Top Grads Lead the Way for the Class of 2017

Cherokee County School District's highest achieving graduates have great plans for the future, as they shared during the 17th Annual Scholar Recognition Banquet on May 24 at Woodmont Golf & Country Club. CCSD’s six high schools graduated more than 2,700 seniors in ceremonies May 25-27, and the valedictorian and salutatorian, based on highest cumulative GPA, for each school were recognized for their amazing achievements.

The evening was attended by the Scholars and their parents; the teacher each Scholar chose as the most influential in his or her education; CCSD’s high school Principals; the Superintendent of Schools and members of his senior staff; and the School Board.

“You made the necessary sacrifices and hard work to earn your dreams,” School Board Chair Kyla Cromer told the scholars during her remarks, adding that praise also is due to their parents who made sacrifices to support them.

Superintendent of Schools Dr. Brian V. Hightower spoke of the fierce academic competition at the top of class in CCSD schools, noting that ranking “goes to the third digit beyond the decimal.”

“We're so proud of you,” Dr. Hightower said to the scholars. “We hope we challenged you, inspired you and loved you – and you knew it.”

Superintendent Names First Annual ‘Game Changer’ Recipients

Superintendent of Schools Dr. Brian V. Hightower has recognized the first class of recipients of an inaugural award he describes as his most important honor for Cherokee County School District employees.

The "Superintendent’s Game Changer Award" will honor four outstanding recipients annually, with one award each for the following categories: Instructional Leadership, to recognize a CCSD administrator; Instructional Excellence, to recognize a CCSD classroom teacher; Instructional Support, to recognize a CCSD employee with a support role; and Instructional Advocacy, to recognize a CCSD employee or community member.
CCSD High Schools Earn National Rigor & Achievement Honors

All six Cherokee County School District high schools were named to the Washington Post’s “Most Challenging High Schools” list this spring, and three schools also were named to U.S. News and World Report’s “Best High Schools in America” list.

**Washington Post:** Cherokee HS, Creekview HS, Etowah HS, River Ridge HS, Sequoyah HS and Woodstock HS

“America's Most Challenging High Schools” ranks schools through an index formula that includes the number of Advanced Placement, International Baccalaureate and Advanced International Certificate of Education tests given at a school each year, divided by the number of seniors who graduated that year. A ratio of 1.000 means the school had as many tests as graduates. Only 12 percent of the approximately 22,000 U.S. public high schools managed to earn placement on the list.

**U.S. News and World Report:** Etowah HS, River Ridge HS and Woodstock HS

Etowah, River Ridge and Woodstock HS earned silver medals under the magazine’s ranking methodology for “Best High Schools in America,” which awards gold, silver or bronze medals based on multiple factors, including AP exam results and performance of disadvantaged students. Data for the rankings is based upon the 2014-15 school year, according to the publication. The annual “Best High Schools” list is released each spring.

**Johnston ES Earns Bronze Award as One of ‘America’s Healthiest Schools’**

Johnston Elementary School has been named to the Alliance for a Healthier Generation’s 2017 list of America’s Healthiest Schools. The school won a Bronze Award from the national organization for making changes that promote healthier eating and physical activity for students and staff. Healthier Generation’s Healthy Schools Program is an evidence-based national initiative to create healthier school environments where children can thrive.

Schools are recognized for such efforts as serving healthier meals and snacks, getting students moving more, offering high-quality physical and health education and empowering school leaders to become healthy role models.

Principal Amy Graham and PE teachers, Michael L’Esperance and Josh Philpot, will be recognized by the Cherokee County School Board and Superintendent of Schools at the School Board’s August meeting.
CCSD High Schools Lauded for AP Exam Excellence

Each of CCSD’s six traditional high schools earned recognition from the State this spring as an 2017 Advanced Placement (AP) Honor School for outstanding student performance and participation on AP exams. CCSD’s high schools have been named to the AP Honor List each of the last seven years. Schools can earn recognition in as many as six categories; CCSD high schools earned recognition in all four categories for which its schools were eligible, including three schools winning a place on the Merit School list.

- **AP Merit Schools:** Creekview HS, Etowah HS and River Ridge HS. AP Merit Schools are those with at least 20 percent of the student population taking AP exams and at least 50 percent of all AP exams earning scores of 3 or higher.

- **AP STEM Schools:** Cherokee HS, Creekview HS, Etowah HS, River Ridge HS, Sequoyah HS and Woodstock HS. AP STEM Schools are those with students testing in at least two AP math courses and two AP science courses.

- **AP STEM Achievement Schools:** Cherokee HS, Creekview HS, Etowah HS, River Ridge HS, Sequoyah HS and Woodstock HS. AP STEM Achievement Schools are those with students testing in at least two AP math courses and two AP science courses, and at least 40 percent of the exam scores on AP math and AP science exams earning scores of 3 or higher.

- **AP Humanities Schools:** Cherokee HS, Creekview HS, Etowah HS, River Ridge HS, Sequoyah HS and Woodstock HS. AP Humanities Schools are those with students testing in all of the following AP courses: at least one ELA course, two social sciences courses, one fine arts course and one world language course.

“This recognition is a testament to the extraordinary dedication of our AP students and teachers,” Superintendent of Schools Dr. Brian V. Hightower said. “We are so proud of these students for challenging themselves with these rigorous courses and equally impressed by our AP teachers’ ability to successfully instruct them on a college level.”

National AP Distinction

CCSD was one of 10 school districts in Georgia named to the national AP District Honor Roll in 2016, its fourth consecutive year to earn national distinction for its AP participation and achievement. With a passage rate of 70% among the 4,784 tests administered in the spring of 2016, CCSD exceeds the State average of 58% and the National average of 57%.

Cherokee HS Riflery Team Wins Region Championship, National Title

The Cherokee High School Riflery Warriors completed an extremely successful Georgia High School Association and JROTC Riflery 2017 season. The Riflery Warriors are the 2017 Air Force JROTC National Riflery Champions. For GHSA, the team is the Area 10 Champion and finished fifth in the GHSA State Riflery Championship at Ft. Benning in April; there the team earned an Area 10 record high score of 1,142. Team members are: senior Cody Stroup; juniors Chaolin Hancock, Brody Miller, Noah Foster, Dylan Rodrigue; and freshman Connor Walsh. The team is coached by Lt. Col. (Ret.) Eddy Stanfill.
School Nutrition Program Wins National Honor

The Cherokee County School District School Nutrition program won a National honor this spring: the Silver Turnip the Beet Award by the U.S. Department of Agriculture – one of only 49 winners in the country. The award recognizes CCSD’s summer meal program, which provides breakfast and lunches at no charge to students in need served by summer school programs, as well as at locations throughout the community.

The District participates in the USDA Seamless Summer Option, which offers the free meals during the summer for children at multiple sites throughout the county. Almost one-third of CCSD students qualify for free or reduced-price meals during the school year, and this program ensures that children continue to have access to nutritious meals throughout the summer break. The program is funded by USDA; no CCSD funds are expended for this program.

The goal of the Turnip the Beet Award, according to the USDA, is to recognize programs that go “above and beyond to ensure their meals are both nutritious and appetizing.” Applications were evaluated on criteria including: serving local foods; serving a variety of vegetables and fruits throughout the week; serving whole grains and low-fat or fat-free dairy products; and serving culturally-appropriate meals.

Cherokee HS Media Specialist Named Best in Georgia

CCSD Media Specialist of the Year Anne Nechvatal of Cherokee HS was named the Georgia Library Media Specialist of the Year at a surprise presentation at the Georgia Library Media Association’s Summer Institute on June 12. She was named the regional winner in May, and the CCSD school district winner in March.

Ms. Nechvatal is a graduate of Oglethorpe University, where she earned her bachelor’s degree; University of West Georgia, where she earned her masters of education degree in school library media; and University of West Georgia, where she recently completed her education specialist degree.

Ms. Nechvatal joined Cherokee High School two years ago and since then has focused on updating the media center and its resources to increase benefits to students and teachers. She also serves as the school’s Reading Bowl Team coach and judges Senior Projects.

“My mission for the CHS media center is to create a space that is open, accessible and user-friendly; put simply, a place where students want to come,” said Ms. Nechvatal, who previously served as a media specialist at Ball Ground ES STEM Academy.

Dr. Pam Andes, as graduation coach at the school, sees students benefit from the media center’s resources and additional learning opportunities.

“Our students are waiting for the media center to open each morning in order to spend time here before school begins,” Dr. Andes said. “Students know that she will assist them with any issues in the media center. She truly cares about our students and wants our media center to be second to none.”

Ms. Nechvatal has applied for grants to improve the center and develops activities to increase student traffic, such as the annual Technology “Smackdown” event.

“Building relationships is one of the most important parts of being an effective media specialist. I strive to understand the wants and needs of both our students and teachers,” she said. “I feel like the students are my customers, and I want to offer them the best customer service possible.”
Holly Springs ES STEM Academy Featured in Microsoft Campaign

A Cherokee County School District teacher and her students were featured in a national commercial for Microsoft this spring.

The commercial, which was launched in May by MicrosoftEdu at its "Learn What's Next" media conference and online with broadcast scheduled on major TV networks, features Holly Springs Elementary School STEM Academy teacher Lauren Pittman and her class.

Ms. Pittman, a Microsoft Innovative Educator Expert, is recognized for her use of the company’s learning tools to help struggling readers succeed, and the commercial features students sharing their stories of academic triumph.

“Our community knows how inspiring our teachers are and how we’re leaders in using instructional technology to educate the emerging generation... thanks to the outstanding work of Ms. Pittman and her students, now the world will know, too,” Superintendent of Schools Dr. Brian V. Hightower said. “We appreciate our community’s support of our Special Purpose Local Option Sales Tax for technology, and we’ll continue to invest those resources to, as the commercial says, ‘empower us all.’"

Link to commercial: https://twitter.com/Microsoft/status/859403893242855425

Sequoyah HS Adds ‘International’ Skills Diploma Seal

The school successfully applied to the Georgia Department of Education for authorization to issue the International Skills Diploma Seal to eligible graduating seniors beginning this school year. Sequoyah HS joins three other CCSD schools in offering the seal: Cherokee HS, Etowah HS and Woodstock HS.

The program recognizes students who complete an “international education curriculum and engage in extracurricular activities and experiences that foster the achievement of global competencies... it is a signal to employers and higher education institutions that a student is prepared to participate in the global economy.”

To earn the designation, students must: complete at least three credits in the same world language and/or English for Speakers of Other Languages; at least four credits in courses determined to have an international focus (e.g., international economics, world/non-US history, world geography, etc.), at least four extracurricular activities and experiences with global themes and/or in global contexts (e.g., exchange programs, international and language clubs, travel abroad), 20 hours of community service involving a global/cross-cultural public service project and a capstone presentation on the knowledge gained in these courses and activities.
Sequoyah HS Student Named A 2017 Presidential Scholar

Isabelle Riddle of Sequoyah High School is one of only 160 high school seniors nationwide selected to be a 2017 Presidential Scholar. Isabelle, along with AJ Cox of Woodstock HS, was a semi-finalist in the national selection process among the nation’s top 700 students.

Honorees are selected based on academic achievement including exceptional performance on the ACT or SAT, personal character, leadership and service activities; application is by invitation only.

“The achievements of these outstanding students deserve acknowledgement,” said Marina C. McCarthy, Chair of the Commission on Presidential Scholars. “The most precious resource of the United States is its talented young people.”

Isabelle was named a 2016-17 Coca-Cola Scholar... one of only 150 students nationwide selected for the $20,000 scholarship. She also was named the STAR Student for Cherokee County and Valedictorian for Sequoyah HS Class of 2017.

Creekview HS Aeronautic Teams Shine at National Finals

Creekview High School aeronautics students earned three team spots at the Team America Rocketry Challenge and finished in the top 25 at the national finals in May. Out of more than 800 teams across the country, 101 qualified for the national finals held in Washington, DC, with Creekview HS making up three of Georgia’s four teams to qualify. The Creekview students’ performance at Nationals earned all an invite to participate in the NASA Student Launch Initiative program.

The Challenge is the aerospace and defense industry’s flagship program designed to encourage students to pursue study and careers in science, technology, engineering and math. The competition challenges middle and high school students to design, build and fly a rocket that meets specific altitude and flight duration parameters. This year’s rules require a rocket carrying one raw egg to reach 775 feet before returning the egg to Earth — uncracked — all within 41 to 43 seconds.

“Although we have qualified for the national finals eight times as a program, we had only cracked the top 25 twice, with two separate teams (winning overall in 2014),” said teacher and aeronautics sponsor Tim Smyrl.
CCSD Teacher Named an Apple Distinguished Educator for 2017

A Cherokee County School District teacher was named to the Apple Distinguished Educators Class of 2017 this spring. Woodstock Elementary School teacher Kristen Brooks is the first CCSD educator to achieve this distinguished honor, which Apple began in 1994 to recognize K-12 and higher education pioneers who use the company’s products to transform teaching and learning.

Ms. Brooks and her fellow Class of 2017 honorees were hand-picked from thousands of applicants and join 2,500 visionary educators and innovative leaders worldwide previously named to this elite group. Apple Distinguished Educators serve as advisors, authors and ambassadors for Apple and as advocates for their peers in the classroom.

Among her many accomplishments, Ms. Brooks created and launched CCSD’s first iPad Lab at Woodstock ES. She is a 2016 Apple Educator, Apple Vanguard Certified, a Certified BrainPOP Educator, OSMO Ambassador and Seesaw the Learning Journal Ambassador, as well as winner of a 2015 PBS Digital Innovator Award.

CCSD Credit Rating Upgraded by Both Moody’s and S&P

The Cherokee County School District’s credit rating continues to improve -- an achievement that saves taxpayer dollars.

The School District’s already positive Aa3 and AA- levels, as rated by Moody’s and Standard & Poor’s financial service companies, were upgraded to Aa2 and AA- Positive, another step toward the goal of acquiring the top AAA rating from both agencies.

“A perfect rating is our goal, which is a challenge, as factors such as State funding and the local economy are considered, but we’re up the challenge,” Superintendent of Schools Dr. Brian V. Hightower said, noting CCSD’s Division of Financial Management led by Assistant Superintendent Kenneth Owen deserves high praise for its efforts to upgrade the rating.

River Ridge HS Yearbook Featured by Jostens in Annual Design Book

The River Ridge High School 2016-17 yearbook is featured in the Jostens LookBook as an example for other yearbooks. This is a prestigious honor as yearbooks across the nation compete to be featured. The school qualified based on the following criteria: Sports, Contrast, Repetition, Tight Spacing, Graphic Accent, Photo Package, Quick Read, Quote Display, Rule Lines, and Modular.

Kate Norris is the school’s yearbook teacher, and she noted the work of Class of 2017 graduates Ally Surovchak, Olivia Webb, Sam Varriale, Maddi Huff and Katie Pettit-McFerrin helped achieve the honor.
Creekland MS Academic Bowl Team Places Fourth in National Tournament

Creekland Middle School’s Academic Teams placed fourth in the 2017 U.S. Academic Bowl and Bee.

The school’s sixth-, seventh- and eighth-grade teams each placed fourth in their respective divisions in the national competition in Chicago.

Individually, sixth-grader Phoebe Feibus placed third in the nation in the individual Humanities Bee. Sixth -grader Sean Yates placed ninth in the nation in the individual geography competition. The national event concluded the team’s season for the school year, with a total of five first-place wins – including first in the State Georgia Academic Team Association Tournament, and four second-place wins.

Team members are Captains Joseph Satterfield and Nathan Davis and members: Hampton Barranue, Justin Bolsen, Susannah Curie, Wilson Hurdle, Ere’l Moyal, Jordan Moyal, Cal Pace and Sean Yates. The teams are coached by teachers Dr. Mark Nazemzadeh and Eli Rollman.

EHS Junior Wins National Award for Spanish Language Skills

Etowah High School junior Joseph Young is a winner of the prestigious 2017 Junior Travel Award, valued at more than $3,500, for his achievement on the National Spanish Examination and demonstrated skills in writing and speaking Spanish.

This honor is awarded by the American Association of Teachers of Spanish and Portuguese to only 24 students in the U.S. from among the 160,000 students who take the exam each year. Joseph will travel in July to Peru with the other 23 winners for the language and cultural immersion experience.

Joseph was nominated for the award by Etowah HS Spanish teacher Tamara Linares. This is the second time an Etowah High School student has won this prestigious award in the past 10 years!

WHS Places Third in Nat’l ‘Brain Brawl’

Woodstock High School’s team placed in the Navy JROTC National Brain Brawl Championship! The team of Captain Anna Fournaris, Lilli Georgescu, Irene Hounblame and Evan Setter recently placed third in the national competition, capping a season that began with 619 schools from across the country in competition.

Photo: Area 12 Commander Rustie Hibbard congratulates the team of Lilli Georgescu, Evan Setter, Captain Anna Fournaris and Irene Hounblame.
Two CCSD Schools Recognized for Media Center Excellence

Two Cherokee County School District schools won top State awards for their media center programs this spring. Indian Knoll Elementary School is the winner of the 2017 Exemplary Media Program Award for elementary schools, and E.T. Booth Middle School is the winner of the 2017 Exceptional Media Program Award for middle schools presented by the Georgia Library Media Association and Georgia Library Association.

The programs, which are led by Indian Knoll Elementary School Media Specialist Jennifer Lewis and E.T. Booth Middle School Media Specialist Amanda Graves, will be honored during the opening ceremony of the Georgia Library Media Association’s Summer Institute on June 12 in Peachtree City.

Three Exemplary and three Exceptional Georgia Library Media Programs (one from each level: elementary, middle and high) are honored each year.

The Judy Serritella Exemplary/Exceptional Library Media Program Award was created by the associations “to recognize those library media programs that empower students to be critical thinkers, enthusiastic readers, skillful researchers, and ethical users of information both in vision and in practice. Exceptional library media programs are ones that demonstrate these characteristics in a consistent and effective manner.” Exemplary programs, according to the associations, “go one step beyond and are a model for innovation, student empowerment, and leadership in the school library community.”

CCSD Adds 19 More Apple Teachers

Nineteen more Cherokee County School District educators were named Apple Teachers by the technology company this spring. Apple Teachers are recognized as experts in using the company’s technology, such as iPads and Macs, to enable teachers to connect with all learners and be more creative and productive with lessons and student activities.

CCSD Apple Teachers 2017

Sandi Adams, CCSD Technology, Technology Project Specialist; Teresa Bailey, Clark Creek ES STEM Academy, Teacher; Anne Benton, Creekland MS, Media Specialist; Jim Berry, CCSD Technology, Instructional Technology Specialist; Jennifer Cogdill, Woodstock HS, Media Specialist; Wendy Cope, Woodstock MS, Media Specialist; Nicole Dahlberg, Hasty ES Fine Arts Academy, Teacher; Susan Dreschel, CCSD Technology, Instructional Technology Specialist; Stephanie Gauthia, Holly Springs ES STEM Academy, Media Specialist; Angel Ginn, Johnston ES, Media Specialist; Dixie Harper, Knox ES, Instructional Technology Specialist; Jennifer Lewis, Indian Knoll ES, Media Specialist; Suzy Lolley, CCSD Technology, Instructional Technology Specialist; Chessa McGinnis, Ball Ground ES STEM Academy, Teacher; Lee Patti, CCSD Technology, Instructional Technology Specialist; Keara Rubin, River Ridge HS, Media Specialist; Joy Silk, CCSD Technology, Instructional Technology Specialist; Yolany Trejo, Canton ES STEM Academy, Teacher; Freda Williams, CCSD Technology, Technology Project Specialist
“Top Grads,” Continued from Page 1

Each student received an iPad, $50 gift card and plaque. Each teacher received a plaque and $100 gift card.

The dinner was made possible by a donation from Presenting Sponsor, LGE Community Credit Union, which additionally presented each student with an iPad cover and each teacher with a tumbler. The gifts of iPads and gift cards were made possible by donations from the following sponsors: Platinum: Curriculum Associates, Northside Hospital-Cherokee, Poole’s Insulation Company, Standard Office Systems (SOS) and Woodmont Golf & Country Club; Gold: Brown & Brown Insurance of Georgia, NOVA Engineering & Environmental, Seasonal Designs Landscaping and Traditions Turf Management, Inc.; and Silver: Eyemed, True Natural Gas and The Travel Store, Inc.

The Scholars and their honored teachers are:

**Cherokee HS**
Valedictorian: Julia Kochansky, who will study English and Classics at the University of Southern California
Teacher: Heather Smith, who taught Julia in AP U.S. History and Government
Salutatorian: Jodi Dowis, who will study mechanical engineering or aerospace science at Georgia Tech
Teacher: Justin Jones, who taught Jodi in AP English Literature and World Literature

**Creekview HS**
Valedictorian: Michelle McCord, who will study nuclear plasma radiological engineering at the University of Illinois and hopes to work with particle accelerators, possibly for the U.S. Department of Defense or Department of Energy
Teacher: Jason Hardin, who taught Michelle in AP Chemistry and homeroom
Salutatorian: Grace Maavere, who will study art at the Savannah College of Art & Design
Teacher: Linda Nicholson, who taught Grace in AP Studio Art

**Etowah HS**
Valedictorian: Sindhu Manivannan, who will study neuroscience at St. Louis University
Teacher: John Murnan, who taught Sindhu in AP Biology, Human Anatomy and Scientific Research at Etowah HS
Salutatorian: Tony Wineman, who will study aerospace engineering at Georgia Tech
Teacher: Dr. Brian Heglund, who taught Tony in AP Physics

**River Ridge HS**
Valedictorian: Tej Patel, who will study computer engineering at Georgia Tech and hopes to work in engineering for the automobile industry
Teacher: Terry Strassner, who taught Tej in AP Macroeconomics and Microeconomics
Salutatorian: Tiana Hom, who will study computer science at Georgia Tech and hopes to work in robotics or computer animation
Teacher: Counselor Brittany Voltner, who was Tiana’s counselor for four years

**Sequoyah HS**
Valedictorian: Isabelle Riddle, who will study biochemistry and molecular biology at the University of Georgia and hopes to work as a pediatric oncologist with a focus on research
Teacher: Brian Carnes, who taught Isabelle in AP and Honors Chemistry
Salutatorian: Kat Massengale, who will study biology and Classics at Vanderbilt University and hopes to work in pediatrics
Teacher: Greg Ross, who taught Kat in four years of Latin including AP Latin

**Woodstock HS**
Valedictorian: Alex Andon, who will study engineering at Georgia Tech
Teacher: Kelly Burke, who taught Alex in three years of AP Physics
Salutatorian: AJ Cox, who will study environmental engineering at MIT and hopes to work in environmental law or policy
Teacher: Josh Sailers, who taught AJ in AP European History, Microeconomics and Macroeconomics
Two Sequoyah HS Grads Win National Merit Scholarships

Two CCSD graduates from Sequoyah HS have won National Merit Scholarships, an honor earned by less than 1 percent of high school seniors.

Katie Bates won a National Merit University of Georgia Scholarship. She plans to study biochemistry at UGA in the fall. Selection of finalists is based on outstanding SAT scores and academic achievements, participation in school and community activities and demonstrated leadership abilities, employment and honors.

Alex Morrison was named the winner of a National Merit Textron Scholarship. He plans to pursue a career in radiology. Textron Inc., through the Textron Charitable Trust, provides scholarships annually to National Merit finalists who also are children of its employees. The multi-industry company based in Providence, RI includes operations in aerospace technology, commercial products and financial services.

“Game Changers,” Continued from Page 1

“We are dedicated to continuous improvement of classroom instruction – teaching is our primary responsibility and what we’re called to do to serve our community,” Dr. Hightower said. “I strongly believe that recognizing excellence not only honors the very worthy recipients, but also inspires all of our team members by showing them who are the role models in their field they can look to as leaders, mentors and visionaries.”

The inaugural 2017 awards were presented to:

- Instructional Leadership: Susan McCarthy, CCSD Assistant Superintendent of Educational Programs
- Instructional Excellence: Heather Phillips, Dean Rusk Middle School teacher
- Instructional Support: Sandi Adams, CCSD Technology Project Specialist
- Instructional Advocacy: Lisa-Marie Haygood, longtime PTA volunteer and leader

The surprise presentations were made in front of audiences of their peers, with Ms. McCarthy recognized at a school improvement leadership meeting; Ms. Phillips recognized at her school’s faculty meeting; Ms. Adams recognized at a CCSD Technology department meeting; and Ms. Haygood recognized at a School Board Meeting packed with parents and families.
27 CCSD Students Chosen for Governor’s Honors Program

Twenty-seven Cherokee County School District students have been selected for the competitive Georgia Governor's Honors Program.

The four-week summer instructional program at Berry College for rising high school juniors and seniors 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 live and study on the campus in Rome from June 18-July 15.

Students apply for a specific area of study and are screened and interviewed locally and at the State level as part of the selection process for the prestigious program.

The CCSD students selected for this honor are:

**Cherokee HS**
- Lane Cannon - World Languages
- Katherine Johnson - Engineering
- Madison Kucensky - Dance
- Madison Prien - Dance
- Kaitlyn Smith - Music
- Katie Vinterella - Music

**Creekview HS**
- Elizabeth Andrews - Music

**Etowah HS**
- John Atwell - Theatre
- Jacob Hootselle -Engineering
- Susan Phetsinghane -World Languages

**River Ridge HS**
- Julia Boll -Science
- Awo Jama - Communicative Arts
- Carson Kantoris - Science
- Yang River - Science

**Sequoyah HS**
- Claudia Evans - Agricultural Science
- Patrick Fagan - Music
- Victoria Turk - Theatre
- Corinne Wallick - Music

**Woodstock HS**
- Nimra Ahmad - World Languages
- Gregory Carroll -Science
- Rachel Heiter -World Languages
- Chloe LeRoy - World Languages
- Maeve Levreault - Dance
- Julia Litrel - Communicative Arts
- Katelyn Provost - Engineering
- Sebastian Russell - Social Studies
- Sasha Stogniy – Science

The team of CCSD bus drivers Kim Bell and Kristen Nichelson won fourth place in the 2017 Georgia Association for Pupil Transportation Special Needs Road-eo Competition.

The annual event tests the skills of special needs bus drivers and monitors throughout the State of Georgia and provides an opportunity for positive reinforcement and recognition.
CCSD Recognizes School Volunteers and Community Partners

The Cherokee County School District celebrated its top school community partners and volunteers at the fourth annual CCSD Partner of the Year and Volunteer of the Year Recognition Ceremony in April. The ceremony, sponsored by the Cherokee County Educational Foundation, recognized a Partner of the Year and a Volunteer of the Year for each individual school and center and then made the surprise announcement of the CCSD Partner of the Year and Volunteer of the Year selected from that pool of candidates. Eighty-three outstanding partners and volunteers were recognized!

Liberty Hill Church, the Hasty Elementary School Fine Arts Academy Partner of the Year, was named the CCSD 2017 Partner of the Year, and Scott Cudabac, the Johnston Elementary School Volunteer of the Year, was named the CCSD 2017 Volunteer of the Year.

“Supportive community partners and caring volunteers are necessary for our school district’s success, and we appreciate all that they do,” Superintendent of Schools Dr. Brian Hightower said. “Recognizing those who give so much of their time, talent and treasure is just one way to foster these relationships. It’s inspiring and heartwarming to learn more about all that our partners and volunteers do to make a difference in the lives of the children and the families that we serve.”

A page on the School District’s website honors school-level and CCSD winners. Every week, a different school Partner of the Year and Volunteer of the Year also will be featured on CCSD social media platforms.

Liberty Hill Church, partner with Hasty ES Fine Arts Academy, was chosen as 2017 Partner of the Year for CCSD.

Scott Cudabac, volunteer with Johnston ES, was chosen as 2017 Volunteer of the Year for CCSD.
2017 SCHOOL PARTNERS OF THE YEAR
ACE Academy: Northside Hospital Cherokee
Arnold Mill ES: State Farm Insurance
Avery ES: Menchie’s Riverstone Plaza
Ball Ground ES STEM Academy: Awnex Inc.
Bascomb ES: Menchie’s Towne Lake
Boston ES: Cub Scout Packs 994 and 999
Canton ES STEM Academy: Rotary Club of Canton
Carmel ES: Modern Woodmen of America
CCSD Preschool Center - Johnston: The Home Depot, Store No. 16943 on Sixes Road in Canton
CCSD Preschool Center - Oak Grove: The Home Depot, Store No. 116 on Highway 92 in Woodstock
CCSD Preschool Center - Ralph Bunche: Christian Egner Smile Foundation
Cherokee HS: Northside Hospital Cherokee
Clark Creek ES STEM Academy: Ridgewalk Chiropractic and Massage
Creekland MS: The One Taekwondo Center of Canton
Creekview HS: Chick-fil-A of Canton
Dean Rusk MS: Kona Ice of Cherokee
E.T. Booth MS: The Premier Group
Etohaw HS: SignGig
Free Home ES: Modern Woodmen of America
Freedom MS: Allegro Business Products
Hasty ES Fine Arts Academy: Liberty Hill Church
Hickory Flat ES: Hickory Flat Orthodontics and Pediatric Dentistry
Holly Springs ES STEM Academy: City of Holly Springs
Indian Knoll ES: Cherokee County Farm Bureau
Johnston ES: Chick-fil-A Dwarf House
Knox ES: Menchie’s Riverstone Plaza
L.R. Tippens Education Center: Pizza Hut of Holly Springs
Liberty ES: Marco’s Pizza of Sixes Road
Little River ES: The One Taekwondo Center of Woodstock
Macedonia ES: Las Palmas Mexican Restaurant
Mill Creek MS: Chick-fil-A Dwarf House
Mountain Road ES: Chick-fil-A Dwarf House
Oak Grove ES Fine Arts Academy: The Premier Group
R.M. Moore ES: Reinhardt University
River Ridge HS: Chick-fil-A Dwarf House
Sequoyah HS: Southeast Restoration
Sixes ES: Marco’s Pizza, Sixes Road
Teasley MS: Chick-fil-A of Canton
Woodstock ES: Woodstock HS Spanish Honor Society
Woodstock HS: The UPS Store at Towne Lake
Woodstock MS: Velociteach

2017 SCHOOL VOLUNTEERS OF THE YEAR
Arnold Mill ES: John O. Donnelly, Jr.
Avery ES: Mary Long
Ball Ground ES STEM Academy: Carrie Halstead
Bascomb ES: Hope Leak
Boston ES: Richard Branscomb
Canton ES STEM Academy: Sarah Hill
Carmel ES: Lavinia “Kay” Hart
CCSD Preschool Center - Johnston: Edir Real Fabiano
CCSD Preschool Center - Oak Grove: Julie Fuller
CCSD Preschool Center - Ralph Bunche: Todd Adams
Cherokee HS: Melanie Rockey
Clark Creek ES STEM Academy: Andrea Dean
Clayton ES: Susan Williamson
Creekland MS: John Russell
Creekview HS: Tim Hart
Dean Rusk MS: Cristina Kroeppler
E.T. Booth MS: Claire Black
Etowah HS: Kellie Covington
Free Home ES: Anita Ask
Freedom MS: Pamela Montgomery
Hasty ES Fine Arts Academy: Larry DeSue
Hickory Flat ES: Megan Kremer
Holly Springs ES STEM Academy: Karrie Pratt
Indian Knoll ES: Sequoyah HS Cadets led by John Futral and Ronald Whittle
Johnston ES: Scott Cudabac
Knox ES: Anne Landfried
L.R. Tippens Education Center: Teddye Holloway
Liberty ES: Jenna Williams
Little River ES: Scott Steinbrenner
Macedonia ES: Erin Whaley
Mill Creek MS: Brandee Sass
Mountain Road ES: Dana Patterson
Oak Grove ES Fine Arts Academy: Stanley Weinick
R.M. Moore ES: Emily and Shane Fager
River Ridge HS: Debbie Rabjohn
Sequoyah HS: Cindy Brown
Sixes ES: Jennifer Mascitti
Teasley MS: Kristi Volz
Woodstock ES: Robert Tidwell
Woodstock HS: Nancy B. Utley
Woodstock MS: Tawnya Velzy
Sequoyah Debate Team Heads to Nationals this Summer

Sequoyah High School Speech and Debate team members are headed to Nationals this summer.

Competing at the National Speech & Debate Association Tournament in Birmingham next month are: Nic Fricia, who earned a spot as a Lincoln Douglas competitor at a District qualifier tournament; and Nyla Crayton, Natasha Ambriz and Valerie Ambriz, who earned spots on the Worlds Debate Team made up of students from north Georgia schools. The school's team is led by coach and teacher Matt Bartula.

“The Speech and Debate team offers our students the unique opportunity to thoughtfully consider and debate issues that are shaping our country and our world,” Principal Elliott Berman said. “The speaking and debating skills they develop here not only benefit them as they look forward to college and job interviews, they prepare them to be well informed vocal leaders of our community and country in the future.”

EHS Baseball Standout Named Gatorade’s GA Player of the Year

The Gatorade Company selected Drew Waters of the Class AAAAAAA State Champion Etowah High School Eagles as its 2016-17 Gatorade Georgia Baseball Player of the Year. Drew, the first Gatorade Georgia Baseball Player of the Year to be chosen from Etowah HS in the award’s 32 years, now is a finalist for the prestigious Gatorade National Baseball Player of the Year.

The award, which in the past has been won at the State level by players including Derek Jeter, Jon Lester, David Price and Clayton Kershaw, recognizes outstanding athletic excellence, high standards of academic achievement and exemplary character on and off the field. As Georgia’s Gatorade Player of the Year, Drew will be able to select a national or local youth sports organization to receive a $1,000 grant as part of the Gatorade Play It Forward program.

An outfielder, Drew led the Eagles to a 26-16 record and State Championship, batting .494 with 13 home runs, 35 RBI and 43 runs scored through 42 games, with a 1.126 slugging percentage. Drew, who earned a 92.1 grade point average in the classroom, volunteered for Goshen Valley Boys Ranch and Never Alone Food & Clothing Outreach Center and helped raise more than $12,000 for the family whose son was diagnosed with a brain tumor.

Drew has signed a National Letter of Intent to play baseball on scholarship at the University of Georgia this fall, but was recently selected in the Major League Baseball draft by the Atlanta Braves!

- 2017-18 School Year Begins Tuesday, Aug. 1
- Open House/Walk Throughs July 25-31
- School Offices reopen July 18

See your school’s website for details!
Six Region, Two State Winners at 2017 Georgia Young Authors Fair

Six Cherokee County School District students have earned regional recognition for their writing, with two earning first-place at the State level. The Young Georgia Authors writing competition, sponsored by the Georgia Council of Teachers of English with support from the Georgia Department of Education, encourages students in grades kindergarten through 12th to develop enthusiasm for and expertise in their writing and recognizes student writings success.

More than 150 school-level winners from throughout CCSD competed at the District level, at which a first-place winner was selected for each grade. Those 13 winners advanced to regional competition, where six students won first-place. Two of those entries then won first-place at the State competition: River Ridge High School ninth-grader Alicia Mazzura and senior Imani Johnson!

District Winners are:
Kindergarten: Zavier Reinhart, Hasty ES Fine Arts Academy for “The Littl Scool Bus”
Grade 1: Chloe Okoth, Clark Creek ES STEM Academy for “My Wiggly Tooth”
Grade 2: Lucy Pagano, Clark Creek ES STEM Academy for “Oscar”
Grade 3: Samantha Moore, Bascomb ES for “Forest Folk”
Grade 4: Jacob Spilker, Woodstock ES for “The Day I Turned Into A Dog” – also First-place, Region
Grade 5: Jared Perry, Holly Springs ES STEM Academy for “Attacked At Sea”
Grade 6: Sydney Crowe, Creekland MS for “Ideas” – also First-place, Region
Grade 7: Eden Price, Woodstock MS for “In the Rain” – also First-place, Region
Grade 8: Mary Grace Chandler, Mill Creek MS for “The Burning of Westly Oak”
Grade 9: Alicia Mazzura, River Ridge HS for “Do Not Tell Me Who To Be” – also First-place, Region and State
Grade 10: Rolando Lopez, Cherokee HS for “Fernando” -- also First-place, Region
Grade 11: Nadia Willis, ACE Academy for “First Flight”
Grade 12: Imani Johnson, River Ridge HS for “America What Time Is It?” – also First-place, Region and State

Gamma Eta Chapter Honors 2017 Golden Apple Award Winners

The Gamma Eta Chapter of Delta Kappa Gamma Society International honored 14 Cherokee County School District teachers and one graduating high school senior at its annual Golden Apple Ceremony in May.

Honorees are selected by their peers. Superintendent of Schools Dr. Brian V. Hightower participated in the event to recognize these outstanding teachers.

Additionally, each year Gamma Eta awards a $1,000 college scholarship to a graduating, CCSD female student who plans to pursue a degree in education, and this year’s honoree is Camryn Goins of River Ridge HS.

Golden Apple Honorees are, from left to right, front row: Debby Amoss, Creekland MS; Cassie Fainter, Teasley MS; David Wilkins, Polaris Evening Program; Amy Dwyer, Woodstock ES; scholarship recipient Camryn Goins of River Ridge HS; Georgia Branson, Little River ES; Curtis Durham, Tippens Educational Center; back row: Kirsten Hargadon, Macedonia ES; Jessica Jones, Sixes ES; Lauren Garcia, Johnston Preschool Center; Katie Freeman, River Ridge HS; Cheryl Morgan, ACE Academy; Georgia Heard, Woodstock MS; Kellie Mason, Woodstock HS; and Bonnie Smith, Avery ES.
Students Excel at Region and State Social Studies Fair

Ten Cherokee County School District projects submitted by students won “Best in Fair” at the Georgia Council for the Social Studies (GCSS) Northwest Regional Fair, with two going on to win at the State Fair. The School District held a district-level fair for which 104 projects were entered, with 32 placing first and advancing to Regionals. At Regionals, CCSD earned 10 of the 16 “Best in Fair” top prizes award. Those winners advanced to State, where Knox Elementary School fifth-grader Makenzie Bird and E.T. Booth Middle School eighth-grader Emma Lambert each won Best in Class in sociology/psychology – one for elementary schools and one for secondary schools! State, District and Region winners are:

Daihanna Aragon, E.T. Booth MS, Sociology/Psychology
Ben Barchie and Nate Sardonia, Macedonia ES, Sociology/Psychology
Zoey Beasley, Woodstock MS, Sociology/Psychology – “Best in Fair” at Regional
Justin Bolsen and Cal Pace, Creekland MS, Geography
Lola Burdick, Keganne Keiger and Riley Stray, Sixes ES, Sociology/Psychology – “Best in Fair” at Regional
Katie Calloway and Daniella Molina, Bascomb ES, Anthropology
Ella Casteel and Abbey Farmer, Woodstock ES, History – “Best in Fair” at Regional
Emily Cranston, Ellie Draughon and Kristen Malencik, Woodstock HS, Sociology/Psychology
Ella Cudabac, Neah Huguley and Abby Richardson, Johnston ES, Sociology/Psychology
Shane Dallas, River Ridge HS, History – “Best in Fair” at Regional
Jessica Dipita, Ella Adkins and Sharon Pradeep, Little River ES History
Sammy Hardison and Isaac Wolf, Knox ES, History
Noelle Harrington, Creekland MS, History
Rachel Hugenberg, Etowah HS, Anthropology
Brooks Johnson, Etowah HS, History
Avery Knoch and Samantha Griffin, Woodstock ES, Sociology/Psychology
Julia Litrel, Woodstock HS, History – “Best in Fair” at Regional
Dellaina McCarty, Arnold Mill ES, Anthropology
Angelica Millen, River Ridge HS, History

Stevie O’Connell, Arnold Mill ES, History – “Best in Fair” at Regional
Simran Patel, Mill Creek MS, Political Science
Vandy Reddish, Arnold Mill ES, History
Maximus Reynolds, Macedonia ES, Economics
Lexie-Anne Rodkey, Freedom MS, Economics
Chandler Stevenson, Freedom MS, History
Isabella Tedesco, Dean Rusk MS, Economics
Brittany Wallace, Sequoyah HS, Sociology/Psychology – “Best in Fair” at Regional
Benjamin Willett, E.T. Booth MS, Economics – “Best in Fair” at Regional
Milan Yadav, Freedom MS, History
Ian Zieg, Avery ES, History

Mountain Road ES Student Wins Kennesaw Mtn Writing Contest

Sarah Courchene of Mountain Road ES is the winner for the elementary school division of the Kennesaw Mountain Writing Project’s Leslie Walker Writers of Promise Contest. Sarah, a student of teacher Alexis Basel, won the award for her entry entitled “Candy Island.”

The award, named after the late teacher Leslie Walker, who strived to create community in her classroom through writing about place, recognizes outstanding writing about a specific place, which may be factual, imagined, or a combination of both.
CCSD Students Take First Place Honors at State Technology Fair

Fifteen Cherokee County School District students earned top honors at the Georgia Educational Technology Fair. The School District entered 46 projects into the State Fair based on students’ outstanding first-place performance at the Regional competition coordinated by Mill Creek MS Assistant Principal Dr. Richie Carnes. The 15 students who placed at State competed there against more than 1,000 other students in a range of categories such as robotics, animation and project programming.

CCSD students who placed first, second or third at State are:

**First Place**
- Shaaz Ali, Clark Creek ES STEM Academy - Literacy Challenge
- Evan Fistel, Dean Rusk MS - Robotics
- Averie LaBarbera, Holly Springs ES STEM Academy - Video Production
- Riley Mulkey, Dean Rusk MS - Animation
- Christopher Newhouse, Woodstock HS - Technology Literacy Challenge

**Second Place**
- Connor Campbell and Ethan Durst, E.T. Booth MS - Audio Production
- Adam Nay and Cateline Ward, Etowah HS - Video Production
- Reagan Pastor, Creekland MS - Internet Applications
- Tyler Richards, Sequoyah HS - Project Programming

**Third Place**
- David Holbrook and Tyler Wilson, Carmel ES - Mobile Apps
- Brett Lougheed, Dean Rusk MS - Project Programming
- Matt Moore, Creekland MS - Digital Game Design
- Jack Sapere, E.T. Booth MS - Animation
- Chandler Stevenson, Freedom MS - Robotics
- Byron Sullivan, Sequoyah HS - Digital Game Design

Two students, Christopher Newhouse and Byron Sullivan, also won $250 scholarships.

State Reflections Winners Named in Annual State PTA Arts Contest

Seventeen Cherokee County School District students placed in the 2016-17 Georgia PTA Reflections fine arts contest, with three winning first place! The annual contest gives students in all grades and abilities the opportunity to create original works of art in the categories of dance choreography, film production, literature, music composition, photography and visual arts for the opportunity to earn recognition at the school, district, state and national levels. This year’s theme was “What is Your Story?”

CCSD’s State-level winners are:

**Dance Choreography**
- First Place: Madeline Fiscarelli, Etowah HS, Grade 9

**Film/Video Production**
- First Place: Sidney Samuel, Hickory Flat ES, Grade 5
- Third Place: Barbora Kocsis, Sequoyah HS, Grade 11

**Literature**
- Second Place: Willa Faulkner, Macedonia ES, Kindergarten
- Honorable Mention: Kayla Lambert, Etowah HS, Grade 9

**Photography**
- First Place: Clayton Tucker, Dean Rusk MS, Grade 6
- Second Place: Raven Winant, Sequoyah HS, Grade 12
- Third Place: Michael King, Ball Ground ES STEM Academy, Grade 4
- Third Place: Huck Wallace, Holly Springs ES STEM Academy, Grade 3
- Honorable Mention: Preston Johnson, Indian Knoll ES, Grade 5, Special Artist
- Honorable Mention: Brooks Keehley, Sequoyah HS, Grade 9
- Honorable Mention: Ryan Weber, Bascomb ES, Grade 4, Special Artist

**Theme Search Award**
- Shelby Rice, Bascomb ES, Grade 5, “It’s what’s on the inside that counts”

**Visual Arts**
- Second Place, Chrissy Ginter, Sequoyah HS, Grade 12
- Third Place: Chloe Mnich, E.T. Booth MS, Grade 8
- Honorable Mention: Alexia Prewett, Johnston ES, Grade 5, Special Artist

**3D Art**
- Second Place: Cade Strom, Cherokee HS, Grade 10
CCSD Students Excel at Region Science & Engineering Fair

Fourteen Cherokee County School District projects earned first-place at Regionals and were entered into the 69th Georgia Science and Engineering Fair, with one winning first-place State honors. Woodstock High School senior Krystl Wood won First Honors and Best in Category, Senior Division in the Chemistry category at the State fair. Students also received special awards and scholarships from partners including Cobb EMC, Gas South and the Cherokee County Water and Sewerage Authority.

The Regional First Honors winners are (State honors and other awards also noted below):

Jackson Baker, Teasley MS, Energy: Physical
Julia Boll, River Ridge HS, Animal Sciences; GSEF Senior Division Second Honors
Irene Chen, River Ridge HS, Computational Biology & Bioinformatics
Briana Delvasto, Woodstock HS: Biomedical and Health Sciences; GSEF Senior Division Second Honors and UGA Graduate-Professional Student Association Award
Evan Fistel, Dean Rusk MS, Robotics and Intelligent Machines; GSEF Junior Division Second Honors and Naval Science Award - Junior Division
Lindsey Graham, Woodstock HS, Plant Sciences; GSEF Senior Division Third Honors
Eva Hansen, Woodstock HS, Plant Sciences

Eight Seniors Selected for 2017 Georgia Scholar Honor

Eight Cherokee County School District high school seniors have been named 2017 Georgia Scholars.

Through the Georgia Scholar program, the Georgia Department of Education identifies and honors high school seniors who have achieved excellence in all phases of school and community life including carrying “exemplary course loads” and excelling in all courses, successfully participating in inter-scholastic and extra-curricular activities. Only 183 graduating seniors from schools across Georgia will receive the honor, which includes a seal for his or her diploma.

Dylan Herrick, Mill Creek MS, Physics & Astronomy
Kali Holierhoek, Teasley MS, Chemistry; GSEF Junior Division Third Honors - Alternate
Layne Johnson, Teasley MS, Chemistry; GSEF Junior Division Third Honors - Alternate
Ramsha Khan, Woodstock HS, Microbiology; GSEF Senior Division Third Honors and Stockholm Junior Water Prize Regional Award
Emma Osborne, Woodstock HS, Cellular & Molecular Biology; GSEF Senior Division Fourth Honors
Grady Port, Mill Creek MS, Physics & Astronomy
Taylor Powell, Etowah HS, Biomedical Engineering
Anna Rives, Woodstock HS, Environmental Engineering; GSEF Senior Division Fourth Honors
Ascher Shostak, E.T. Booth MS, Earth & Environmental Sciences
Emily Voigt, Sequoyah HS, Chemistry
Krystl Wood, Woodstock HS, Chemistry; GSEF Senior Division First Honors and GSEF Best in Category Chemistry Senior Division
Gwenevere Wyre, Etowah HS, Behavioral & Social Sciences; GSEF Senior Division Second Honors

The CCSD honorees are: from Creekview HS, Austin Griffin, Michelle McCord, Austin Miles, James Pace and Haleigh Streak; from River Ridge HS, Cecelia Fornuto; from Sequoyah HS, Daniel Gordon; and from Woodstock HS, Abbey Barrett.

“I offer my sincere congratulations to each of our 2017 Georgia Scholars,” State School Superintendent Richard Woods. “These students have exemplary academic performance but they’ve also gained soft skills by taking on leadership roles within their schools and communities. I am confident we will hear great things about their accomplishments in the near future.”
Two Sequoyah High School students earned honors at the 2017 DECA International Career Development Conference in Anaheim, Calif. Hanna Palmer, for Apparel & Accessories Marketing, and Sydney Neubert, for Hotel & Lodging Management, each won the “Award of Excellence” for achieving all standards of performance at the international level of the student marketing association competition.

Two River Ridge High School students placed at the State Science Olympiad. Valentin Valkov and Tej Patel brought home fourth-place medals in Ecology. The school’s team placed 15th in the statewide competition.

Woodstock Elementary School fifth-grader Sofie Walz recently was selected to serve as Woodstock’s Mayor for the Day. Woodstock Mayor Donnie Henriques selected Sofie for this honor based on her winning essay. As part of her duties, she officiated a Woodstock City Council meeting. Mayor Henriques, Police Chief Calvin Moss, Fire Chief David Soumas and teacher Ashley Amos also joined Sofie and her family and friends for lunch at the school.

Woodstock Middle School Abby Hallman won first place at the TomeCon annual statewide conference. The sixth-grader earned the honor for her Book Review Blog. The conference is celebration of “all things literary” for elementary, middle and high school students.

Creekland Middle School teacher Traci Palmer won the Georgia Recycling Coalition 2016 Read for Recycling competition. She encouraged her students to read books about recycling and the environment and submitted completed student journals in the statewide contest honoring America Recycles Day. Ms. Palmer received 15 books for her classroom from the Coalition.

A River Ridge High School senior Emmy Perez has been selected for Google for Education program: a three-week, all-expenses-paid immersive program in July at Google’s office in Midtown. Participants “learn programming fundamentals directly from Google engineers, get an inside look at some of Google’s most exciting, emerging technologies, and even design and develop their very own application with fellow participants that they will showcase to Googlers in local offices.”

An E.T. Booth Middle School eighth-grader won a regional oratorical contest. Sophia Stewart is the Optimist International Gateway District Oratorical Contest winner, topping competitors from across Georgia and East Tennessee.

Arnold Elementary School fourth-grader and Youth Garden Club member Landon Waters won first place in the Garden Club of Georgia Sculpture Contest. He went on to earn Honorable Mention in the Deep South Region Youth Sculpture Contest. The school’s Youth Garden Club is sponsored by Denise Forward of the Trayletaah Garden Club of Canton, Laurel District.
Cherokee HS Students Win Silver and Bronze at SkillsUSA State Leadership Conference

Cherokee Schools, Staff Honored at District 13 PTA Conference

Cherokee County School PTAs, volunteers, support staff and administrators won multiple awards at the recent District PTA annual Spring Conference held April 26 in Canton. Woodstock HS Principal Mark Smith was named Outstanding Principal for District 13, and Mill Creek MS Nurse Thania Molina was recognized as Outstanding School Nurse for District 13. Georgia PTA is comprised of 13 geographic districts; the 13th District covers northwest Georgia and includes Cherokee County, as well as Forsyth, Gordon and Whitfield counties.

At the Cherokee County Council of PTA level, Johnston ES Principal Amy Graham was selected as Outstanding Elementary School Principal, and Mill Creek MS Principal Dr. Kerry Martin was honored as the Outstanding Middle School Principal.

Model PTA awards were presented to Little River ES, Bascomb ES, Hickory Flat ES, Indian Knoll ES, Mill Creek MS and Woodstock HS. These schools, plus the addition of Mountain Road ES, were also named Outstanding Local Units for 2016-17.

Cherokee High School’s career and technical program and its students earned State recognition this spring at the SkillsUSA State Skills and Leadership Conference at the Georgia International Convention Center. Students competed in a variety of skilled trades and leadership contests in areas including: Welding Sculpture, Diesel Technology, Job Demonstration, Automotive Collision Repair, Medical Math, Automotive Brakes, Early Childhood and Nurse Assisting.

Freshman Austin Ledbetter, in his first time competing at State, won Silver in collision repair and earned more than $12,000 in scholarships and tools. Payton Hodges won Silver in Medical Math for his second year of State placement, and Edith Loarca earned Bronze in Nurse Assisting, also her second consecutive State win.

The school’s SkillsUSA chapter earned recognition as a Silver Chapter of Distinction for its outstanding service to students and the community. Automotive program teacher Mike Hagan is the Chapter’s advisor, and Edith Loarca is its student President. Representatives from the Cherokee Child Advocacy Council, with which the Chapter partners to produce displays for its Holiday Lights of Hope fundraiser, also attended the recognition ceremony.
More than 30 Cherokee County School District seventh-graders have been recognized by Duke University for their SAT and ACT scores!

The Duke University Talent Identification Program (TIP) supports academically talented seventh-graders who have previously scored at or above the 95th percentile on a standardized test such as CogAT by providing them with the opportunity to take the SAT and ACT, which are college-entrance exams designed for above-average 11th- and 12th-grade students.

This year, 116 CCSD students participated in the program, with 31 students earning State-level honors, and two students – Justin Bolsen of Creekland MS and Sophie Williams of Freedom MS -- additionally earning Grand-level recognition.

The CCSD honorees are:

Creekland MS
Justin Bolsen, Jessica Hickman, Joshua Mays, Callahan Pace, Ciana Ruggiero

Dean Rusk MS
Adam Brooks, George Chemmala, Thomas Nguyen

E.T. Booth MS
Joseph Didzbalis, Samantha Sapere, Kyleigh Wallace

Freedom MS
Naomi Clark, Audrey Edwards, Ayden Fountain, Gabriela Isaac, Connor MacMillan, Brendan Stewart, Will Sumner, Grace Webb, Sophie Williams and Everett Wise

Mill Creek MS
Autumn Bailey, Sarah Fraser, Dylan Herrick, Rachel Kim, Carter Macdonald, Carson Portis, Matthew Stevens, James Tham, Megan Wasson

Teasley MS
Lauren Kinney, Madi Mathews

Woodstock MS
Tyler Halebian

A Cherokee High School Class of 2017 graduate was named Georgia’s Positive Male Athlete of the Year this spring. Jacob Klebar, a member of the school’s football team who graduated May 26 and is headed to Reinhardt University on an academic scholarship, will be honored this summer at the 2016-17 Georgia Positive Athlete Awards.

The award is presented by Positive Athlete Georgia, a subsidiary of Celebrate Positive LLC, which promotes the benefits of positivity to young athletes around the world. More than 3,400 students are nominated annually by coaches, principals, athletic directors, teachers and parents. Awards are presented for specific sports and regions, with the top award – Positive Athlete of the Year -- presented to one male and one female student for the entire state.

In addition to excellence on the field, Positive Athletes must show characteristics such as an optimistic attitude, teammate encouragement, servant leadership, heart for others, ability to admit imperfections, giving 100 percent all the time, and realizing the team as more important than the individual.

An injury left Jacob unable to play on the field his junior and senior years, but that didn’t end his membership on the team, as he stayed on the roster and involved in encouraging and coaching his teammates.

Jacob Klebar
Turning 2,700 Tassels... 

Congrats to the Class of 2017!