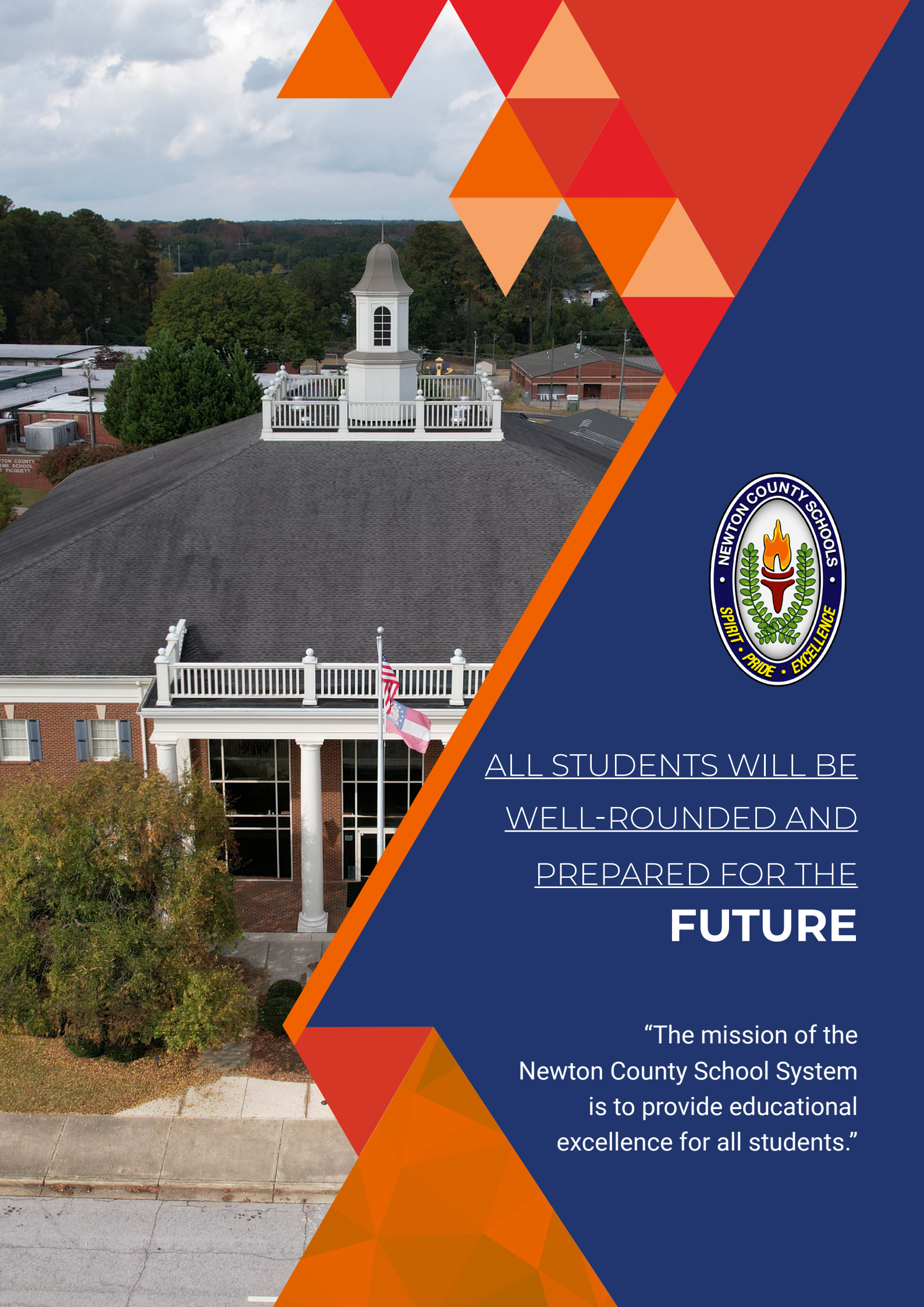


2021-2022

ANNUAL REPORT

NEWTON COUNTY, GA
SCHOOL SYSTEM





ALL STUDENTS WILL BE
WELL-ROUNDED AND
PREPARED FOR THE
FUTURE

“The mission of the
Newton County School System
is to provide educational
excellence for all students.”

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MEET THE BOARD



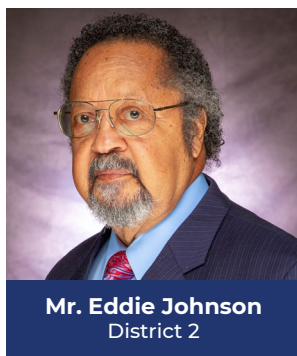
Mrs. Shakila Henderson-Baker
Board Chair, District 3

BELIEF STATEMENTS

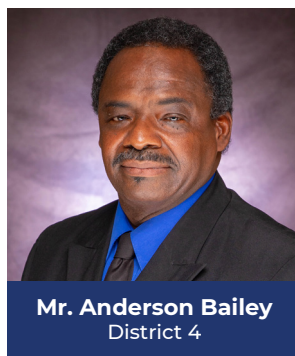
- Students are our first priority;
- Our principals and teachers make the critical difference in student achievement;
- Respectful partnerships among students, staff, parents, and the community are integral to student success;
- All students and staff deserve a safe, positive, and supportive environment;
- Success is based on high expectations for our students, parents, and school system staff; and
- Lifelong learning is essential in a diverse and changing world.



Mr. Trey Bailey
District 1



Mr. Eddie Johnson
District 2



Mr. Anderson Bailey
District 4



Mrs. Abigail Coggin
Vice-Chair, District 5

MESSAGE FROM THE SUPERINTENDENT



“Even while managing the impact of the pandemic, our school system students and staff soared to great heights, which was capped off by our Class of 2022 earning an astounding \$75 MILLION DOLLARS in scholarships!”

———— Samantha Fuhrey ————

Dear Newton County School System Stakeholders,

Welcome to our 2021-2022 Annual Report. Each year we publish an Annual Report to keep you informed of important financial, academic, and operational information. More importantly, we like to take the opportunity to share with you the many great things that took place during the course of the school year.

Now obviously we can't provide all of our accolades for the year—we simply don't have enough pages! But please take note of the highlights of our students, staff, and school accomplishments, and you'll see that the 2021-2022 school year was quite spectacular! Even while managing the impact of the pandemic, our school system students and staff soared to great heights, which was capped off by our Class of 2022 earning an astounding \$75 MILLION DOLLARS in scholarships! I'd **definitely** call that a successful year! To say that I am incredibly proud of our students and the Newton County School System team would be an understatement!

So please, take a moment to read through our 2021-2022 Annual Report and learn more about your local school system. See for yourself the outstanding academic and professional accomplishments of the students and staff of the Newton County School System. Our motto is Spirit, Pride, and Excellence, and they truly exemplified that during the 2021-2022 school year!

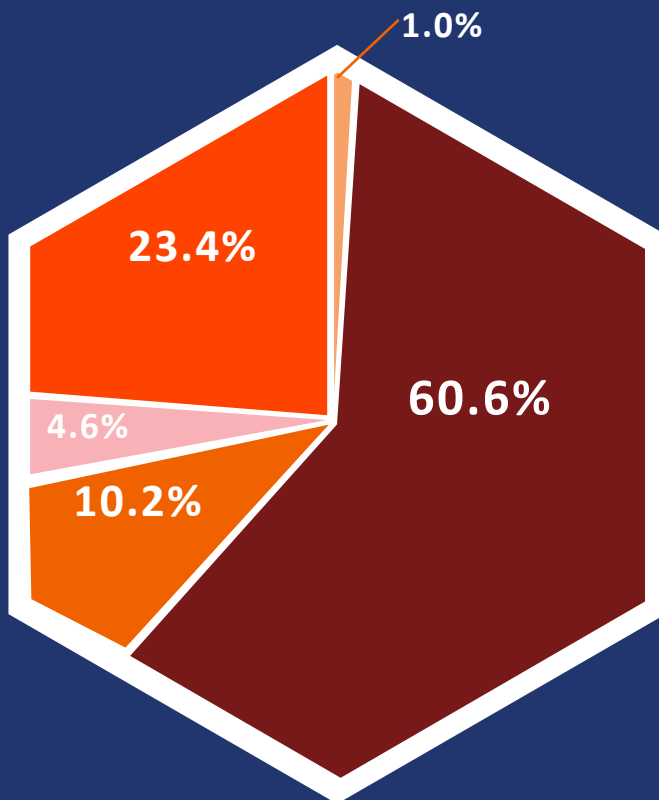
As always, I thank you for your continued support of the Newton County School System.

Sincerely,

Samantha Fuhrey
Superintendent

DEPARTMENT DATA

STUDENT DEMOGRAPHIC REPORT



-  Black/African American
-  White/Caucasian
-  Hispanic
-  Multi-racial
-  Asian/Pacific Islander

Not charted: Native American/Alaskan Native: 0.1%

LANGUAGES SPOKEN



- | | | | |
|---|--|---|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Albanian • Amharic • Arabic • Cantonese • Chinese • Creole • Dutch • Farsi • French • German • Gujarati | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Haitian Creole • Hindi • Hmong • Itsekiri • Khmer • Kiro • Korean • Kosraean • Lao • Mandarin • Moldovan | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nepali • Portuguese • Punjabi • Russian • Samoan • Slovak • Somali • Spanish • Tagalog • Tamil • Thai | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tigre • Turkmen • Urdu • Vietnamese • Yoruba • Additional Nigerian/African/Ghanaian Languages |
|---|--|---|--|

HR DATA

FTE Staff Count with degrees (which excludes Pre-K, Extended day, Extended year, SN-Pre-K, GNets Teacher-Grant Funded, Federal Programs Director, and Title I Director)



EMPLOYMENT STATUS

Certified hires: 1,448
 Classified hires: 1,081
Total Active Employees: 2,529



EDUCATION STATUS

Bachelor's: 404
 Master's: 646
 Specialist: 271
 Doctorate: 76
 Associate's: 1 (CTAE or ROTC)
 High School and less than
 associate's: 1 (ROTC)

FY22 TOTAL MEAL PARTICIPATION

Total Breakfasts	ADP - Breakfast	Total Lunches
1,314,928	6,757	2,156,100

TRANSPORTATION



178
 Bus Fleet



2,831,600
 Miles traveled



Newton BOE Reduces Millage Rate

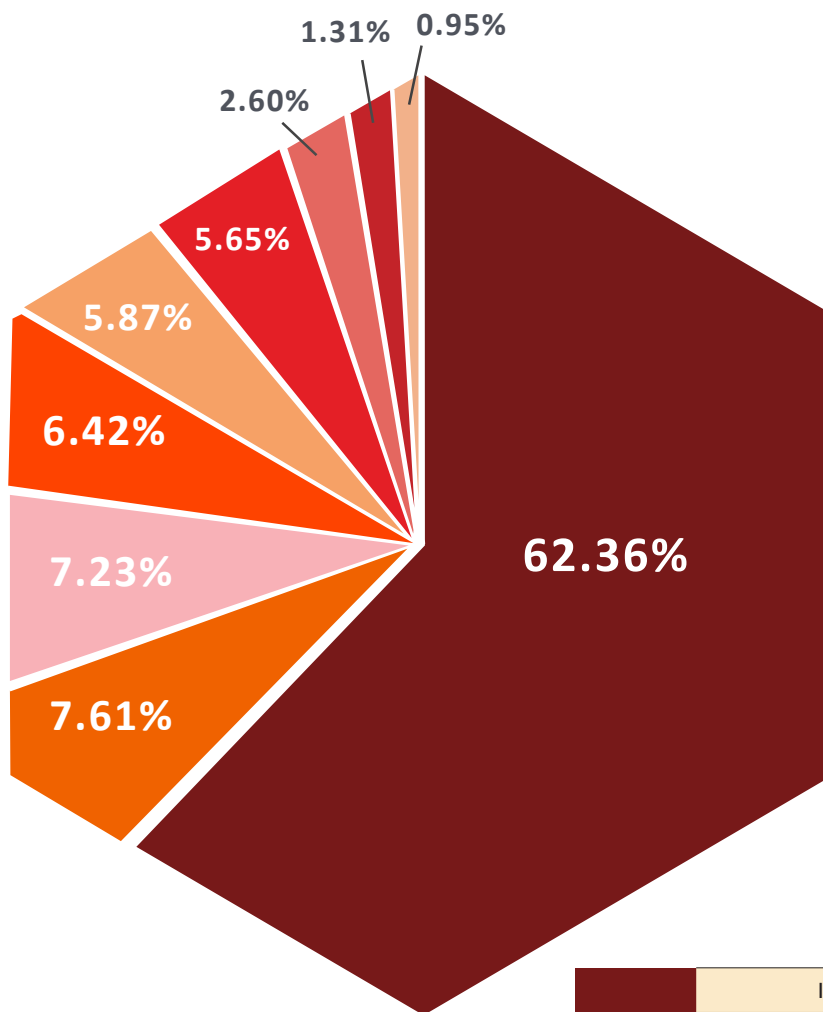
The Newton County Board of Education reduced the local millage rate from 19.788 to 18.288—a reduction of 1.5 mills. The new rate marks the lowest education millage rate for Newton County residents in twelve years.

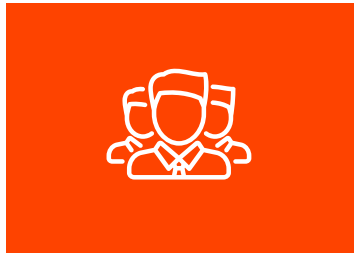
The Newton County Board of Education held three public hearings throughout the month of August to obtain feedback on the millage rate, and its impact on local residents. All members of the school board were in favor of reducing the millage rate for Newton County residents. Ultimately, Ms. Abigail Coggin, Mr. Trey Bailey, and Ms. Shakila Henderson-Baker voted to approve the 18.288 millage rate, with Mr. Eddie Johnson and Mr. Anderson Bailey opposed. While Mr. Johnson and Mr. Anderson Bailey were in favor of a reduction, their motion for a slightly higher millage rate of 18.788 mills did not pass.

—August 25, 2021

DEPARTMENT DATA

UNAUDITED EXPENDITURES FOR FISCAL YEAR ENDING JUNE 30, 2022





**NEWTON COUNTY
SCHOOL DISTRICT**

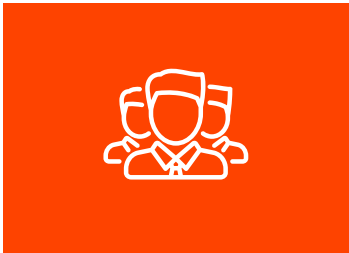
UNAUDITED EXPENDITURES FOR
FISCAL YEAR ENDING JUNE 30, 2022

INCLUDES GENERAL FUNDS AND
STATE AND FEDERAL GRANTS
TOTAL - \$225,508,057

	INSTRUCTION	\$140,621,949
	PUPIL SERVICES	\$13,232,813
	STAFF SERVICES	\$16,313,845
	MEDIA SERVICES	\$2,963,488
	GENERAL ADMINISTRATION	\$2,137,998
	SCHOOL ADMINISTRATION	\$14,469,090
	TRANSPORTATION	\$12,746,700
	MAINTENANCE & OPERATIONS	\$17,167,263
	CENTRAL SUPPORT & BUSINESS SERVICES	\$5,854,911
	TOTAL	\$225,508,057

DEPARTMENT DATA

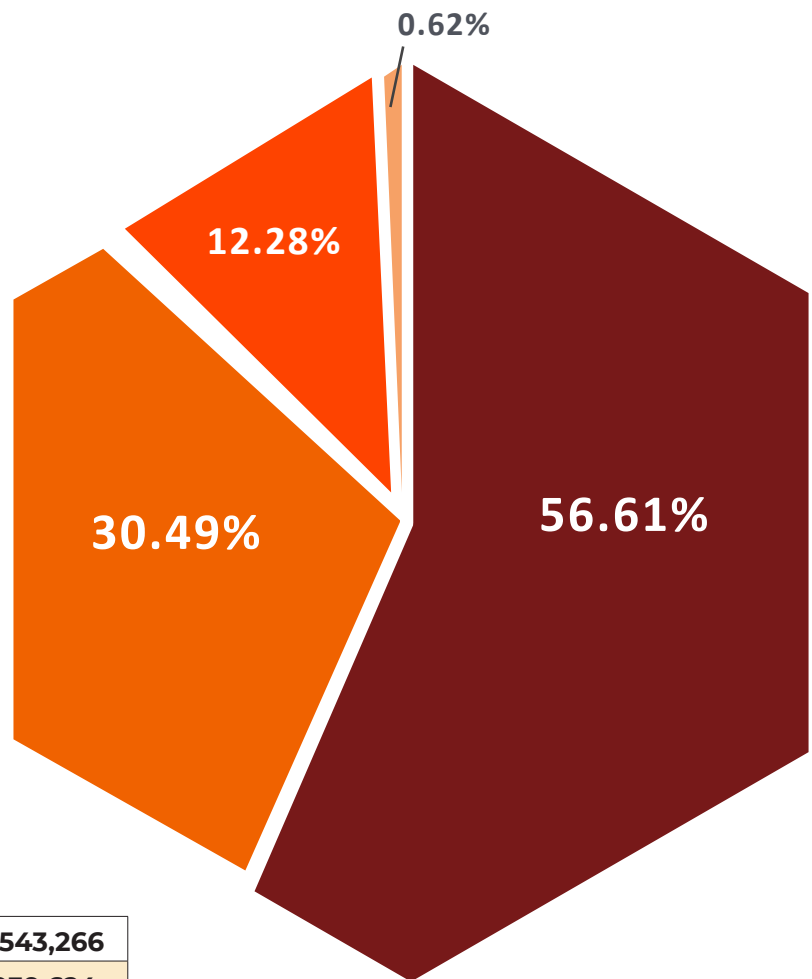
UNAUDITED REVENUES FOR FISCAL YEAR ENDING JUNE 30, 2022



**NEWTON COUNTY
SCHOOL DISTRICT**

UNAUDITED REVENUES FOR
FISCAL YEAR ENDING JUNE 30, 2022

INCLUDES GENERAL FUNDS AND
STATE AND FEDERAL GRANTS
TOTAL - \$235,911,686



	STATE GRANTS	\$133,543,266
	LOCAL REVENUE	\$71,939,624
	FEDERAL GRANTS	\$28,958,533
	OTHER	\$1,470,263
TOTAL		\$235,911,686

DEPARTMENT DATA

NEWTON COUNTY TAX DIGEST HISTORY FY 2009 TO PRESENT

FISCAL YEAR	TAX DIGEST	MILLAGE RATE	GROSS TAXES	CHANGE FROM 2009
2008-2009	\$2,955,093,084	18.210	\$53,812,245	
2009-2010	\$2,844,952,913	18.210	\$51,806,593	(\$2,005,653)
2010-2011	\$2,365,056,068	20.000	\$47,301,121	(\$6,511,124)
2011-2012	\$2,177,437,258	20.000	\$43,548,745	(\$10,263,500)
2012-2013	\$1,951,639,208	20.000	\$39,032,784	(\$14,779,461)
2013-2014	\$1,848,940,820	20.000	\$36,978,816	(\$16,833,429)
2014-2015	\$1,975,479,218	20.000	\$39,509,584	(\$14,302,661)
2015-2016	\$2,064,418,136	20.000	\$41,288,363	(\$12,523,882)
2016-2017	\$2,166,406,608	20.000	\$43,328,132	(\$10,484,113)
2017-2018	\$2,367,504,096	20.000	\$47,350,082	(\$6,462,163)
2018-2019	\$2,585,783,528	20.000	\$51,715,671	(\$2,096,574)
2019-2020	\$2,826,853,995	19.788	\$55,937,787	\$2,125,542
2020-2021	\$3,032,654,860	19.788	\$60,010,174	\$6,197,929
2021-2022	\$3,470,927,362	18.288	\$63,476,320	\$9,664,075
2022-2023	\$4,220,726,899	16.788	\$70,857,563	\$17,045,318

SCHOOL DATA



NCSS ANNOUNCES 2022 SAT SCORES

GROUP	2022 #TEST TAKERS	2022 EVIDENCED-BASED READING AND WRITING	2022 MATH	2022 COMPOSITE
ALCOVY HIGH	122	513	476	989
EASTSIDE HIGH	133	536	518	1054
NEWTON HIGH	178	488	449	937
NCSS	433	510	478	988
GEORGIA-PUBLIC SCHOOLS	---	536	516	1052
USA PUBLIC SCHOOLS	---	521	507	1028

Newton County School System (NCSS) students scored a 988 composite on the 2022 SAT including a 510 Evidenced-Based Reading and Writing score and 478 score on Math. Alcovy High School test takers compiled a 989 composite score with a 513 score in Evidenced-Based Reading and Writing and 476 in Math. At Newton High, students attained a 937 composite score, including a 488 in Evidenced-Based Reading and Writing and 449 in Math.

With their results, Eastside High School students bested the state and nation’s public school system students in both Math and the composite score at 518 and 1054 respectively. They also topped the nation in Evidenced-Based Reading and Writing with a score of 536, which matched the state average for public school students.

The SAT is a national college entrance exam some colleges and universities utilize to measure critical thinking skills students need for academic success in college. The SAT assesses how well students analyze and solve problems. It is typically taken by high school juniors and seniors.

“First, congratulations to our Eastside students, families, teachers, and leaders! We are all incredibly proud of your efforts,” said Samantha Fuhrey, superintendent of the Newton County School System. “We continue to work diligently to prepare students for life beyond high school which for many includes post-secondary education. As such, teachers and both district office and school leaders will review the results to continue to identify opportunities for all students to experience even greater success.”

SCHOOL DATA

NEWTON COUNTY SCHOOL SYSTEM ANNOUNCES 2022 ACT SCORES

GROUP	ENGLISH	MATH	READING	SCIENCE	COMPOSITE
ALCOVY HIGH	17.8	17.9	19.9	18.8	18.8
EASTSIDE HIGH	19.8	19.4	21.3	20.0	20.3
NEWTON HIGH	16.3	16.7	17.7	17.4	17.2
NCSS	18.2	18.2	19.8	18.9	18.9
GEORGIA	21.0	20.8	22.5	21.5	21.6
NATION	19.0	19.3	20.4	19.9	19.8

The Georgia Department of Education released Newton County School System’s district and school-level ACT Scores for the 2021-2022 school year. According to the data, students at Eastside High School outpaced the nation in all categories and the composite score. District and school scores did, however, fall short of the state average in 2022.

Unlike the SAT, a reasoning test that measures critical thinking skills and assesses how well a student analyzes and solves problems, the ACT is a series of curriculum-based, multiple-choice tests that cover content knowledge in four basic skill areas: English (College English Composition), Math (College

Algebra), Reading (College Social Science), and Science (College Biology). Students also receive a composite score on the exam, which is scored on a scale from 0 to 36. The ACT also has an optional writing test.

“Congratulations to our Eastside students, families, teachers, and leaders! We are all incredibly proud of your hard work, dedication, and focus,” said Samantha Fuhrey, superintendent of the Newton County School System. “We continue to work diligently to prepare students for life beyond high school which for many includes post-secondary education. As such, teachers and both district office and school leaders will review the results to continue to identify opportunities for all students to experience even greater success.”

SCHOOL DATA

■ ALL THREE NCSS HIGH SCHOOLS NAMED 2022 ADVANCED PLACEMENT HONOR SCHOOLS



All three Newton County School System high schools—Alcovy, Eastside, and Newton—were named 2022 Advanced Placement (AP) Honor Schools by Georgia School Superintendent Richard Woods.

All three schools were recognized as AP STEM schools this year. In addition, Alcovy and Newton were also named 2022 AP Humanities Schools. According to the Georgia Department of Education, AP STEM schools are schools with a minimum of five students testing in at least four AP STEM courses (AP Calculus AB, AP Calculus BC, AP Statistics, AP Biology, AP Chemistry, AP Environmental Science, AP Physics 1, AP Physics 2, AP Physics C, AP Computer Science A, AP Computer Science Principles). AP Humanities schools are schools with a minimum of five students testing in each of the following AP categories: one ELA course, two history/social science courses, one fine arts course, and one world language course.

“Congratulations to Alcovy, Eastside, and Newton for being named AP Honor Schools,” said Samantha Fuhrey, Superintendent of Newton County Schools. “Our goal is to offer a wide variety of AP courses to

not only expose students to the rigorous coursework they can expect in college but also allow them the opportunity to gain college credit in the process. We currently offer twenty-three different AP courses and continue to work to identify ways to expand and provide additional opportunities for our students with the goal that any high school student interested in enrolling in a collegiate-level course has the access and opportunity to do so.”

“We are committed to expanding opportunities for Georgia students, including in advanced and accelerated coursework,” Superintendent Woods said. “I offer my sincere congratulations to each of this year’s AP Honor Schools, and thank each teacher, student, and school leader who worked hard to create strong AP opportunities in these Georgia schools.”

Advanced Placement (AP) classes and exams are administered by the College Board, which also administers the SAT. AP classes offer rigorous college-level learning options to students in high school. Students who receive a 3, 4, or 5 on AP exams may receive college credit.

SCHOOL DATA

NCSS GRADUATION RATE TOPS STATE

SCHOOL/GROUP	2018 GRADUATION RATE	2019 GRADUATION RATE	2020 GRADUATION RATE	2021 GRADUATION RATE	2022 GRADUATION RATE
ALCOVY HIGH	84%	85%	89%	85%	89%
EASTSIDE HIGH	91%	87%	89%	91%	91%
NEWTON HIGH	87%	88%	91%	91%	92%
NCSS	87%	87%	90%	89%	90%
STATE	82%	82%	84%	84%	84%

According to data released by the Georgia Department of Education (GaDOE), Newton County School System’s (NCSS) four-year, cohort graduation rates continued to best the state rate in 2022. Both Alcovy and Newton High increased their graduations rates to 89% and 92% respectively last year and Eastside maintained its 91% rate.

The four-year adjusted cohort graduation rate defines the cohort based on when a student first becomes a freshman. The rate is calculated using the number of students who graduate within four years and includes adjustments for student transfers. According to the GaDOE, the state calculates a four-year adjusted cohort graduation rate as required by federal law. This rate is:

- The number of students who graduate in four years with a regular high school diploma, divided by
- The number of students who form the adjusted cohort for the graduating class

“Congratulations to each of our high school students, families, teachers, staff, and leaders,” said Samantha Fuhrey, Superintendent of Newton County Schools. “To say that I am proud of their efforts to ensure students graduate well-rounded and prepared for the future is an understatement! Our school system teachers and leaders work diligently to support students, early and often, on their journeys to reach this very important milestone. This year’s 4-year cohort graduation rate for the school system is the highest graduation rate we have ever experienced in a time when the state’s graduation rate has remained flat! It’s just incredible! The Class of 2022 set the bar high for all of the subsequent classes; not only did they reach the highest graduation rate yet, but they also earned more the \$75 million dollars in academic, athletic and fine arts scholarships! I am so proud of them, and I am looking forward to watching future graduating classes inch closer to a 100% graduation rate!”



2021-2022 HIGHLIGHTS

NEWTON COUNTY SCHOOL SYSTEM SELECTED TO BE PART OF LEARNING 2025 INITIATIVE: A NATIONAL PUSH TO TRANSFORM AMERICA'S EDUCATION SYSTEM



In a bold effort toward a holistic redesign of our nation's schools, Newton County School System joined the Learning 2025 network of demonstration systems, a collaborative network of districts to help advance student-centered, equity-focused, future-driven education, administered by AASA, The School Superintendents Association.

The more than 60 "demonstration systems" represent a collection of forward-leaning urban, suburban and rural districts serving as national models to help guide and reposition partner districts efficiently by sharing successful practices and successes, as well as challenges.

"Serving as a demonstration site by participating in this initiative is an honor for the Newton County School System," said Samantha Fuhrey, Superintendent of Schools. "We look forward to working with other school districts from across the country to learn more about their strategic improvement efforts. In addition, our staff will be able to network with peers nationwide and share strategic ideas and winning solutions in our collective effort to strengthen our communities and improve student outcomes."

"Our goal is to galvanize and synergize thought leaders from all sectors to emerge from the pandemic in better shape than they were before," said Daniel A. Domenech, executive director, AASA. "This initiative

will ensure that educators are empowered and equipped to meet whole learners' needs by personalizing and customizing instruction involving students in designing their own learning and coordinating resources to support ALL children's overall growth and well-being."

An AASA Learning 2025 Demonstration System will:

- Receive senior consulting services, personalized engagement and strategic planning support for their district.
- Create a customized action plan tailored to meet the needs of their district.
- Gain a customized dashboard to track their district's progress and provide real data to community stakeholders.
- Take part in professional learning opportunities, including a complimentary registration to one of AASA's Leadership Network cohorts.
- Contribute to national research, practice and policy.
- Network, collaborate and learn with school systems that are committed to supporting the whole learner, ensuring anti-marginalization and adopting future-driven practices.
- Move their district forward with research-based recommendations to provide all learners with a bright future.

ARBOR EQUITY, INC. NAMED 2022 NCSS PARTNER OF THE YEAR



Arbor Equity, Inc. was named the 2022 NCSS Partner of the Year. Arbor Equity is a partner in education with Newton College & Career Academy. School principal, Chad Walker, nominated the local business for the annual award.

According to Walker, Arbor Equity owner Dan Bauer and staff volunteer their time and talents to support students not only at the Career Academy but other schools across the district. In fact, the company helped Cousins Middle School students celebrate Arbor Day by planting trees on the campus.

“Mr. Bauer and his staff often serve on employability panels at our school to help students by having real conversations about career opportunities and what employers are looking for in potential candidates,” said Walker. “They also have assisted in planting multiple trees on our school campus, and they often bring their climbing apparatuses so our students can have the unique opportunity to climb a tree just like one of the employees would do.”

Walker added, “As a result of them providing hands-on experiences—from planting and climbing events—many students have gained an interest in this industry in terms of career opportunity. In fact, Arbor Equity has hired no less than ten graduates from Newton County Schools in recent years.”

Arbor Equity has also led classes for Newton County Young Farmers on proper pruning techniques for

Crepe Myrtle’s and other common trees found in home landscapes and they are working with NCCA students enrolled in the Natural Resources Management course, to develop a plan to replace invasive species on campus with native species of Georgia. Bauer and the company have pledged up to \$6,000 in labor for the project if it comes to fruition.

“Arbor Equity has truly made a difference at Newton College & Career Academy,” said Debbie Harper, president of the Newton County Chamber of Commerce. “It makes me so proud to know that we have business partners like this in our community.”

“We’ve built our business on relationships, and we use the word partner, but my entire career, and my entire belief in how we operate in a community is in relationships,” said Bauer. “We don’t have big billboards along the drives, we are literally out in the communities all the time doing arbor days being involved and that’s how we built our business. And so, it’s the relationships we have, it’s not just always giving to the school. We receive as well. We receive students and they’ve become some of our greatest employees. We were over here last week recruiting more so as we grow, we hire more.... The more we can do the more we can build off of that the more we can grow, it’s just a benefit to the community. We just want to be out helping people. Our goal is really about community involvement and it’s the relationships we have with the school, the chamber, and everybody else that drives that.”

2021-2022 HIGHLIGHTS

■ NCSS WINS 2021 GSBA LEADING EDGE AWARD FOR CUSTOMER SERVICE INITIATIVE

Newton County School System earned the prestigious 2021 GSBA Leading Edge Award for the district’s customer service initiative—Family Friendly Schools.

“A key to student success is making sure parents and students feel welcome in our schools,” said NCSS Superintendent Samantha Fuhrey. “We know that a welcoming environment is fundamental and plays an important role in many areas of school and district success. With that in mind, we increased our commitment to high-quality customer service.”

Dr. Sheila Thomas, NCSS Chief Strategy and Support Services officer, led the district’s initiative. “We partnered with the American Association of School Customer Service, who helped create and implement a plan, conducted a district-wide customer service needs assessment, and evaluated the district and school sites based on assessment results. AASCS also worked with the district to develop a five-year Customer Service Training Plan for employees,” she explained.

The American Association of School Customer Service then conducted a very thorough investigation of district and school practices with a customer service audit that examined both in-person and electronic customer connections. In-person evaluations consisted of face-to-face site visits to experience customer service firsthand. Phone calls, emails, and websites comprised the electronic evaluations. Through phone calls and emails, auditors could determine how customers were treated regarding their wants and needs. Through website evaluations, auditors could determine customer usability, website function and design, and district information.



After the initial audit, a five-year customer service training plan was developed, consisting of two courses—Customer Service 101 and 201. The goal of Customer Service 101 was to identify fundamental needs of all customers, determine causes of bad service, develop strategies to serve diverse backgrounds, and discuss tips for primary modes of interaction. Customer Service 201 goals were to examine roles of diversity in customer service, practice strategies of service, prepare to serve difficult customers, and determine appropriate first impressions. Overall, 124 employees participated in the initial trainings and 90 new employees have participated in ongoing trainings.

A second customer service audit was performed, and a third will be scheduled in the near future as we continue to study and implement best customer service practices.

NCSS PUBLIC RELATIONS DEPARTMENT WINS 25 NATIONAL AWARDS

The Newton County School System (NCSS) Public Relations Department, comprised of Sherri Partee and Derrick Barnes, won twenty-five national awards in the 2022 Publications and Digital Media Excellence Awards sponsored by the National School Public Relations Association (NSPRA). Overall, the PR department won a total of nine awards of excellence, twelve awards of merit, and four honorable mentions. The NCSS PR department earned Awards of Excellence for a wide variety of submissions, including branding and imaging, electronic newsletters, writing, marketing, and videos. Every publication submitted by the NCSS PR department earned a national award.



NCSS TECHNOLOGY DIRECTOR WINS NATIONAL AWARD

Newton County School System (NCSS) Director of Technology and Media Services, Dr. Adam Phyll, won the award for Best Implementation of Digital Curriculum at the national Tech & Learning Innovative Leader Awards conference ceremony in Orlando, Florida. The award is testament to Phyll's department quickly and successfully making the switch districtwide to a digital curriculum in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic.

"At the start of the pandemic we were almost at a ratio of one device for every two students," Phyll explained. "We had begun the process of moving to 1:1 with Chromebooks in 2018."

Then COVID hit. Schools were closed with no set timetable to reopen, meaning all teaching and learning had to switch—quickly—to a digital format.

"As soon as we were allowed to leave our homes during the shelter in place order the Technology Department was distributing devices throughout the county," said Phyll. "We deployed over 1500 hotspots and over 11,000 Chromebooks, laptops, and iPads to our students during the pandemic."

According to Phyll, one of the greatest challenges was being able to provide support for all users.

"From a user support standpoint, we are used to being able to meet with a teacher or student and provide support," he explained. "Being virtual, we had to think outside the box and provide remote support by creating a call center and utilizing tools like Chrome Remote Desktop and Splashtop. These tools allowed us to see what the user was seeing on their device and troubleshoot remotely."



NCCA INSTRUCTOR NAMED GBEA'S TEACHER OF THE YEAR

Newton College and Career Academy (NCCA) instructor, Mrs. Jasmine El-Jourbagy was named the Georgia Business Education Association's 2022 Teacher of the Year! She teaches multiple courses in the animation Pathway.

"I am humbled," she said. "As an educator you are always building and learning your craft. It is not every day you are recognized for working and honestly it is a surprise and I thank the community and work family for building me up to the educator I am today."



2021-2022 HIGHLIGHTS

NCSS ANNOUNCES DISTRICT MEDIA SPECIALIST OF THE YEAR

Ms. Misty Morgan was named the Newton County School System’s (NCSS) 2022 Media Specialist of the Year! Newton County Theme School media specialist Ali Geigerman; Porterdale Elementary School media specialist, April Davis; and Alcovy High School media specialist, Marneda Ivey, were finalists for the district award.

Morgan joined the NCSS team eight years ago as a social studies teacher at Newton High before transitioning to the school’s media specialist position four years later.



ALCOVY HIGH SCHOOL EDUCATOR NAMED CLAES NOBEL EDUCATOR OF DISTINCTION

Alcovy High School assistant principal, Ron Edwards, was named a Claes Nobel Educator of Distinction by The National Society of High School Scholars (NSHSS). A role model to pupils, Mr. Edwards was nominated by a student for outstanding dedication and commitment to excellence in the profession.

“I am honored to be recognized by the National Society of High School Scholars as a Claes Nobel Educator of Distinction,” said Edwards. “As an administrator, one of my goals is to promote an environment that fosters passion and devotion to inspire students as they grow and develop as scholars, leaders, and productive citizens. I have worked with so many students in my 16 years in education and to realize that my work is truly having an impact is refreshing and encouraging.”



NCCA INSTRUCTOR NAMED GEORGIA AGRICULTURE TEACHER OF THE YEAR

Newton College & Career Academy (NCCA) teacher, Dr. Cecily Gunter, was named the 2021 Georgia Agriculture Teacher of the Year! This award program distinguishes teachers who are conducting the highest quality agricultural education programs. It recognizes leadership in civic, community, agriculture/agribusiness and professional activities.

“Receiving the Outstanding Agricultural Education Teacher Award for 2021 was a great honor, said Gunter. “I have had the privilege to work with and learn from some truly remarkable agriculture teachers throughout my career who have been instrumental in my success. This recognition would not have been possible without their support and help over the years. I would also like to thank my administration, fellow agriculture teachers, and the Newton County School System for always supporting my program and ideas.”



SHAKILA HENDERSON-BAKER NAMED PRESIDENT-ELECT OF GEORGIA SCHOOL BOARD ASSOCIATION'S BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Newton County Board of Education District three representative, Mrs. Shakila Henderson-Baker, was installed as the president-elect of the Georgia School Board Association Board of Directors. Mrs. Henderson-Baker previously served as vice president of the GSBA Board of Directors. According to the Georgia School Board Association, Mrs. Henderson-Baker, as president elect, will assume the president's position the following year. She would perform the duties of president of the Board in the absence of the president, to include presiding over meetings of the Delegate Assembly, the executive committee and the board of directors.



"To be able to serve in the role of President-Elect is an honor," said Mrs. Henderson-Baker. "Over the last few years in past roles as a District Director and Vice-President of GSBA, I have taken the time to get to understand the many districts across our state that serve Georgia's public education students, as well as get to know other board members who serve in their communities. Just like the demographics and resources vary across the state of Georgia that same concept applies to school districts, as we have rural districts, urban districts, mixed districts, small, medium, large districts and that makes our state unique as there is not a district or community that is exactly alike. As a public servant, I have worked really hard to understand public education, educational policy, governance, and stay informed on legislation that will impact our schools."

She added, "I try to stay connected with the people I serve so that I fully understand and advocate on their behalf. Public service is not easy, however, as a product of Georgia's public education system I know how public education saved me, and for that reason I'm forever grateful and fully vested in making sure it saves others. In my role as President-Elect, I get to do what I love, which is advocate for those who work hard for public education, advocate for those who believe in public education, and advocate for the children we serve in our public schools. Again, I'm honored to serve as the Georgia School Board Association President-Elect."

EASTSIDE HIGH SCHOOL'S DEANNA O'BRIEN NAMED 2022 NCSS TEACHER OF THE YEAR

Eastside High School special education teacher, Ms. DeAnna O'Brien, was named the Newton County School System's 2022 Teacher of the Year! She represented Newton County Schools in the Georgia Teacher of the Year Program. Ms. O'Brien's prizes included \$1,000 cash and a crystal vase from the Newton County Chamber of Commerce, \$500 cash from Covington Ford, and a dozen red roses.

Ms. Samantha Greco of West Newton Elementary School and Mr. Clayton Hammonds of Veterans Memorial Middle School were the runners up. They each received a crystal vase award from the Newton County Chamber of Commerce.

Prior to joining the Eastside High School team, Ms. O'Brien taught in both the Morgan County and Rockdale County School System. She also taught hospital bound patients with traumatic brain injuries at Scottish Rite Children's Hospital. She earned her Bachelor of Science in Special Education from Georgia Southern in 1995 and is currently working on her Master's in Education from the same institution.



2021-2022 HIGHLIGHTS

NEWTON COUNTY SCHOOL SYSTEM ANNOUNCES SCHOOL-LEVEL TEACHERS OF THE YEAR



The Newton County School System and the Newton County Chamber of Commerce announced the 2021-2022 school level teachers of the year. These teachers participated in the county program with the winner selected to serve as the Newton County School System’s 2022 Teacher of the Year.

SCHOOL	TEACHER OF THE YEAR	SCHOOL	TEACHER OF THE YEAR
EAST NEWTON ELEM.	BETH ROGERS	SOUTH SALEM ELEM.	RENEE ANDERSON
FAIRVIEW ELEM.	KATHY NADEAU	WEST NEWTON ELEM.	SAMANTHA GRECO
FLINT HILL ELEM.	BLAIR HAMBY	CLEMENTS MIDDLE	MONICA JACKSON
HEARD-MIXON ELEM.	NICOLE ROBERTS	COUSINS MIDDLE	EMILY LUMPKIN
LIVE OAK ELEM.	STEPHANIE MUHAMMAD	INDIAN CREEK MIDDLE	CHARNESE PHILLIPS
LIVINGSTON ELEM.	KRISTIN CARTER	LIBERTY MIDDLE	TERAYE LAW
MANSFIELD ELEM.	GINA MCDONALD	VETERANS MEMORIAL MIDDLE	CLAYTON HAMMONDS
MIDDLE RIDGE ELEM.	EBONY BRYANT	ALCOVY HIGH	MIRANDA LAMB
NEWTON COUNTY THEME SCHOOL	MARQUITA CORBETT	EASTSIDE HIGH	DEANNA O'BRIEN
OAK HILL ELEM.	MARISSA BIGLOW	NEWTON HIGH	STEPHEN FOSTER
PORTERDALE ELEM.	THECLA JAMES	NEWTON COLLEGE & CAREER ACADEMY	ROBERTA AXSON
ROCKY PLAINS ELEM.	ALAINA KHAN		

2021-2022 STUDENT HIGHLIGHTS

2022 STAR STUDENTS AND STAR TEACHERS

Newton County School System's three high school STAR Students for 2022 were: Brianna Francis, Alcovy High School; Amara Ann Igwilo, Newton High School; and Rivash Deepnarain, Eastside High School. STAR Students must be one of the top ten graduates or in the top ten percent of their class and score the highest score on the SAT in one sitting. Brianna scored 1390 out of 1600 on the SAT; she selected Mrs. Laura Lambert from the NCCA STEM Institute as her STAR Teacher. Amara Ann Igwilo scored 1270 on the SAT; she selected Newton High School environmental science teacher, Ms. Virginia Moulder as her STAR Teacher. Rivash Deepnarain was not only named the Eastside High School STAR Student but also the NCSS Star Student as he had the highest SAT score in the district—1530 out of 1600. He selected Mr. Joshua Cook, calculus teacher at NCCA STEM Institute as his STAR Teacher.



EASTSIDE HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT PERFORMS AT CARNEGIE HALL

Gracie Bates, a junior at Eastside High School, was selected for the 2022 High School Honors Performance Series at Carnegie Hall. Gracie performed as a soprano with the High School Treble Choir. Participation in one of the five Honors Ensembles is limited to the highest-rated high school performers from across the world.

Gracie auditioned for the Honors Performance Series the previous year and was accepted after a review by the Honors Selection Board. Acceptance to the elite group is a direct result of the talent, dedication, and achievements demonstrated in her application and audition recording.

Gracie has studied music for five years and is a member of Oxford Youth Singers and Eastside High School's Acapella and Show choirs. Gracie has also auditioned for and been selected for All State Chorus.



2021-2022 STUDENT HIGHLIGHTS

NCSS STUDENTS COLLECT OVER 30,000 CANNED FOOD ITEMS FOR LOCAL FOOD PANTRIES

Newton County School System students were on a mission to fight hunger in our community. Students throughout the school district collected thousands of canned food and other nonperishable items for the annual NCSS Can-a-thon to support our community’s local food pantries. Despite being in the midst of a worldwide pandemic, the students shattered their previous record of 21,000 cans by collecting a staggering 30,060 nonperishable food items.

George Hutchinson, NCSS social worker, said the school district’s annual Can-a-thon is extremely important to the local Newton County community.



“This is one of the largest, if not the largest food drives in Newton County and our local food pantries have come to depend on us for this food drive to restock their pantries for the upcoming holiday season and winter season,” said Hutchinson. “Particularly right now with our economy being so impacted by the pandemic, a lot of people are hurting and in need. This goes a long way for these food pantries to provide for their needs.”

INDIAN CREEK FCCLA STUDENTS EARN AWARDS AT STATE CONFERENCE

Indian Creek Middle School FCCLA (Family, Career and Community Leaders of America) members fared well at the Georgia FCCLA State Leadership Conference—competitors brought home bronze and silver medals. Emilee Beal, Cailyn Hurt, and Morgan Bennet earned bronze in the Focus on Children event and De’Shari Hollingsworth and Mariah Davies brought home silver in the Chapter Service Portfolio event. Their silver award earned them the chance to compete at the National FCCLA Leadership Conference in San Diego, California.



There are over 20,000 Georgia FCCLA members and 200 plus Georgia FCCLA chapters. While attending the Georgia FCCLA State Leadership Conference, the students had the opportunity to expand their leadership potential and develop skills for life planning, goal setting, problem solving, decision making and interpersonal communication necessary in the workforce.

LIVINGSTON THIRD-GRADER MADE HONORARY FIREFIGHTER AFTER SAVING FAMILY DURING HOUSE FIRE

Newton County Fire Chief Michael Conner officially presented Livingston Elementary School third-grader, Reniya Ritter, with a badge and certificate making her an honorary firefighter, in light of her heroic actions that saved her family from a house fire. Reniya knew what to do in the event of a fire after attending a lesson at school taught by Newton County Fire Safety Specialist, James Franklin.

“I learned how to get out of a house or a truck when there’s smoke in there and I learned how to be a good firefighter,” said Reniya.

That’s exactly the information Franklin hoped Reniya, and her classmates, would take away from his fire safety presentation, which is geared for younger elementary-aged children.

“We taught over a 2-day period,” Franklin explained. “We watched a video that kind of taught them what to do in the event of a fire and then we talked about matches and lighters and the importance of not playing with them.”

He added, “We talked about the importance of having working smoke alarms in the house. And then we moved to the back of our trailer, where we can actually practice what we’ve learned. We fill up the room full of smoke and have the children practice crawling outside to a meeting place. We teach them to go home and ask their parents, ‘Where would we meet if there was a fire?’”

Reniya was very excited about the firefighters’ visit and eager to share with her mother, Nikia Ritter, the lessons she learned that day.

“When she got home, she explained to me that the fire department came to her school...,” said Mrs. Ritter. “She went over the drill even climbing on her knees to show how to get out of the house.... She also talked about sparkles that you might see in a fire.”

Reniya had in fact learned to report any colorful sparks or the smell of smoke right away—and just a few days later, she did just that when her family home caught fire. As a result of her quick thinking, Reniya and her family were able to escape the fire without sustaining any injuries. Although they have lost their home, the family still have each other.

“I’m proud of my baby. She’s an attentive listener,” said Mrs. Ritter. “She’s very helpful. She wants to see people win. She helped us. She really, really saved us by listening and paying attention. I told her that was an A+ for me because not everybody pays attention and utilizes and brings it home. Everything she learned from Mr. Franklin, she brought it home and shared it with her family. We were able to put that into perspective and she saved us.”

Franklin said he was extremely proud of Reniya.

“It definitely made my day that she took the lesson to heart and brought that home to her family and not only did she learn it, but she passed it on to them and put it into use, so I’m very proud of her,” he said.

The Newton County firefighters were excited to welcome Reniya as one of her own; they even took her and her family for a short ride in a fire truck at school, with Reniya controlling the lights and sirens!



2021-2022 STUDENT HIGHLIGHTS

EAST NEWTON ELEMENTARY SCHOOL NAMED NATIONAL BETA SCHOOL OF DISTINCTION

East Newton Elementary School was named a *2021-2022 National Beta School of Distinction*. The school earned this recognition by increasing their club’s membership by at least 10% from last year.

National Beta School of Distinction is an honor for Beta clubs striving towards academic achievement, exemplary character, demonstrated leadership and service to others. With an ongoing quest to instill these qualities in more students, the *National Beta School of Distinction Award* is designed to award those schools that show an increase in membership from the previous school year.



EASTSIDE SOPHOMORE CHOSEN FOR STATE SUPERINTENDENT’S STUDENT ADVISORY COUNCIL

Eastside High School sophomore, Abigail Morgan, was one of only 66 high school students in the state selected to serve on the Georgia School Superintendent’s 2021-2022 Student Advisory Council. Over 1,000 students across the state applied for the opportunity. Throughout the year, the 66 student-member council met with Superintendent Woods to discuss the impact of state policies in the classroom.

“Year after year, my Student Advisory Council is an invaluable resource as I make decisions that impact students across the state,” Superintendent Woods said. “Getting to know these students and seeking their feedback and perspectives allows all of us at the Georgia Department of Education to make the best possible policy choices.”



NEWTON HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT WINS CONGRESSIONAL ART COMPETITION

Newton High School freshman Christopher Ramos’ artwork, “Bereavement”, will hang in the U.S. Capital in Washington, D.C., after the budding artist won the grand prize in Representative Hank Johnson’s Fourth District Congressional Art Competition! In addition to having his artwork displayed in the Capitol, Ramos also was awarded a \$12,000 scholarship to the Savannah College of Art & Design (SCAD). “I’m still processing it,” said Ramos. “I’m just overwhelmed and in disbelief.”

While Christopher was stunned by the award and recognition, his high school art teacher, Earnestine Bailey was not.

“I’m so proud of him,” said Bailey. “I was overwhelmed when I found out that he won. When I saw his work, I knew that he had the possibility of winning so I made sure he submitted it.” She added, “We don’t often get artists like that. I can see in his work that he is going to be very successful.”



LIBERTY MIDDLE SCHOOL FCCLA NAMED CHAPTER OF THE YEAR

It was a tremendous year of accolades and amazing accomplishments for the Liberty Middle School Family, Career and Community Leaders of America (FCCLA) club members, who culminated the school year by being named the Georgia FCCLA Middle School Chapter of the Year!

“We are elated to receive the highest honor for a middle school chapter,” said Felicia Hodges, Liberty Middle School FCCLA adviser. “Honestly, that has been our goal every school year. However, every year I explain to the chapter that success is not achieved accidentally.

Success is achieved through hard work, perseverance, learning, studying, adapting, sacrifice, and most importantly the love of what you are doing.”



In addition to the Chapter of the Year award, Hodges received the 2022 Adviser Mentor Award, which recognizes advisers who have been successful in achieving Master Adviser Recognition, devoting two years to new adviser assistance, assuming adult leadership roles in FCCLA, conducting adviser workshops, attending training workshops and using national and state FCCLA resources.

According to Hodges, there are over 20,000 Georgia FCCLA members and over 200 Georgia FCCLA chapters and Liberty Middle School’s organization walked away with several of the highest honors from the Georgia FCCLA State Leadership Conference, earning them the opportunity to compete at the National FCCLA Leadership Conference in San Diego, California.

NCSS HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS NAMED FINALISTS FOR 2022 GOVERNOR’S HONORS PROGRAM

Seven NCSS high school students were named finalists for the 2022 Governor’s Honors Program (GHP). The Georgia Governor’s Honors Program (GHP) is a residential summer program for gifted and talented high school students who will be rising juniors and seniors during the program. The program offers instruction that is significantly different from the typical high school classroom. It is designed to provide students with academic, cultural, and social enrichment necessary to become the next generation of global critical thinkers, innovators, and leaders.

Students interested in attending must participate in a series of interviews and should be able to speak eloquently and in great detail about the subject they choose. They are students who desire to work with their subject outside of school and go above and beyond. Students may be nominated in Communicative Arts (ELA), all the Foreign Languages, Math, Science, Social Studies, Dance, Music, Theater, Visual Arts, Engineering, and Agriscience.

The seven NCSS finalists selected to attend the 2022 Governor’s Honors Program were:

NAME	SCHOOL	GRADE	SUBJECT AREA
Mason Sorrow	Eastside High & NCCA	10	Agricultural Research, Biotechnology, and Science
Dhakiya Knights	Newton High & NCCA STEM Institute	11	Communicative Arts
Kendall Hawley	Newton High	10	Communicative Arts
Emma Grace Lumpkin	Eastside High & NCCA STEM Institute	10	Mathematics
Natalie Henderson	Alcovy High & NCCA STEM Institute	11	Mathematics
Breanna Epps	Eastside High	10	World Languages: Latin
Colin McGowan	Eastside High	10	World Languages: Latin



NEWTON COUNTY SCHOOL SYSTEM

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