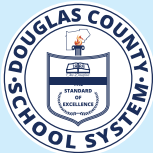


DCSS digest

Highlighting Excellence in the **DOUGLAS COUNTY SCHOOL SYSTEM**

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The DCSS Digest is published by the Douglas County School System, 11490 Veterans Memorial Hwy, Douglasville, GA 30134, in partnership with the Douglas County Sentinel advertising department.

The mission of the Douglas County School System is to provide a quality education for all students in a safe, supportive environment.

Letter from the Superintendent



Dear Douglas County Families:

This year, over 2,000 Douglas County students accepted their diplomas and began the next chapter of their lives. As each student turned the tassel on their cap and transitioned from student to graduate, I beamed with excitement and pride.

Graduations are always an exciting and exhilarating experience. These momentous and joy filled occasions are an immense source of pride for our scholars, families, employees and the community.

Every time a Douglas County scholar graduates, our school community celebrates. We celebrate because we have worked hard to prepare students for a lifetime of success. Whether they leave our school system and pursue higher education, enter the job market directly or serve our country, I can be sure of two things.

First, our graduates are poised to make a difference in the world. They enter the world prepared for a global marketplace and are highly sought out by colleges, universities, and employers. We offer students a relevant, rigorous education that encourages independent thinking and creative problem solving. In addition, our well developed curriculum offers students the opportunity to connect their studies to the world around them.

Highly qualified educators, all committed to student success, guide our students to excellence. They have the full support of our school system and our Board of Education. A powerful network of community advocates and international business leaders also supports their educational and professional pursuits. These Douglas County businesses and global industries connect our students with real life business experience and opportunities.

As a result, our graduates enter the job market and institutions of higher learning ready to compete with students from around the world. Douglas County students are not only work ready, but they are also relentless in their pursuit of academic excellence. The Class of 2021 earned \$68 million in money to pursue higher learning at many of our nation's top colleges and universities.

One last thing I know for certain is that this graduating class leaves us with a hope filled future. The past year has been filled with significant changes, but it has also been marked by triumph and great hope.

With hard work, determination and grit, the Class of 2021 persevered throughout the COVID-19 pandemic. They joined other Douglas County students in their quest for excellence. They worked hard, believing better days were ahead. And once again we could not be more proud.

Our students represent a district wide and community wide commitment to student success. As we look forward to the 2021-2022 school year, we look forward to offering students the same opportunities for success. There remains work to be done and there are always opportunities for growth. But with the support of the Board of Education, our employees, and community members like you, we will continue working to ensure students achieve their maximum potential.

Thank you, Douglas County families, for the trust you have placed in your school system. I will forever be grateful for your support of students on their path to success.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Trent North".

Trent North
Superintendent, Douglas County School System

Douglas County Schools Earn National Recognition for Counseling Programs

Alexander High Named RAMP School of Distinction

Three Douglas County schools are receiving national recognition for their work impacting the lives of students. Factory Shoals Middle School, Chapel Hill High, and Alexander High School recently received acclaim from the American School Counselors Association (ASCA). The Recognized ASCA Model Program (RAMP) designation celebrates the work the Professional School Counselors have made to the student body. Alexander High received the additional title of a RAMP School of Distinction for having a nearly perfect score. The organization awards the distinction to groups that align with criteria set in the ASCA national model. It recognizes schools delivering a comprehensive, data-driven school counseling program.

“Becoming a nationally recognized ASCA Model Program at Chapel Hill High School is an honor,” says CHHS School Counselor Margaret Redmond. “It validates the impact we have on our students, the school, and the community.”

Redmond says becoming RAMP designated is daunting, but well worth the extra effort. “The application process is very extensive,” she explains. “It involved demonstrating that our counseling program works within the ASCA National Model.”

Factory Shoals Middle School Principal Dr. Raymond Leonard says School Counselors Chandra Peyton and Keisha White developed a comprehensive School Counseling program to meet the ASCA standards. “They successfully evaluated the needs of the school by strategically planning instructional lessons, starting a school ambassador program, scheduling First Friday advisements, starting a Counselor Mailbox System and Google counseling classroom, planning parent



(Left to right) Counselors Rebecca Thompson, Margaret Redmond, Patreece Hutcherson and Jackie Hix.

programs, incorporating virtual offices, and incorporating systems and interventions to meet the needs of students, families and the community,” Dr. Leonard says. He adds that with the work of Counselors Peyton and White, Factory Shoals earned recognition as a model school for the district and as the first middle school in Douglas County to receive RAMP recognition.

ASCA’s model encompasses providing data driven school counseling in an exemplary school setting. School counselors had to submit evidence of the impact their counseling program has on support of student achievement and its connection to the mission and goals of the school and their use of data to drive decisions. Research has proven that fully implemented school counseling programs are associated with a range of positive student educational and behavioral outcomes.

Executive Director of College and Career Programs and Counselors Mandy Johnson says the RAMP application process allows

counselors to dive deep into their already established mission, vision, and goals. “It helps everyone to gain a better understanding of the needs of our students and the role our school counseling department plays in meeting those needs,” she explains.

Johnson adds that RAMP designation also allows counselors to take their school counseling program to the next level. “We want to ensure the programs we implement continue to be relevant and impact student needs in the areas of academics, college and career readiness, and social/emotional well-being,” she says.

The program also allows counselors to share their commitment to delivering a data informed school counseling program with the community. One hundred and thirty schools in 27 states earned RAMP designation this year. According to the program’s website, a panel of school counseling professionals review RAMP applications once a year. The RAMP designation is held for five years.

School Leadership Changes Announced

New Principals Named for Three Douglas County Schools

Douglas County School Superintendent Trent North and the Douglas County Board of Education are pleased to announce three new principal appointments for the upcoming school year.

“These leaders have all done an outstanding job in their current leadership positions. They all possess a vision and passion to see Douglas County students succeed. I am confident they will continue our standard of excellence by setting high expectations and standards for our students.”

— Superintendent Trent North

Kenja Parks has been named principal of Douglas County High School. Before moving to Douglas County High School, Parks was assistant principal at Factory Shoals Elementary School for two years and assistant principal at Alexander High School for 11 years.



Kenja Parks

Parks holds an undergraduate degree from Dillard University and a master’s degree from the State University of New York. She also holds education specialist degrees from Jacksonville State University and Lincoln Memorial University. Parks has been accepted into the doctoral program at University of Alabama.

Parks says she is excited to join the Douglas County High School family. “I am excited to learn and lead alongside a legion of stellar staff at a school with longstanding traditions and legacies,” Parks says.

Pamela Wooley will serve as principal of North Douglas Elementary School. Wooley previously was an assistant principal and instructional coach in the DeKalb County School District. Wooley holds an undergraduate degree from Tuskegee University. She completed her master’s in educational leadership at Kennesaw State University. Wooley is currently pursuing a doctorate degree in advanced leadership at Georgia State University.



Pamela Wooley

Wooley is excited to serve the Douglas County community. “The

Douglas County community has a strong foundation of serving students with excellence. I am grateful for the opportunity to build on this legacy and build a strong learning environment for every student,” she says.



Tosha Wright

Tosha Wright has been named the new principal of Factory Shoals Elementary School. Previously, Wright worked at Douglas County High as assistant principal and school testing coordinator. Wright has an undergraduate degree from the University of Georgia. She also earned a master’s degree from Central Michigan University. Wright is currently pursuing an educational specialist degree from Valdosta State University.

Wright previously taught at Factory Shoals Elementary School and is excited to be a part of this full circle moment. “I am looking forward to working together with the staff to continue the standard of excellence happening here at the Factory,” Wright says.

1/4 page ad

Advancing Learning Through AVID Elementary

Since 1869, the Douglas County School System has been guided by the belief that preparation today leads to success tomorrow. This passion to see students succeed has led to the introduction of an exciting new program at the elementary level.

AVID Elementary is a program newly launched in the Douglas County School System. AVID, which stands for Advancement Via Individual Determination, is a College Readiness System that transforms leadership, instruction, and culture to focus on the academic and social skills needed in higher education and beyond.

The comprehensive AVID system extends from elementary to post-secondary and is founded on a research-based curriculum and strategies to develop critical thinking, literacy, and math skills across all content areas. The nonprofit program has a proven track record for bringing out the best in students and closing the achievement gap.

Implementation of the AVID program reflects DCSS's commitment to student success at the earliest level. This program builds stronger learners and prepares them for a lifetime of success. AVID Elementary accomplishes this by introducing the ideas of organization, writing to learn, and a college-bound culture. These essentials are introduced with hopes of preparing students for a lifetime of success.

Melissa Joe serves as Douglas County's AVID Coordinator. Joe says this year all twenty Douglas County elementary schools are participating in AVID at the third through fifth grade level. North Douglas Elementary has an expanded AVID program with components at the K-5 levels. Next year AVID elementary will serve even more students by expanding to the second grade level.

"AVID Elementary serves our students by closing the opportunity gap," Joe says. "I am thrilled that Douglas County has a program devoted to preparing our young scholars for

college readiness and success," she explains.

"In AVID Elementary, each elementary school creates a culture that every student is college-bound. We are teaching lessons on colleges and careers. We are showing students that college is not just a word, but a life expectation," Joe says.

Joe explains that one proven learning strategy that AVID Elementary uses is focused note taking. At the beginning of the school year, the school system distributes a three inch binder and planner to each student. The planner serves as a communication between home and school. AVID Elementary students use these binders and index tabs to take notes and stay organized in each of their class subjects.

"Learning focused note taking techniques helps students establish their content and

standards in memory. It also helps them create levels of questioning and academic language," Joe continues.

These note taking techniques guide students in comprehending difficult concepts and articulating ideas at increasingly complex levels. AVID's proven learning support structure also incorporates WICOR. WICOR is a collection of teaching and learning strategies that support student learning in the classroom.

WICOR stands for Writing to Learn, Inquiry, Collaboration, Organization, and Reading to Learn. Even at the elementary level, WICOR helps students learn long-term learning skills and strategies that will continue serving them as they grow.

AVID has its roots as a global nonprofit organization dedicated to closing the



Bulletin boards at New Manchester Elementary (above) and Arbor Station Elementary (right) help create the AVID culture and serve to reinforce the AVID message that a college education is an expectation for students.

(Above right) Eastside Elementary faculty sports their college spirit wear.



achievement gap. It fulfills its mission by offering educators comprehensive training to use proven practices to prepare students for success. The program impacts over 800,000 nationwide in 44 states as well as 16 other countries/territories.

Nationwide, AVID is a tremendously successful program. Approximately 10,000 students have graduated from AVID programs. A variety of entities have thoroughly researched the program, including private foundations and

federal and state agencies. Over 90 percent of AVID graduates attend college and 89 percent of those students are still in college after two years.

AVID Secondary continues promoting a college bound culture in Douglas County middle and high school students. Students at Chestnut Log Middle School, New Manchester High School, Stewart Middle School, and Turner Middle School begin college and career exploration with a strong focus on organized college campus visits and completion of college applications.

AVID Secondary supports them by building a community of peer support, providing academic help from tutors, and participating in motivational activities to help students achieve their dreams.

Implementing AVID at the elementary level allows the Douglas County School System to provide students academic and social support and to continue holding them to the highest academic standards. In doing so, all students will rise to the challenge and be prepared for success in a global society.

Douglas County School System Superintendent Trent North says the program helps students achieve at the highest levels. "AVID Program and now AVID Elementary is yet another way for the Douglas County School System to provide students an exceptional educational experience," he says. "AVID Elementary is one additional way that we can provide our students with the tools they will need to successfully navigate middle school, high school, and beyond."



1/4 page ad

The \$12 Million Dollar Men

Two Douglas County High School Seniors offered millions in scholarships by colleges and universities

Douglas County High School seniors and good friends Jonathan Jefferson and Joshua Robinson have received a combined total of \$11,884,434 in scholarship offers! Anyone who has selected a college recently knows how difficult it can be to make the final decision of where to attend. Imagine being Jonathan and choosing from 47 different colleges offering scholarships ranging from a high of \$320,724 to a low of \$87,848, if you can call that a low! Joshua chose from 34 colleges that offered him anywhere from \$320,724 to \$90,020.

Jonathan's 47 scholarship offers totaling \$6.6 million come from leading universities including Duke, Notre Dame, Auburn, Alabama, Georgia Tech, and Georgia. Despite all the schools courting him to join their ranks, he chose to stay near his roots by attending University of Georgia (UGA). "UGA has always had a place in my heart," says Jonathan. "It's close to home, and it was my first offer during my freshman year. It just felt right." Jonathan will play on the defensive line for the Bulldogs while working on an accounting degree.

He says Douglas County High School (DCHS) Coaches Johnny White and Faamoemoe Soli helped prepare him for where he is now. "Coach White and Coach Soli were always pushing me," said Jonathan. "The hard work they put me through and the coaching helped prepare me for college football. I appreciate everything they did for me."

Jonathan's inspiration is his mother. "She's a single parent and put in a lot of work to put a roof over my head and food on the table," he says of his mom. "I want to make it for her!" Jonathan's long-term goals are to play for the NFL, preferably the Atlanta Falcons!



Jonathan Jefferson during practice at UGA

Joshua also received scholarship offers from leading institutions, ultimately deciding on Georgia Tech. Joshua's first of 34 scholarship offers came during his sophomore year at DCHS. He chose Georgia Tech because, "I like the coaches; the location is good; and the academics are amazing." He will play defensive end for the Yellow Jackets while pursuing a business degree.

Joshua says his time as a student and athlete at DCHS "got me physically and mentally ready in every aspect for college and college football."

He receives inspiration from his mother, saying, "she inspires me to work hard and accomplish goals." Those goals include playing in the NFL



Joshua Robinson is ready for the GT Yellow Jackets season

one day. Like his friend Jonathan, Joshua would like to play for the Atlanta Falcons!

"The thing that makes me proud about both of these young men is that they are STUDENTS FIRST," says Head Football Coach Johnny White. "Jonathan and Joshua will both graduate with great grades. Jonathan has a 3.2, and Joshua has a 3.8. Their leadership was never vocal, but they let their ACTIONS speak louder than their WORDS. Their work and team first mentality has left a legacy at Douglas County that every student athlete now has the blueprint to follow."

Jonathan and Joshua graduated from DCHS on May 27, but they have been attending classes at UGA and GT since January.

District Says Farewell to 86 Retirees

Sheila Squire is among those with most years of service

The Douglas County School System bid farewell to 86 members of TeamDouglas who retired this school year or who will retire this summer.

Speaking about the group of retirees, Superintendent Trent North said, “They have all had distinguished careers with the Douglas County School System and have played crucial roles in caring for and educating our students. Thousands of students have been positively impacted because of them.” Superintendent North honored retirees with a drop-by reception on May 10 at the Central Office.

One of this year’s retirees with the most years of service is Sheila Squire, library media specialist at Mt. Carmel Elementary School, who is retiring after 38 years in education.

“Mrs. Squire has had an enduring positive impact on the hearts and minds of our school community,” said Principal Marco Holland. “Her commitment to student development is continually reflected in the pride that she takes in making the media center a place where students discover their passion and cultivate a love for reading. We are

eternally grateful for the lasting legacy of teaching, learning, and caring that Mrs. Squire has established at Mount Carmel Elementary School.”

“I have truly enjoyed working for the Douglas County School System,” said Mrs. Squire. “I have been blessed to call Mt. Carmel my home away from home for the last 20 years of my 38 years in education. I will miss my school family and the time I spent with the students in the media center. Thank you all for the wonderful memories!”

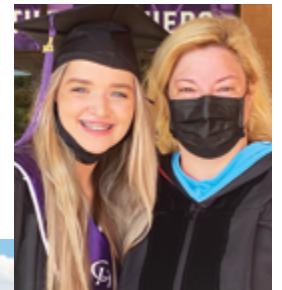
The impact Mrs. Squire and our other retirees has made on children in our community is immeasurable, and we thank all of them from the bottom of our hearts.



(Above) Superintendent Trent North congratulates Sheila Squire at the May 10th retiree event at DCSS Central Office. (top right) Sheila shows off her TeamDouglas spirit while posting a yard sign.

1/4 page ad

Congratulations



Class of 2021



Where are they Now?

Catching Up with Douglas County's REACH 2012 Graduating Cohort

Governor Deal launched the first graduating class of the Realizing Educational Achievement Can Happen (REACH) program in 2012. When it launched, it became Georgia's first public-private needs based scholarship opportunity with 100% of the funds raised going to college scholarships. The program offers academically promising middle school students with the knowledge, advice, guidance, and support needed to graduate high school and attend college with up to \$10,000 in scholarship funds.

Since the program's inception, Douglas County's REACH Scholars have been graduating with the skills they need to succeed in college and beyond. They are quickly impacting their communities, proof that the REACH Scholars program is making a difference.

Communities In Schools of Douglas County Executive Director Mitzi Teal caught up with members of the original REACH graduating cohort for an update on their time with their program and where life has taken them.

Roda Kesete graduated from Douglas County High School in 2017 as part of the original REACH graduating cohort. She entered Emory University that fall as a political science and Spanish double major. Now that she has completed her Emory undergraduate degree, Kesete will begin graduate coursework in global government in China next year as a Schwarzman Scholar. After that she will head to law school, and ultimately carve a career in public policy.

"The REACH scholarship made a difference and played a big role in completing college," Kesete says. "The program's foundation and sense of financial support have been very valuable during my college career."

As a REACH scholar, Kesete worked with an academic coach and mentor who modeled positive behavior. This academic coach provides REACH scholars with knowledge,



Roda Kesete

advice, guidance, and support related to education and beyond.

"My mentor throughout high school was a wonderful mentor and community supporter. This high school mentor was a community volunteer who would send check-in texts, emails, and reminders about important dates," Kesete says. "This support system provided a sense of community. It was a network of people rooting for you. REACH was a significant experience for me," Kesete adds.

Josslyn Lally was also part of the 2012 REACH cohort and graduated from Douglas County High School. Like other REACH Scholars, she was identified in the 7th grade and began the program in 8th grade. Lally will soon graduate from Georgia Institute of Technology with a degree in biomedical engineering. After graduation, she would like to pursue a career in research and development engineering.

She describes the REACH program as a growing experience. "The REACH program was helpful in high school. It helped me prepare for college and assisted me throughout college. It showed me the importance of mentoring. I will never forget the encouragement I received from all the people who make being a REACH Scholar possible," she adds.



Josslyn Lally

Additional members of the 2012 REACH Graduate Cohort:

Amber Moreland, New Manchester High School. Amber will soon graduate from Fort Valley State University with a degree in biology. She plans to attend graduate school and become a midwife. She is currently giving back to her community by working as an intern at the Family Health Center of Georgia at the Douglas County School System's School Based Health Clinic.

Jazmine Blancas, Lithia Springs High School. Jazmine will graduate next year from Clayton State University with a health science degree.

Cole Blasczyk, Alexander High School. Cole is a University of West Georgia May 2021 graduate. He graduated with a degree in criminology and a forensic certification.

Shiyenne Earley, New Manchester High School. Shiyenne is a graduate of Health and Style Institute. Shiyenne is a health and beauty entrepreneur and has started her own skin care line.

Tafari Kennedy, New Manchester High School. Tafari is a Georgia State University May 2021 graduate in sports management.

Ambitious Students Earn Associate

Degree Along with High School Diploma

continued

Superintendent Trent North salutes the success of all the Douglas County REACH Scholars.

“I am so proud of each of our REACH Scholars and the career paths they have chosen,”

— Superintendent Trent North

“REACH offers our students opportunities to succeed at every level and allows them to reach their highest potential,” North adds.

Teal agrees. She adds that the REACH Scholarship program has offered Douglas County students, especially the first cohort, tremendous opportunities for success. “This first cohort of students has a special place in my heart! All nine of us, and their parents, had to navigate this new program as pioneers,” she says.

“I remember their graduation day and look back at the pride, excitement and hope they all had about their future,” Teal says. “It is exhilarating to see their accomplishments in the postsecondary setting. I am proud of all their successes and I hope they can serve as role models for current scholars.”

Teal adds that REACH scholars have to meet academic, behavioral and attendance criteria. Their parents also had to commit to a certain level of involvement to qualify to receive a \$10,000 college scholarship. Qualifying REACH Scholars are awarded a financial scholarship upon graduation, with many colleges offering to match or double match the scholarship.

Teal says that for REACH Scholars, this additional support makes a difference. “The program is proof that dedication, support, and teamwork can make opportunities such as this scholarship a reality!”

For more information about REACH in Douglas County, please contact Mitzi Teal at 770-651-2039 or mitzi.teal@dcssga.org.

Jerney Jackson and Nikera Williams are May graduates from New Manchester High School. When the friends walked across the stage and received their high school diploma, they needed two frames: one for the high school diploma, and one for the college diploma.

The girls have taken advantage of dual enrollment, a state-funded program that allows students to attend high school and an eligible postsecondary institution in Georgia. Participants earn credit toward both high school graduation and postsecondary degree, diploma or certificate requirements. Jerney and Nikera began attending college the summer after their sophomore year.

Jerney Jackson’s initial dual enrollment goal was to take a few college courses to make it easier to transition into four-year college when the time came. With plans to become a doctor, she decided during her junior year in high school to focus on earning an associate of science degree from Georgia Highlands College (GHC) to reduce the number of years before medical school and to take advantage of state-paid courses while she had the chance. Upon graduation, she had 22 college courses on her transcript, including several from West Georgia Technical College.

At NMHS, Jerney is on the FAME (Fine Arts Magnet Education) Pathway, plays on the varsity volleyball team and is a competitive cheerleader. “I’ve had to truly manage my time and study often to maintain my grades and keep up with the rigor of the college courses.”

Despite the challenges, Jerney is a big proponent of dual enrollment. “Dual enrollment allows students to have a sneak peek at college as well as take advantage of courses at no cost. The level of responsibility has allowed me to grow and become more organized. Accomplishing this goal as a high school student

feels empowering! It helped me to realize that I can accomplish anything that I set my mind to.”

Jerney’s journey will continue this fall at University of Georgia or Georgia State University where she is exploring the Honors College. “I plan to major in biology or the pre-med track. I aspire to become a bariatric surgeon and someday own my own medical practice.”

Nikera Williams says, “It has always been a goal of mine to graduate with my associate degree by the time I graduate from high school.”

She began taking classes at West Georgia Technical College and later transferred to Georgia Highlands College where she completed the general studies curriculum. Her college classes include astronomy, environmental science, English, psychology, sociology, history and economics.

Like Jerney, Nikera is very busy with high school and college classes, extracurricular activities and part-time work. She says she has learned a lot about time management. “I had to juggle my regular high school classes, clubs, and my job, all while trying to stay on track and succeed in my college courses.”

She gives a lot of credit for her success to her parents, especially her mom, who she says gave her the motivation to start taking college classes. She also has good friends who have been with her throughout high school. “Having an amazing group of friends in addition to my parents has played a major role in my success,” says Nikera. “They motivated me every day, and I am so grateful for them.”

The next step for Nikera is majoring in biology at Georgia State University followed by medical school. “I plan to become an otolaryngologist (ear, nose and throat doctor) and own my own private practice.”



Jerney Jackson



Nikera Williams

Chapel Hill High School Training New Generation of EMTs

As this school year closed, 19 students at Chapel Hill High School completed their first year of classes in the Emergency Medical Technician Pathway. Chapel Hill High School (CHHS) joins Lithia Springs High School as two of a very few high schools training students to be emergency medical technicians (EMTs).

The EMT program at CHHS is a partnership between the Douglas County School System and the Douglas County Fire/EMS Department. Healthcare Science Teacher Sandy Smith, M.Ed., AEMT, teaches EMT classes, and the Fire/EMS Department handles the majority of clinical training. Clinicals include CPR training; helicopter landing and loading demonstrations; practice sessions with a driving simulator provided by the Sheriff's Department to prepare students for driving ambulances; and time on ambulances.

Speaking about the clinicals, student Hannah Napolet says, "Clinicals are very informative and give us (the students) a chance to see what really goes on in the EMT workforce. It gives us the opportunity to learn more about the career while asking questions and seeing the events first hand. I am really thankful that I was able to go on clinicals and get the experience that I did."

"Clinicals give you a sneak peek into what life will be like in medical or nursing school," adds student Kendall King. "It also gives students a great chance to have a career path straight out of high school."

In March, Ms. Smith received an email from Lt. Mark Sullivan with the Fire/EMS Department that reinforced how well the program is preparing students to be EMTs. A student was on a call with Lt. Sullivan that took them to the home of a patient in full cardiac arrest. Lt. Sullivan said, "The student kept herself together very well. She retrieved equipment and jumped in on compressions." He goes on to say, "The scene was stressful, but she stayed tough throughout it all." That's high praise for a veteran firefighter/EMT to offer about a teenager.

Once students have taken the necessary EMT classes and participated in a minimum of 20 hours of clinical training, often on weekends, they are eligible to sit for testing with the National Registry of Emergency Medical Technicians (NREMT). After successfully completing the training and NREMT certification, students who are at least 18 can begin working as EMTs.

Ms. Smith says the partnership between the school system and the Fire/EMS Department gives high school graduates an opportunity to enter a career, debt free, after high school graduation. The average EMT salary in Georgia is around \$35,500, but the range typically falls between \$31,765 and \$40,020. Salary ranges may vary widely depending on the city, education levels, certifications, additional skills, and number of years in the profession.



Pinwheel Memorial Garden Planted for Loved Ones Lost to COVID-19

Douglas County School System staff and families were joined by members of the Douglas County Board of Education, other elected officials, and members of the community on the afternoon of June 2 to pause and reflect on the impact the pandemic has had on everyone in our community. Pinwheels memorializing 110 people lost to COVID-19 were placed on the lawn of the new DCSS Central Office at 11490 Veterans Memorial Highway in Douglasville.

Names of loved ones including family members, friends, neighbors, and coworkers were submitted by those who wished to honor them.

DCSS Superintendent Trent North welcomed guests at the event and said, "Each pinwheel on our lawn represents a mother, father, son,



Douglas County Board of Education members Glenn Easterwood; Michelle Simmons, Vice Chair; and Devetrian Caldwell accompany Tracy Rookard, Board Chair, at the podium as she addresses the crowd

daughter, sister, brother, spouse, grandparent, auntie, uncle, cousin, friend, or neighbor. Today we honor those we have lost, and share our love with those who grieve."

Members of the clergy were on hand to offer words of comfort and

prayer for those in attendance and all affected by loss.

The pinwheels will remain on the lawn for two weeks. Family and friends who submitted a name or placed a pinwheel are invited to stop by and take one at their convenience.



**Upcoming
Dates for the
2021-2022
School Year**

**July 30
High School
Back-to-School
Bash**

**August 2
Elementary &
Middle School
Sneak-a-Peek**

**August 4
First Day
of
School!**

**Is your child
registered for
school?**

**Register online
at
dcssga.org**

STAR Students and Teachers Shine Brightly



Sammi Zhu



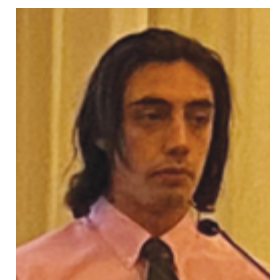
Corinne Barnes



Hayden Bogner



Kimberly Laver



Roman Compitello



Evan Gibbs

Congratulations to the DCSS 2021 STAR Students and Teachers

The Douglas County STAR Students and Teachers for 2021 were recognized by the local Rotary Club at a luncheon on April 19.

Sammi Zhu from Douglas County High School was named the STAR Student for the county, meaning her SAT score was the top score for all students in Douglas County. She chose **Corinne Barnes** as her STAR Teacher. This is the 13th year the county's top STAR Student has been enrolled at Douglas County High School.

STAR Students must be enrolled seniors in an accredited Georgia public or private high school. The program is designed to recognize high school seniors who have the highest SAT score in their graduation class. STAR Students select a teacher who has meant the most to them in their educational journey as their STAR Teacher.

Alexander High School has two STAR Students and Teachers this year after **Hayden Bogner** and **Roman Compitello** had the same high score on the SAT. Hayden chose **Kimberly Laver** as his STAR Teacher, and Roman chose **Evan Gibbs**.

Chapel Hill High School's STAR Student is **Wyatt Griffin**, and he chose **Kristen Johnson** as the teacher who has meant the most to him during his academic career.

Tiolulope Popoola is the STAR Student at Lithia Springs High School, and her STAR Teacher is **Debra Vinsant**.

New Manchester High School STARS are senior **Sua Williams** and teacher **Whitney Swift**.

Sammi Zhu moved to the United States from China at the age of four to live with her parents. She started kindergarten at Annette Winn Elementary knowing no English. By first grade, she was in the gifted program, and she now speaks four languages.

Sammi, an IB student at DCHS, selected Corinne Barnes as her STAR Teacher. "Madame Barnes is there for every event with encouraging words," said Sammi. "Without the experiences I've had with Madame Barnes, I would not be the person I am today."

Sammi will continue her studies this fall at Harvard University, where she will study international business. She was also accepted at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT), Georgia Tech and other prestigious universities.

Hayden Bogner is in the AP (Advanced Placement) Capstone program at AHS where he is a member of National Honor Society, Beta Club and HOSA. He is active in his church, participates in community service and works

part-time. "Although taking higher-level classes was a challenge, it prepared me to have a deeper understanding of my studies and work," said Haden about his AP Capstone experience.

Speaking about his STAR Teacher, Kimberly Laver, Hayden said, "Ms. Laver is probably one of the nicest teachers I've ever met. She could serve as a model for other teachers to follow. She is patient, kind and listens to her students. She has made a tremendous impact on my life."

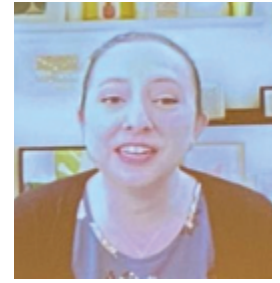
Hayden is still deciding which university he will attend, but he will pursue a pre-med track and aspires to be a radiologist. "I want to help people who are underserved and can't afford good healthcare," said Hayden.

Roman Compitello has enjoyed trying different activities during high school. He played football one year, was on the robotics team and joined the track team last year as a pole vaulter. He says pole vaulting is a new sport to him that he has enjoyed learning. "It's not like anything I've done before," says Roman about pole vaulting. "It's a fun, active niche sport that I've loved learning about and participating in. I've met a lot of new people through the sport." Roman is also a member of National Honor Society at AHS.

Outside of school, Roman served as an IDF



continued

**Wyatt Griffin****Kristen Johnson****Tiolulope Popoola****Debra Vinsant****Sua Williams****Whitney Swift**

counselor at a camp in California for children who have immune deficiency, something he lives with daily. He is also a member of the Civil Air Patrol, a civilian auxiliary of the US Air Force.

Roman will attend Purdue University and major in aerospace engineering with a concentration in aeronautics. With the pole vaulting, Civil Air Patrol participation and aerospace engineering major, it's clear Roman loves to fly! His long-term career goal is to be a mission specialist on a space flight.

"I'm excited to begin college at Purdue and broaden my horizons and meet new people," said Roman. He says he is ready for the next step of his life that will take him away from Douglasville, but he says Douglasville is home, and returning home will always be special.

While in high school, **Wyatt Griffin** has participated in the Chick-fil-A Leader Academy, National Honor Society and served on the State Superintendent's Student Advisory Council. He has been on the yearbook committee and served as an officer in both SGA and DECA. He competed in nationals in DECA his sophomore year. Wyatt also participated in swim all four years of high school and placed 9th at state in two events this year.

"I thoroughly enjoyed my entire high school experience at Chapel Hill High School, and

I give that credit to my STAR Teacher Mrs. (Kristen) Johnson," said Wyatt.

Wyatt plans to major in aerospace engineering at Georgia Tech where he will begin this summer through the Ignite Summer Launch Program. "I am not fully sure what my future career may hold," said Wyatt, "but the field of aerospace engineering is full of opportunities, and it's only growing."

Tiolulope Popoola is a biomedical and healthcare science STEM student at LSHS. Her teachers say that her passion for learning and devotion to academic excellence is evidenced by the 9 AP and 12 Dual Enrollment classes she has completed, in addition to many academic honors and awards.

In addition to her academic accomplishments, Tiolulope has been very involved in extracurricular activities, including 4-H, where she has been a leader on the local and state level.

Tiolulope selected Ms. Debra Vinsant as her STAR Teacher. "Ms. Vinsant has been so supportive throughout my high school career. She always pushes her students to reach their full potential and is always so caring."

After high school, Tiolulope will attend the University of Georgia as a nutritional sciences

major and a Spanish minor. She will be a pre-med student, with plans to become an OB/GYN specializing in maternal and fetal health.

Sua Williams, NMHS STAR Student and Whitney Swift, participated in the Rotary STAR Student presentation virtually. Ms. Swift teaches social studies.

Sua has maintained a perfect 4.0 grade point average in high school while pursuing the healthcare science pathway and taking advanced placement classes. She is a member of National Honor Society, serving as the organization's secretary, and she tutors students in the AVID program. She received a Certificate of Merit from the University of Georgia for being in the top five percent of the junior class.

"I have made so many great memories in high school," said Sua. "I am so thankful for our school for providing students with the best quality resources and helping me to have this honor of becoming the 2021 STAR Student of New Manchester High School."

Sua has not finalized her university decision, but her undergraduate major will be biology with an ultimate goal of becoming a transplant surgeon.



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