



THE SCOOP@ THE STEW

FEBRUARY 2025



DR. MICHAEL ROBINSON

SUPERINTENDENT

Hello Stewart County,

Happy New Year! I'm excited to share key updates about our continued work to improve student outcomes. Our top priority remains student success, and we're working hard to get our students ready for the Spring 2025 Georgia Milestones exams. We believe in a comprehensive education that meets academic standards and develops critical thinking, creativity, and resilience.

We continue implementing several new initiatives to support these goals and create a positive and encouraging learning environment. Our teachers are working together, finding new ways to teach, and tailoring their methods to meet the diverse needs of our students.

I want to thank our fantastic staff, students, families, and community partners for their continued dedication to the Stewart County School District. Your commitment is essential to our success, and I'm confident we will continue to achieve great things together.

Thank you for your ongoing support. I look forward to celebrating our students' achievements with you soon.

Sincerely,

Dr. Michael H. Robinson
Superintendent



A MESSAGE FROM:

Superintendent

Principal

Assistant Principal/ Facilities

Assistant Principal

Assessment Director

Curriculum Director

Finance

Transportation

Federal Programs

Technology

Exceptional Students

Literacy Coach

School Nurse

Mental Health

Counseling

Athletic Department

Nutrition Director

21st Century/Pre-K

CTAE

Media

Family

BRIAN BARNHILL

PRINCIPAL

Dear Knights Community & Family:

At this point we are well into the 2024-2025 school year. As we have completed the 1st semester and move into the 2nd semester, I want to let all of you know that I am encouraged by the effort, cooperation, and hard work I have seen from our scholars thus far. The hard work is the kind of effort each of them must maintain to be College and Career Ready I am also pleased by the effort of our staff as they work diligently to prepare the scholars as the world of education constantly changes with standards, requirements, and various other means of rigor.

Parents, please continue to support our schools by encouraging your child to give their best effort in all that they do academically, in extracurriculars, and socially. Sit down with your scholar and inquire about their school work, and stay in touch with your child's teachers regarding their academic progress, behavior, etc. I also recommend that you read with your child daily, as this will enhance their academic progress and love for learning.

We are eagerly anticipating the opening of the school-based health clinic, our District based alternative school, and the implementation of an alert-based security system - Centegix. Additionally, our PBIS celebration will take place at the end of February. Winter Break will be February 14 - 17, and PTO/Parent KNIGHT Conversations will be February 27. Finally, our staff and scholars are diligently preparing for the Georgia Milestones Assessment which is less than 50 days away as I type this letter.

As always, I have an open-door policy; therefore, if you have any questions or concerns, please feel free to contact me at (229) 838-4374 ext. 301. Thank you for your continued support of Stewart County Schools!!!!

Sincerely,
Brian Barnhill
Principal



DR. BUSANI SIPHAMBILI

FACILITIES DIRECTOR/
HIGH SCHOOL AP

Alternative School

Happy Belated New Year!

I hope this year will be a rewarding one for you. We've completed half of our fiscal year and accomplished some significant things you may not know about. We are working on completing three projects for this school year: our school health clinic, our alternative school building and the CENTEGIX Safety Platform, which will give our school system and district the confidence to act and respond quickly in emergencies.

Lastly, we are working hard to be more collaborative with those we work with. You will see more relationship building activity to improve our efforts to make SCSS a cornerstone of great things in Stewart County. It is the department's belief that you are an integral part of making things happen in Stewart County.

Dr. Busani Siphambili
Facilities Director/ High School Assistant
Principal



PAULETE WHITE

ASSISTANT PRINCIPAL
ELEMENTARY/MIDDLE

Preparing and Enhancing Student Knowledge at the STEW

What does it take to help students learn or enhance their understanding? Two things for sure are the use of manipulatives and real-life situations. Relevance is important to learning. The teachers are helping students to make connections to the standards and elements.

In the fourth grade, students are learning the phases of the moon. The students and Mrs. Williams were able to identify each phase with the use of oreo cookies. The students enjoyed creating each phase and recording information in their science journals. After learning and making a connection, the students were to eat their products.

In the third grade, students are learning about fractions. Students created the manipulative using construction paper. Creating their representation of the fractal parts help the students to make a real-life connection. Evidence-based resources were used to assess students' understanding and to enhance their knowledge.



AISHA EVANS

DIRECTOR OF ASSESSMENT

As we move into the second half of the academic year, our students have successfully completed their mid-year assessments. Students in grades K-11 recently took the Reading and Math NWEA MAP Universal Screeners, while students in grades K-3 also completed the Acadience Assessments. These assessments provide valuable insight into student progress and help guide instructional decisions.

To ensure continuous monitoring of student understanding, teachers will utilize Progress Learning to develop monthly assessments aligned with the standards taught. These assessments will help track student growth and identify areas needing reinforcement.

Looking ahead, the Georgia Milestones Assessment System (GMAS) is quickly approaching. High school students will take the GMAS End-of-Course (EOC) exams from April 21 - 25, 2025, while students in grades 3-8 will take the GMAS End-of-Grade (EOG) exams from April 28 - May 5, 2025. Additionally, high school students and middle school science students have completed their mid-year benchmark assessments. These benchmarks provide teachers with essential data to tailor instruction and focus on areas where students need additional support in preparation for the upcoming Georgia Milestones.

We encourage all students to continue putting forth their best effort and to take advantage of the resources available to them. Families can support their students by reinforcing study habits at home, encouraging regular reading, and ensuring they get plenty of rest leading up to testing days.

Thank you for your continued support as we work together to help our students succeed!



AISHA EVANS

DIRECTOR OF CURRICULUM & INSTRUCTION

The Stewart County School System is working to ensure high-quality instruction and meaningful learning experiences for all students. Our educators are actively engaged in professional development and innovative teaching practices to enhance student achievement. On January 6, 2025, teachers participated in a professional learning course on differentiation, conducted by the Georgia Department of Education (GaDOE). This training equipped educators with strategies to meet the diverse needs of all learners in the classroom. Additionally, they are engaging in Math Learning Plans professional learning led by Mrs. Angie Brunson from Chatt-Flint RESA, which provides teachers with effective strategies and resources to support mathematics instruction and ensure students master essential math concepts.

To foster collaboration between schools and families, Stewart County Schools host Curriculum Nights in conjunction with the Stewart County Parent Knight Conversations on the last Thursday of each month. These events offer fun and engaging activities for students and parents, along with important updates on how families can support their children's learning at home. A special Literacy Night is scheduled for February 27, 2025, where families will have the opportunity to explore reading activities, gain literacy resources, and learn strategies to support reading at home.

On March 19, 2025, Stewart County Schools will hold Student Digital Learning Day. On this day, students will complete assignments virtually, enhancing their digital literacy skills, while teachers will participate in professional learning sessions designed to improve instructional effectiveness and integrate innovative teaching strategies into their classrooms.

Through these initiatives, Stewart County School System continues to prioritize student success by supporting teachers, engaging families, and fostering an enriched learning environment. Stay tuned for more updates as we work together to enhance curriculum and instruction for all students!

TINA SELLERS

Finance Director

As we entered into the winter season, it was clear that preparing for the upcoming budget season was to be a significant task. I spent a considerable amount of time reviewing financial statements, evaluating forecasts, and data analysis. This proactive approach will allow Stewart County School District to prioritize resources more effectively and manage cash flow with greater precision. Behind the scenes, the preparation involves countless hours of data analysis, cross-departmental collaboration, and ensuring every dollar is accounted for to meet budget.

With the FY 2026 budgeting season in full swing, we will need to focus on fine-tuning projections based on departmental needs and district priorities. This means revisiting past expenditures and adjusting for any unforeseen variables. While it's a time-consuming process, the goal is clear: ensuring that we enter FY 2026 with a strong financial foundation.



DARRYL JONES

TRANSPORTATION
DIRECTOR

It is with great pleasure to announce that we have received (2) 2025-year model school buses to add to our school bus fleet. We are in the process of updating our school bus fleet as we maintain safe transportation for our students. As CDL holders, our bus drivers are required to submit random drug and alcohol testing with a third-party tester every quarter. As another layer of safety, our bus drivers are also registered with the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration (FMCSA) Drug and Alcohol Clearinghouse Query. This query of the FMCSA Commercial Driver's License Drug and Alcohol Clearinghouse will consist of and determine whether drug or alcohol violation information about the Bus Driver exists in the Clearinghouse. Our Annual Underground Storage Registration Certificate was renewed for another year which allows us to purchase and store fuel with the compliance of the Environmental Protection Division (EPD).



MARKUS TAYLOR

Federal Programs Director



Federal Funding Programs for K-12

The federal government provides support for K-12 education through specific grant programs administered by the states to school districts. Federal dollars supplement state resources by narrowing funding gaps for at-risk students through programs such as Title I grants under the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) and Part B grants under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). Federal funds made up \$119 billion or roughly 14 percent of total education funding during the 2022 fiscal year. That amount has doubled from pre-pandemic levels (\$58 billion in 2019) partially due to legislation enacted in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, which provided emergency relief funding to address the impact that COVID-19 had on elementary and secondary schools.

Title I ESEA

Title I grants provide funds to school districts serving large shares of low-income students. It is the largest grant program of ESEA, totaling \$15 billion during the 2022 fiscal year. Those funds are allocated through four formulas that are based on the number of eligible students and several provisions, including a state's target level of funding per student. Eligible students include children ages 5 to 17 in:

1. low-income families;
2. institutions for neglected or delinquent children or in foster homes; and
3. families receiving Temporary Assistance for Needy Families payments.

PARKER SCHABECK

TECHNOLOGY DIRECTOR

The Technology Department has been dedicated to enhancing our security measures, collaborating closely with Centegix Security to stay at the forefront of Rapid Incident Response Safety Solutions. Additionally, our school system has been awarded a grant from the Federal Communications Commission to participate in the FCC's Schools and Libraries Cybersecurity Pilot Program. This three-year initiative will provide valuable support and help offset the costs of eligible cybersecurity services and equipment. Furthermore, we are actively planning for upcoming testing and system updates to ensure our infrastructure remains secure and resilient.



BAILEE STOVALL-SMITH

DIRECTOR OF
EXCEPTIONAL STUDENTS



In the Department of Exceptional Students, we are always working on various initiatives. Along with our daily responsibilities, one of our current priorities is encouraging parents and guardians of students with an Individualized Education Plan (IEP) to complete the FY25 GaDOE Parent Survey. Your feedback is invaluable to us, as your voice plays a critical role in guiding decisions and improvements within our department. The survey is now open, and we invite you to share your thoughts, experiences, and suggestions. This will help us continue enhancing the support we provide to the students of Stewart County Schools and ensure we are meeting the unique needs of all our diverse learners.

The feedback you provide will play a vital role in shaping the services and supports we offer. We use the information gathered from the survey to make changes that can positively impact the educational experience of every student in our program. Your insights are a key part of the decision-making process that drives improvements in our approach, resources, and teaching methods.

We are striving for 100% participation from all families, and we need YOUR help to reach this goal. The more responses we receive, the more comprehensive and accurate our understanding will be of how we can best meet the needs of your child and the entire community we serve.

How to Participate:

1. Complete the Survey online @ <https://survey.gadoe.org/SPEDParentSurvey> . We also have a paper copy available that will be coming home with your student in the near future, if you have not already received it. It should only take a few minutes of your time to complete the survey.
2. Share Your Experience: Your honest feedback on the services, communication, and support your child has received will help us improve. We want to hear what's working well and where we can do better.

Your participation is essential for creating a better learning environment for our students, and we truly appreciate the time and effort you put into completing the survey. We are committed to making positive changes based on your feedback and ensuring that every student has the resources they need to succeed.

If you have any questions or need assistance with the survey, please do not hesitate to reach out to a member of our department.

JANIS SCOTT

LITERACY COACH
MTSS/RTI COORDINATOR

There have been some changes on the state level that will impact how literacy is implemented in English Language Arts (ELA) classrooms. Teachers at Stewart County Schools are being trained to implement these changes so that they can prepare students to become proficient readers.

One of the changes is the new standards. The teachers in Stewart County have been and will continue to have professional learning on the new ELA standards adopted by the state of Georgia. The 2024-2025 School Year will be the last year students will be instructed on the Georgia Standards of Excellence in English/Language Arts (ELA) across all grade levels K-12. Starting the 2025 - 2026 School Year, new standards, Georgia's K-12 English Language Arts (ELA): Foundational Skills, Language, Texts, and Practices Standards will be implemented in classrooms.

Another change is through the Georgia Early Literacy Act. All teachers who teach Kindergarten - 3rd grade students are receiving training in structured literacy and the science of reading as mandated by the Georgia Department of Education. This training will help teachers fully understand why students have certain deficits in reading and provide the necessary instruction and interventions to help them through researched-based strategies and resources.



PATTI MCDONALD

SCHOOL NURSE

Welcome back, students and families! I hope everyone had a restful and refreshing break. As we settle back into our school routines, it is important to stay healthy and prepared for the changing seasons. With spring just around the corner, many students may start experiencing seasonal allergies. Common symptoms include: sneezing, runny nose, itchy eyes, and congestion. To help manage allergies, please encourage your child to wash their hands and face after being outdoors, keep classroom windows closed on high-pollen days, and take any prescribed allergy medications as directed. If your child has severe allergies and needs medication during school hours, be sure to update the nurse's office with the appropriate documentation.

Additionally, we want to remind parents and guardians that our annual scoliosis screening for middle school students is coming up. Scoliosis is a curvature of the spine that can develop during growth spurts, and early detection is key for effective treatment. The screening is a quick, non-invasive check conducted by trained professionals. If you prefer to have your child opt out, please send in a written exemption to the school nurse before the screening date. If you have any questions about allergies, scoliosis screenings, or any other health concerns, feel free to reach out to the nurse's office. Wishing everyone a healthy and successful remainder of the school year!





DEMETRIA NORRIS

MENTAL HEALTH

**Mental
health
matters**

The main goal of the faculty and staff of the Stewart County School District is to ensure that our scholars achieve academic success and to do so, we must also take care of their social and emotional needs. We offer counseling services for our students through the Georgia Apex Program and the services are provided by the New Horizon Behavioral Health Center. The Georgia Apex Program (Apex), funded by the Georgia Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Disabilities (DBHDD), strives to build capacity and increase access to mental health services for school-aged youth, Pre-Kindergarten to 12th grade, throughout the state.

Apex recognizes schools as a natural environment for identification and intervention and aims to reduce the number of youth with unmet mental health needs.

The program promotes collaboration between community mental health providers and schools to provide school-based services and support, including training for school staff, to facilitate the right care at the right time for children, young adults, and families.

CHERRIKA ASHFORD

COUNSELOR

The scholars and staff celebrated Mrs. Ashford the week of February 3-7, 2025 for National School Counselor Week. Mrs. Ashford was showered with gifts, cards, posters, kind words and much more for the work that she does here at SCS. She greatly appreciated every token of love received.

The counseling department has also been assisting scholars with the tools needed to start this second semester on a positive note. In an effort to ensure that all scholars stay focused on the requirements for promotion and graduation; Mrs. Ashford has been meeting with scholars and their parents. Recently, there was a Senior Class Parent meeting, and a middle school general assembly as well as individual conferences to name a few.

Here are some of the upcoming activities and events to be on the lookout for: I Love My Future Week (2/10-14/25), Progress Reports (2/12/25), STAR Student & STAR Teacher Program (2/26/25 @ 2:00) and PBIS Monthly Celebration.



HARVEY SMITH

ATHLETIC DIRECTOR

The Stewart County Royal Knights showed their love and appreciation towards their scholar athletes with their annual Senior Night celebration Wednesday February 5. We had an excellent turnout and we truly appreciate everyone for their contributions to making Senior Night a success.

The Stewart County basketball regular season is drawing to a close with our final home game of the season taking place on Friday, February 7 vs Pelham. Our Girls' and Boy's teams are looking to win and advance deeper into the post season with the region tournament set to begin on Monday February, 10. The Riflery team has also been doing well and they will continue to grow and progress throughout their season. As we transition into spring sports, we look forward to watching our scholar athletes perform in baseball, under the tutelage of Coach Jeffery Thornton, and Track, under the guidance of Coach Kyran Stewart. Stewart County Athletics is constantly moving forward. We are looking forward to the opportunity to compete and represent for Stewart County.



MONA HUBBARD

NUTRITION DIRECTOR

I am pleased to announce that the Nutrition Department has enrolled in a program called FIG, which is a program to provide in-depth training at everyone's own pace. We have used it in the past and the training modules have been updated. We are looking forward to bringing new ideas to the Knight's Cafe this school year.



TAWNYA HADLEY

21ST CCLC PROGRAM DIRECTOR

The A-TEAM

Afterschool Program Academic Tutorial Enrichment and mentoring Program

The A-TEAM held their annual Christmas program on December 11th. Students showcased their many talents through song and dance.

The A-Team applied to have the 21st Century grant renewed for another five years. We are hopeful that we will be able to continue serving our students.

Spring activities are underway to include field trips, spring shows, and so much more.

Summer School dates will be June 2- June 26. Applications are currently being accepted.

Thanks,
Mrs. Hadley



TAWNYA HADLEY

PRE-K DIRECTOR

Pre-K students have had an amazing time learning and growing! This term has been filled with fun, adventure, and lots of learning experiences that made every day exciting. Our little learners explored the magical world of fairy tales, bringing stories to life with creative activities. They also embraced the winter season, learning about snow, chilly weather, and even taking a special ride on The Polar Express! The excitement of Thanksgiving and Christmas was in the air as they learned about these special holidays through crafts, songs, and festive celebrations. Bears also became a favorite topic, as students discovered fun facts about these fascinating animals! In addition to themed lessons, our Pre-K students enjoyed visits from published authors. They mastered the days of the week and the months of the year, sang songs to help them remember, and had fun counting the days. They also have been working hard on recognizing their alphabets and numbers, laying the foundation for future reading and math skills. Basic math concepts like adding and subtracting were introduced through hands-on activities, making learning interactive and enjoyable.

With so much learning packed into this school term our Pre-K students are well on their way to becoming confident and curious learners. We are so proud of their hard work and can't wait to see all the amazing things they will accomplish by the end of the year!



NICOLE MALLORY

CTAE DIRECTOR

Stewart County CTAE students received Microsoft Office Specialist certifications. Amarri Biggers is in the Business and Technology pathway and has received Microsoft certifications for:

Word 2019, Word Expert 2019, Excel 2019 and PowerPoint 2019. These achievements have earned her a Microsoft Office Specialist Associate certification. She will successfully complete the Business Communication class this semester and which will complete her CTAE pathway.

Financial Literacy Students are learning how to identify and apply various budgeting ratios. Each student explained and demonstrated how to calculate and interpret the assigned ratios.

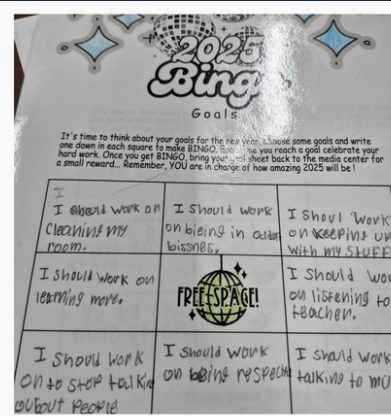
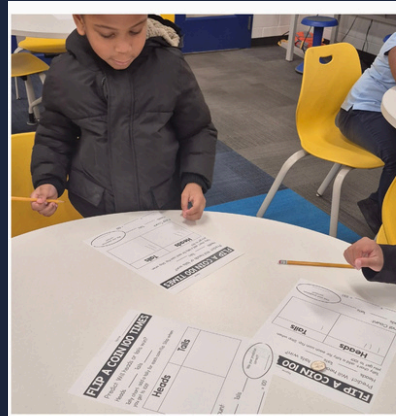


CRYSTAL TOWNSEND

Media Specialist

We are off to a great start in the Media Center for the second semester. Students continue to check out books weekly to help promote life-long readers. We also started the New Year in media classes with our "Goal Bingo" Students set academic and personal goals for 2025. The 100th day of school was one for the "books". Students celebrated the 100th day in the media center by seeing who would be the first to get their game piece to 100, stacking 100 books, decorating the number 100, tossing coins, and much more.

In addition to weekly media classes, students are learning about financial literacy as a part of our collaboration with Parks Memorial Library. Ms. Dee Spinks-Russell and her staff have been providing students with fun hands-on lessons about managing money.

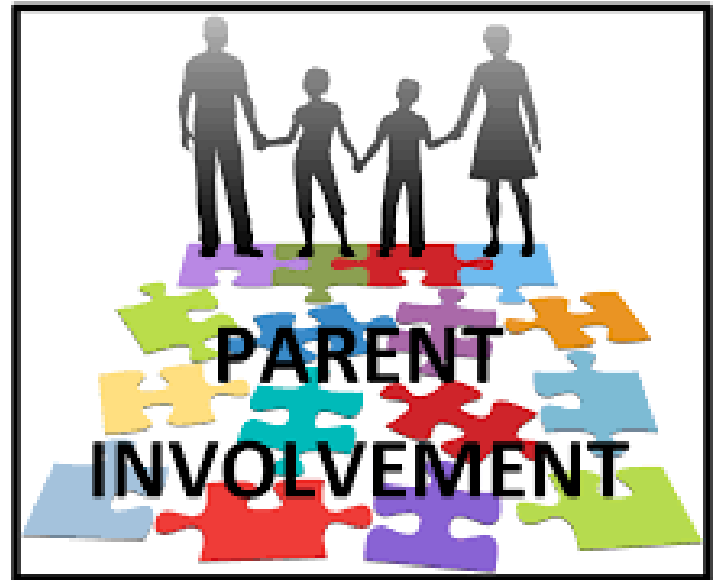


SHARON JONES

PARENT FACILITATOR

Parent Involvement continues keeping parents informed and involved. Parents were invited to Science KNIGHT in January, however it was canceled due to the "snowy weather". We are now preparing for Literacy KNIGHT in February with activities, prizes and food. All parents and community partners are asked to come out and participate. We especially want our parents of our 3rd, 5th, and 8th graders to come out and be a part of the grade level presentations. We encourage all parents to be more active and attend the planned meetings and activities.

Over the next few months, we will be asking for input through school surveys on important issues. We will end the year with our annual input meeting to update our family engagement policy and school compacts.

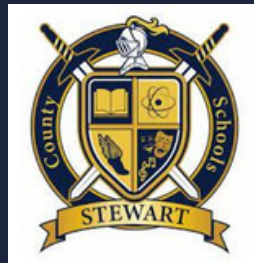


SOCIAL MEDIA

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