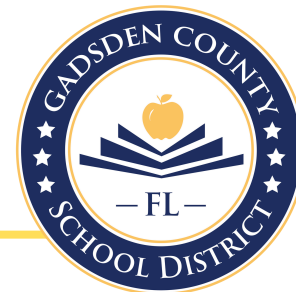


APRIL 2025

ACADEMIC SERVICES



# NEWSLETTER



## Title I/VPK Slots Open!

We're now enrolling prekindergarten students for an exciting year of learning, growth and fun! Our Title I/VPK program provides a safe, nurturing environment where children build essential foundational skills through creative exploration and social interaction. Help recruit community children to join our vibrant PreK program today!

#PrekindergartenMatters

### UPCOMING MEETINGS/EVENTS

April 25: Relay For Life (6:00- Midnight) MLK Track

May 10: GCPS Staff Field Day (9:00 - 3:00) CPA Athletic Field

## Updates from OPLS

This week the OPLS team will meet with the final two schools for our Teacher Needs Survey Focus Groups — Gadsden County High School and James A. Shanks Middle School. These focus groups have yielded a tremendous amount of important feedback from educators throughout the district. The OPLS team will review and disaggregate the qualitative data collected and create the sessions for the educators' summer summit.

We continue to conduct virtual meetings with educators whose temporary and professional certifications expire on June 30, 2025.

Our departmental efforts also include planning professional learning for the remainder of this school year, managing the Teacher Apprenticeship program, and establishing nurturing partnerships that benefit the goals and initiatives of our department and the school district.

*Elijah Key, Superintendent*  
*Tammy McGriff, Asst. Superintendent,*  
*Academic Services*

## Updates from Elementary Education

As the school year nears its end, preparation for the ELA textbook adoption and intervention resources for both ELA and Math has been a primary focus. Vendor sample materials were distributed and reviewed, with schools ranking the options based on student needs. Following the rankings, selected vendors were invited to present their materials to a team of teachers and district staff for further evaluation. In support of our BSI schools, I have continued to provide guidance and oversight as we approach the final state assessment, PM3. I have also begun reviewing school data to help determine student promotion and retention decisions for the end of the year. Additionally, I have advertised positions and initiated the selection process for staffing the upcoming summer reading program.

## Updates from Assessment & Accountability

### ***Statewide Testing is Here!!!***

Several schools have been working hard trying to complete the administration of the Florida Alternate Assessment to students with disabilities. The window to administer the assessment to high school students closes on Friday, April 25<sup>th</sup>. Next up, FAST PM3 for students in grades K-2 which actually started on Monday, April 21<sup>st</sup>. Students in grades 3-12 will participate in at least one statewide assessment beginning May 1<sup>st</sup>.

High schools are scheduled to administer Advanced Placement assessments to students enrolled in Advanced Placement courses during the month of May.

In addition to all the testing and other school activities, schools are making sure that correct data is being reported to the Florida Department of Education that could impact school grades. Hats off to all the parents, faculty, staff, and community stakeholders for pouring into the boys and girls in Gadsden!

## Updates from Secondary Education

During the month, Director Holmes participated in several events supporting educational initiatives and student achievement. Targeted instructional support was provided at Shanks Middle School through small group pullouts in 8th grade ELA. Professional learning was prioritized with attendance at the FASFEPA Spring Forum in St. Augustine, where best practices and strategies to close the achievement gap were explored. Continued involvement in instructional materials adoption included participation in the Read 180 webinar on April 9th. On April 10th, information on the Xello college and career readiness platform and employee evaluations was presented at the monthly principal leadership meeting, followed by participation in the monthly BSI District meeting.

Collaborative efforts extended to a meeting on April 14th with Jordyn Landsman regarding Florida's new Story of America initiative, aimed at enhancing student engagement in U.S. History. Regular BSI support visits were conducted at West Gadsden Middle School on April 15th and Shanks Middle School on April 16th. Additionally, the Graduation Alliance Kick-off Meeting was facilitated to promote alternative pathways to graduation and career readiness. Upcoming events include professional learning opportunities, including 4/23 RAIDE High School Tutoring Program Train the Trainer, AVID District Director Leadership 5 on 4/29-4/30.

## Updates from Federal Programs

The Federal Programs Office hosted its monthly Title I Parent Night at Havana Magnet School on April 10th. The meeting was a huge success, with lots of parents and vendors. Program managers are working on final amendments for roll-forward for 2024-2025. The Federal Program Director recently completed the private school 2025-2026 enrollment. We will focus on closing out the 2024-2025 purchasing on April 30, 2025, on all grants under federal programs

## Updates from Exceptional Student Education (ESE)

Our Student Athletes Shine at Regional Games—  
Next Stop: State Special Olympics!

We are thrilled to share some exciting news about our incredible student athletes! On April 5, our students proudly represented our district at the Regional Special Olympic Games in DeFuniak Springs.

With determination, sportsmanship, and a whole lot of heart, they gave outstanding performances that earned them a spot at the State Special Olympic Games in Orlando, FL, taking place May 16–17.

This achievement is a testament to their hard work, dedication, and team spirit—and we couldn't be prouder.

We also want to extend our heartfelt thanks to our local Law Enforcement and Mr. Kevin Ward for hosting an amazing Torch Run Event. Your support, encouragement, and commitment to these athletes play such a vital role in their journey.

Let's continue to cheer on our athletes as they prepare to compete on the state level. We're all rooting for you—bring home that Big Win!



**“Try to be the  
rainbow in  
someone else’s  
cloud.”**

Maya Angelou

## Updates from Head Start/PreK

Gadsden County Head Start/Pre-K is pleased to announce that we have secured all 227 slots for our Head Start classes for the 2025-2026 school year. However, we currently have openings for only Title I (4-year-olds) at HMS, SSES and GES.

### Upcoming Events

April 29-30 – Health Clinic Day (Hemoglobin and Lead testing only)

Location: PreK Office (10:30-1:45PM)

May 2 – Dental Day

Location: PreK Office (9:45-12:30PM)

PreK Progression Ceremonies

May 15 – CES (9:00)

May 20 – HMS (9:00), GWM (9:15), SSES (12:00)

May 21 – GES (9:30), MHS (10:00)

## Updates on School Improvement Efforts

This month, District Instructional Coaches remain focused on supporting teachers in the implementation of high-quality, standards-aligned instruction. Strengthening Tier 1 instruction continues to be the top priority, with both school-based and district coaches providing direct, collaborative support. Instructional coaches are also partnering with additional support staff, including retired educators, to assist in planning and delivering targeted resources—particularly for small group instruction. Increased attention is being given to small group and individualized instruction, with instructional specialists also working closely with students to tailor learning experiences. These combined efforts and the use of the most recent assessment data support the district's goal to enhance teaching strategies, address instructional gaps, and align classroom practices with student learning needs. Through this ongoing collaboration between school-based and district coaching teams, the district continues to strengthen instructional practices and promote student achievement.

## Celebrating Excellence in Education

### Stewart Street Elementary's Jameson Maddox Selected for Prestigious SPARC Fellowship and Ph.D. Program at Florida State University

We are thrilled to share incredible news! Jameson Maddox, one of our outstanding resource teachers, has been accepted into Florida State University's highly competitive Ph.D. program in Exceptional Student Education (ESE). Even more impressively, Jameson is one of only 22 students nationwide selected for the prestigious SPARC Fellowship – the Special Education Policy, Practice, and Research Consortium.

This national fellowship is part of a federally funded initiative that brings together top scholars in special education from across the country. Florida State University is one of only six universities awarded the SPARC grant, joining Texas A&M, the University of Central Florida, the University of North Carolina, North Carolina State University, and George Mason University in this elite collaboration.

The SPARC Fellowship is designed to prepare future leaders in special education through rigorous research, policy analysis, and collaboration. Candidates are selected based on exceptional academic performance, teaching experience, and demonstrated commitment to the field.

In his acceptance letter for the fellowship, Jameson credited Gadsden County Schools for helping shape him into the educator he is today. He expressed heartfelt appreciation for the leadership at Stewart Street Elementary, highlighting the school's strong support systems, structured schedules, and high expectations for documentation and instructional practice. Jameson stated he "could not be where he is today without the experience and mentorship he received in Gadsden."

This recognition is not only a testament to Jameson's talent and dedication, but also a major honor for Gadsden County Schools. It reflects the strength of our educators, the support of our school leaders, and the impact of our district's commitment to excellence in education.



Please join us in celebrating Jameson Maddox – a scholar, a leader, and a proud product of Gadsden County. We are incredibly proud and excited to follow his journey as he represents our district at the national level.

#GadsdenProud #ExcellenceInEducation  
#SPARCFellowship #FuturePhD

## DISTRICT GOALS

### ACADEMICS

- Increase the % of students who are kindergarten ready; proficient in core areas & graduation ready

### BEHAVIOR

- Reduce % of OSS incidents; student absences; teacher absences

### COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

- Increase # of community partnerships; # of parents engaged in school community