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PRESS RELEASE

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Three Schools in Houston County Presented Military Flagship School Award



HOUSTON COUNTY, GA – Bonaire Elementary School, Bonaire Middle School, and Matt Arthur Elementary School were honored by the Georgia Department of Education as a 2022-2023 Military Flagship School at ceremonies held on April 20. State Superintendent Richard Woods presented each school principal with a Military Flagship School banner. The Military Flagship School Award recognizes schools that provide a supportive environment for military students and families by recognizing and accommodating their unique needs.

Bonaire Elementary School has an assigned Military and Family Life Counselor, a licensed mental health professional designated to provide solution-focused counseling support to military students and their families. The school provides a Deployment Group program, in conjunction with Robins Air Force Base, which offers support for students with family members deployed. The school also provides military students with a student ambassador through Robins Air Force Base's Anchored4Life grant to help acclimate them to the school environment. Students are encouraged to participate actively in celebrations like Veterans Day and the Month of the Military Child – everything from reading the announcements, pinpointing places they have lived and what life is like there, and sending thank-you cards to veterans and active service members to sending in family portraits to display on the Wall of Fame.

At **Bonaire Middle School**, a Military and Family Life Counselor meets regularly with students, and students also have access to three school counselors with military backgrounds. The Military and Family Life Counselor also meets periodically with faculty and staff to provide professional

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development and training to understand and support military students. The school honors course placement in academic classes based on parents' verbal consent if still waiting for transcripts, to ensure there are no academic disruptions due to military transfers. The Museum of Aviation is approximately five miles from the school and offers STEM activities for military families, and the school also offers an Anchored4Life Club which is designed to help with school transitions, leadership, and character-building.

Matt Arthur Elementary School administrators, staff, and teachers work as a team with the school Military Family Life Counselor to support military students. The school holds quarterly activities during which the Robins Air Force Base School Liaison, Exceptional Family Member Program, and other service members offer an outlet for students with deployed parents to come together and share experiences. The Robins Air Force Base School Liaison also provides professional development to all teachers and staff to help them understand the unique challenges faced by military children who move repeatedly and often deal with a parent being deployed for long periods of time. The school also provides care packages for deployed military members, and each year fifth-grade students raise funds for the Wounded Warrior Project.

At least one school from Houston County has received this award since the program began. Previous winners include Hilltop Elementary School, Warner Robins High School, and Langston Road Elementary School. For more information about the Military Flagship School Award, visit www.gadoe.org/militaryflagship.

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