

GEORGIA SCHOOL PUBLIC RELATIONS ASSOCIATION 2023 GOLD AWARD OF EXCELLENCE FOR MAGAZINES

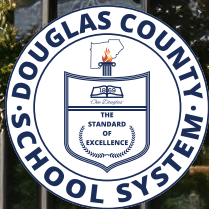
DCSS Digest

Highlighting Excellence in the Douglas County School System

Summer 2023



ON THE COVER:
Alexander High School's
new Performing Arts
Center is now open!
Story on page 2



Together,
we shape the future.

AHS PERFORMING ARTS CENTER

Congratulations Graduates

Class of 2023 photos inside

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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 Vision of the Douglas County School System

Our VISION is to build a community of lifelong learners who become responsible individuals, independent thinkers, and productive citizens in a global society.

The Mission of the Douglas County School System

We will serve our community with excellence by:

- *Helping our students reach their potential as we prepare them for college and career in a safe and supportive environment*
- *Recruiting, cultivating and retaining the best teachers, staff and administrators*
- *Providing a challenging curriculum and relevant learning opportunities*
- *Providing the highest quality instructional resources and tools*
- *Fostering a culture of continuous improvement*

The Beliefs of the Douglas County School System

We BELIEVE that we must ...

- *Understand how children and adults learn and continue learning*
- *Build communities of lifelong learners*
- *Cultivate the leadership potential of every employee, student and parent in our school system*
- *Be creative, energetic visionaries who respond quickly to diverse and evolving issues*
- *Meet the diverse needs of all stakeholders (students, parents, employees and community)*
- *Maintain efficient and effective administrative processes for instruction, operations, human resources and sound fiscal management*

Dear friends and neighbors,

I am thrilled to share some fantastic news. The Alexander High School Performing Arts Center has opened its doors to students and the community.



This magnificent facility fills me with tremendous joy. It represents our ongoing commitment to helping students succeed. In addition to fulfilling our district's mission, its presence creates unlimited opportunities to enrich the lives of our community. Since it opened, it has already impacted our community by providing an additional platform to display our students' creativity, innovation, and artistry. In the pages of this DCSS Digest, you will learn more about the path to its completion and how the space will inspire all who visit the facility.

As we celebrate this new cultural space, I want to remind you of the importance of summer learning. While summer break represents a time of relaxation for students, it also offers a time to maintain academic growth and progress. To support your student's development, I encourage you to explore the many opportunities for summer learning.

In addition to the summer learning resources provided by our schools, Douglas County Libraries offer additional opportunities for educational enrichment. Our libraries offer summer reading programs and activities that foster a lifelong love of literacy. These institutions also provide other digital learning resources in math, science, reading, and the arts. As well as taking advantage of these resources, I encourage you to engage in cultural learning experiences with your child this summer. Explore Douglas County's rich history and learn by visiting our parks and cultural sites.

As your community partners, we remain committed to supporting Douglas County families. We are excited to provide resources on how you can create an enriching and enjoyable summer learning experience for your child.

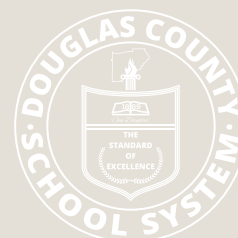
In closing, the new Performing Arts Center fills our hearts with pride. We look forward to witnessing its impact on our students and the entire community. We invite you to celebrate this achievement as we fulfill our commitment to nurturing our students' academic and artistic talents.

Have a rewarding and enriching summer!

Your partner in education,

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

Trent North, Superintendent
Douglas County School System



Congratulations to Our 2023-2024 Teachers of the Year



Alexander HS
Karen Kennedy



Arbor Station ES
Erika Ruth



Beulah ES
Erin Potter-Faile



Bill Arp ES
Avery Guy



Bright Star ES
Lynn Shafer



College & Career
Institute
Chiquita Plenty



Chapel Hill ES
Olivia Theodore



Chapel Hill HS
Erika Mayfield



Chapel Hill MS
Shemeria Hatcher



Chestnut Log MS
Princess Wade



Douglas County HS
Teresa Wellmaker



Dorsett Shoals ES
Jill Farnan



Eastside ES
Kayla Arnold



FLEX Academy
Jacqueline Roth



Factory Shoals ES
Nicole Clay



Factory Shoals MS
Aaron Hester



Fairplay MS
Jordan Mallory



Holly Springs ES
Holly Bradley



Lithia Springs ES
Dawne Matthews



Lithia Springs HS
Stephanie Carr



Mason Creek ES
Katrina Knowles



Mason Creek MS
Stephanie Hindmon



Mirror Lake ES
Julia Sweeney



Mt. Carmel ES
Morgan Shepherd



New Manchester ES
Dayana Jacques



New Manchester HS
Courtney Greene



North Douglas ES
Antrovisse Lemon



South Douglas ES
Jennifer Waits



Stewart MS
Chelsea Montford



Success Center
Araceli Hurley



Sweetwater ES
Amy Thomas Wisor



Turner MS
Claudia Copeland



Winston ES
Julie Buff



Yeager MS
Dedra Wiggins

Alexander's Performing Arts Center Opens New Doors for All Students



by Maggie Padgett
DCSS Communications Intern
AHS Class of 2023 Valedictorian

At Alexander High School, ESPLOST (Educational Special Purpose Local Option Sales Tax) funds present another opportunity for students and their community to experience cultural events. The new 26,900 square feet, 610-seat Performing Arts Center sports many aspects that make it a valuable addition to the school system and its surrounding region. Updated from the 300-seat auditorium that was built in 1986, the larger space empowers all Alexander students to reach their full potential and be recognized for their efforts.

With state of the art acoustics, a green room, and two dressing rooms, students are given the chance to use professional equipment in a safe, accessible setting. The wheelchair lift in the orchestra pit



and handicapped seating around the facility allow everyone to take part in and appreciate the arts. The stage crew can take advantage of the new fly-loft rigging system to fully immerse the cast and audience in the performance with scenery and drapery. All fine arts students at Alexander are given the

support and opportunities to achieve continued success in their respective performances.

As a 2023 Alexander graduate, I'm excited to come back and experience more amazing musical performances like Newsies, The Wiz, Shrek, and Les Miserables with all of the new resources in the Performing Arts Center. The fine arts have been an important part of our school system and its success for years, so the future of the numerous arts programs at Alexander looks even brighter since the facility was added.

Not only does the Performing Arts Center aid student growth in fine arts, but it also provides the chance for students from all over the school to be recognized. Alexander held the first awards nights in the Performing Arts Center in early May, setting the stage



for many more just like them. Students from all grade levels were presented with various awards for academic achievement, fine arts accolades, CTAE (Career, Technical, and Agricultural Education) pathway completion, athletic honors, club involvement and achievement, and excellence in many fields. The DCEF (Douglas County Education Foundation) and community sponsors, like the DAR (Daughters of the American Revolution) and multiple sororities and fraternities, awarded scholarships to seniors.

The Performing Arts Center has an expansive front entryway where students can showcase their artwork and visitors can mingle before and after shows and during intermission. The area functions as a small performance space and a parent-approved photo-op spot, as well. Memories and important moments of all kinds are able to be created and captured in the Performing Arts Center.

The overlap of different art styles,

student achievement, school unity, and community interaction generates a distinct atmosphere for exploration and appreciation. Adding to the atmosphere of interconnection is the option for community and regional events and groups to rent out the space. Opening

up the Center allows the Douglas County School System to continue investing in the whole student and community. Alexander's Performing Arts Center opens doors for all students to explore the arts and the community to appreciate their hard work and talents.



DCSS Announces New Administrative Appointments

The Douglas County Board of Education and Superintendent Trent North recently announced several administrative appointments and changes, most of which will be in place for the 2023-2024 school year. Superintendent North welcomes all into their new roles. “The Douglas County School System is fortunate to have a highly qualified, diverse, and experienced team of educators,” he says. “Because of their proven commitment to excellence, I have no doubt these experienced administrators will dedicate themselves to their new leadership roles and responsibilities.”

Superintendent North adds, “All our staff members play a critical role in student achievement. From our school principals to our teachers and bus drivers, they greatly impact student learning. Each employee is an important partner as we fulfill our district promise of creating excellence and achievement for every student.”

Alexander High School Principal **Dr. Christopher Small** will be the district’s Executive Director of Operations. He fills the role of Assistant Superintendent of District Operations Kwame Carr, who recently retired.



Before being named Alexander High School principal in 2019, Dr. Small worked at the school as assistant principal. He also worked at Alexander and Stewart Middle School as a Special Education Interrelated Teacher.

Dr. Small earned his bachelor’s degree in Psychology from Southern Wesleyan University and his master’s in special education behavior disorders from the University of West Georgia. He also earned his education specialist degree in educational leadership from

the University of West Georgia and his doctorate in education in leadership for learning from Kennesaw State University.

Lora McAdams will be the new principal of Alexander High School. McAdams has served as the school’s Assistant Principal and Athletic Director. Before becoming Assistant Principal, McAdams worked at Alexander for 12 years in many roles, including Assistant Administrator, Special Education Department Chair, Special Education teacher, and Head Cheerleading Coach.



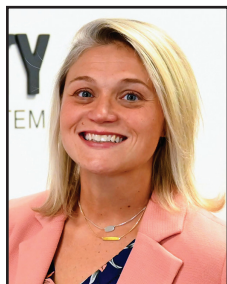
The Alexander High School graduate received her undergraduate degree from the University of West Georgia, a master’s from Valdosta State University, and a specialist degree in instructional technology from Kennesaw State University.

Mitch Springer will be the new Assistant Superintendent of Student Services. He will step into this new role beginning July 1, 2024. Springer has been the Executive Director of Teaching and Learning 6-12 Curriculum since 2022. Previously, he worked as the district's Area Executive Director. Prior to stepping into that role, he worked as an elementary and middle school principal in another district.



Springer earned his undergraduate degree from the University of Georgia. He earned a master's degree from LaGrange College and an education specialist degree from Kennesaw State University. He is currently pursuing a doctorate in secondary history.

Chelsie Goodman will be the district's new Assistant Superintendent of Teaching and Learning. She will assume the role of Melanie Manley, who will retire this year.



Goodman graduated from the University of Arkansas with a bachelor of science in education and a master of arts in teaching. In addition, she holds an educational specialist in leadership degree from Kennesaw State University. She taught middle school for 13 years in Arkansas and Georgia before joining the Douglas County School System. Goodman began her DCSS tenure as a social studies instructional coach, primarily at the high school level, before transitioning to Holly Springs Elementary as assistant principal in 2014. After five years at Holly Springs, she became Winston Elementary School's principal. Most recently, she served as executive director of teaching and learning for grades K-5.

New Manchester Elementary School Principal **Keith Racine** will also step into a new leadership role. He will be an area executive director for the district. Before leading New Manchester

Elementary, Racine served as assistant principal of Chestnut Log Middle School. He also worked as a high school assistant principal, special education department chair, and teacher in other districts.



Racine earned his undergraduate degree in religion from the University of Florida. He earned a master's degree in education leadership from the University of Phoenix, and a specialist in education leadership degree from the University of West Georgia.

JaQuan Carter, assistant principal of Douglas County High School, is the new principal of North Douglas Elementary. He has experience working with all levels of students. Before Douglas County High, Carter worked as assistant principal of Factory Shoals Elementary. He also worked as a teacher and curriculum representative at Mason Creek Elementary after working as a middle school teacher in another district.



Carter received an undergraduate degree at the University of West Georgia. He later earned a master of education and an educational specialist degree in curriculum and instruction from Piedmont University.

Monica Henderson is the new Director of the Program for Exceptional Children (PEC). She assumes this position after serving as Assistant Director of PEC. Henderson holds an undergraduate, masters, and specialist degree from the University of West Georgia.



Before joining PEC, she worked as a special education program specialist at the Georgia Department of Education.

She has also worked as a special education program coordinator, program specialist for compliance, and instructional support teacher in other districts.

Tanish Springer becomes principal of Sweetwater Elementary School after serving as assistant principal at Holly Springs Elementary. She was formerly the district's K-5 Science Content Specialist and K-12 Instructional Technology Specialist.



She earned bachelor's and master's degrees in Early Childhood Education from the University of West Georgia. She received her specialist in curriculum and instruction from Piedmont University. Springer also has endorsements in gifted education and ESOL and is nationally STEM certified. In addition, she participated in the DCSS Aspiring Principal Leadership Academy.

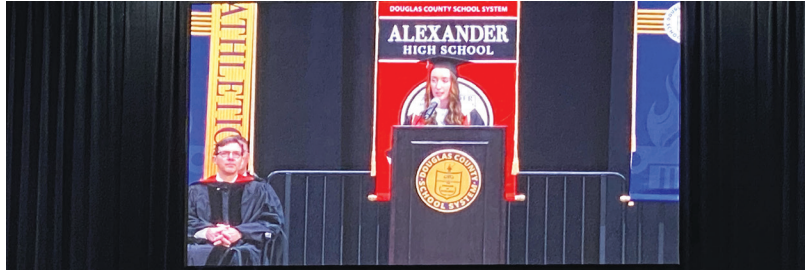
Khalilah Allen is stepping into a new role as principal of Burnett Elementary School. Allen was formerly an assistant principal at Turner Middle. Prior to that she worked as an instructional lead teacher and eighth-grade teacher at Chestnut Log Middle. Before joining DCSS, she worked as an assistant principal and math coach.



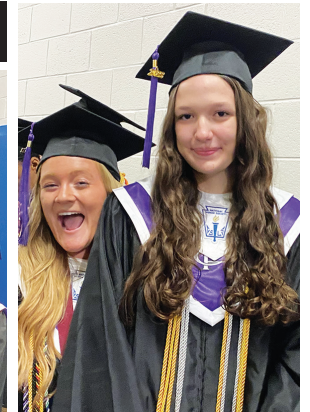
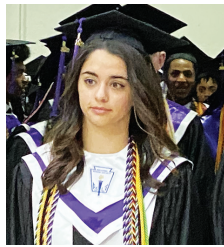
Allen attended Clark Atlanta University to earn her undergraduate degree. She has a master of arts from Argosy University and an educational specialist degree from the University of West Georgia.

Other administrative changes include **Minda Trexler** and **Dr. Sherritta Abell**. Trexler has served as the principal of Holly Springs Elementary School and will now lead Annette Winn Elementary School. Annette Winn Elementary School Principal Dr. Sherritta Abell will also change schools and become the new principal of Holly Springs Elementary School.

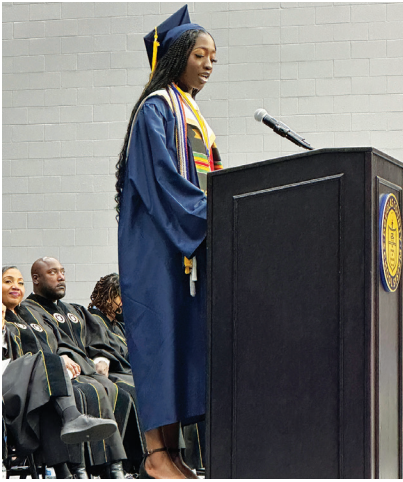
Alexander High School



Chapel Hill High School



Douglas County High School



Lithia Springs High School



New Manchester High School



Lots of Socks: MAES Club's Service Project Makes an Impact



Mason Creek Elementary School's 4th Grade Girls Coding Club organized and held a sock drive for the local homeless population. The girls made announcements to the school when they began and created posters to encourage their classmates to donate new socks. After working on the drive for several weeks, the club collected **over 300 pairs of socks!** The socks were recently given to a local shelter.



Club members are looking forward to working on another community service project in the upcoming 2023-2024 school year! Principal Kristin Martin, and the club's sponsors, Dr. Katrina Knowles and Mrs. Lorrie Sprayberry, are already brainstorming to come up with ways to have an even greater impact in our surrounding communities with the club's future endeavors.



American Idol Megan Danielle's Hometown Visit

In a whirlwind hometown tour on May 16, American Idol finalist Megan Danielle surprised hundreds of Winston Elementary students with an afternoon stop on their campus. Danielle was welcomed to her former school by Principal Heather George and hundreds of students and staff who were thrilled with the opportunity to cheer her on to the final round of the competition. The 20-year-old vocalist shared a few words with the crowd and expressed her appreciation for their support before she was whisked away to meet her busy schedule.

Douglasville's newest celebrity, a 2020 graduate of Douglas County High School, rounded out the day with a parade and a pep rally prior to an evening performance. More than 1,000 fans braved the threatening weather to attend the free concert at DCHS stadium.

An American Idol camera crew captured footage from these events that was featured in a 'Hometown' video story aired during the show's ABC finale on May 21. Danielle finished as runner-up in the competition.

Four Track and Field Athletes Honored by Atlanta Track Club

Four DCSS students were honored by the Atlanta Track Club for outstanding performance during the spring season.

Three students were selected to the organization's All-Metro Track and Field Teams. Selections were based on overall season performance, season head-to-head results, and place at the state meet.

Skylar Soli, a Douglas County High School student, was named the Atlanta Track Club's Female Field Athlete of the Year while being one of three athletes to make the All-Metro team in two events. The Ole Miss commit was recognized for her performance in the shot put and discus events, as she won the state title in both events this year. She also owns the 10th longest shot put in Georgia history, with a 47-4.5 throw that won the Wingfoot Night of Champions.

Soli is joined on the girls All-Metro team by **Alisa Gordon** of Alexander High School. Gordon, a junior, is the No. 1 triple jumper in the state and ranks sixth nationally in the event. Soli owns the fourth-longest triple jump in state history, as she leapt 41-9.5 to win the Class 6A state title in the event this year.

On the boys side, New Manchester High School's **Nicolas Crosswhite** was also named to the All-Metro Team. Crosswhite became the top-ranked triple jumper in the state this season, as he won this year's Class 6A state title in the event.

In addition to having three named to the All-Metro team, Chapel Hill High School's **Benjamin Garrison** was also the recipient of the 2023 Hawthorne Wesley Scholarship from the Atlanta Track Club.

The award, which is named after one of the founding members of the Atlanta Track Club, is awarded annually to a male metro-Atlanta high school graduating senior cross country or track and field student-athlete. To be eligible, athletes must be in good academic standing with their schools, live in the metro-Atlanta area, and be competitive in cross country or track and field with plans to participate in college.



From top
Skylar Soli,
Nicholas
Crosswhite,
Alisa Gordon,
Benjamin
Garrison



Free Summer Meals for Children

Douglas County children will be able to eat healthy school meals this summer at no cost to families, thanks to a federally-funded, state-administered program. During the months of June and July, Douglas County Schools are offering free breakfast and lunch at designated school locations. In addition, the Douglas County School System School Nutrition Department is delivering meals to churches, parks, and recreational centers. In fact, this is the first year the school system is preparing hot sandwiches for camps to allow kids to be more receptive to meals.

The school system “delivers to as many on and off site programs as possible with a goal to feed as many students as possible due to their limited access,” according to Danielle Freeman, Executive Director of School Nutrition. All children under the age of 18 and special needs children under 21 are eligible to participate. Approximately 3,000 Douglas County children benefit from this program each summer, and there are no specific requirements to secure a summer meal. “The goal is to increase the program every year,” Freeman said. Children can show up during scheduled meal hours at one of the designated locations to receive the meals, which due to federal guidelines, must be eaten on site. Douglas County has participated in the summer school meals program since 2007 and looks forward to reaching as many children as possible through athletics and the community.

Summer meals are being served through June 29 at Mason Creek Elementary School, and through July 13 at Lithia Springs High School. Breakfast serving times are between 8:00 and 9:00 a.m. Lunch is served between 11:00 a.m. and 12:30 p.m.

For additional information, please call 770-651-2300 or visit dcssga.org. **All sites will be closed July 3 thru 7.**



DCSS Students Recognized for Cybersecurity Excellence

After Lithia Springs High School was named Cyber Opportunity School by the CyberStart America Program, two students have made groundbreaking individual achievements in Georgia's CyberStart program as well.

LSHS's Kingston Vastine has become the first-ever student in the district to attain gold status as well as the first to earn the prestigious National Cyber Scholar designation. To earn the recognition, Vastine was among the 1,000 highest-scoring students, and he has earned a free invitation to the Cyber Foundations Immersion Academy.

The multi-week program is centered around the nationally recognized SANS Cyber Foundations online training course and certification. Students who participate also get to hear from America's top cybersecurity experts about current issues and trends within

the field.

Along with Vastine, LSHS's Marshawn Judge was also named a National Cyber Scholar for his work in the CyberStart program. Judge was also awarded

silver status, thereby making him the first and only student in the district to reach this remarkable milestone. He has also earned an invitation to the Cyber Foundations Immersion Academy this summer.

