

# Honors and Awards

The awards “season” kicks in later in the spring, but we’ve already racked up these honors for schools, students, and staff...

- A nationally recognized Latin teacher, winner of the **Classical Studies Award for Excellence in Teaching at the Pre-Collegiate Level**;
- A finalist and a semifinalist for the nation’s **2015 Counselor of the Year**;
- One of 24 region winners in the nation in the **Verizon App Challenge**;
- Nineteen **AP Honor Schools**, recognized in both STEM subjects and the humanities;
- The state’s **High School Principal of the Year**;
- A student team placing 2nd for the **Health IT Student Innovation Award** in a state application design competition;
- Winner of the state **Exemplary Media Center Award**;
- Student artwork selected to represent Georgia on the **Youth Art Month flag** and in a national exhibition;
- The middle school winner for the state’s **Academic Bowl championship**;
- Georgia’s **Academic Decathlon** top team;
- Twenty-eight schools honored for implementation of **Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS)**;
- State championships in **cheerleading**, and in traditional and team duals in **wrestling**, and a state **dance** title;
- Regional kudos for **teachers and athletic directors**, and for **One-Act Play**;
- Hundreds of student-musicians playing in **audition-only orchestras**;
- An award-winning **parent leader** at the state level;
- Eighty-eight schools honored for **environmental education**, including schools that have sustained high levels of excellence for five or more years;
- Staff and students serving on **state advisory councils and committees**;
- County honors for **GCPS’ top teachers, counselors, media specialist and media clerk, advocates, and bus managers and monitors**;
- Staff selected for GCPS and county **leadership development** programs; and
- **Grants from businesses, foundations, and government** to support teaching and learning.



*Principal Maryanne Grimes of Central Gwinnett High is Georgia's 2015 High School Principal of the Year! Under her leadership, Central Gwinnett has worked to establish additional partnerships with the Lawrenceville community and has launched an academy model that provides students with real-world applications for their learning in an environment that better prepares them for college and careers.*

It is the policy of Gwinnett County Public Schools not to discriminate on the basis of race, color, sex, religion, national origin, age, or disability in any employment practice, educational program, or any other program, activity, or service. Gwinnett County Public Schools wishes to meet the needs of all of its students and families. If any member of your family needs assistance or has any questions regarding mobility impaired issues or handicapped access, please contact the principal of your local school.

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Important news, dates, and messages from GWINNETT COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS  
**ESSENTIALS** Spring 2015  
**Communique**

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# Communiqué

## ESSENTIALS | Spring 2015

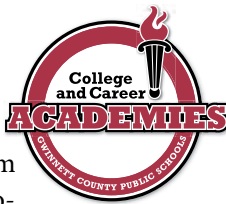
Important news, dates, and messages from GWINNETT COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS

### Innovation and technology in GCPS: We've got IT!

Gwinnett County Public Schools (GCPS) is thinking outside the box. *The results?* Innovative approaches to classroom instruction, scheduling and school programming, the use of technology, even physical space, are helping to ensure that our students are prepared for their future.

At the district level and in our schools and clusters, our teachers and school leaders are exploring new ways to engage our students in their learning. Here are just a few creative learning opportunities in Gwinnett, and plans for more in the coming year:

- **College and Career Academies and Project-Based Learning:** This year, five high schools— **Central Gwinnett, Lanier, Meadowcreek, Shiloh, and South Gwinnett**— launched academies that give students a preview of potential careers as students learn core subjects through the lens of an academic or career theme. Through job-shadowing, internships, and project-based learning, students learn from experience and collaborate with peers. **Berkmar High School** and the new **Discovery High School** will launch academy programs in the fall.
- **Discovery High and Entrepreneurship:** Gwinnett's newest high school opens in August, with innovative programs in entrepreneurship. The facility also will house Junior Achievement (JA) programs for middle schoolers.



(Learn more about **JA BizTown** and **JA Finance Park** inside.)

- **STEM and STEAM:** Thanks to robust partnerships and innovative and academically rigorous classes, **Gwinnett School of Mathematics, Science, and Technology (GSMST)** serves as a model for STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics) education in the state. Both GSMST and **Lanier High School's CDAT program** hold state STEM certification and other Gwinnett schools are working toward that designation. Countywide, robotics, coding, and other STEM activities enhance science and math instruction. Extracurricular competition takes kids to the next level. STEAM integrates the arts, rounding out students' education. Ask about STEM initiatives at your student's school.
- **Blended/Hybrid Learning and BYOD:** Around the county, teachers are using technology to support student learning. A blend of digital learning, web-based video lessons, and classroom activities keeps kids engaged and allows more hands-on learning and individualized support. eCLASS and the district's Bring Your Own Device initiative ensure that students are powering up to learn where they "live"... online on their digital devices.
- **Theme-Focused Magnet High Schools:** The district is developing plans for two proposed high schools that will provide relief for crowding in **Meadowcreek** and **Norcross** high schools.

"If we teach today as we taught yesterday, we rob our children of tomorrow." *John Dewey*



The magnet schools will focus on healthcare and on international business and the legal profession, respectively.

- **Embedded Credit and Scheduling Options:** Creative approaches to scheduling classes give students the opportunity to earn more credits while exploring additional electives. In some case, embedded credits are earned for longer classes that combine an elective and a core subject.
- **Dual Language Immersion:** Now in its second year, DLI offers half-day instruction in another language for young students at **Annistown, Bethesda, and Trip** elementary schools. *See more inside.*
- **IB, AP, and Dual Enrollment:** Gwinnett high school students get a head start on college, earning both high school and college credit through programs such as **International Baccalaureate** and **Advanced Placement**, and coursework completed on college campuses.

# Communiqué Essentials Bulletin Board

## GCPS to pilot online registration for schools for 2015–16 school year

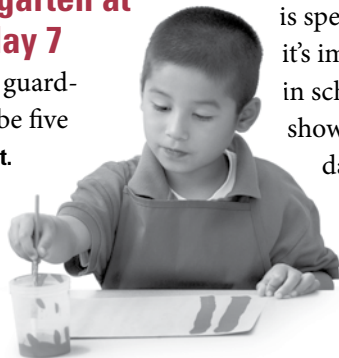
This spring and summer, GCPS schools will begin implementing a new online registration system. The user-friendly platform ensures consistency among enrollment processes and meets the district's guidelines for keeping student information safe and secure. In addition, the online registration system includes some great features for parents and schools. For example, with one visit to the system, parents will be able to enroll multiple children even if they attend different schools. Look for more information from your local school over the summer as schools begin the registration process.

## Consider Dual Language Immersion program for 2015–16

Families of rising kindergartners may elect for their child to learn a new language at one of three elementary schools offering a dual language immersion (DLI) program — Spanish at **Annistown** and **Bethesda** elementary schools and French at **Trip Elementary School**. Now in its second year, the program will build by one grade level every year, through high school. Registration for 2015–16 is open through **May 14** at 4 p.m. The schools will accept transfers if available slots are not filled by students in the school zone and families provide transportation. Learn more about DLI on the district website.

## Register for kindergarten at local schools on May 7

On **May 7**, parents and guardians of children who will be five years old on or before **Sept. 1, 2015**, are encouraged to attend Kindergarten Registration activities at their child's new school.



Times and activities vary from school to school so contact the local school or check the school website for details.

If you're not sure which school your child will attend, call the Planning Department at 678-301-7085.

When you come to registration, remember to bring birth records and required health and residence information. Go to the "Countdown to Kindergarten" link at [www.gwinnett.k12.ga.us](http://www.gwinnett.k12.ga.us) to learn what documents you'll need. Allow plenty of time to fill out forms.

**If you missed it:** The Winter 2014–15 issue of GCPS' digital magazine, *Communiqué*, featured stories on Career Connections, computer science in Gwinnett, tech-related projects around the county, tips for parents, and more! Find a link on the GCPS website.



## Other calendar reminders

- **April 6–10:** Spring Break
  - **May 21:** Last Day of School
- Find the 2014–15 calendar online.

## Know spring testing dates

The state's end-of-year Milestones assessments are administered in the spring. While only a small amount of time— one to two-and-a-half hours— is spent testing on a given day, it's important that students are in school, on time, and ready to show what they know on test day! Check the testing calendar on the school system website or contact the school for dates for your student's tests.

## Register for HS summer classes

High school students who want to make up a class or get ahead can register online for online summer school ([www.gwinnettonlinecampus.com/summer.html](http://www.gwinnettonlinecampus.com/summer.html)) and for face-to-face summer classes ([www.gcpssummerschool.com](http://www.gcpssummerschool.com)) at three locations— **Grayson**, **Norcross**, and **North Gwinnett** high schools. Health and PE classes are open to rising 9th graders. Online registration is open **March 16–June 1** for both online and face-to-face classes. (For face-to-face classes, students also can register at **Gwinnett Online Campus on June 1**.) The cost for each one-semester class is \$250 for current GCPS students. Summer school runs **June 9–July 8** for face-to-face classes, and **June 8–July 6** for online. Both programs will follow a Monday-to-Thursday schedule. Summer graduation is set for **July 9**.



## ES and MS summer school set

Elementary and middle school students who need more time and opportunity to learn will have that option during Gwinnett's free Academic Summer School, scheduled for **June 8 to July 1**, with no Fridays. Qualifying students in grades 3–8 would be recommended for the 15-day session if they have not met promotion requirements. Parents of eligible students will be notified later this spring and given specifics about location and hours.

## Key budget dates coming up

GCPS' FY2016 budget reflects an investment in Gwinnett's schoolchildren, staff, and community. Dates include:

- **March 24:** Superintendent's Recommended Budget available
- **March 28:** BOE budget work session
- **April 14:** BOE budget work session and adoption of tentative budget
- **May 14:** Public budget hearing
- **May 21:** Public hearing, final budget adoption, adoption of tentative millage
- **June TBD:** Final adoption of millage



# Continued focus required to sustain success

Gwinnett County Public Schools' longtime commitment to academic success has earned GCPS the reputation as a high-performing school district that provides a quality and effective education for all students. Twice recognized with the prestigious Broad Prize for Urban Education, the district is known as a model of public education.

*But can we sustain that success as we continue to grow and change?*

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*Our best hope lies in never losing our focus on the main thing—teaching and learning.*

Our best hope lies in never losing our focus on the main thing—teaching and learning. We must continuously review our current status and envision what the school district must be like in the future. For that reason, we conducted a public review of the school district's vision, mission, and strategic goals in the spring of 2014.

Our vision is to become a system of world-class schools. It is what we aspire to be, and based on the review feedback, it is a vision shared by Gwinnett educators and community members alike. During the review, input from parents, community members, and educators indicated that support remains strong for these foundational components

of our strategic direction. Only minor revisions were suggested, modifications that were approved by the Gwinnett County Board of Education.

We will share the updated versions of the vision, mission, and goals, as well as updated characteristics of world-class schools, at upcoming Area Board Meetings.

We invite you to attend one of five meetings to learn more about our strategic direction, and to engage in the work that is moving us closer to realizing our vision.



*J. Alvin Wilbanks*

**J. Alvin Wilbanks**  
GCPS CEO/Superintendent

## You're invited!... 2015 Area Board Meetings

<b>March 24</b>	District V	<b>Meadowcreek High</b>
<b>March 26</b>	District IV	<b>Berkmar High</b>
<b>March 31</b>	District II	<b>Mountain View High</b>
<b>April 2</b>	District I	<b>Dacula High</b>
<b>April 14</b>	District III	<b>North Gwinnett High</b>

The Area Board Meetings are organized by the schools in each Board member's electoral district. However, citizens may attend any one of the five meetings. All meetings begin at 7 p.m. in the host school's theater, with refreshments served at 6:30 p.m.

# Planned JA Discovery Center brings finances to life, volunteers needed

**Developed to educate and designed to inspire a generation of young people who know how to budget, save, and invest, ready to control their financial futures and achieve their dreams...**

Opening in Gwinnett's new **Discovery High School** in the fall, **JA Discovery Center** will provide hands-on experiences in financial literacy for GCPS 6th and 8th grade students who have completed related classroom instruction at their home schools.

In **JA BizTown**, the historic Lawrenceville courthouse will be surrounded by familiar businesses. Visiting students will take part in BizTown's simulated economy



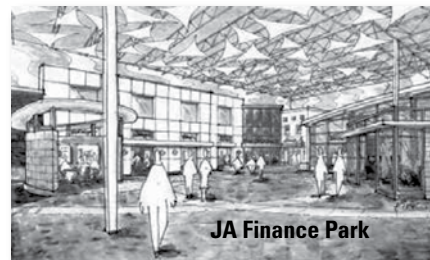
**JA BizTown**

as an employee, taxpayer, and consumer. Working in teams at assigned businesses, students will learn by doing—developing budgets, making purchasing decisions, and increasing their business know-how.

Modern-day Gwinnett is the inspiration for **JA Finance Park**—a "City of Tomorrow." With this simulation, students will experience their personal financial futures first-hand.

Assigned a "life situation"—complete with a job, income, education level, and family scenario—students will learn how to make wise financial decisions and manage a household budget.

A similar center housed at the World



**JA Finance Park**

Congress Center in Fulton County has yielded strong results for participating students who overwhelmingly reported that they can see the

strong connection between choices made during the simulations and the real-life choices they will face. Not surprisingly, research finds that, with hands-on experience, young people make the connection between school, their level of education, and the lifestyle they hope to lead as adults.

**Parents, community members, and business partners of all educational and professional backgrounds are invited to support JA Discovery Center as volunteers.**

**To learn more about volunteer opportunities, contact [VolunteerGwinnett@georgia.ja.org](mailto:VolunteerGwinnett@georgia.ja.org).**