



District 3 Parent/Stakeholder Newsletter

Dr. Michael A. Erwin
School Board Member



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2015-2016 Testing Calendar

Elementary School Testing Dates

Apr. 18-29, 2016 Georgia Milestone (EOG), Grades 3-5
May 23-24, 2016 Georgia Milestone Retest (EOG), Grades 3 and 5

Middle School Testing Dates

Apr. 18-29, 2016 Georgia Milestone End of Grade (EOG), Grades 6-8
May 2-9, 2016 Georgia Milestone End of Course (EOC), Grade 8
May 23-24, 2016 Georgia Milestone End of Grade Retest (EOG), Grade 8

High School Testing Dates

Apr. 13-29, 2016 CTAE End of Pathway Exams, Grades 9-12
Apr. 27-May 31, 2016 International Baccalaureate (IB) Exams Grades 9-12
May 2-9, 2016 Georgia Milestone End of Course (EOC) Spring Main
Grades 9-12
May 2-13, 2016 Advanced Placement (AP) Exams AP Students
Jun. 27-30, 2016 Georgia Milestone End of Course (EOC) Summer Main,
Grades 9-12

Greetings ~

Thank you, thank you, thank you. Your words of encouragement on the inaugural issue of the District 3 Parent\Stakeholder Newsletter are greatly appreciated. As we enter the spring season of the school year, there are several important topics to share with the District 3 community. In this issue, you will find the 2015-2016 testing calendar for April and May and the June summer school retest period. This will be the second year of the new Georgia Milestones Assessment (GMA). Explore this issue to find answers to the most common questions on GMA. Be sure to check out "Toot Our Own Horn" and learn about the great things going on in our schools. There is an update on the dual immersion program scheduled to open the 2016-2017 school year in the new Clifton/Meadowview ES. Keep an eye on upcoming important dates of school system events and meetings. I also encourage your feedback and input

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Georgia Milestones Assessment

What is the Georgia Milestones Assessment System?

The Georgia Milestones Assessment System (Georgia Milestones) is a comprehensive assessment system spanning grades 3 through high school. Georgia Milestones measures how well students have learned the knowledge and skills outlined in the state-adopted content standards in English Language Arts, Mathematics, Science, and Social Studies. Students in grades 3 through 8 will take End-of-Grade (EOG) assessments in each content area, while high school students will take End-of-Course (EOC) assessments for each of the ten courses designated by the State Board of Education.

What is the purpose of Georgia Milestones?

Georgia Milestones is designed to provide information about how well students are mastering the state-adopted content standards in the core content areas of English Language Arts, Mathematics, Science, and Social Studies. Importantly, Georgia Milestones is designed to provide students with critical information about their own achievement and their readiness for their next level of learning—be it the next grade, the next course, or the next endeavor (college or career).

When do students take the assessments?

Students will take the assessments on days specified by their local school system within designated state testing windows. The End-of-Course (EOC) Main administrations will occur in December and January in the winter months. The Spring Main administration will occur from late April through early June, with the Summer Main administration taking place in June and July. In addition, Mid-Month administrations are available during designated months of the year for students who require testing at a time other than the Main administrations. Students in grades 3 through 8 will participate in the End-of-Grade (EOG) assessments from early April through early May.

What is the school district implementing to aid students in preparing for the assessments?

The District is implementing a variety of intervention and support strategies to include additional teachers to reduce class sizes, additional instructional materials, tutorial and summer programs, professional learning for teachers, academic coaches in schools, and parent training and workshops. Retired and certified teachers have been hired to serve as Milestone Mentors during the school day to support students with critical thinking and inquiry-based questioning across content areas. They also support classroom teachers through professional learning, modeling, and rigorous instructional practices.

What can I do to help my student?

Students perform better on tests when they are prepared, calm, and rested. Here are some of the many ways to help your student approach Georgia Milestones in a relaxed, positive way:

- ◆ Encourage your student to employ good study and test-taking skills. These skills include following directions carefully, avoiding careless errors, and reviewing work.
- ◆ Explain the purpose of the tests. The assessments give students an opportunity to show what they have learned in school. They also give teachers information that helps them plan instruction.
- ◆ Point out that some items may be more difficult than others.
- ◆ Be certain your student gets plenty of sleep and has a healthy breakfast and lunch. Taking tests is hard work for many students and can require a lot of energy.
- ◆ Be certain your student is at school on time. Rushing and worrying about being late could affect performance on the tests.
- ◆ Remember to ask your student about the testing at the end of each day

Where can I find more information about Georgia Milestones?

Talk with your student's teacher or school principal. They can provide specific information about the dates your student will be taking the assessments this year. Resources to help your student prepare for Georgia Milestones are available on the Georgia Department of Education's website at <http://testing.gadoe.org>. To see what online testing is like, you and your student may visit the Experience Online Testing Georgia website at <http://gaexperienceonline.com>. The items on the demonstration tests are general and represent multiple grade levels. They do not assess student achievement.

Toot Our Own Horn

GOOD NEWS FROM THE SCHOOLS!



DeKalb School of the Arts DeKalb School of the Arts' Junior, Ms. Jillian White, was awarded 2015-2016 High School Reader of the Year from the Georgia Reading Association. She was honored at an event in Macon on March 13, 2016.

Columbia Elementary School On March 12, 2016, Boys to Bowties performed on Peoples TV (Xfinity Channel 27). The program will air in the very near future. Additionally, Boys to Bowties received an invitation to perform on Steve Harvey's season 2 "Little Big Shots" television program. The date will be announced within the next few weeks.

Cedar Grove Middle School 8th grade student Isaiah Ratcliff was voted Player of the Year for his outstanding performance on the CGMS football team by the organization **Born To Compete**. In addition, CGMS Head Football coach Rickey Wright was voted Coach of the Year by the same organization. The CGMS Cheer Squad won "County Champions" for cheerleading for football. The Title I Math Parent Workshop was a huge success because each grade level did a presentation and an interactive activity that included the parents, students and teachers.

Clifton Elementary Magnet School of Technology We've been very busy in the Cougar Den...Clifton had its African-American History Program (with Judge Angela Brown as our special guest), a well-attended morning PTA meeting, school-wide STEM activities for staff and students, professional learning activities for staff, community meetings with Meadowview and some really great field trips!

Ronald E. McNair Middle School The band received a Superior rating at the band festival. This is the first time that band has received a superior rating. The band has grown from 20 members to 95 members under the leadership of second year teacher, Mr. Kyle Lewis.

Ronald E. McNair High School SAT Scores increased by 108 points. To date, 46 graduating senior have received their college acceptance letters, and \$237,000 has been awarded in scholarship (according to a recent AJC article). The McNair Travel Club travelled to Guatemala to help build a school from recycled bottles March 3-8, 2016.

PARENT ENGAGEMENT

The following workshops are scheduled at the Region 5 Parent Center Located at Snapfinger Elementary:

- ◆ Thursday, March 24, 2016 | Georgia Milestone Workshop | Snapfinger ES | 10:00a.m.
- ◆ Friday, April 15, 2016 | Science Day | Columbia HS | 5:00p.m.
- ◆ Wednesday, May 4, 2016 | Reading Café | Snapfinger ES |



The E-SPLOST V referendum will outline categories of improvements for DeKalb County School District and the estimated revenue for a continued five-year collection of a 1% sales tax, up to \$600 million, if approved by the voters in May 2016. The capital improvements will be funded by the E-SPLOST commencing on July 1, 2017, if approved by the voters in the May, 2016 special election.

Even though the E-SPLOST V project list has not been developed at this time, the administration anticipates improvements will be included based upon the data received from our facility assessments, community meetings and stakeholder engagement process:

MEETING DATES, TIMES, AND LOCATION TO BE ANNOUNCED

Dual Immersion Programs Update

Currently, DCSD implements the 50/50 immersion model in three elementary schools. Students are taught literacy, math, science, and social studies in the selected language. The students receive additional literacy and math instruction in English. Ashford Park Elementary (German language), Evansdale Elementary (French language), and Rockbridge Elementary (French language) presently have students enrolled in grades K-2. In 2016-2017, the District will expand the dual immersion programs by establishing in Region V the Dual Language Immersion (DLI) Spanish Program at Clifton/Meadowview Elementary School. The students will be immersed in the Spanish language and culture.

In preparation for the 2016-2017 lottery, community meetings were held at Meadowview Elementary School on October 16 and November 16 to share information and obtain input from stakeholders. Community advocates discussed the DLI program during the Region V celebration in December at McNair High School. Clifton Elementary School placed the link to apply for the DLI program on the school's website during open enrollment from January 11 – February 19, 2016. Clifton and Meadowview distributed information to parents about the School Choice options through the PTA, newsletters, community organizations, and churches. Also, the new DLI Spanish Program at Clifton/Meadowview Elementary School was featured in the School Choice Brochure and on the District's webpage.

The Department of School Choice noted that 119 applicants applied during the open enrollment period. An additional five applications have been received since the window closed. As a result of the input received from the administrators and community members, 52 students will be randomly selected from the application pool to participate in the inaugural cohort.

IMPORTANT DATES

April 1, Good Friday, Schools Closed
April 4-8, Spring Break, Schools Closed
May 26, Last Day of School
May 30, Memorial Day



“An investment in knowledge always pays the best interest”-

Send Feedback:

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Tune into Comcast Channel 24 to view board meetings

<http://www.dekalb.k12.ga.us/www/pdstv-24/>

Work Session 2:00 PM, Community Input 5:45 PM, Business Meeting, 7:00 PM

April 18, May 9, June 6, July 11, August 1, September 12, October 3, November 7, December 5,