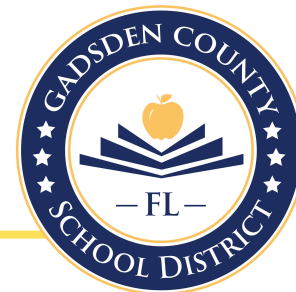


MAY 2025

ACADEMIC SERVICES



# NEWSLETTER



## District Supports Grade 3 Scholars

The Third Grade Summer Reading Camps in Gadsden will offer intensive, evidence-based reading instruction for our learners. The camps will focus on building foundational literacy skills, improving reading fluency, comprehension, and helping students reach their grade level.

Camps will be held at CES, GWM, HMS, SSES and GBES, Monday - Thursday, June 2, 2025 - July 10, 2025.

### UPCOMING MEETINGS/EVENTS

May 29: GCPS Staff Field Day (11:00am- 4:00pm)  
CPA Athletic Field

### Updates from the Counselors' Corner

As the school year ends, we want to express our heartfelt gratitude for your hard work, dedication, and support throughout the year. We've witnessed incredible growth and accomplishments among our students, and we are proud to have been a part of their journey.

We thank our students for their resilience, eagerness to learn, and the positive energy brought to our school community. Parents, your unwavering support and partnership have been vital in helping your children thrive. To our teachers, staff, and administration—your tireless efforts in creating a positive, nurturing learning environment are deeply appreciated.

As we head into the summer break, we encourage everyone to take time for rest, relaxation, and rejuvenation. May your summer be filled with joy, new experiences, and lasting memories.

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

## Updates from Elementary Education

During the month of May, the Director of the Elementary Office focused on several key initiatives aligned with the district's instructional priorities. A comprehensive analysis of PM3 FAST data was conducted to inform planning and support data-driven decision-making across elementary schools. The textbook adoption process was finalized, ensuring that all instructional materials will be available for timely implementation. In addition, allowable expenditures under the UNISIG grant were reviewed and revised to ensure compliance with funding requirements while maximizing instructional impact.

In collaboration with the Academic Services team, the proposed 2025–2026 school calendar was reviewed to support alignment with instructional goals. As part of summer programming efforts, instructional materials and supplies were procured for the 3rd Grade Reading Camp to support both student success and staff preparedness. The hiring process for all positions associated with the camp was completed in close coordination with the Human Resources Department.

Furthermore, School Improvement Plans for the 2024–2025 school year were reviewed, with a focus on identifying district strengths and developing strategies to address barriers to student learning. To support leadership development, the list of administrators participating in summer professional development sessions—designed to increase proficiency in Florida's state standards—was finalized.

## Updates from Assessment & Accountability

Schools are working hard to make sure that all students take their grade level statewide assessments! As the District Assessment Coordinator, Ms. McKinnon monitoring data, working with schools to alleviate any issues they may have, and offering support wherever necessary.

In addition, we are looking ahead to the 2025-2026 school year by developing a comprehensive assessment schedule for schools to use as a guide when preparing to test students.

## Updates from Secondary Education

The Office of Secondary Education engaged in several strategic activities to support schools and district-level initiatives. Dr. Holmes actively participated in the textbook adoption process for English Language Arts (ELA), Reading Intervention, and Personal Financial Literacy. Additionally, she contributed to a collaborative reflection and planning meeting focused on the UF Math Matrix Initiative.

Support was provided to Gadsden County High School in the areas of testing coordination and graduation readiness. Dr. Holmes also attended the AVID ADL 5 Leadership Training to enhance her capacity to support the implementation and growth of the AVID College and Career Readiness Program. This work was conducted in alignment with ongoing bi-weekly District Director Collaborative Conference Calls.

Furthermore, she was involved in efforts to raise awareness of human trafficking among faculty, staff, and students through targeted collaboration and outreach. Lastly, Dr. Holmes attended the Leading to Your Why professional development session in Santa Rosa County, presented by Dr. Michael Toth of Instructional Empowerment. This session emphasized the impact of student academic teaming as a strategy to improve instructional outcomes.



## Updates from Federal Programs

The Federal Programs Office is in full swing with grant writing for the district's Title I, Title V, and Title IX programs. Director Thomas is in the process of developing these grant applications to ensure that they are data-driven, student-centered, and strategically aligned with the district's goals. She also supports ongoing monitoring and reporting, and facilitates parent and family engagement components to maximize program impact. Further, she is submitting necessary amendments so that the schools can maximize available funds.

## Updates from Exceptional Student Education (ESE)

Our incredible athletes participated in the State Special Olympics on May 16–17, 2025 in Orlando, Florida where they showcased their hard work, determination, and team spirit on a statewide stage. We're proud of their commitment and could not wait to cheer them on! To celebrate their achievements, we will host the Special Olympics Celebration on June 25, 2025 — a joyful event to honor their accomplishments and share in the pride of their journey.

We are also proud of the 2025 graduates and look forward to celebrating all they have achieved as they prepare for their next chapter.

## Updates from Head Start/PreK

On Saturday, May 3, 2025, at 10:00 a.m., our program hosted a successful Head Start/Pre-K Transition Day designed to support families as they prepare for their child's important move into kindergarten. During this event, families received essential information to help ensure a smooth transition, including guidance on the health documents required for kindergarten enrollment, insights from our Exceptional Student Education (ESE) department, and details about the registration process specific to each school site.

A highlight of the day was a presentation by one of our kindergarten teachers, who provided families with a clear overview of what to expect in a kindergarten classroom, from daily routines to academic and resiliency expectations. This presentation helped ease anxieties and fostered a deeper understanding of the kindergarten experience.

Overall, the event served as a valuable opportunity to build partnerships with families, answer questions, and ensure every child is ready for a successful start to their elementary school journey.

## Community Connections

We are excited to announce a new partnership with Jewel Empowerment Foundation, aimed at enhancing student success through expanded educational opportunities and community support.

This collaboration will focus on mentorship, education, mental health advocacy and personal development. Through their collaboration with The Girl Flo, Jewel Empowerment Foundation will help us address "period poverty" in Gadsden.

"This partnership allows us to make a greater impact where it's needed most," posits Asst. Superintendent Tammy McGriff. "By working together today, we can build a strong Gadsden for tomorrow."

## Updates on School Improvement Efforts

This month, District Instructional Coaches continued to focus on implementing high-quality, standards-aligned instruction, with a concerted effort on strengthening Tier 1 instruction. School-based and district coaches collaborated closely with teachers and retired educators to deliver targeted instruction, interventions, and test preparation.

Following the completion of FAST Progress Monitoring (PM) 3, instructional coaches are actively analyzing scores to assess student proficiency and identify learning gains. Additionally, coaches are preparing for the Third Grade Reading Summer Camp and strategically planning for the next academic school year to improve student achievement.

**Positions are temporary.  
Ranks and titles are  
limited.  
But the way you treat  
people will always be  
remembered.**

## Celebrating Excellence In Education

### Mrs. K. Weeks Selected as SPARC Fellow

Last month we shared that Mr. 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). We are ecstatic to share that another one of our employees, Mrs. Kameelah Weeks, has also been selected to the prestigious SPARC (Special Education Policy, Practice, and Research Consortium). Fellowship and PhD program.

As noted last month, the 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.



Mrs. Kameelah Weeks, the second GCSD employee selected for FSU's prestigious SPARC program.

### Academic Services Congratulates Our Own

Superintendent Elijah Key and the Academic Services Department are excited to extend congratulations to Dr. Nikitra Jones on earning her Doctor of Philosophy (Ph.D.).

This remarkable achievement reflects your unwavering commitment to learning, leadership and the advancement of educational excellence in Gadsden County. Your hard work and perseverance are an inspiration to us all, and we look forward to seeing the positive impact you will continue to make in the field of education.



## 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