



**GUILFORD**  
EDUCATION ALLIANCE



**GUILFORD**  
County Schools

# IGNITE

EXPLORING GUILFORD COUNTY SCHOOLS

SPRING 2018

**STEM  
IS FUN**

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# Message from the Superintendent

**Our colleges, universities, workforce and entrepreneurial ecosystem are prepared to receive our best and brightest students. It is our job to ensure that they are ready. By nearly all accounts, experts agree that science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) are the subjects of the future. The time to prepare is NOW.**

In a March 2017 report, the U.S. Economics and Statistics Administration announced that over the past 10 years, employment in STEM occupations grew much faster than employment in non-STEM occupations: 24.4 percent versus 4.0 percent, respectively. Not only that, but STEM occupations are projected to grow by 8.9 percent between 2014 to 2024, compared to 6.4 percent growth for non-STEM occupations.

At Guilford County Schools, we are preparing our students for what is to come.

With our goals set on the brightest futures imaginable for each child enrolled in GCS, our inaugural issue of IGNITE focuses on the opportunities, programs, and services offered by our district in the STEM fields. In the following pages, you will enjoy stories of GCS teachers and students engaging in innovation, problem solving, creativity, teamwork, and astounding possibility. We want to thank Guilford Education Alliance (GEA) for their financial support of this magazine. They work collaboratively with our students, schools and community to spark possibilities and ignite learning.

Our district is filled with educators who hold a deep respect and understanding of the various industries represented within the vast STEM fields. They are positioned to identify the curious spark in a child's eye, and nurture that spark into a full-blown inferno.

Our children are studying robotics, forensics, and the design thinking process. They are unleashing their inventions in maker spaces and teaming up with their peers to engage in healthy competition. They are building with Legos and learning about the real life work of crime scene investigators. They are budding computer scientists, and they are conducting research on anti-viral drugs.

The next generation of leaders and inventors are already outpacing previous generations, and I am so proud to know that they are being led by teachers, staff, and administrators who really "get" the bigger picture. Without teachers who are willing to stretch their own limitations, conjuring up new ways to present information and playful approaches to make learning fun, we would not be in the position to celebrate all that is taking place within the walls of our classrooms.

They are doing their work, and I am committed to doing mine – continuing to build partnerships with community stakeholders who are positioned to extend opportunities to our students after they graduate from our district. And while there is always room for growth, the pages that follow will show that there is much worth celebrating right NOW.

Ignite a child by encouraging his or her curiosity in STEM. Our future depends on it.

In the interest of all students,

*Sharon L. Contreras*

Sharon L. Contreras, Ph.D.  
Superintendent, Guilford County Schools



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## EXPLORING GUILFORD COUNTY SCHOOLS SPRING 2018



**02.**

At Johnson Street Global Studies,  
media specialist Ashley Morgan has  
tapped into a new way of teaching.  
It's all about making things.

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Conducting labs right out of popular  
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educators are brining STEM to life.







# Maker Spaces: Education's “New Big Thing”

**“Tell me,  
I forget.  
Show me,  
I remember.  
Involve me,  
I understand.”**

Chinese proverb

At Johnson Street Global Studies, media specialist Ashley Morgan has tapped into a new way of teaching.

It's all about making things.

She has created a space where students work together to create and construct using materials around them. They stretch their brains and understand that experience can be the best teacher – even if they fail.

In the process, they see school as fun.

That's because of Johnson Street's new maker space, the spot in the media center between two walls painted the color of lime sherbet. There, students let their creativity loose.



“I hear excitement and enthusiasm, and that's loud,” Morgan said. “It's ‘Look at me! Check this out! Try this!’ And that is a good loud. It means students are learning something, developing their independence and doing what they came to school to do.”





Johnson Street Global Studies students build miniature skyscrapers and cars with plastic sticks in the school's Maker Space.

## The Relevance of Gizmos and Gadgets

To understand the maker's space movement, first look at what a maker's space is.

It's an informal spot in a school, full of gadgets and gizmos.

Students dive into that space, building something using concepts attached to the most popular acronyms in education today – STEAM, as in science and technology, engineering, art and math; and STEM, science and technology, engineering and math.

Faith Freeman understands those concepts firsthand.

She's the STEM director for Guilford County Schools, and she said Morgan is one of many district educators creating a maker's space at their schools.

Teachers also are participating in workshops at places like UNCG to figure out how to incorporate maker's space experiments into the education standards they are required by the state to teach.



Next fall, UNCG will begin offering teachers a chance to earn a maker's space certificate and learn how to incorporate these concepts into their lesson plans.

Meanwhile, schools are raising money and going after grants to pay for the materials they need to create what Freeman calls education's "new big thing."

But she believes this "new big thing" will last.

**"It's making learning much more relevant," she said, "and if students can see the relevance, it will stick with them."**

## The Benefit of Exploration

At first glance, a maker's space may seem like just a place to play. But it's more than just a playground. It's an academic sandbox, educators say, where students begin to understand complex ideas involving science and math by doing something that feels so fun.

In his latest book, "Creating Innovators: The Making of Young People Who Will Change The World," well-known educator Tony Wagner found that children involved in creative play develop deep-seated interests and curiosities that motivate them to pursue what they love both in work and in life.

Swati Justice, a fifth-grade science and math teacher at Greensboro's Irving Park Elementary, sees how that can happen.

"I personally think that exploring allows kids to build connections to understand concepts," she said. "And as teachers, if we can help them make those connections, we're preparing our students to become the citizens of tomorrow, giving them the skills that are lifelong."

That's easy to see at Johnson Street Global Studies, a magnet K-8 school in High Point.

Just ask fifth-grader Samuel Palmer and sixth-graders Jason Lopez and Joshua Pratt.

They circle up around a computer and show the stop-motion videos they recently made with Lego figures and a green screen during their Maker's Club, which meets every Monday after school.

The club, which teacher Ashley Morgan created, brings together about 20 or so students who create most anything. Like the videos. They last no more than five seconds. Yet, Samuel, Joshua and Jason see the lasting benefits.

"It'll help you with job opportunities," Joshua said. "You're not lazy or anything like that. You're doing something that helps your brain work."

And what else?

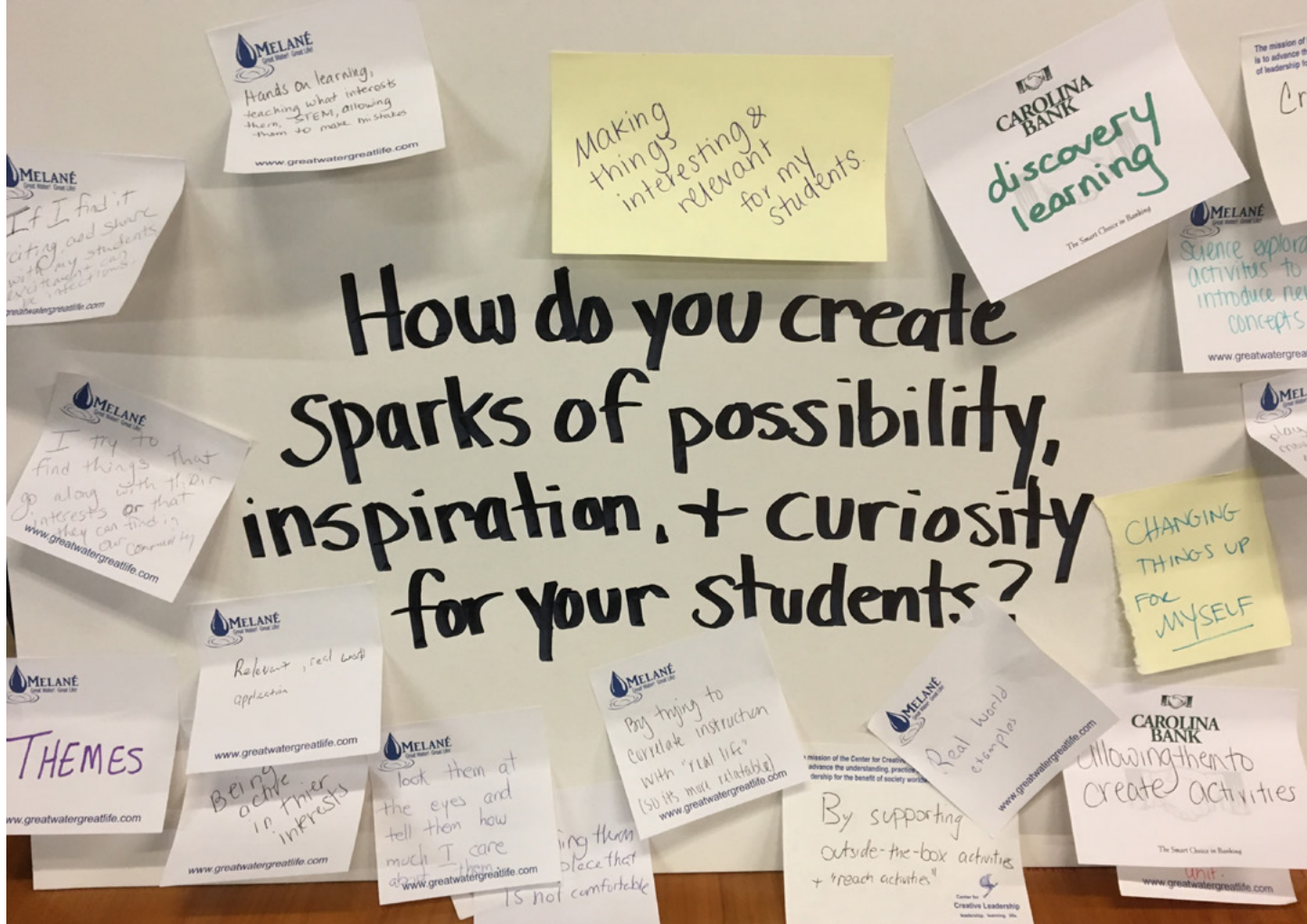
"It helps me be creative, and you get together with people who'd never meet in class," Samuel said.

**"And when I finish a project, I get this special feeling," Jason interjects. "I'm happy. I did it on my own."**

Minutes later, Jason, Joshua and Samuel turn to watch their Maker's Club videos one more time.

For them, that never gets old.







# Sparkling Possibility in Our Educators

## The Young Professional Educators Academy

**The facts are undeniable: as teachers retire and the salary for teachers in NC sits \$10,000 below the national average, school districts are facing increasing shortages. Enrollment in the UNC system schools of education is down 30%. College graduates aren't flocking to the teaching profession and those that do come, too often leave before celebrating their five year anniversary.**

**So, how can we help recruit and retain the best and brightest teachers?**

syngerG and Guilford Education Alliance have an answer: the Young Professional Educators Academy. The Academy offers 33 young GCS educators a chance to connect with their community, build relationships, check-out some local hot spots and hone their teaching skills. At the Forge—Greensboro's local maker space—GCS educators worked with a UNC-Greensboro professor to master hands-on-activities that can be used as part of science, technology, engineering and math lessons in the classroom. At the new, modern, downtown headquarters of the national executive recruitment firm, Charles Aris & Associates, local business leaders talked with teachers about how to prepare for the jobs of the future. A meaningful session at the Elsewhere art collaborative equipped teachers with the language and skills needed to handle conversations and dynamics around diversity and the various "isms" that impact students and the classroom.

As a bonus, educators are paired with community champions – business and community leaders – who have agreed to support their educator-partner in whatever way needed.

"As a realtor, I know that schools matter and I want to be a part of making our schools the best they can be," said Julie LeMond, a community champion and Allen Tate realtor. "I have worked with my educator to brainstorm solutions to problems she's encountered and to help connect her with community resources."

Teacher responses have been overwhelmingly positive, "I have really appreciated being around others – educators and community members – who have a passion for education," said Tinisha Shaw, a teacher at Southern Guilford High School. "This program is a long-term investment in our community and I am a grateful to know that Guilford County values what we do."

**"The quality of the school system cannot exceed the quality of it's teachers"**

**Dr. Sharon Contreras**



# Engineering Solutions

**If you ask them about their sixth-grade engineering projects, Kiser Middle School students Amani Turner and Jamilla Idrissa's faces break out into big smiles.**

"I liked that I came up with the idea of a light up desk, because I wanted to help everybody," explained Idrissa.

Her idea of the light up desk, powered by a hand crank, stemmed from her need to find items in her desk quickly, or risk being late for her next class.

"That's the perfect example of what we are trying to do," said Dr. Edna Tan, associate professor at UNCG's School of Education. "The goal is to show these students that they are already experts in their community, and they can use engineering to solve problems they see. Who other than a student would even think about desks being too dark?"

Tan and her colleagues teamed up with Kiser science teachers Gina DiFrancesco and Emma Linn, as well as public schools in Michigan along with her colleague Dr. Angela Calabrese Barton at Michigan State University, to encourage more students to see themselves as engineers through the i-Engineering program, particularly girls and students of color who are underrepresented in many STEM fields.

"Many times we see students of color and girls say they don't identify with STEM," explained Tan. "These projects help them proactively identify with engineering and show them that they have something to contribute."

The project starts with students identifying a problem via community input by conducting surveys. Students then analyze the community data to identify problems that they may be able to address by engineering solutions. During the design process, students go through stages of engineering and community feedback, and



finally build a working prototype with materials including circuits powered by renewable energy sources such as solar panels or mechanical hand-crank. Examples of these projects include the light-up desk, a light-up happy box for encouraging messages and teaching tools such as a light-up equator globe and a moon phase box.

"I learned how to put my creativity to work," said Turner, who created the box to help students better understand the phases of the moon. "We wanted kids to have a better way to learn moon phases because, when I was learning about them, it was hard. We wanted a way to make learning about moon phases more fun."

DiFrancesco said she is very impressed by how well the students learned, understood and then implemented what they learned through their projects. The new sixth-grade students overused Idrissa's light up desk to the point that it broke, but a year later, Idrissa was able to come back and fix the problem.

"What this does for the kids is it empowers them, and helps them identify themselves

as engineers," said DiFrancesco.

In fact, she still uses Turner's moon phase box in class to help her current students not only learn about moon phases, but see what their peers did, and what they can do themselves.

She also said she's grateful to UNCG for working so closely with her on the projects. "The alliance I've had with UNCG over the last few years has been wonderful, because they supply all of these things for these kids, and I wouldn't be able to do that on my own."

The alliance is growing. After the success in DiFrancesco's sixth-grade class last year, UNCG is now partnering with more teachers at Kiser to bring the lessons into their classrooms.

Both Tan and DiFrancesco hope continued success will allow the program to reach even more students and schools in the future.



**I liked that I came up with the idea of a light up desk, because I wanted to help everybody"**

Jamilla Idrissa's idea of the light up desk, powered by a hand crank, stemmed from her need to find items in her desk quickly, or risk being late for her next class.



# What People Are Saying About CCS

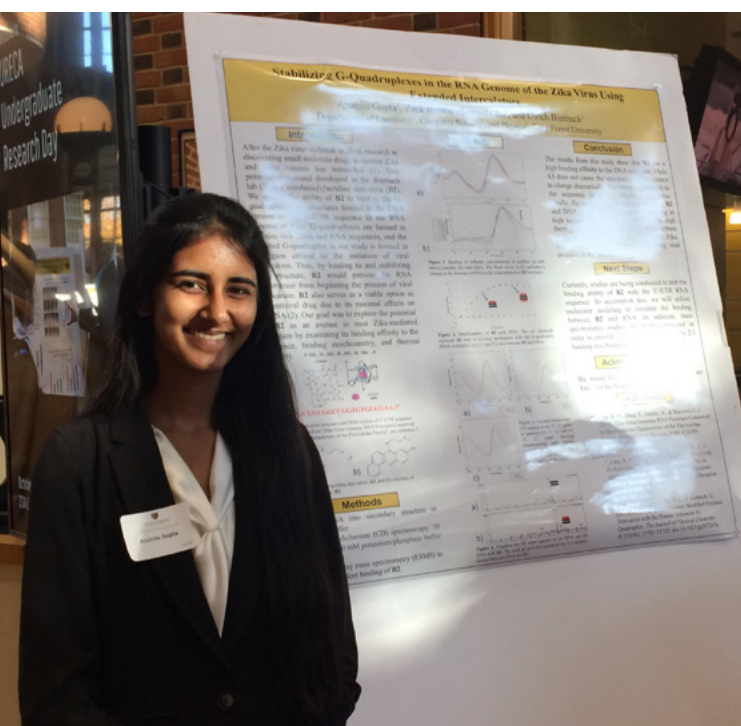


“In a world where most of our use of technology is from the ‘user’ end of the spectrum, it is important to expose children to being creators using technology... The staff at General Greene is committed to including STEM subjects across the board, and I’ve been encouraged by seeing how the technology, media and science specialists are pushing into other classes this year.”

Matt Fisher, father of two General Greene Students

“Andrews Aviation Academy prepared me for college by allowing me to take college classes at GTCC, which helped me get a lot of prerequisite credits done. It also prepared me for college because it motivated me to start thinking about my future more by preparing my resume, which I later found out is really important in college and life.”

William Roberts, Andrews Aviation Academy graduate and current student at Xavier University in Cincinnati, OH.



“Since 10th grade, I have had the opportunity to conduct research in developing antiviral drugs at the Wake Forest University Innovation Quarter. I came into high school with a passion for biology, which was further developed as I took courses in related subjects. One of my favorite parts of biology is understanding the intricate processes that make life possible, along with the ways in which scientists can aid those with diseases caused by mutations at the molecular level. This interest in biology is what led me to reach out to a professor at Wake Forest who was conducting research in an area that interested me, and he helped me in establishing a project to identify potential treatments for the Zika virus.”

Anahita Gupta, Early College at Guilford junior, is currently interning with Dr. Ulrich Bierbach and Dr. Samuel Cho at Wake Forest University

**Finding ways to encourage an interest in STEM can come from passionate teachers, after-school clubs and even school projects. Here are just a few examples of GCS students and teachers standing out on the national and state level in STEM.**

## Early College at Guilford Robotics

The Early College at Guilford's FIRST Robotics Team succeeded in qualifying three teams for the World Championship in 2017, with Team 731 earning eighth place in their first year at the world championship.

Each year, the teams are given a new game and design a robot specifically to compete in that game. The students say their success lies in their excitement for robotics and teamwork.

"Each team grows up together and we are a tight knit community," said Ashley Myers, President of the Early College at Guilford's FIRST Robotics Club. "We also find we all want to learn more so we can put that into the work we're doing."

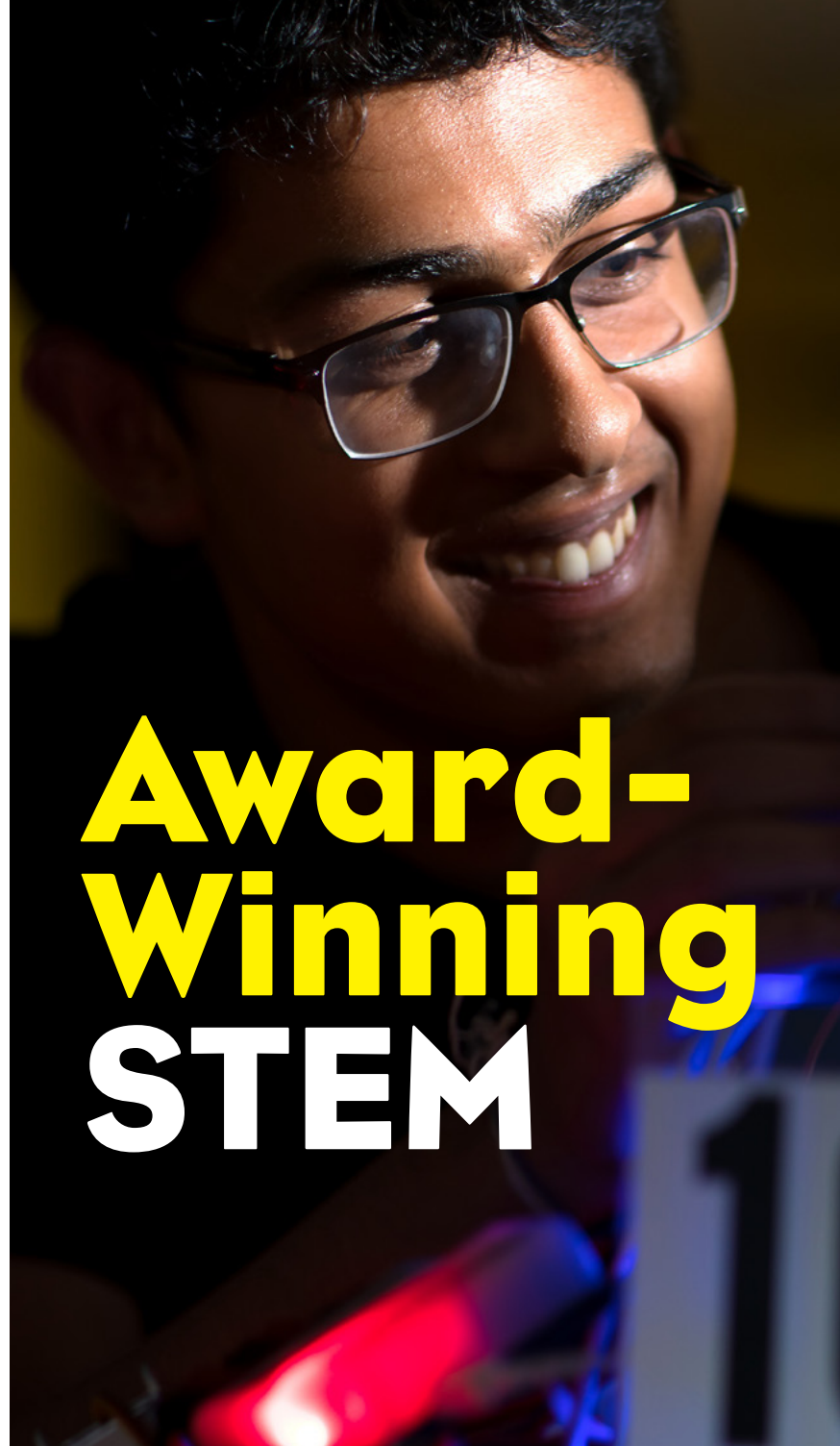
The students are also proud of their outreach efforts. The team partners with Bluford STEM Academy, Wiley Elementary and Archer Elementary to mentor the younger engineers and help foster their interest in robotics.

The outreach efforts earned The Early College at Guilford's Team 5795 North Carolina's Inspire Award, for representing the mission of FIRST, "to inspire young people to be science and technology leaders and innovators, by engaging them in exciting mentor-based programs that build science, engineering and technology skills, that inspire innovation, and that foster well-rounded life capabilities including self-confidence, communication and leadership."

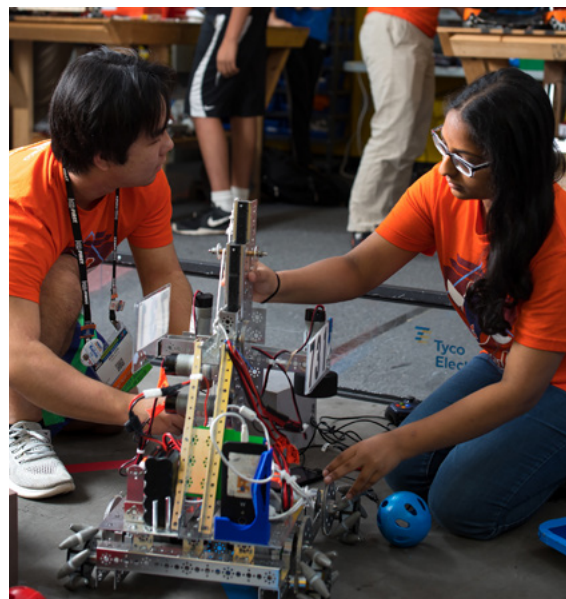
## Inspiring Teachers

Guilford County Schools teachers earned the state award for inspiring their students the last two years. In 2017, Weaver Academy teacher Jeffrey Gates was named the NCWIT North Carolina Educator Award Winner. In 2016, Northern's Scott Ilkenhons earned that honor. The National Center for Women and Information Technology (NCWIT) gives the award each year to educators that have demonstrated a commitment to encouraging young women's aspirations in computing.

The success of their students speak volumes. This past April, Weaver Academy student Diep (Ngoc) Nguyen was named one of 50 National Aspirations in Computing winner from NCWIT, and two other GCS students received honorable mentions. This fall, Weaver Academy sophomore Gabrielle Campbell was selected as a 2017 Charlotte Metro/Piedmont Area Affiliate Winner.



# Award-Winning STEM





## STEM Early College at NC A&T Real World Design Challenge

STEM Early College at NC A&T students earned the title of North Carolina Real World Design Challenge State Champions the last two years and are now looking for number three.

The Real World Design Challenge is an annual competition that provides high school students with the opportunity to work on real-world engineering challenges in a team environment. The STEM Early College's last championship team designed an unmanned aerial vehicle and associated unmanned aircraft system to serve as multipurpose tools for farmers.

"The Real World Design Challenge has allowed me to hone my leadership and communication skills," said team member Via Abiera.

This year, the school's seven teams are made up with all new competitors. This year's challenge is similar to last year's competition, with the exception of new components to the unmanned aircraft.

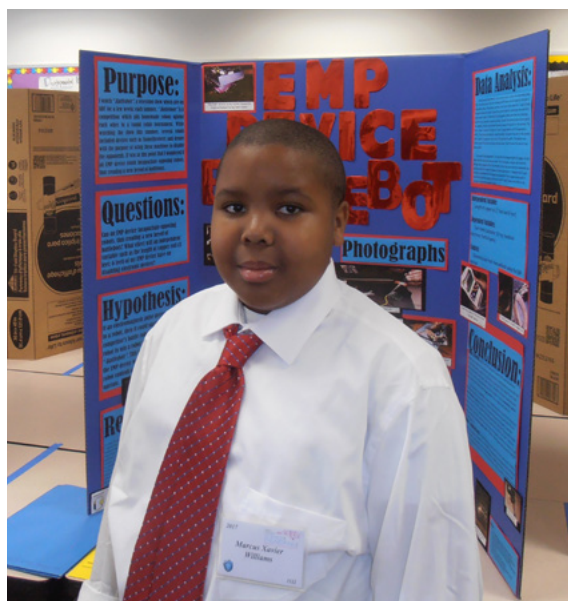
## 2016-17 Science Fair Award

Marcus Williams was named a state-wide winner in the 2016-17 North Carolina Science and Engineering Fair while he was a fifth-grade student at Millis Road Elementary. He earned an "exemplary award," the top honor for elementary students, for his project "Electromagnetic Pulse (EMP) Device Battlebot."

"I am proud to say Marcus has done a science fair project every year since kindergarten," said his mom Shawn Williams. "Back when Marcus first turned in his project proposal, Mrs. Linda Daniels, his 5th grade science teacher, was the one who encouraged his idea and said she thought it was a winning idea."

**Top:** Early College at Guilford's Robotics Team.

**Bottom:** North Carolina Real World Design Challenge State Champions, Marcus Williams







# Resourcing STEM Education: GEA Provides Access to Needed Supplies

**STEM continues to be a priority focus area for educators across the country and for good reason. Science, technology, engineering and math skills are essential to the jobs of today and tomorrow. What often gets missed is the need for increased resources and funding to help educators dig into teaching STEM in relevant ways.**

And that's where Guilford Education Alliance (GEA) comes in. GEA is an independent nonprofit organization made up of key stakeholders across the county – parents, grandparents, educators, administrators, business leaders, community leaders, nonprofits and for-profits – who understand that healthy schools are the foundation of a thriving community. GEA works to support quality public education for every Guilford County child.

"Supporting our public schools can mean different things at different times," said GEA executive director Winston McGregor. "Once GEA knows about a need, we can quickly connect GCS with available community resources to make the spark of an idea a reality."





One example is GEA's Teacher Supply Warehouse. "Teachers want to offer creative, experiential STEM activities, but often the funding for needed materials just isn't there," explains McGregor. "The Warehouse is a treasure trove of supplies that can help teachers creatively inspire students without bankrupting their own limited budgets." The average public school teacher spends \$1000 of their own money to furnish their classroom. To help off-set those costs, GEA started the Teacher Supply Warehouse which offers new and gently-used supplies to GCS educators at no-cost. Dr. Fran Nolan, a retired GCS science teacher and principal recently donated two truckloads of supplies that he had collected over his long career – rock collections, test tubes, electrical equipment and more. Those supplies quickly found their way into GCS classrooms across the county. Individual donations as well as supplies gathered through drives hosted by local corporations, houses of faith, scout troops and others keep the shelves stocked throughout the year.

On a bigger scale, linking the resources of the community with the county's schools can also mean tapping into available private funding for GCS initiatives. "Investing in our public schools isn't just the right thing to do morally," explains McGregor. "It's the right thing to do for the business community's bottom-line." McGregor points out that well-funded STEM programs help develop the well-trained workforce of tomorrow.



**“What if we all – everyone in our community – made schools our business?” asks McGregor. “Think of the possibilities that could be sparked.”**

Interested in learning how you can get involved?  
Go to [www.GuilfordEducationAlliance.org](http://www.GuilfordEducationAlliance.org).



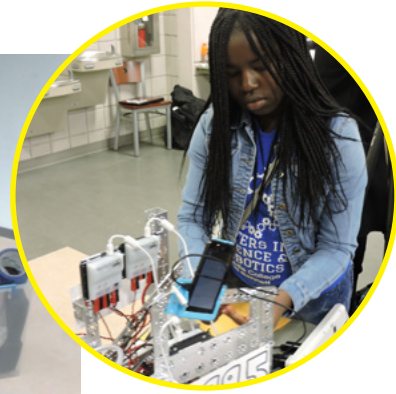
**GEA and the business community bring resources that spark STEM possibilities with our schools:**

**\$27,000** donated by Duke Energy over the last four years to purchase STEM supplies for teachers

**\$10,000** donated this year from Quorvo to purchase ittyBit electronic building block sets for Jackson Middle School

**\$1,100,000** raised for start-up funding for the STEM Early College at NC A&T University and the Health Sciences program at the Middle College at UNC-Greensboro.

# Community Support Builds Opportunities



**In 2015, Guilford County Schools won a \$150,000 grant to train and equip new robotics teams in local high schools, bringing this hands-on experience to more students.**

Several GCS schools, including Ragsdale, Penn-Griffin, the Academy at Smith, Grimsley, the Middle College at Bennett, Southern and Smith benefited from the training and continue to compete in North Carolina's First Tech Challenge (FTC) each year. The teams are responsible for designing, building and programming their robots to compete against other teams.

The Middle College at Bennett's Sisters in Science and Robotics Club expanded its opportunities in 2016, winning another grant to purchase a 3D printer and PLA filaments to create a NASA Rover design project. The investment allowed students to design and create their own parts for the robotics competitions and the NASA Human Rover Challenge.

Now, this year the team will attend the NC First Tech Robotics Challenge thanks to \$1,000 from the Enrichment Fund for the Guilford County Schools.

Team supervisor Marcia Moore-Lyons said she's grateful to the generosity of the community that has allowed the young women at her school to find a passion in STEM through robotics.

"When I first meet students they say, 'I'm not good at science' or 'I don't want to be a doctor,'" explains Moore-Lyons. "When people first think about science they think of the medical field. I want to introduce them to other fields that may gain their interest in STEM."

Moore-Lyons said the robotics team has more than doubled in size since it started three years ago, and some students go on to study STEM disciplines in college.

**"I would say that this club has shown me how different components make up a team, in order for a result to happen. I personally want to do computer science, and exploring programming in this club has gotten me used to working behind the scenes of a project."**

**Tytianna Horne, president of the Middle College at Bennett's Sisters in Science and Robotics Club**



# Business Partners: Launching GCS Students

**“They (the students) get to see the workflow such as typing prescriptions, filling them, checking for drug interactions, etc. They learn how to interact with patients and doctors. They observe pharmacist counseling of both prescription and over-the-counter medications. They observe the pharmacist giving vaccinations. They also learn about inventory. I think it’s great for the students who are interested in healthcare. They get to see all of the things we do to help people on their path to better health. I have actually hired some of the students after they job shadowed as pharmacy technicians.”**

– Kim Graham is a pharmacist at CVS in Summerfield. She has worked with pharmacy students from Northwest and Northern for approximately five years.

**“An aging workforce has the potential to create shortages in many areas, and we face a challenge of sustaining young talent involvement in STEM careers. The partnership between GCS and HAECO Americas allows us to build a pipeline of talent that is well aware of what opportunities HAECO has to offer. It also enhances our workforce culture by bringing in new ideas from groups that can bring different perspectives.”**

– Clarissa Carl, Talent Acquisition Manager for HAECO Americas. Approximately 8 to 10 students from Andrews Aviation Academy job shadow with the company each year in the spring and fall.



# STEM is Fun

**GCS teachers are passionate about their jobs and their students, so they always look for new ways to teach their lessons and get the students excited about what they're learning in class. Conducting labs right out of popular TV shows and playing with Legos are just a few examples of how GCS educators are bringing STEM to life.**

## Irving Park STEM Days

"This is going to be awesome," yelled one fourth grade student at Irving Park Elementary as she got ready for the next science experiment.

The elementary students were participating in one of the schools STEM days, held several times throughout the year. Graduate students from N.C. State University and UNC-Chapel Hill lead groups of students in various experiments that coincide with GCS' science curriculum. Each experiment starts with a question and a hypothesis from the students, then they test their theories.

"The kids love it," said Principal Cynthia McKee who is also working on building a STEM Lab at the school.

The partnership with the universities is also designed to help the teachers learn new techniques to get students excited about what they learn in class.

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Dola Nie Mah, 10, with his new rubber ball made with glue and other simple ingredients during Irving Park Elementary's STEM Day.







Southern Guilford High School students perform tests during the GSR and Tool Marks Lab in Heather Montgomery's Honors Forensic Science class.



Fifth-graders at Irving Park Elementary create bouncy balls as a science experiment during the school's STEM Day.



Science concepts are reinforced through fun, hands-on projects in Southwest Elementary's STEM Lab.

## Southern High Honors Forensics

The students in Heather Montgomery's Honors Forensic Science class are always excited on lab days.

"I like 'Law and Order,' and I always thought it would be fun to know how they do what they do," said sophomore Synia Waldon. "(In this class) you're hands-on and experience the actual work."

On this particular day, the students are testing for gunshot residue and making impressions of tool marks to determine what was used at a crime scene. Of course, the crimes are fabricated but the tools and science are all real.

"They hear from people who are actually doing the work thanks to partnerships with local law enforcement, and they use the same chemicals and materials that are used in forensics labs," said Montgomery.

Right now, Southern High is the only GCS school to offer forensic science at the honors level, thanks to Montgomery's work. She spent the summer proving the class would meet the state's honors expectations with coursework, labs and assessments she used with the curriculum she created before joining GCS. Now, the class can be offered in other schools that might be interested.

"I like the honors level, because it allows us to work with the depth and rigor required to understand and perform the same techniques used by CSI technicians and scientists in the field," said Montgomery.

## Southwest Elementary STEM Lab

Southwest Elementary school makes STEM exploration a regular part of the school week. Just as students spend time each week on music, art and physical education, they also spend time in the school STEM lab.

The lab, which was created just last year, allows students to take a more hands-on approach to what they're learning in science lessons. They work with marble runs, magnets, Kinex, Legos and other items to bring science and math concepts to life.

"Look! I'm making force of motion," said one boy to STEM specialist Michael Graham. "See how it goes around?"

Mr. Graham looks on with pride and excitement at all of the student's work. He takes special care to make sure each lesson supports the subjects his students discuss in other classes, including motion, sound vibrations, thermal energy and the weather.

"We teach them the vocabulary and concepts," said Graham. "They're having fun and learning at the same time. A lot of the teachers tell me this is the class their students never want to miss."

# What Else is Happening in GCS

## GCS Official Assists Puerto Rican Schools After Hurricane Maria

Guilford County Schools' Executive Director of Facilities, Julius Monk, was one of seven people in the country chosen to review the damage caused by Hurricane Maria to Puerto Rico's schools.

In eight days, they saw 33 of the island's 1,300 schools. They traveled as close as 15 minutes from their hotel in San Juan to three hours away into the island's mountainous western side where roads were as steep as a rollercoaster incline.

"You have all this time alone, thinking about the things you saw with your own eyes and you realize there's something about overcoming tragedy that brings people together," Monk said. "I felt like I left a piece of myself there."

To read more about Monk's time in Puerto Rico and what he saw, visit [www.gcsnc.com](http://www.gcsnc.com) and click on District News.

## GCS Students Raise \$33,000 for Hurricane Damaged Schools

Guilford County School students spent a month collecting change, selling cookies, hosting lemonade stands and more to help schools impacted by Hurricanes Harvey and Maria as part of the district's "Change for Children" Campaign. In one month, they raised more than \$33,000 for schools in Texas and Puerto Rico.

A video about the district-wide campaign is available on the district's [YouTube page](#).

## GCS Unveils Strategic Plan Outlining District Goals

Superintendent Sharon L. Contreras' new strategic plan, *Ignite Learning*, will streamline goals and priorities while also providing more accountability.

Steps outlined in the plan include strengthening Career and Technical Education (CTE) programs to better prepare students for post-secondary success, increase focus on literacy and enrolling students of color in more rigorous coursework to eradicate achievement and preparation gaps, improve operational efficiency, recruit and develop a high-performing workforce through increasing professional learning opportunities and compensation for those who perform better and lead or teach in high-needs schools, and more.

The entire strategic plan is available on the GCS website, [www.gcsnc.com](http://www.gcsnc.com), under the About Our District tab.



Julius Monk, left, Executive Director of Facilities, Guilford County Schools, meets with Robert Faison, center, construction project manager, Guilford County Schools and Brandon Anderson, right, assistant project manager Samet/SRS to finalize occupancy of the new Western Guilford Middle School.

GCS' Change for Children campaign raises more than \$33,000 for students and families in Houston, Dallas and Puerto Rico.



## GCS Forms New Group to Improve and Expand Higher Education Partnerships

GCS Superintendent Sharon L. Contreras will meet with a group of higher education leaders on a regular basis to discuss ways to expand and improve the district's partnerships with local colleges and universities.

The group, called the Superintendent's Think Tank, consists of key GCS leaders and deans and department chairs of the schools of education at UNCG, North Carolina A&T State University, High Point University, Bennett College, Greensboro College and Guilford College.

GCS hopes the partnership will provide a direct pipeline of qualified teachers who are ready for the district's classrooms. Higher education leaders believe the meetings will better help them train their students.

## GCS Website Offers New Data Dashboards

GCS has launched a new data resource tool on its website that will offer the public an opportunity to review and analyze district information in one, easy-to-find location.

The dashboards will include data ranging from basic school information to standardized test results by grade, race/ethnicity and gender. In any display, student information and identities are protected and not available to the public.

The Data Dashboards can be found under several tabs on the GCS home page, including QuickLinks, Community, Academics and Departments.



Superintendent's Think Tank group from left to right – Dr. Henry Johnson, Bennett College, Chairman, Department of Curriculum & Instruction; Dr. Julie Burke, Guilford College, Chairwoman of Education Studies; Guilford County Schools Superintendent, Dr. Sharon L. Contreras; Dr. Anthony Graham, North Carolina A&T University, Dean, College of Education; Dr. Rochelle Brock, UNCG, Department Chairwoman, Education Leadership & Cultural Foundations; Dr. Randy Penfield, UNCG, Dean, School of Education; Dr. Rebecca Blomgren, Greensboro College, Chairwoman, Department of Education; Dr. Mariann Tillery, High Point University, Dean, School of Education

## Stay Connected



### LET'S TALK

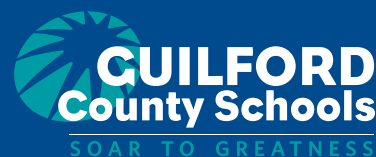
GCS APP  
WWW.GCSNC.COM  
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**“To raise new questions, new possibilities, to regard old problems from a new angle, requires creative imagination and marks real advance in science.”**

ALBERT EINSTEIN

