

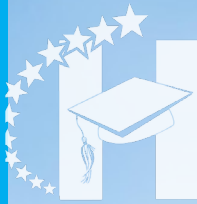
STUDENT SERVICES REPORT

APRIL IS OCCUPATIONAL THERAPY MONTH

Occupational therapy assists individuals in performing necessary tasks through therapeutic use of daily activities (occupations). This skill based therapy supports the student’s ability to participate in school activities or occupations. This includes academic support and non-academic support. Occupational therapists collaborate within the educational team to provide supports and interventions for students to engage in school activities and achieve independence in the school setting. They may work on maintaining or improving functional joint motion needed during the school day such as putting on a coat or reaching for items in a locker. When needed, they work on the development of hand skills for functional writing, keyboarding, cutting, and buttoning. Occupational therapists fabricate splints to enable the student to perform educational tasks such as writing, eating, using a keyboard, or stabilization of work material. They recommend and assist with modifying seating or positioning on the school bus. An occupational therapist will promote safety within the school environment and modify playground equipment and common areas. Our occupational therapy team works hard for student success!

Houston County Board of Education Occupational Therapy Department team members: Leigh Ann Allen, Ansley Bailey, Danetta Hardy, Lauren Hatcher, Heather Mattox, Stephanie McCormick, Keshia Ragin, Amy Velazquez, and Lynn Whittle. The department currently serves over 300 students across the District! Thank you for your dedication!





HOUSTON COUNTY
SCHOOL DISTRICT
High Achievement for All



March was Social Worker Appreciation Month. The Houston County School District celebrated School Social Worker Week March 6-10. The theme for this year's celebration was "We Rise." School Social Workers rise to support their students, families, and school communities. School Social Workers rise to share hope. They rise to listen and understand. They rise to challenge inequities. They rise to support all students. School Social Workers are advocates who help students achieve academic success by linking home, school, and community. In order to reach this goal, School Social Workers provide support services to remove barriers to student success. These support services include intervention, crisis support, assisting students in dealing with mental health and behavioral challenges, and addressing issues of truancy.

Several schools across the district have campaigns to increase school attendance with assistance from School Social Workers. The goal is to ensure that every child has an equal opportunity to reach his or her potential. Social Workers collaborate with families to help meet their basic needs and reduce barriers that keep students from attending school. Georgia House Bill 1190 states that students missing five or more unexcused days from school are considered truant. Social workers conduct home visits to locate students who are truant, attend court, collaborate with the judges at magistrate and juvenile courts, work with community agencies, and write grants for the department. They have a direct impact on increasing graduation rates and decreasing drop-out rates among students. We thank you for your hard work and dedication!



CEC AWARDS

On March 9th, the Ellen Maltais Chapter for Exceptional Children held their annual awards program. The night was a celebration of students, teachers, paraprofessionals, administrators, and community members. We were honored with a special visit from Dr. Gwen Allen, with the Georgia Department of Education, who presented the ASPIRE Awards which promotes self-advocacy among our students. Mr. Bobby Ryals was honored with the CEC Community Award for his countless hours of volunteer work and raising over \$12,000.00 for the Sharks Program. Dr. Alicia Campbell was presented with the Legacy of Service Award for her countless contributions and dedicated service in the field of Special Education. Dr. Campbell is more than deserving of this prestigious award! Congratulations to all who were honored in receiving the following awards!

ASPIRE Award Winners

Ke'Shawn Smith - Langston Road Elementary
Carmelo Warren - Huntington Middle
Sean Young - Transition Academy

Academic Award Winners

William Huber - Tucker Elementary
Michelle Nguyen - Feagin Mill Middle
Isaac Pardue - Perry High

Art Award Winners

Kelsey Tiznado - Quail Run Elementary
Daniel Brown - Thomson Middle
Brandeis Taylor - Houston County High

Athletics Award Winners

Dayton Smith - Bonaire Elementary
Torrey Williams Jr. - Bonaire Middle
Ja'lean Robinson - Warner Robins High

Technology Award Winners

Harley Strout - Child Find
Kayleigh Allen - Mossy Creek Middle
DeCorrin Tyson - Northside High

Administrator Award Winners

Ovedia Glover - Hilltop Elementary
Dr. Andy Gentry - Mossy Creek Middle
Russell Lawley - Northside High

General Education Award Winners

Jaqueline Randall - Russell Elementary
Dr. Ashley Whiddon - Perry Middle
Virgil Blalock - Northside High

Special Education Award Winners

Wendy Walker - CB Watson Primary
Rhonda Zellner - WIN Academy
Tyler Rodgers - Perry High

Support Personnel Award Winners

Danielle Baker - Matt Arthur Elementary
Kenya Walker - Mossy Creek Middle
Kristine Staff - Veterans High



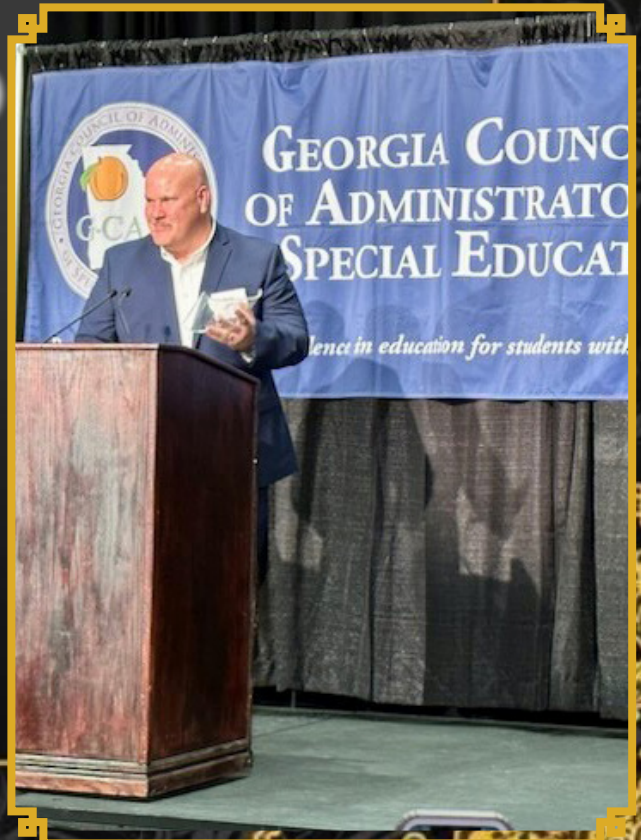
A NIGHT AT THE MUSEUM



Perry High School hosted the Partner's Prom for students across the district. The theme for this year's prom was "A Night at the Museum". Decorations, lights, balloon arches, and flowers made the event extra special. Students came dressed up in their fancy attire to dance the night away to the DJ's favorite dance tunes. Each year the current Seniors are recognized by walking across the stage and receiving a special gift for their accomplishments. Students were also provided refreshments and beverages. A photographer captured individual pictures of this special occasion. Teachers volunteer to help with planning and organizing this event. This special evening is always a night to remember.

FRIEND OF G-CASE AWARD

Dr. Mark Scott was honored with the Friend of G-CASE award during the G-CASE Spring Legal Forum hosted at the Classic Center in Athens, Georgia on March 6-8th. This prestigious award is given in recognition and gratitude for dedicated service, devotion, and support of G-CASE. He was unanimously selected by the G-CASE Executive Board to receive this honor. We appreciate Dr. Scott's continued support!



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TEACHER SPOTLIGHT

Our teacher in the spotlight this month is Elizabeth Larsen from Northside High School. Mrs. Larsen was born in Suva, Fiji and moved to Utah at the age of 3. She grew up in Orem, Utah until she married her husband who serves in the military. Since her marriage, she has lived in Utah, Minnesota, Arizona, Ohio, and Georgia. Mrs. Larsen has called Georgia her home since August 2016.

Mrs. Larsen received an Associate of Arts degree from Mesa Community College and a Bachelor's Degree in Special Education from Brigham Young University. She has been teaching since 2009 and has been at Northside High School for the last 3 years. Since she was a little girl, Mrs. Larsen wanted to teach and help others succeed. She loves working with students as they have brought much joy to her life! "Teaching has pushed me to be better, strengthened me, and taught me we all have value in life." She strives to show her students their potential and what they have to offer this world. When she isn't teaching, Mrs. Larsen can be found spending time with her family and friends. She loves being outdoors: hiking, swimming, and taking her dogs on walks. She loves to travel, dance, go to Zumba classes, and loves to read. Elizabeth Larsen is a passionate and caring teacher. We are so thankful to have her as part of our Houston County family! Thank you Mrs. Larsen for everything you do!





DIG IN TO SCHOOL BREAKFAST™

CAUTION: Lunch Ladies at Work! The Houston County School Nutrition Program participated in National School Breakfast Week (NSBW) during the first week in March. This event celebrates the importance of a nutritious school breakfast in fueling students for success. During NSBW, we swapped hairnets for hard hats, and everyone dug into delicious morning meals! When the school week gets busy, it's easy for students to rush out the door in the morning without having a nutritious meal. That's why school breakfast is such a great option! In fact, Houston County School Nutrition served nearly **3,000,000 breakfasts** during last school year! Research shows students who participate in school breakfast tend to have **better attendance** rates and **fewer behavioral problems**. We want to do our part to ensure our students have fun and enter the classroom ready to learn!



We are excited to share the **School Nutrition Awards Banquet** is back in-person! Each year our department hosts a celebration to recognize the outstanding school nutrition employees who have served our students and community. We would love for you to come and celebrate with us!

Please save the date for **Thursday May 11, 2023**. Dinner will be provided at **6:00 pm** followed by the awards ceremony. This event will be hosted in the **Perry Middle School Cafeteria**. Stay tuned for more information.

HOUSTON COUNTY SCHOOL DISTRICT

High Achievement for All

Special Education Teacher Induction Series

School Psychologist Kristen Peaster and Transition Support Teacher Dr. Brandi Mauney conducted professional learning for thirty-four participants on February 28th. Attendees were new special education teachers from across the District who have been participating in the New Teacher Induction Series. Presentation topics included *Understanding the Re-evaluation Process and Transition Planning for Life after High School*. Why students may be referred for re-evaluations and the referral process were discussed. The 12 eligibility areas and the basics for writing IEP transition plans were reviewed. Participants had opportunities for Q&A, and resources were provided through a shared site.

Assistive Technology team members Jennifer Thomas and Bethany Baker presented, *Using Assistive Technology for Academic and Communication Needs*, during the Special Education Teacher Induction Series on March 24th. An open forum for Q&A was a valuable part of the presentation. The series of questions included: When do you consider assistive technology? Where can you find the documents to start and continue the assistive technology process? What assistive technology tools exist and how can you tell what is appropriate for your specific concerns? How do you include assistive technology information on the IEP? Who all is involved in the assistive technology process? A video series was also provided to access and refer back to at a later time. Videos included examples of filling out assistive technology forms and step by step directions for assistive technology functions available on Chromebooks.

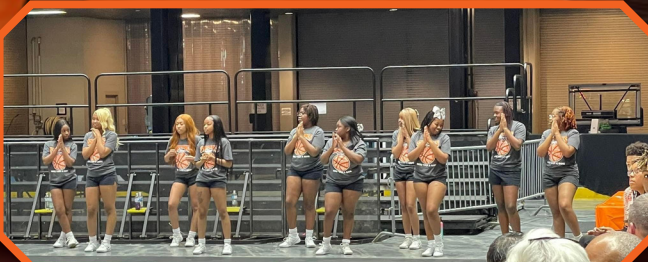


SHARKS



THE HOUSTON COUNTY VARSITY SHARKS 2023

Congratulations to Coach Roberson, Coach Anna Henry, Coach Jamie, and the Varsity Shark Players! They defeated Dekalb County Silverstreaks Saturday, March 11th, to retain their title of State Wheelchair Basketball Champions! The Sharks offense struggled early in the first half. After some words of wisdom from Dr. Scott at halftime, they found the backboard during the second half and the tide turned. Sharks defeated the Silverstreaks 49-30. Special shout-out to the Houston County Cheerleaders and Coach Waite for cheering them on!



THE HOUSTON COUNTY JV SHARKS 2023 SEASON

Houston County JV Sharks started the 2023 basketball season with uncertainty due to the loss of two valuable players at the beginning of the handball season. The uncertainty quickly turned to excitement with the addition of several new players for basketball season! The Sharks began the season with four straight victories. They had a strong offense and a stingy defense. Unfortunately, the Sharks dropped a doubleheader to Gwinnett heading into the state tournament. The Sharks bounced back though by defeating the Muscogee Lions in the first round of the state tournament. However, they dropped the final championship game to Gwinnett finishing the season 5-3. A bright future is ahead for these JV Sharks! Coaches, parents, and fans cannot wait to see what happens in the upcoming football season!





Spring Special Olympics was held at Perry High School March 15-17th. Twenty-five schools and over 530 athletes participated in Level A events, Volleyball, and Track & Field. Opening ceremonies were held by Perry High School's Chorus who sang the National Anthem and JROTC presented colors. Thirty-eight seniors from around the district were recognized for their years of participation in the Special Olympics program. The Special Olympics motto states, "Let me win, but if I cannot win, let me be brave in the attempt". All students were awarded ribbons based on the premise of this motto. The games were competitive and fun! These local events take a lot of time, organization, and volunteers to help make them a success. We are thankful to all the schools and organizations in Houston County who teamed up to provide this opportunity for our athletes!

