the Joy!

<https://win.hcbe.net/>

TEACHER SPOTLIGHT

Our teacher in the spotlight this month is Kaitlyn Thompson from Bonaire Elementary School. Mrs. Thompson was born in Virginia and grew up in Pike County, Georgia. She met her husband in 2019 and moved to Houston County in 2020. Mrs. Thompson earned a degree in Special Education, with a concentration in Deaf Education, from Valdosta State University. Mrs. Thompson has been teaching for 7 years and has been at Bonaire Elementary for the last 3 years. Mrs. Thompson stated “the community within BES is amazing. The staff love and support one another. Most importantly, they love my students and include them.”

Mrs. Thompson knew she wanted to be a teacher in first grade. She would play school with her siblings and give them tests. Her favorite thing about teaching is seeing the growth her students make. Mrs. Thompson strives for independence in the classroom. “I want all of my students to be as independent as possible. Every student is capable of learning. My job is to provide tools, accommodations, and support to make that possible.” Mrs. Thompson considers her students her family. Her home away from home. She is committed to her students and strives for them to succeed. Thank you Mrs. Thompson for your passion and love for your students!



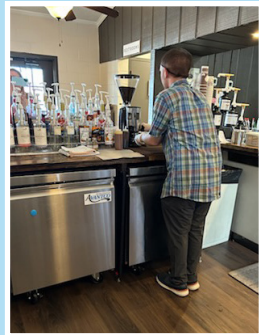
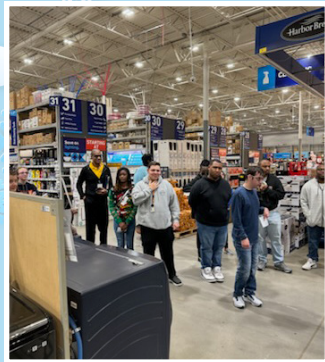
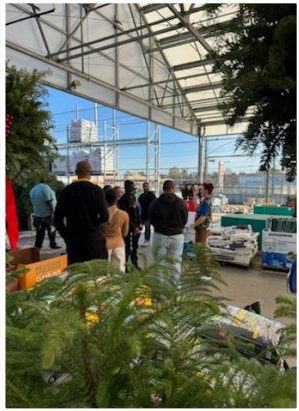
ROOSEVELT Warm Springs & TRANSITION ACADEMY

Students from the Transition Academy were able to tour the campus of Roosevelt Warm Springs. The Roosevelt Academy provides opportunities for students to gain skills and independence. Roosevelt Academy offers 6 pathways for Vocational Rehabilitation students interested in careers in one of these high-demand fields. Academic pathways at RWS are 16-week residential programs that give eligible students the perfect balance of direct instruction coupled with hands-on experience in Hospitality, Auto Detailing, Logistics/Warehousing, Low Voltage Wiring, CVS/Retail, or Nursing. Successful completion of coursework prepares students to earn professional certificates in their chosen area of study, and the RWS staff assists with job placement opportunities to help secure employment. We look forward to seeing our students continuously grow through potential post-secondary opportunities like the Roosevelt Academy in Warm Springs.



WELCOME *Winter*

& WELCOME PARTNERSHIPS



The Transition Academy has partnered with Star Innovative Coaching and Waves Autism Center to provide Pre-Employment Transition Services (Pre-ETS) for students. Pre-ETS are career focused services that include Job-Exploration Counseling, Work-Based Learning Activities, Workplace Readiness Training, Self Advocacy Instruction, and Counseling on Post-Secondary Options. Students from the Transition Academy, with the coordination from Star Innovative Coaching and Waves Autism Center, toured Lowe's Retail Company and Z-Beans Coffee Shop for a Work-Based Learning Experience. Students gained realistic perspectives on workplace requirements allowing them to explore and observe different occupations. Students engaged through informal, personal conversations and interactions with employees learning the importance of thinking about career development through the career path stories their tour guides shared. Thank you to Star Innovative Coaching and Waves Autism Center for the services they provide our students!



Transition Academy Celebration



December is a time to celebrate, and students from the Transition Academy did just that! A trip to the Georgia Aquarium was earned and well deserved for their hard work and dedication this semester. Students enjoyed touring the Aquarium, learning all about animal life, and watching the shows. Holiday spirit was in the air while students decorated gingerbread houses and dressed up in their favorite holiday outfits. The Grinch even made an appearance! The Transition Academy celebrated the accomplishments of three hardworking young men who have achieved so much and are aging out of the program this month. We are so excited to see what the future holds for KeShaun, Mikhi, and Griffin! We celebrate all your accomplishments and are so proud of you!



Sensory Rooms

The Houston County Student Services Department, along with the help of the Maintenance Department facilitated the installation of fifteen sensory rooms across the county. The District contracted with Sensory Room Solutions to tailor the rooms for the unique needs of our students. The team planned and installed each component in the rooms to ensure maximum student engagement and safety. ARP IDEA funds distributed during the 2021-2022 school year provided financing for this project. To ensure equity throughout the county, schools were selected based on program type. The first schools completed were HCHS, VHS, MCMS, FMMS, TMS, MAES, QRES, CBWPS, PSES, PKWD, HTES. These are schools that have programs that serve students with severe and profound intellectual disabilities. Additionally, The Lindsey Behavior Support Program, The Lindsey Student Support Center and the Houston County Annex Child Find programs all added sensory rooms.

Moving forward, the District plans to phase in sensory rooms throughout the county using IDEA funds. This semester, Langston Road Primary School, Langston Road Elementary School, and Hilltop Elementary School will have sensory rooms installed. Each of these schools house classrooms for students with autism, emotional and behavioral disorders, and/or special education Pre-K. During the 2024-2025 school year we will continue to expand with a focus on autism and EBD classes, outfitting eight elementary schools with state-of-the-art sensory rooms. The addition of sensory rooms will be an ongoing project, with schools being evaluated each year to determine necessity of installation.

As the District continues to grow, the goal is to make sensory rooms available to students with disabilities throughout the county. To ensure safety and proper use, each room will include guidelines to educate users and adult facilitators accordingly. Use of the sensory room as an antecedent intervention for students that may become dysregulated is a proactive strategy for reducing problematic behavior, including physical aggression toward peers and staff.





AAASP SPORTS PROGRAM
2023-24 WHEELCHAIR BASKETBALL
MASTER SCHEDULE



Times subject to change, for information call Robyn Hootselle at (404) 294-0070, Ext. 2

DATE	DIVISION	VISITING TEAM	@	HOME TEAM	TIME
Sat., 1-6	JV	Clarke Classic City Dawgs	@	Houston Jr. Sharks	11:00 a.m.-12:30 p.m.
Sat, 1-6	JV	Clarke Classic City Dawgs	@	Atlanta Wolfpack	1:00 p.m. – 2:30 p.m.
Sat, 1-6	JV	Atlanta Wolfpack	@	Houston Jr. Sharks	3:00 p.m. – 4:30 p.m.
Sat, 1-6	V	West GA Wolverines	@	Clayton Eagles	11:00 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.
Sat., 1-13	V	DeKalb Silver Streaks	@	Gwinnett Heat	11:00 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.
Sat., 1-20	JV	Peach Rolling Trojans	@	Muscogee Lions	11:00 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.
Sat., 1-20	JV	Peach Rolling Trojans	@	Georgia Storm	1:00 p.m. – 2:30 p.m.
Sat., 1-20	JV	Georgia Storm	@	Muscogee Lions	3:00 p.m. – 4:30 p.m.
Sat., 1-20	V	Clayton Eagles	@	Gwinnett Heat	11:00 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.
Sat., 1-20	V	Houston Sharks	@	West GA Wolverines	11:00 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.
Sat., 1-27	JV	Atlanta Wolfpack	@	Clarke Classic City Dawgs	11:00 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.
Sat., 1-27	JV	Atlanta Wolfpack	@	Houston Jr. Sharks	1:00 p.m. – 2:30 p.m.
Sat., 1-27	JV	Houston Jr. Sharks	@	Clarke Classic City Dawgs	3:00 p.m. – 4:30 p.m.
Sat., 1-27	V	Houston Sharks	@	Clayton Eagles	11:00 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.
Sat., 1-27	V	DeKalb Silver Streaks	@	West GA Wolverines	11:00 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.
Sat, 2-3	JV	Houston Jr. Sharks	@	Georgia Storm	11:00 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.
Sat, 2-3	JV	Houston Jr. Sharks	@	Muscogee Lions	1:00 p.m. – 2:30 p.m.
Sat, 2-3	JV	Muscogee Lions	@	Georgia Storm	3:00 p.m. – 4:30 p.m.
Sat, 2-3	V	Gwinnett Heat	@	Houston Sharks	11:00 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.
Sat, 2-3	V	Gwinnett Heat	@	Houston Sharks	1:00 p.m. – 2:30 p.m.
Sat, 2-10	JV	Muscogee Lions	@	Peach Rolling Trojans	11:00 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.
Sat, 2-10	JV	Muscogee Lions	@	Georgia Storm	1:00 p.m. – 2:30 p.m.
Sat, 2-10	JV	Georgia Storm	@	Peach Rolling Trojans	3:00 p.m. – 4:30 p.m.
Sat, 2-10	V	Gwinnett Heat	@	Clayton Eagles	11:00 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.
Sat, 2-10	V	Houston Sharks	@	DeKalb Silver Streaks	11:00 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.
Sat, 2-17	V	Clayton Eagles	@	DeKalb Silver Streaks	11:00 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.
Sat, 2-17	V	Clayton Eagles	@	West GA Wolverines	1:00 p.m. – 2:30 p.m.
Sat, 2-17	V	West GA Wolverines	@	DeKalb Silver Streaks	3:00 p.m. – 4:30 p.m.
Sat, 2-24	JV	Peach Rolling Trojans	@	Atlanta Wolfpack	11:00 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.
Sat, 2-24	JV	Peach Rolling Trojans	@	Clarke Classic City Dawgs	1:00 p.m. – 2:30 p.m.
Sat, 2-24	JV	Clarke Classic City Dawgs	@	Atlanta Wolfpack	3:00 p.m. – 4:30 p.m.
Sat, 2-24	V	DeKalb Silver Streaks	@	Houston Sharks	11:00 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.
Sat, 2-24	V	West GA Wolverines	@	Gwinnett Heat	11:00 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.

JUNIOR VARSITY DIVISION – TWO JV SEMI-FINAL GAMES AND ONE JV FINAL GAME TO BE PLAYED LOCALLY AND HOSTED BY 1ST PLACE IN STANDINGS ON MARCH 2, 2024 (TIMES TBA)

LET'S GO SHARKS!