



GUILFORD
EDUCATION ALLIANCE



GUILFORD
County Schools

IGNITE

EXPLORING GUILFORD COUNTY SCHOOLS

SPRING 2019

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A Message from the Superintendent

INVESTING IN THE ARTS

When students come home from school each day, what do they talk about? What classes inspired them or sparked a new interest? The answer for every child will be a little different, and for many the answer is music, dance, theatre or art. The classes that ignite their imaginations, allow them to get creative and show their own personalities through their work.

Seeing the excitement in a child when they come home with a picture they drew or want you to listen to the song they just learned, it should be no surprise that arts education is vital to a child's academic success.

Faced with difficult budget decisions, many school districts have chosen to cut funding for arts education. It's a challenge I understand, and one I am grateful I have not had to make. Thanks to parent and community support, along with the hard work and dedication of a passionate staff, Guilford County Schools (GCS) has invested in its arts programs during this past decade. We've added 40 positions and increased community partnerships to 58.

We've invested for good reason. Of GCS students enrolled in arts education, 100 percent graduate from high school; 99 percent are college bound; 99 percent are also enrolled in honors, Advanced Placement or International Baccalaureate courses; and 97 percent are involved in sports, clubs or student government. The numbers don't lie.

The research also backs us up. Studies have shown that participating in the arts can boost student achievement in other academic areas and can help close the opportunity gap between socioeconomic groups by providing enrichment opportunities to students who may not otherwise be able to afford them.

Thanks to GCS' investment and the support from our community, our district is now a national leader in arts education, earning multiple awards in the last two years including the 2018 John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts and National School Boards Association District of Excellence in Arts Education Award and being named the 2018 National Association of Music Merchants (NAMM) Best Community for Music Education.

We're taking that success further with a \$2.5 million Assistance for Arts Education Development and Dissemination grant from the U.S. Department of Education. The grant is providing tools and training to integrate a new arts curriculum in both art and non-art courses.

We're a leader, but we continue to look for ways to improve. In these pages you will learn more about what is happening in GCS' arts education departments, where we are seeing great success, where some of our students are today and where we hope to go in the future.

In the interest of all children,

Sharon L. Contreras

Sharon L. Contreras, PhD

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EXPLORING GUILFORD COUNTY SCHOOLS SPRING 2019



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Integrating Arts

Walk into Allen Jay Elementary on any given day and you are likely to see students chanting and dancing in math class, creating their own carnival games in science class and learning about Greek mythology in the art room.

It's all part of the new Arts Integration Program underway in three Guilford County Schools during the 2018-19 school year, thanks to a \$2.5 million Assistance for Arts Education Development and Dissemination (AAEDD) grant.

The program integrates arts into core curriculum subjects and more closely ties in the grade-level curriculum to "specials" such as music, art and physical education.

At Allen Jay Elementary, the teachers and principal are invigorated by the new format and excited about what the future could bring.

"It's great to see kids using musical instruments in their classrooms as a way to support and enhance their learning in other subject areas," said music teacher Marcia Renne after she finished teaching students about songs and instruments from other cultures.

"When we were going through the training, it was so easy to see how STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Math) related topics fit in with arts and design," explained third grade science and math teacher Brittany Nunes. Her students were building games for a classroom carnival. The games included an explanation of how their design used force.

The training Nunes referred to is GCS' new Lyceum program. The program provides tools and training to integrate a new arts curriculum in both art and non-art courses.

"For example, students can learn geometry by studying angles used in a famous piece of art," explained Nathan Street, director of fine arts for GCS.

The practices also seem to be working for the students. During a multiplication lesson, third grade math teacher Jo Anna Robertson reminded

students to use their "waves." One student with a question moved her arms in wave motion while saying, "8, 16, 24. Eight times three is 24."

"The songs and motions help our kids make connections and retrieve the information," explained Principal Carla Flores-Ballesteros. "We've found the program also encourages more teamwork within the school as a whole. The grade-level teachers work more closely with the specialists to effectively integrate their lessons."

There is more to come, with an artist-in-residence scheduled to join the school during the spring semester.

The program is currently in place at Allen Jay Elementary, Peeler Open Elementary for the Performing Arts and Southwest High with plans to expand it to other schools in the future.



“We’ve found the program also encourages more teamwork within the school as a whole. The grade-level teachers work more closely with the specialists to effectively integrate their lessons.”

– Carla Flores-Ballesteros, Principal

The grant also gives GCS new opportunities to partner with local arts organizations, from an apprenticeship program for older students to providing private lessons for students who normally would not be able to afford them.

“The research shows us that students involved in art are more likely to succeed in school,” said Street. “With this program, we are leading the way to closing the opportunity gap and giving more of our students the chance to ignite their passion and interest in the arts and school.”

Recognizing GCS

\$1.4 million Professional Development in Arts Education (PDAE) federal grant

\$2.5 million Assistance in Arts Education Development Dissemination (AAEDD) federal grant

National Association for Music Merchants (NAMM)
2018 Best Community for Music Education

2018 John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts and the National School Boards Association (NSBA) **District of Excellence in Arts Education**

\$1 million Lang Lang International Music Foundation Keys of Inspiration (KOI) Piano Lab grant

2017 and 2018 recipient of the National Pawn instrument donation valued at **\$10,000** each

2018 Community Theater of Greensboro (CTG) community arts leadership award for **Dr. Nathan Street, GCS Director of Fine Arts**

The Classroom Wisdom of Elvira Green

A close-up portrait of Elvira Green, an elderly African American woman with short, curly grey hair. She is wearing glasses, a red blazer, a gold chain necklace, and a large gold hoop earring. She is smiling warmly at the camera. The background is a blurred green wall.

Underneath a string of Christmas lights in the chorus room at Swann Middle, they sing, smile and dance boy-girl around the diminutive woman with the bright eyes and skin the color of cinnamon.

After class, they surround her. She talks to each one of them in an enunciated voice as musical as any instrument. She answers their questions and addresses them as “darling” or “dear one.” They seem in awe.

Maybe these eighth-graders should be.

She is Elvira Green, Class of 1958 from Dudley High. And she is an opera star.

A Grandmother’s Advice

When the Steven Tanger Center for the Performing Arts opens next year in downtown Greensboro, Green will be there.

She is the artistic adviser for “Porgy & Bess,” one of Tanger’s first performances. She’ll help performers bring to life the world-famous opera about Catfish Row, the dockside spot where the poor and destitute scrape out a living around 1930 in historic Charleston.

Green brings to the production a wealth of experience. Green has played Maria, one of the opera’s main characters, more than 800 times. She also will work with Rhiannon Giddens, the world-renowned singer from Greensboro.

Green is a gifted teacher. She also is a risk-taker from way back.

When she was 14, her father worried about her dream of being a professional pianist and told her she should have something more stable to fall back on. She disagreed.



"If I don't look back," she told him, "I won't fall back."

She didn't.

In 1962, after graduating from N.C. Central University with a major in piano performance and a minor in French, she moved to New York City to study voice. She had big dreams, and she believed in herself – and what her mentor, her namesake, always told her.

That person was her maternal grandmother, Elvirah Catherine Pennington Watson.

"Hold your head high," she always told her oldest granddaughter. "Only God is greater."

Green listened. She practiced too. Her mezzo soprano voice became a sensuous, 2 ½-octave instrument that could be as loud as a church bell and as soft as a coo from a newborn child.

People noticed.

'She Didn't Quit'

Green became one of three African-American performers for the Metropolitan Opera, the 135-year-old opera company known as the world's greatest stage.

Green sang on and off with the Met for nearly two decades, starting in the chorus and rising to principal artist. That experience catapulted her worldwide.

She performed for presidents, played principal operatic roles from San Francisco to Sydney, Australia, and sang in such iconic places as Carnegie Hall.

Along the way, she found happiness and heartache. She got married and had a son. Her husband died in 1991. Four years later, she moved back to Greensboro to be close to her mom, who had relocated from a small-town in North Carolina to Greensboro decades before.

She now lives in her mom's old house. It's a few blocks from her alma mater, Dudley High, around the corner from one sister, and a 15-minute drive from another sister.

She is a board member of the Greensboro Opera, the first recipient of the acclaimed Betty Cone Medal of Arts Award and a member of Dudley's Hall of Distinction, the school's hall of fame. She's also a teacher revered by a generation of students.

For 12 years until 2007, she ran a summer camp in Greensboro where teenagers produced an opera and did everything from creating the stage to performing the arias. Her graduates have gone on to become ministers, doctors, actors and acclaimed performers.

Green's passion for teaching has never ebbed.

In a few months, she will resurrect the opera camp as part of the IGNITE Summer Camp. Meanwhile, school officials want to bring her in as a visiting artist during the school year and have her work with older elementary and middle school students interested in music.

Just like the ones at Swann Middle.

"She gives me a lot of hope," says India Jones, a 13-year-old student. "When I know a woman, particularly an African-American woman, can make it, that keeps me strong."

"She has wisdom," adds Bene Daye Ponder, a 14-year-old student. "And she didn't quit."

She won't. Even at 80.

"Whenever I'm with a group of young people, they're teaching me something," Green says. "They're teaching me that there is still life to be lived."

The Benefit of Boundless Determination

Green came to Greensboro as a high school junior and moved in with her maternal aunt and uncle. They wanted their niece to get some big-city culture because Green lived more than two hours northeast of Greensboro in a town no bigger than a dime.

Green, the second oldest of four, grew up on a family farm beside U.S. 158 in Macon, N.C. Her dad was a medical secretary; her mom, a teacher. She took piano lessons, attended a one-room schoolhouse, dealt with racism and learned the importance of familial roots in the red clay of Warren County.

Three generations of her family lived side by side, and they did much together. That included spending every Saturday afternoon, in the living room of the family's 19-room two-story house, listening to the Metropolitan Opera on their radio.

Green tells that story to anyone who asks. The students at Swann Middle did.

"Oh, my dear," Green told them. "I must've been six years old when I first started listening to all those beautiful voices, and that's when I began to think, 'I got this.'"

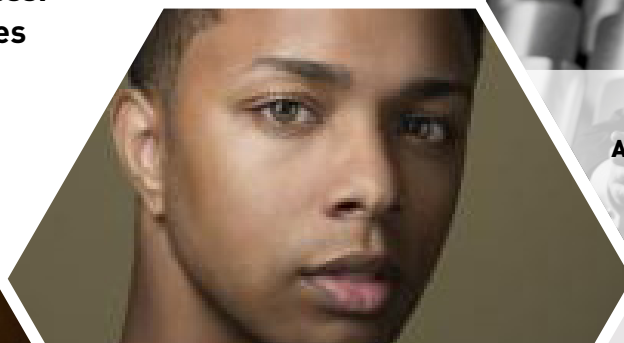
More questions followed. After class, up came Josiah Johnson, a shy, slender boy of 13. He hugged her.

"You know, I want to try to enroll next year in Weaver," he told her.

"You don't have to try, darling," Green told him, her hands on his shoulders. "You just enroll. You're already in music, darling. Music is who you are."

Successful Graduates

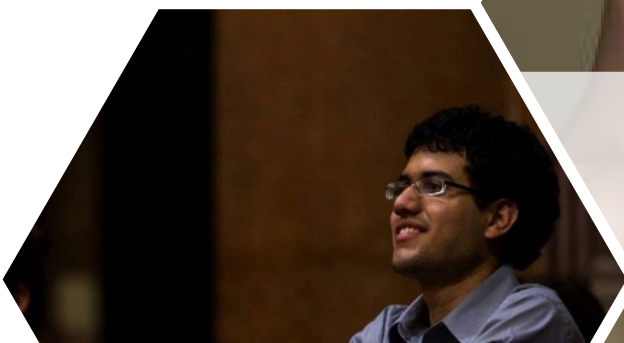
GCS' talented graduates have gone on to great success. Here are just a few examples of our outstanding alumni:



Weaver Academy graduate **Brion Marquis Watson** toured with "Hamilton."



Andrews High alum **Anthony Dean Griffey** is a critically acclaimed American tenor.



Composer **J. Andrés Ballesteros** graduated from Southwest Guilford High.



Page High graduate **Jules Pegram** is now a composer, conductor and pianist.



Ragsdale graduate, **Imani Pressley** is a Grammy-nominated producer, singer-songwriter who signed her first major deal just out of high school.



The legendary American jazz saxophonist and composer **John Coltrane** graduated from what was then William Penn High in High Point.



Weaver Academy alum **Smith Carlson** is a multi-platinum engineer, producer and songwriter. He won a Grammy for his work on Taylor Swift's "1989" album.



Harnessing the Power of Music

Franco Nannucci knows the power of music. In fact, a quote from legendary musician Stevie Wonder inspires him – “a time to love can’t just be a project, it must be our promise.”

Nannucci, a native of Italy who moved to Greensboro in 2002, had this quote in mind when he planned his 50th birthday party a few years ago. As a textile executive, Nannucci travelled the world and saw firsthand the poverty that often came with a lack of access to quality education and healthcare. In celebration of his birthday, he asked friends and family to donate money towards improving education and healthcare in Africa. A few weeks later, Nannucci quickly raised \$70,000 and his nonprofit, It's All About the Love Again, was born.

During the first few years, the nonprofit raised funds with its Music for Love charity concerts and focused much of its attention on communities in Africa. But as Nannucci learned more about Guilford County, he decided that there was work to be done here.

“I saw that Guilford County has a high number of people living in poverty, way too high,” he

explained. “As much as I believe we all should work to help the poorest countries in the world, we also need to look at what is happening in our own neighborhoods.”

Nannucci and his wife, Laura are parents of three Guilford County Schools’ students and wanted to do something to help public schools. Local friends of Nannucci connected him with Guilford Education Alliance (GEA) to learn more about the needs of the schools and GEA paired him up with Peck Elementary. The school was working to update its media center and Nannucci’s nonprofit and its board members donated more than \$15,000 to help buy books and computers.

Three days after a tornado swept through Greensboro, Nannucci was touring Peck Elementary with GEA’s executive director, Winston McGregor. As they talked about the three GCS schools that had been severely damaged by the tornado, Nannucci had an idea.



To learn more about GEA, go to GuilfordEducationAlliance.org.

I asked Winston, “Can we hold a concert to raise funds for the schools and their students?”

McGregor quickly agreed to help. Nannucci then reached out to renowned Italian jazz musician and friend, Fabrizio Bosso who he knew would be returning to the U.S.

“I asked him if he would like to spend a couple of days with us here in Greensboro and perform a benefit concert for tornado relief,” said Nannucci. “He immediately said yes!”

Seven weeks later, the Fabrizio Bosso Quartet performed to a sold-out audience of 300 at the Van Dyke Performance Space. The Music for Love concert raised \$20,750 for GCS’s tornado relief efforts. Nannucci hopes this is just the beginning for Guilford County. “We have to decide as a community if we want to invest in education,” Nannucci said. “It’s the only way to make our community better.”



Keys of Inspiration

"When you give a child the gift of music, you give a child the world"

A wonderful mixture of sounds come out of the piano lab at Jefferson Elementary as budding musicians explore skills on their instruments. The school is one of five Guilford County Schools selected to join an elite national partnership, designed to provide new music opportunities to students.

The Lang Lang International Music Foundation™ (LLIMF) selected the five schools, Irving Park Elementary, Hampton Elementary, Sedgefield Elementary, Jefferson Elementary and Oak View Elementary, out of hundreds of applicants from across the country, as recipients of the LLIMF Keys of Inspiration™ grant.

Keys of Inspiration™ (KOI), part of the GRAMMY™ Music Education Coalition, is an innovative program designed to revolutionize what music education looks like in American public schools. Created to inspire change from within, KOI weaves rigorous, keyboard-centric musical instruction into selected Title I public schools' mandatory curriculum—integrating group piano classes for grades 2-5, twice a week.



Keys of Inspiration™ grant winners receive:

- A permanent piano lab with 20-30 state-of-the-art electric Roland pianos,
- A musical curriculum designed by Lang Lang himself,
- Supplemental training and ongoing support for the music teachers,
- Access to the Keys of Inspiration™ Educators Network and Resource Library,
- Technical support for three years.

Keys of Inspiration™ aims to encourage students to create music, and through music, help them find a secure space where they can freely be and believe in themselves. So far, the students say it's a success.

"My second favorite thing I want to do in life is piano, just behind astronomy," said second-grade student Sean Binder. "Learning different notes and learning different songs. It inspires me to write new songs."

"I've never played piano in my life. I really like the piano," said third-grade student Gage Watlington. "My favorite part is making new beats."

The Lang Lang International Music Foundation's \$250,000 investment in GCS will provide students with access to an area of music education that is generally only accessible through paid private lessons.

"Not only do students get to learn piano individually, they also learn how to play as an ensemble and explore ways to play expressively and beautifully," said Jefferson music teacher Winnona Roshan. "Students create their own pieces as well as play music from famous composers."

The Grammy-nominated, internationally-renowned pianist Lang Lang has been supporting children through music for over a decade. Heralded by the New York Times as "the hottest artist on the classical music planet," Lang Lang plays sold-out concerts covering all continents of the globe. He was designated a United Nations Messenger of Peace with a special focus on global education, and worked as a Goodwill Ambassador for the UN Children's Fund (UNICEF). He hails from humble beginnings and is committed to creating and participating in charitable activities focused on children through the strategic work done at his foundation.

"When you give a child the gift of music, you give a child the world," said Lang Lang.



Giving Educators Supplies to Inspire & Teach

When Joe Avent, a sixth-grade social studies teacher at Western Middle, visited the Teacher Supply Warehouse in the fall, he had a mission. Avent would soon be teaching a lesson on ancient Egypt and he wanted materials for a project he called “make a mummy.”

For Avent, the goal was simple – make history come alive for his students. The Warehouse, operated by Guilford Education Alliance (GEA), was the perfect place to for Avent to go for creative inspiration and supplies. Shelves are stocked with new and gently-used classroom supplies and GCS teachers can shop at no-cost up to four times a year.

The front section of the Warehouse offers new, name-brand supplies that are often most-needed: glue sticks, notebooks, pencils and more. A separate section provides a plethora of gently-used items that are donated from the community. “If you have it, we guarantee that a teacher can use it!” said Winston McGregor, GEA’s executive director.

As Avent shopped, he found a mix of supplies that included bulletin board paper, plastic toy watches, leftover wrapping paper, ribbon and fabric. “I left with a shopping cart full of supplies!” he said. Soon, 107 sixth-graders at Western Middle had turned the supplies into mummies encased in shoebox tombs covered with hieroglyphics.

And that’s exactly why GEA operates the Warehouse. “On average, teachers spend around \$650 of their own money on classroom supplies,” explained McGregor. “The Warehouse helps them offset the burden on their personal budgets while providing them with much-needed materials.”





The Warehouse stocks its shelves in three ways: monetary donations; individual donations of new or gently-used supplies; and supply drives. Supplies can be dropped off at the GEA office at 311 Pomona Drive, Suite E in Greensboro from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Monday through Thursday. Monetary donations can be made on GEA's website at www.GuilfordEducationAlliance.org. GEA may be reached at (336) 841-4332.



"Education can be complex," said McGregor, "but this is an easy way for our community to make a very real impact and let our teachers know that we value their work."

Photos courtesy
Ivan Cutler



Can you pick a few of these items up on your next shopping trip and donate them?

- Copy paper
- No. 2 pencils
- Glue sticks
- Crayons
- Marble notebooks
- Colored markers
- Colored pencils
- Blue & black ink pens
- Construction paper
- Dry-erase markers
- Highlighters
- Index cards
- Post-it notes
- 2-pocket folders
- Hand sanitizer
- Facial tissues
- Scissors (adult & child)

Are these items in your house but no longer bringing you joy? Teachers can use them!

- Art supplies: paint, fabric, glitter, yarn, pipe cleaners, buttons, seashells, ribbons
- Science supplies: beakers, thermometers, hot plates, aprons, plastic squeeze bottles
- Party & holiday decorations
- Games & puzzles
- Organizational bins, plastic containers, baskets
- Musical instruments
- Cultural & travel souvenirs
- Prize box items – stress balls, small toys, etc.
- Carpet squares
- Desk trays & organizers
- 3-ring binders
- Letterhead and stationery
- Notepads
- Envelopes – even with logos or windows
- Staplers & tape dispensers
- Binder clips
- Hole punchers
- Adding machines
- Canvas bags
- CD cases
- Nametag holders & lanyards



This summer, it's all brand new.

Students once again will come to the Summer Arts Institute and learn how to play the flute, create an opera, act out a play and turn a toothpick into a paintbrush.

But this time, for the first time in a decade, it's not just the Summer Arts Institute this go-round. It'll be much bigger. It'll include three other GCS summer programs — Academic All-Stars, Read To Achieve and Freedom School — all under a new name.

IGNITE Summer Camp.

"We're going to calm that summer slide," says Dr. Nathan Street, the director of fine arts for Guilford County Schools. "All the research shows students lose ground in the summer. But we'll be able to build on the school year with IGNITE and push them further."

From 8 a.m. to 6 p.m., the summer camp will operate five days a week from June 17 through August 16 at Bennett College and Emerywood Baptist Church. One will be in Greensboro, the other in High Point. In both places, students will take one major course and two minor courses.

For example, students can major in robotics and minor in theater and dance.

"I've done a fair amount of research," Street says, "and there is no other school district doing anything like this."

At least 4,000 students are expected — and that's a conservative estimate, Street says — and they'll arrive at summer camp by coming to a hub yet to be finalized and ride a school bus to a summer camp location.

As for students enrolled in Read To Achieve, the summer camp will be free, and buses will pick them up at their homes. It's an incentive to attract more students identified as needing more support in reading.

"Students can't be successful in art or music, social studies or science if they can't read," Street says. "We can help make an impact."

Great Summer Experience





THE 411 ON IGNITE Summer Camp



The cost.

Most programs are free of charge to students, with some specialized programs having a fee. Details and full registration will be available by March 15.

The span.

From June 17 through August 16.

The students eligible.

Kindergarteners through ninth-graders.

The GCS investment.

Around \$1 million, all covered by grants, tuition, in-kind donations and partnerships.

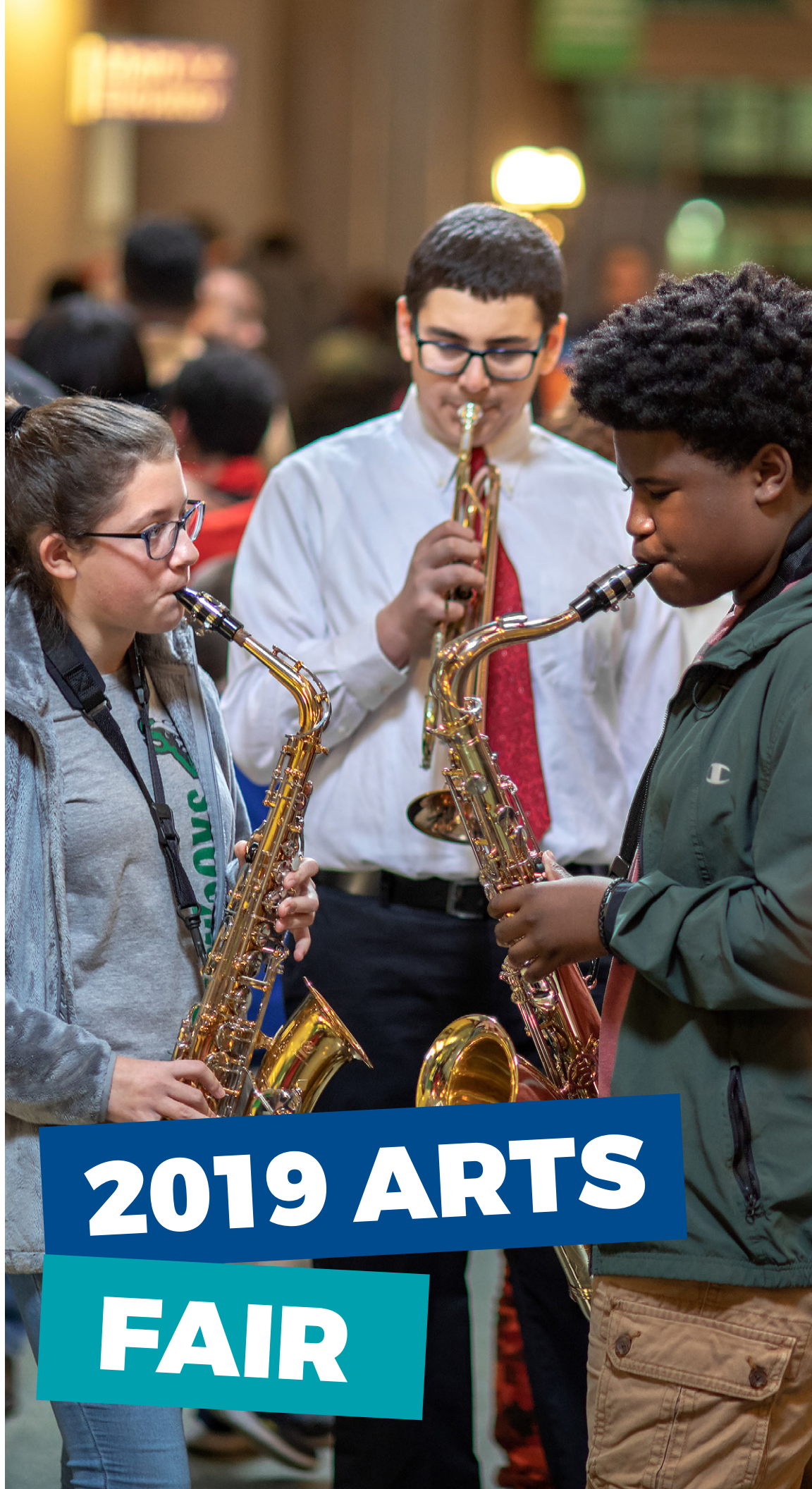
Information:

www.gcsnc.com

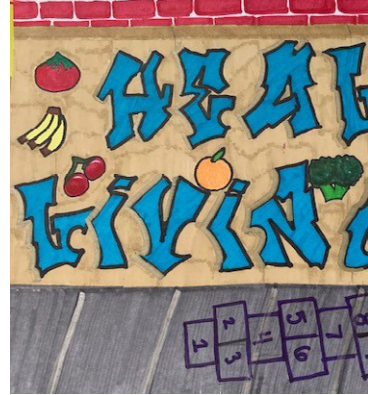
Nathan Street, director of fine arts, (336) 574-2645

Cindy Helms, program manager, (336) 207-8897





2019 ARTS FAIR





Creative Collaborations

Igniting student passions and setting them up for success is a team effort between schools, families and the community. GCS is proud and grateful for our partners in Guilford County and the art community as a whole. Below are just a few examples of how, together, we are inspiring and showcasing student talent.

Community Art Installations

GCS students combine their talents to beautify our community with works of art. Last year, 80 schools participated in an underwater themed art installation created from recyclable materials. Each school's artwork was displayed with others for a year at Piedmont Triad International Airport.

This year's project is in collaboration with Project SNAP, a non-profit partner of Cone Health. Students are working to create a mosaic mural that will be displayed in the hospital's new women's facility. So far, more than 4,000 pieces of student artwork have been collected to be included in the project.

Hey Mozart! Competition

GCS' partnership with the Greensboro Symphony Orchestra (GSO) not only introduces students to the symphony, but also celebrates student talent. The Hey Mozart! competition allows students to compose their own music. The 15- to 30-second melodies are submitted to GSO, and their conductors select a handful to perform for students across the county.

The 2019 Elementary Concert Series will feature work composed by Ava Roland, Bryana Septoe and Elonzo Imes' fourth-grade class from Hunter Elementary.

Arts Fair

GCS and its partners joined forces to introduce students and families to a variety of artistic opportunities at the 2019 GCS Arts Fair in January. The fair, held at the Greensboro Cultural Center, hosted booths showcasing opportunities at schools and community organizations. Attendees were entertained by student performances, visual art activities, art displays and instrument petting zoos so students could try out different instruments.

Art installation artwork from top to bottom by: Eva Maria, 10th-grade Southern High; Jahanna Harmon, 11th-grade Southwest High; Millicent Creef, Kindergarten Millis Road Elementary; Parker Kosobucki, 7th-grade Northwest Middle; and Norah El-Banna, 7th-grade Brown Summit Middle.

All County Collaborations

GCS musicians from the elementary to high school level have the opportunity to work with and get to know other musicians across the county through GCS' eight all-county productions. The groups include All-County High School Chorus, Middle School Chorus, Elementary Chorus, Middle and High School Band, Middle and High School Orchestra and Jazz Band. The district also hosts GCS Dance Day and the GCS Middle School Jazz Festival. Approximately 1,400 students participate in the all-county programs each year.



What Else is Happening in GCS

GCS Superintendent Testifies Before Congress



Guilford County and Guilford County Schools was in the national spotlight on February 12, 2019 when Superintendent Sharon L. Contreras, Ph.D., testified before the House Committee on Education

and Labor. She was the only superintendent testifying at the hearing, "Underpaid Teachers and Crumbling Schools: How Underfunding Public Education Shortchanges America's Students."

Contreras discussed the condition of school facilities and how infrastructure impacts the educational experience for students and teachers.

The invitation came on the heels of an independent audit of GCS facilities, which recommends \$1.5 billion for school renovation, replacement and new construction. The full report may be found on GCS' website.

Equal Opportunity Schools

To assist with meeting the district's strategic plan goal of decreasing the achievement gap between African-American and Latino students and their White peers, GCS is working to identify and enroll more students in Advanced Placement (AP) and International Baccalaureate (IB) programs. The district partnered with Equal Opportunity Schools (EOS), to help identify students who may have been overlooked for those more rigorous academic programs.

Research by The Education Trust shows that more than half a million low-income students and students of color are missing from AP and IB participation. The classes provide a jump start on a college education and can also increase the likelihood of a student's acceptance to and success in college.

EOS works with school districts around the country to identify, enroll and support students who are qualified but missing from those college preparatory courses.

GCS District Science Fair

More than 200 students from across the district showcased their work at the GCS District Science Fair held at the Greensboro Science Center.

Dhairya Agarwal from the Academy at Lincoln won first prize for his project, working with algae to find a solution to pollution. He is now working with the Algae Foundation to get more students from his school involved in their work.

Social Emotional Learning

With the goal of creating safer and more positive learning environments throughout the district, GCS launched a partnership with CASEL (the Collaborative for Academic Social and Emotional Learning). The partnership focuses on district processes that can help children and adults understand and manage emotions, set and achieve positive goals, feel and show empathy for others, establish and maintain positive relationships, and make responsible decisions.

CASEL, a national organization focused on making Social and Emotional Learning (SEL) an integral part of education, has found students who participate in SEL programs do better in school academically and have fewer behavioral issues. With a more positive environment and fewer distractions, students have a better chance of doing their best work in school.

Attendance Matters

In a renewed effort to keep more students in class each day, GCS announced a new partnership with Attendance Works, a national nonprofit dedicated to improving school attendance.

Starting as early as kindergarten or even pre-school, chronic absence predicts lower third-grade reading scores. By middle school, it's a warning sign that students will fail key classes and drop out of high school.

"It's not just about unexcused absences," explained Hedy Chang, director of Attendance Works. "Missing just two days a month, excused or unexcused, can put students from elementary to high school at a greater risk of falling behind and dropping out of school."

North Carolina A&T State University Poster Winners

To commemorate the 59th anniversary of the historic February 1 sit-ins, when four N.C. A&T students sat at the "whites-only" lunch counter at Woolworths in Greensboro, North Carolina A&T State University sponsored a poster competition for GCS middle and high school students. The winning students were honored at an annual breakfast in the Alumni Foundation Events Center on February 1 and the eight winning posters were exhibited in the Harrison Auditorium.

Seniors Jordyn Greenstein, Page High, and Maryam Keshavarz, Northwest High, each earned scholarships to the university for their first- and second-place finishes.

GCS Wins Four Awards for United Way Campaign

Continuing the streak it has maintained since 2013, Guilford County Schools again received the Spirit of North Carolina Award from the United Way of North Carolina for its 2018 campaign.

Three GCS schools — Alamance Elementary, Allen Jay Middle and Christine Joyner Greene Education Center — also received the award, which is given to organizations that demonstrate excellence in their United Way campaigns as well as a strong philanthropic culture and community partnerships.

GCS employee participation increased 6.5 percent from 2017, and the campaign raised more than \$378,000 to benefit the United Way of Greater Greensboro and the United Way of High Point.



Bikes for Kids

Bikes for Kids

This past December, third-grade students at seven GCS schools received early holiday gifts and a special reminder that kindness matters.

The students read a book about kindness, and wrote an essay about kindness in the hopes of winning a bike. Little did they know, every student in their grade would receive one.

"With all the bad we see in the world, and they see something like this happening to them, these kids will always remember it," said Bob Krumroy of Bikes for Kids. "It will teach them that's it's good to help others when you can and appreciate what you've got."

Northwood Chinese New Year Celebration



Students enrolled in Northwood Elementary's International Baccalaureate Primary Years Programme participated in a month-long study of the Chinese New Year, culminating in two Chinese New Year celebrations the first week of February.

All students (K-5) in the program study Mandarin Chinese for 40 minutes at least once a week. In addition to learning a new language, students also

study the culture of China. In January, students explored customs and traditions of the new year, including learning the Chinese dragon dance, various art forms, the importance of tea as part of everyday life, Chinese games, Chinese foods and forms of celebration. The school also hosted six visiting Chinese teachers in partnership with University of North Carolina – Greensboro.

As a culmination of the study, students participated in a day-long Chinese New Year celebration, and hosted a Chinese New Year celebration for families and the community.

GCS to Launch Six Pilot Signature Academies Next Year

Students entering ninth grade this fall will have six new options for advanced Career and Technical Education (CTE) programs. The Board of Education approved new signature academies that support the district's Strategic Plan goal to increase the number of graduating seniors who complete a rigorous career pathway.

The academies approved Thursday feature four themes at six locations, which are:

- Academy of Advanced Manufacturing & Engineering, located at Smith High and Southeast High (attendance zones apply)
- Academy of Computer Science & Information Science, located at Kearns Academy and Northeast High (attendance zones apply)
- Academy of Transportation, Distribution & Logistics, located at Western High (open to all)
- Academy of Biomedical & Specialized Health Sciences, located at Academy at Smith (open to all)

Students can apply for the signature academies during the magnet application window from March 13 to April 5. Families can learn more about the great choices for students in GCS by visiting gcsnc.com.

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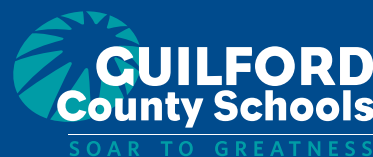
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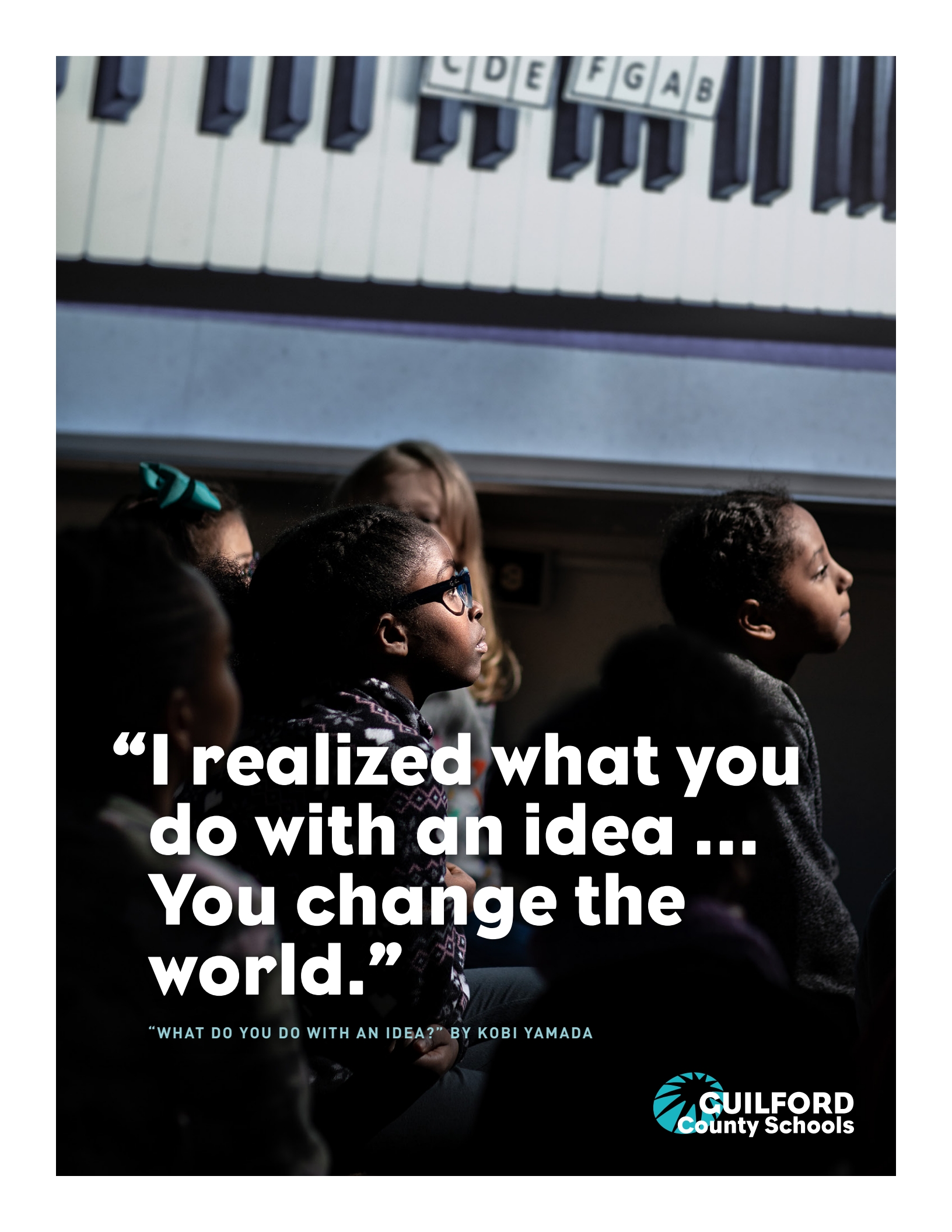
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All Guilford County Schools facilities, both educational and athletic, are tobacco-free learning environments.

712 N. Eugene Street
Greensboro, North Carolina 27401
336.370.8100

www.gcsnc.com





**“I realized what you
do with an idea ...
You change the
world.”**

“WHAT DO YOU DO WITH AN IDEA?” BY KOBI YAMADA