



# G-CASE Fall 2021



The annual Georgia Council of Administrators of Special Education (G-CASE) Conference was held in Savannah November 17-19. The G-CASE organization promotes professional leadership, provides an opportunity for the study of problems common to its members, and communicates information that will develop improved services for exceptional children. Houston County Student Services was honored to contribute by presenting during two sessions of the conference.

Dr. Kristi-Lee Arrington and Dr. Alicia Campbell presented information on the Transition Academy during the general session. They shared the process for determining student eligibility and the curriculum of the program. The highlight of the presentation was a video of our students stating in their own words the skills they are learning at the Transition Academy.

Dr. Jenny Millward and Dr. Alicia Campbell led a breakout session on integrating social and emotional learning (SEL) to create supportive and safe experiences for students at all grade levels. They outlined the implementation timeline of the various programs and training opportunities our district provides for students and staff. Participants asked questions and provided information on SEL programs in their own districts. We appreciate the opportunity to share just a few of the many great things happening in the Houston County School District.



# New Teacher Induction

On November 16th, twenty-seven teachers participated in the Special Education Teacher Induction program to learn about High Leverage Practices (HLPs). HLPs were developed in partnership with the Council for Exceptional Children (CEC) and Collaboration for Effective Educator Development (CEEDARS). HLPs are divided across four broad domains: Assessment, Collaboration, Instruction, and Social/Emotional/Behavioral. These twenty-two evidence based practices are fundamental to effective teaching and improving student outcomes. HLPs can be implemented across varied content areas and grade levels. Participants engaged in hands-on and interactive activities throughout the session. The training is a two-part series and facilitated by Mrs. Cindy Harkins, Dr. Karen Jones, and Mrs. Daphne Whetsel.

## Parent Mentor Meeting

Our Parent Mentor, Mrs. Marina Jones, hosted the quarterly Middle Georgia Parent Mentor meeting at the Transition Academy during the month of November. It was a wonderful opportunity to collaborate with other parent mentors across the region about the support provided to the parents of students with disabilities. The group toured the facility and learned about the Transition Academy from our Transition Support Teacher, Mr. Patrick Thomas. The students from the academy provided fresh baked cookies for the meeting.



# Thanksgiving in the Park



Thanksgiving at the Park is an annual event sponsored by Church In The Park and is designed to help needy families in our community. With the assistance of our Social Workers, more than 90 families with students in the Houston County School District received a basket created with love. The basket included food for a complete Thanksgiving feast. We appreciate Church in the Park for partnering with us each year to provide assistance to our students and their families.



## Westside Gardens



We love supporting our local farmers, including the “little” ones! School Nutrition and Westside Elementary have partnered together, through the Georgia Organics Farm to School Innovation mini grant, to support new learning opportunities for students. The grant will help purchase rock wool that will serve as a new growing medium for vegetables and ornamentals in the adorable garden that is onsite at Westside Elementary. Westside’s garden already utilizes multiple hydroponic towers and various in-ground containers. The rock wool will be yet another way to pique the interest of inquiring minds and hopefully help make meaningful connections between students and their food!



# Special Olympics



Houston County High School and Warner Robins High School were able to compete in a state organized Special Olympics Invitational Basketball Tournament. This event was hosted on November 10, 2021 at the North Houston Complex in Warner Robins. Warner Robins High School won gold medals for Traditional 5 versus 5 and silver medals for Unified 5 versus 5. Houston County High School also brought home gold medals in the Basketball Team Skills competition.



## COVID-19 Vaccination

The Houston County School District is working hard to keep our schools and workplaces healthy. During the month of November, our school nurses, in partnership with Houston County Health Department, administered over 3000 Flu vaccines at no out of pocket expense to students and staff. In addition, staff were able to receive other adult vaccines for Tetanus, Hepatitis A and B, and Shingles to ensure they are up to date on all immunizations.

Pfizer COVID vaccination and employee booster clinics in cooperation with Houston Healthcare, were held November 15th-19th at middle and high schools. We had a great response to this with a total of 343 employee boosters given. Forty students received their first COVID vaccine and will complete the series on December 10th.

The Pfizer COVID vaccine clinics for 5-11 year olds are scheduled to take place during December. Employees in these schools will be offered the Moderna booster. For these clinics, 581 students and 241 employees have pre-registered. Houston County School Nurses are excited to participate and promote happy and healthy holidays ahead!

# SUPPORT STAFF SPOTLIGHT



The December spotlight is shining on Danielle Jewett, an interrelated paraprofessional at Northside Middle School. This is her second year working as a paraprofessional after being a stay-at-home mom for fifteen years. Ms. Jewett appreciates that the school schedule allows her to be home at the same time as her children. She enjoys her job because she is able to have one-on-one contact with students and make connections with them. She feels building relationships with students is key to assisting them with academic tasks they find difficult. Ms. Jewett also says emotional support is essential, adding that sometimes her student interactions “can just be listening to them, sharing a snack, helping them put words to feelings, or taking a walk around the track with them to help them decompress.” She likes lending a hand to meet the various needs of students in the classroom.

Ms. Jewett has three boys and is a foster parent to three. All six of the children attend Houston County Schools. She feels the experience and training she received from fostering plays a role in how she is able to connect with students as a para. It brings her satisfaction to know when children are at school and are struggling with something, they feel safe enough to open up to her because of the relationship they have. Ms. Jewett says “as a para, it brings me joy to go beyond the academic lessons and walk beside them as they learn coping skills, build confidence, learn how to have healthy connections, and grow in life skills.” In her free time, Ms. Jewett enjoys CrossFit, watching her kids participate in extracurricular activities, reading, and relaxing at the beach.

Dr. Martin, NMS special education department chair, shares, “Ms. Jewett is dependable and works well with others. She has a great relationship with the students in her class. She works well in both the small group and co-taught settings in all grade levels. She is flexible and always willing to be of service. She walks students to class and serves morning and afternoon duties. Not only is she looking out for the kids at Northside, she is looking out for all kids in general.”



**AAASP SPORTS PROGRAM**  
**2021-22 WHEELCHAIR BASKETBALL**  
**MASTER SCHEDULE**



Times subject to change, for information call Robyn Hootselle at (678) 283-4424

DATE	DIVISION	VISITING TEAM	@	HOME TEAM	TIME
Sat., 1-8	V	DeKalb Silver Streaks	@	Clayton Eagles	11:00 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.
Sat., 1-15	V	DeKalb Silver Streaks	@	West GA Wolverines (Troup)	11:00 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.
Sat., 1-22	JV	Gwinnett Heat	@	Houston Jr. Sharks	11:00 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.
Sat., 1-22	JV	Muscogee Lions	@	Gwinnett Heat	1:00 p.m. – 2:30 p.m.
Sat., 1-22	JV	Muscogee Lions	@	Houston Jr. Sharks	3:00 p.m. – 4:30 p.m.
Sat., 1-22	V	Houston Sharks	@	Clayton Eagles	11:00 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.
Sat., 1-29	V	West GA Wolverines (Troup)	@	Clayton Eagles	11:00 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.
Sat., 1-29	V	West GA Wolverines (Troup)	@	Clayton Eagles	1:00 p.m. – 2:30 p.m.
Sat., 2-5	JV	Houston Jr. Sharks	@	Gwinnett Heat	11:00 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.
Sat., 2-5	JV	Houston Jr. Sharks	@	Muscogee Lions	1:00 p.m. – 2:30 p.m.
Sat., 2-5	JV	Muscogee Lions	@	Gwinnett Heat	3:00 p.m. – 4:30 p.m.
Sat., 2-5	V	Houston Sharks	@	West GA Wolverines (Troup)	11:00 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.
Sat., 2-5	V	Houston Sharks	@	West GA Wolverines (Troup)	1:00 p.m. – 2:30 p.m.
Sat., 2-5	V	Clayton Eagles	@	DeKalb Silver Streaks	11:00 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.
Sat., 2-12	JV	Gwinnett Heat	@	Muscogee Lions	11:00 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.
Sat., 2-12	JV	Gwinnett Heat	@	Houston Jr. Sharks	1:00 p.m. – 2:30 p.m.
Sat., 2-12	JV	Houston Jr. Sharks	@	Muscogee Lions	3:00 p.m. – 4:30 p.m.
Sat., 2-12	V	Houston Sharks	@	DeKalb Silver Streaks	11:00 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.
Sat., 2-12	V	West GA Wolverines (Troup)	@	DeKalb Silver Streaks	1:00 p.m. – 2:30 p.m.
Sat., 2-19	V	DeKalb Silver Streaks	@	Houston Sharks	11:00 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.
Sat., 2-19	V	Clayton Eagles	@	Houston Sharks	1:00 p.m. – 2:30 p.m.

**AAASP/GHSA STATE WHEELCHAIR BASKETBALL CHAMPIONSHIP**  
**TO BE HELD ON SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 26, 2022**  
**ONE JUNIOR VARSITY SEMI-FINAL GAME**  
**ONE JUNIOR VARSITY CHAMPIONSHIP GAME**  
**TO BE HOSTED LOCALLY BY 1<sup>st</sup> PLACE IN STANDINGS**  
**TWO VARSITY SEMI-FINAL GAMES TO BE PLAYED LOCALLY**  
**AND HOSTED BY 1<sup>st</sup> & 2<sup>nd</sup> PLACE IN STANDINGS**  
**VARSITY CHAMPIONSHIP: SATURDAY, MARCH 12, 2022 @ 3:00 PM**  
**AT THE MACON COLISEUM, MACON, GA**