



# NEWS RELEASE

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: August 30, 2018**

*News Media Contact: Communication and Media Relations, 678-301-6020*

## **Gwinnett teachers honored by the Atlanta Journal-Constitution**

For the second year in a row, **Gwinnett County Public Schools** educators have been recognized by the *Atlanta Journal-Constitution* (AJC) for their positive impact on students' lives and the local community. **Dr. Kara Cowdrick**, a 5th grade teacher at **Chesney Elementary School**, **Robert Katz**, a physics teacher at **Norcross High School**, and **Cicely Lewis**, a media specialist at **Meadowcreek High School**, have been named **AJC Celebrating Teachers Award** honorees.

### **GWINNETT COUNTY BOARD OF EDUCATION**

**Carole C. Boyce**  
2018 Chairman  
District I

**Daniel D. Seckinger**  
2018 Vice Chairman  
District II

**Dr. Mary Kay Murphy**  
District III

**Dr. Robert McClure**  
District IV

**Louise Radloff**  
District V

**J. Alvin Wilbanks**  
CEO/Superintendent



Dr. Kara Cowdrick,



Robert Katz



Cicely Lewis

### **THE MISSION OF GWINNETT COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS**

*is to pursue excellence in academic knowledge, skills, and behavior for each student, resulting in measured improvement against local, national, and world-class standards.*

437 Old Peachtree Road, NW  
Suwanee, GA 30024-2978  
678-301-6000  
[www.gwinnett.k12.ga.us](http://www.gwinnett.k12.ga.us)

It is the policy of Gwinnett County Public Schools not to discriminate on the basis of race, sex, religion, national origin, age, or disability in any employment practice, educational program, or any other program, activity, or service.

The trio are among a select group of 10 metro Atlanta educators honored by the AJC. The teachers were recognized on Wednesday, August 29, at the *AJC Celebrating Teacher's Awards* ceremony. Of the 10 honorees, some have creatively used subject matters – from science to poetry – to spark their students' interest and engage students in their learning. Winners were chosen on three levels of excellence:

- Went above and beyond to educate
- Encourage
- Inspire

More than 200 public and private school teachers for grades kindergarten through 12 were nominated for the award. The Celebrating Teachers Award recipients were selected by a panel of three independent academic professionals who contribute to the Atlanta regional teaching community.

*-more-*

**2010 and 2014 Winner of**



**The following are excerpts from the Atlanta Journal Constitution's articles about these award-winning teachers:**

**Cicely Lewis**

During her 16-year career so far, Lewis has been an advocate for learning about other cultures and languages and even worked alongside novelist Toni Morrison in Paris, France, on a program entitled "Language Matters."

Under her direction, Lewis transformed the school library into an inviting, collaborative space for learning.

In 2017, she launched the "Read Woke" challenge, which encouraged students to read books that "challenge a social norm, give voice to the voiceless, provide information about a group that has been disenfranchised, seek to challenge the status quo" or "have a protagonist from an underrepresented or oppressed group."

**Robert Katz**

Robert Katz has a passion for wildlife, and he has shared his knowledge and understanding of the natural world with students in his more than 20-year career in education.

He has spent the last 17 years of his career at Norcross High School, where he has taught various levels of biology, chemistry and ecology. Many fellow teachers influenced and encouraged him along the way, including veteran educators Paula Lindsey and Patricia Furman.

Outside of the classroom, Katz devotes a good deal of his time to volunteering for the Norcross High Interact Club. Over the past decade, he and the student members of the Interact Club have developed and sustained the school's robust recycling program. The club has also gotten involved with other conservation projects in the greater Norcross community.

**Dr. Kara Cowdrick**

Born and raised in Atlanta, Kara Cowdrick's teaching career began at Gwinnett County's Charles Brant Chesney Elementary School, but in her nine years of experience, she has influenced students and teachers all over the state.

She's part of her school's leadership team, services new teachers, is an adjunct professor and an acting member of Atlanta Families' Award for Excellence in Education Winners' Circle, which recognizes outstanding educators in five metro Atlanta school districts.

Even when school's out for the summer, Cowdrick travels with her literacy initiative, the Chesney Champion Bookmobile, and shares books with Chesney students in the Duluth area in hopes of not only inspiring their minds, but also empowering their hearts. She believes the champions in her classroom today are tomorrow's world leaders.