

Houston County School District Truancy Intervention



What is Truancy?

GEORGIA ATTENDANCE LAW

- ▶ **Compulsory Attendance Law Ages:** “between 6th and 16th birthdays.” However, “if a child is under 6 and has attended more than 20 days in a public school, he/she is then subject to the compulsory attendance law.”
- ▶ Violation of the GA Compulsory Attendance Law can result in a fine of no less than \$25 and not greater than \$100, imprisonment not to exceed 30 days, community service, or any combination of such penalties at the discretion of the courts. Each day’s absence from school can be considered a separate offense.
- ▶ Code Section 20-2-690.1 O.C.G.A. - *States in subsection (a) that every parent, guardian, or other person residing in the state having control of any school-age child or children between the age of six (6) and sixteen (16) shall enroll and send such child or children to school. Further, all children enrolled for 20 school days or more in the public schools of Houston County prior to their sixth (6) birthday shall become subject to all provisions of this law. Any parent/guardian who fails to comply with the requirements of this policy and Georgia law shall be subject to sanctions imposed by the courts of Houston County.*
- ▶ Subsection (b) of that code section additionally states any parent, guardian or other person residing in the state who has control or charge of a child or children and who shall violate this code section shall be subject to a fine not less than \$25 and not greater than \$100, imprisonment not to exceed 30 days, community service, or any combination of such penalties at the discretion of the court having jurisdiction. Each day’s absence from school after proper notification of absences shall constitute a separate offense.

PROJECT RECONNECT

- ▶ You are here because your child has 8 or more unexcused absences and is considered truant.
- ▶ HCSD and the Magistrate/Juvenile court system have developed this program as a Pre-Trial Diversion Program in lieu of court proceedings. This is meant to be educational, not punitive. If a parent/child fails to attend this class (Project Reconnect), they will be submitted and summoned to appear in the appropriate court.
- ▶ If after the parent/student attends Project Reconnect, and continues to have unexcused absences, they WILL be summoned to the appropriate court.
- ▶ Required days of instructions: 180 days

Attendance Protocol Basics

“3-5-8”

▶ 3 unexcused days

- ▶ Parent is contacted by the school

▶ 5 unexcused days

- ▶ A parent conference is scheduled, and an Attendance Contract is signed.

▶ 8 unexcused days

- ▶ Truancy charges may be filed in Magistrate and/or Juvenile Court depending on age of the student.

▶ 7 unexcused days

- ▶ Notice of Pending Court Referral Letter sent by the social worker

ABSENCES

- ▶ TWO TYPES OF ABSENCES:
 - ▶ EXCUSED
 - ▶ UNEXCUSED

EXCUSED ABSENCES

- ▶ Excused absences are simply absences that are supported by a doctor or parent note.
- ▶ Students may be excused from school for the following reasons:
 - ▶ Personally ill and attendance could endanger their health or the health of others
 - ▶ A serious illness or death in their immediate family
 - ▶ Mandated to be absent by order of the government
 - ▶ Celebrating religious holidays observed by your faith
 - ▶ Military Reasons

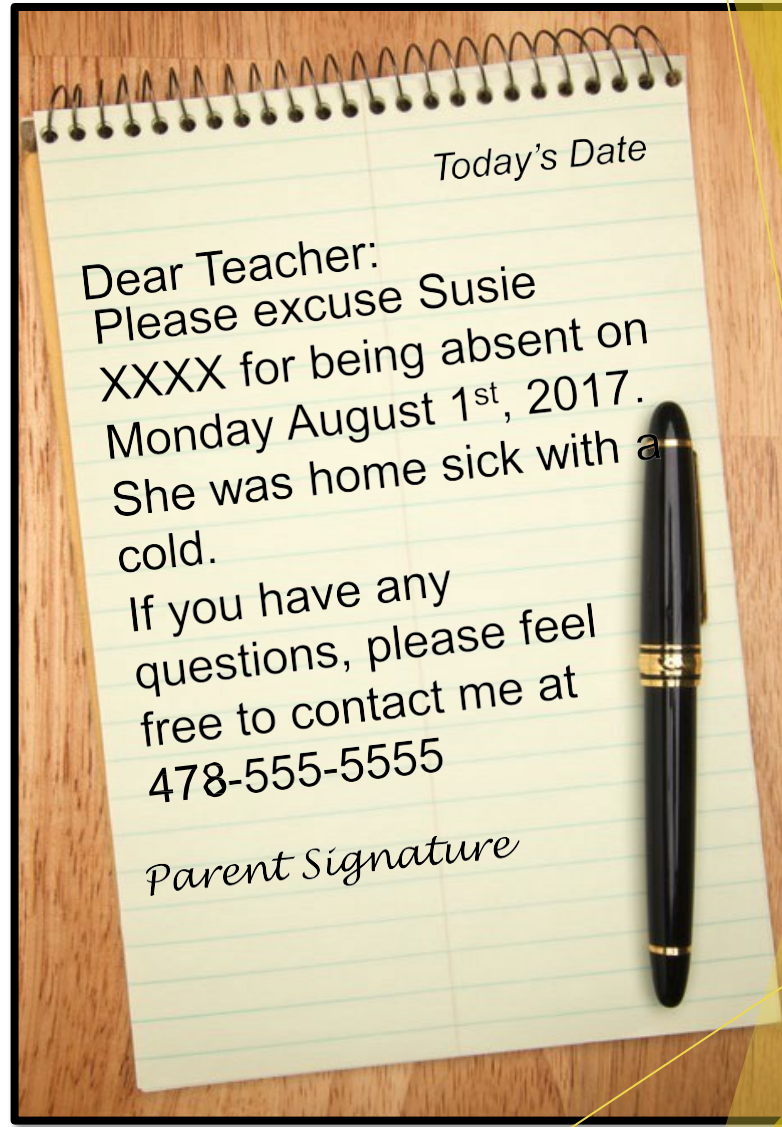
UNEXCUSED ABSENCES

- ▶ Unexcused absences are absences that are **NOT** supported by:
 - ▶ Doctor's note
 - ▶ Parent note
 - ▶ Court order
 - ▶ Military Approval
 - ▶ Religious

NOTES FOR ABSENCES

- ▶ The doctor or parent note for the absences should be sent to the school on the first day, and no later than the fifth day the student returns to school.
- ▶ The note should have the name of student, date, and the reason the student was absent. If note is not turned in within the five-day window, the absence will be unexcused.
- ▶ Make sure the note is an excusable reason.
 - ▶ Not Disney World or Family Reunions/Vacations
- ▶ Notes may be emailed to the school's clerical staff, and/or school messenger.

More Tips.....



What if.....????

- ▶ *“I gave my child the note, he said he gave it to the teacher...”*
 - ▶ Double check with the teacher by phone or email every time you send a note to school (primarily for elementary students). They are known to forget about notes in their backpack. Call the school office, they can check for you.
 - ▶ Check your child’s book bag when he/she returns home
 - ▶ Check with Infinite Campus!! It is constantly being updated. A green “A” means the day was excused. A red “AU” means it was unexcused.
 - ▶ Problems can be taken care of before it gets to court level at 8 unexcused absences.
- ▶ *“Well, the doctor’s office was supposed to fax a note to the school for me...”*
 - ▶ Check with the doctor’s office to make sure they faxed the note.
 - ▶ Check with the school to make sure they received it.

Facts to consider..

- ▶ Absenteeism in the first month of school can predict poor attendance throughout the school year. Half the students who miss 2-4 days in during the first month go on to miss nearly a month of school.
- ▶ Missing 10% (about 18 days) can make it harder to learn to read.
- ▶ By 6th grade, chronic absence becomes a leading indicator that a student will drop out of high school.
- ▶ By 9th grade, regular & high attendance is a better predictor of graduation rates than 8th grade test scores.

<https://www.attendanceworks.org/>

TARDY OR UNEXCUSED EARLY DISMISSALS

- ▶ How do tardies and unexcused early dismissal affect students of all ages?
 - ▶ Tardiness affects your child's ability to be successful in his/her schoolwork.
 - ▶ Tardiness has a negative impact on your child. The teacher does not have time to stop scheduled activities to get him/her "caught up" on what your child missed.
 - ▶ Tardiness has a huge negative impact on other students who arrive on time, and who are then distracted while your child gets settled upon his/her arrival.
 - ▶ Tardiness can be considered defiance of the school attendance policy and can result in assigning the student consequences, such as detention, etc., (especially true for students in grades 7 through 12.)
 - ▶ Being on time teaches lifelong skills and appropriate work ethic (jobs, appointments, etc.)

| IF YOUR CHILD MISSES... | THAT EQUALS... | WHICH IS... | AND OVER 13 YEARS OF SCHOOLING THAT'S... |
|-------------------------|-------------------|-------------------|------------------------------------------|
| 1 DAY EVERY 2 WEEKS | 20 DAYS PER YEAR | 4 WEEKS PER YEAR | NEARLY 1 ½ YEARS |
| 1 DAY PER WEEK | 40 DAYS PER YEAR | 8 WEEKS PER YEAR | OVER 2 ½ YEARS |
| 2 DAYS PER WEEK | 80 DAYS PER YEAR | 16 WEEKS PER YEAR | OVER 5 YEARS |
| 3 DAYS PER WEEK | 120 DAYS PER YEAR | 24 WEEKS PER YEAR | NEARLY 8 YEARS |

| HE/SHE IS ONLY MISSING JUST... | THAT'S EQUALS... | WHICH IS... | AND OVER 13 YEARS OF SCHOOLING THAT'S... |
|--------------------------------|------------------------|---------------------------|------------------------------------------|
| 10 MINS PER DAY | 50 MINS PER WEEK | NEARLY 1 ½ WEEKS PER YEAR | NEARLY ½ YEAR |
| 20 MINS PER DAY | 1 HR, 40 MINS PER WEEK | OVER 2 ½ WEEKS PER YEAR | NEARLY 1 YEAR |
| 30 MINS PER DAY | HALF DAY PER WEEK | 4 WEEKS PER YEAR | NEARLY 1 ½ YEARS |
| 1 HOUR PER DAY | 1 DAY PER WEEK | 8 WEEKS PER YEAR | OVER 2 ½ YEARS |

What can I do to prevent Truancy?

- Make sure your child brings a note or you can email a note for each absence. Notes are accepted up to five days after the student returns to school. The student handbook lists what is considered an acceptable excuse.
- Double check with the teacher/staff to make sure the child has turned in the note, or the parent can bring the note to the office on the day the child returns.
- If your child has a chronic medical condition that causes him or her to be absent, make sure the school is aware of these medical issues. Hospital Homebound can be an option.

What can I do as a parent/guardian?

- ▶ Establish and communicate expectations; Be consistent! Parents who are inconsistent with routines, discipline, and expectations have a tougher time with their children.
- ▶ Help your child form a positive peer group.
- ▶ Encourage your child to participate in school activities.
- ▶ Get involved in your child's school as best as you can (Open House, Meet & Greet, Teacher Conferences, etc).
- ▶ Get to know your child's teachers and school administrators.
- ▶ Update your contact information with school personnel.

What can I do as a parent/guardian?

- ▶ Set a regular bedtime & morning routine.
- ▶ Layout clothes & backpacks the night before.
- ▶ Develop back-up plans for getting your child to school if something comes up. (family members, friends, neighbors, etc)
- ▶ Stay on top of your child's social contacts. Peer pressure can lead to skipping school, while students without many friends may feel isolated.
- ▶ Ask for help from school officials, juvenile sheriff's office, community & faith-based agencies, if you are having trouble getting your child to school.

<https://www.attendanceworks.org/>

WHEN PARENTS/GUARDIANS ARE INVOLVED

- ▶ Test scores improve
- ▶ Students earn higher grades and graduate
- ▶ Attendance improves
- ▶ Student is motivated, better self-esteem
- ▶ Less student behavior problems

Did You Know?

- ▶ Infinite Campus App
 - ▶ A great tool for parents concerning attendance and grades.
- ▶ Here Comes The Bus
 - ▶ A bus-tracking app which enables parents to view real-time location of their child's school bus via a computer, tablet, or smartphone.

Both can be found at www.hcbe.net under the Parent Information Center in the Parents tab.

Did You Know?

- ▶ **McKinney Vento (Homeless)-** The definition of homeless can be broad and unique under this program (i.e.-doubled up with relative). The main advantage is school transportation services to school outside zone. **POC-Patricia Lane- 478-210-8600; Homeless Social Worker- James Eustis- 478-312-4205**
- ▶ **Hospital Homebound Program-** This program is designed for those students who will miss a significant amount of school due to a chronic medical/MH condition. This is meant to be a temporary program and expires after an approved time frame. You must reapply after every expiration. HH application must be signed by an MD. For MH issues, only a **Licensed Practitioner's** signature on the HH form will be accepted. **Contact School counselors**

Did You Know?

- ▶ **HCCA-** This is a part time program in which students are bussed from their main schools. Some of the programs include culinary, nursing, cosmetology, computers, automotive, etc. <http://hcca.hcbe.net/> **Contact School counselors**
- ▶ **Online academics (Credit Recovery)-** This program is at the schools and the HCCA. It is meant for students who have fallen behind and allows them to make up the work with on-line classes. **Contact School counselors**
- ▶ **WIN Academy at the HCCA -** This program will provide full time alternative options for a student to graduate with greater flexibility. This includes offering evening on-line academic classes (3-7PM) for those who work. A Specialist at the Career Academy will support students who have stopped attending school or choose to work. They will reconnect with students to establish a path to graduation. **Contact School counselors**

Did You Know?

- ▶ Middle GA Consortium (ages 16-24)- Free program- Assists with obtaining GED, post-secondary education, or job training. 478-953-4771
- ▶ Job Corps (ages 16-24 low income)- Free education and career training. 800-733-JOBS(5627)
- ▶ Youth Challenge Academy (ages 16-18)- Free boot camp type program where students can earn their diploma or GED. Students must volunteer for this program. <https://www.georgiayouthchallenge.org/>
- ▶ For information purposes only

Did You Know?

- ▶ CGTC Academy (ages 16-21)- Alternative Diploma Program- 478-988-6800 or email: info@centralgatech.edu
- ▶ Home School- You have that option. If interested, you must contact the Georgia Dept. of Education in Atlanta. Don't forget to withdraw your student.
<https://www.gadoe.org/Curriculum-Instruction-and-Assessment/Pages/Home-Schools.aspx>
- ▶ For information purposes only

Did You Know?

▶ Mental Health Services

- ▶ **PROJECT AWARE**-(All Schools) Federally funded grant program with a focus on mental health. Speak with the school counselor if interested.
- ▶ **APEX program**-(Middle & High Schools) Mental Health counseling in the schools. Speak with the school counselor if interested.

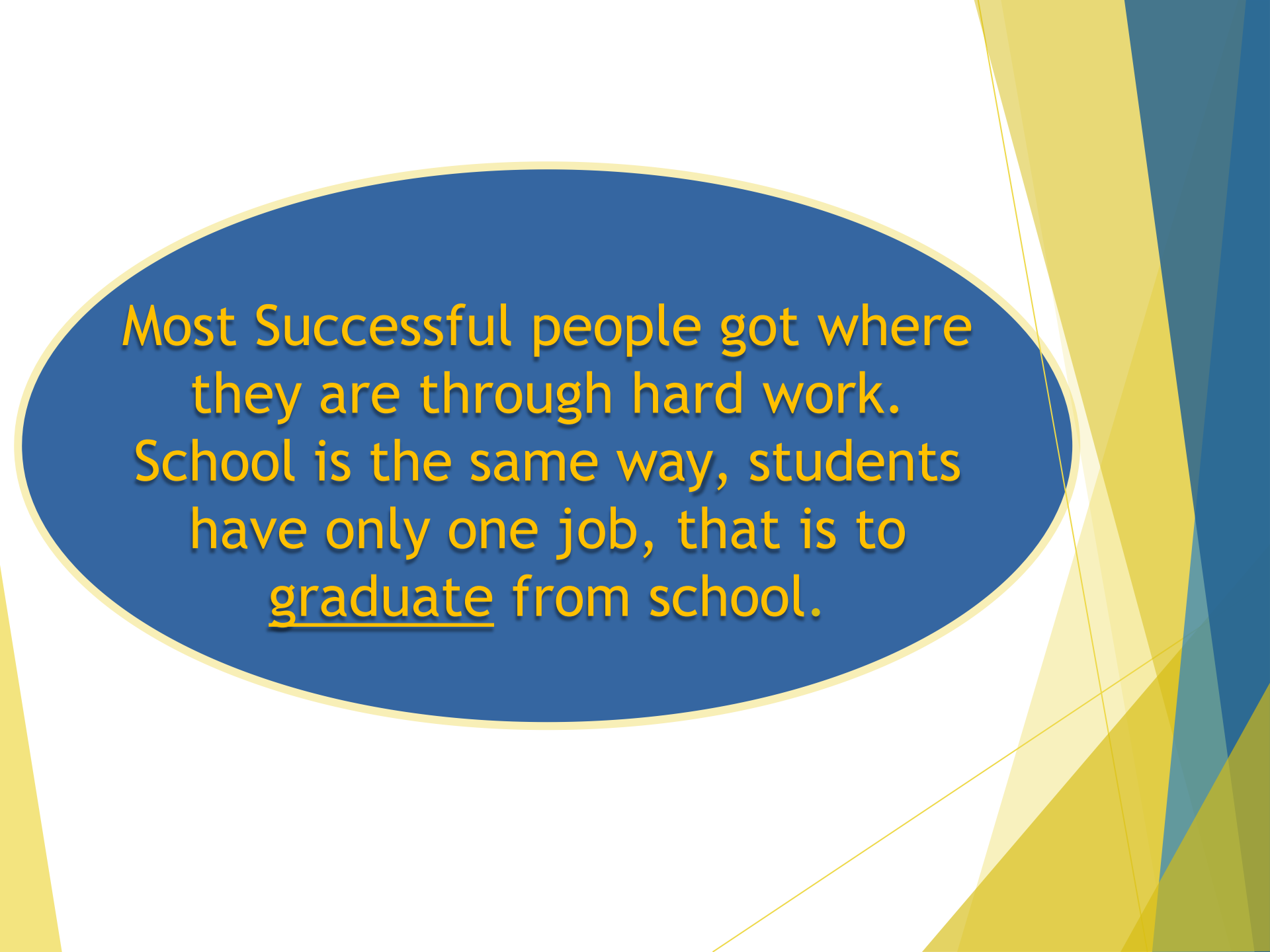
What is expected of students...?

- ▶ Be on time for school everyday.
 - ▶ Elementary starts at 8:30
 - ▶ Middle starts at 7:30
 - ▶ High starts at 8:00
- ▶ Be prepared for class.
- ▶ Complete all assignments and homework.
- ▶ Follow school rules, including dress code.
- ▶ Be respectful, responsible and well mannered at school and on the bus.
- ▶ No unexcused absences.
- ▶ No school or bus suspensions for any reason.



Students--What do you want to do?

- ▶ How do you get there? Most dream jobs START with a high school diploma
- ▶ Failure is not as bad as you think, it is a learning opportunity
- ▶ Dust yourself off, and try again, and again. You will succeed if you give 100%



Most Successful people got where
they are through hard work.
School is the same way, students
have only one job, that is to
graduate from school.

**Click on the link
below to hear a special
message from the
Magistrate Court Judge
Angela Sammons.**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xcBjDT1004Q>

**Click on the link
below to view a special
message from the
Juvenile Court Judge,
Monica Wilburn.**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xpWGYI1o4mM>

NEXT STEP

Click [here](#) to complete the Project Reconnect Letter and Acknowledgement. You will not get credit for this course unless this form is completed in its entirety.

Social Worker School Assignments

Latonya Blasingame 478-302-2105Email: latonya.blasingame@hcbe.net

Phone: 988-6200 ext. 3559

Huntington Middle

Langston Road Elementary

Langston Road Primary

Matt Arthur Elementary

Northside High

Stephanie Canion 478-273-1131Email: stephanie.canion@hcbe.net

Phone: 988-6200 ext. 3562

Bonaire Middle

Miller Elementary

Parkwood Elementary

Veterans High

Westside Elementary

April Nelson 478- 225-8611Email: april.nelson@hcbe.net

Phone: 988-6200 ext. 3557

Bonaire Elementary

Bonaire Primary

David Perdue Elementary

David Perdue Primary

Russell Elementary

Maria Josey 478-217-1928Email: Maria.josey@hcbe.net

Phone: 988-6200 ext. 3558

Feagin Mill Middle

Lake Joy Elementary

Lake Joy Primary

Perry Middle

Perry High

Shante Hendrick 478-397-2970Email: shante.hendrick@hcbe.net

Phone: 988-6200 ext. 3561

Centerville Elementary

Northside Elementary

Northside Middle

Shirley Hills Elementary

Thomson Middle

Amy Hutto 478-447-2650Email: amy.hutto@hcbe.net

Phone: 988-6200 ext. 3556

Houston County High

Kings Chapel Elementary

Morningside Elementary

Mossy Creek Middle

Tucker Elementary

Kristine Thornburg

Administrative Assistant

Email: kristine.thornburg@hcbe.net

Phone: 988-6200 ext. 3551

Pony # 8038

Linda Lewis 478-447-3501Email: linda.w.lewis@hcbe.net

Phone: 988-6200 ext. 3560

CB Watson Primary

Hilltop Elementary

Lindsey Elementary

Pearl Stephens Elementary

Warner Robins Middle

Stephen Veal 478-273-1511Email: stephen.veal@hcbe.net

Phone: 988-6200 ext. 3563

WIN Academy Middle

WIN Academy High

Eagle Springs Elementary

Quail Run Elementary

Warner Robins High

Houston County Career Academy/Win Online

Tangela BriceCoordinator of Student
Services/ Project AWAREEmail: tangela.brice@hcbe.net

Phone: 988-6200 x4392