

# IN CASE YOU MISSED IT...

## A Brief Recap of the Board Meeting & News from Savannah Chatham County Public Schools



Video highlights from the January 5 Board Meeting from Public Information Manager Sheila Blanco. Click [here](#) to watch.



### Budget Process Update

At the Regular (Formal) Meeting, Board members received a report on enrollment expectations and the effect on the district budget. SCCPSS enrollment has experienced declines in recent years due to a number of factors, most notable, a decline in the birth rate. Board members were also presented an update on the budget process calendar.

<http://go.boarddocs.com/ga/sccs/Board.nsf/goto?open&id=CAD33904DE3F>

### COVID Operational Update

At the Formal meeting, Board Members were updated on the District's Second Semester Operational plans as the COVID pandemic continues. The District's mitigation efforts including, but not limited to: mask/face coverings, use of PPE, social distancing where possible, event capacity limits, limitations for visitors/volunteers and weekly testing for student-athletes will continue as we begin the second semester. A review of strategies will not take place until at minimum two weeks after students return from the winter break as recommended by the Superintendent's Medical Advisory Committee. Areas of review will include visitors and volunteers, events and athletics capacity, weekly testing of athletes and the screening process for building entry. The current Community Transmission Index is in the high range for Chatham County. See the full report here:

<http://go.boarddocs.com/ga/sccs/Board.nsf/goto?open&id=C9QP355BDB62>

### CARES ACT II Budget Ratification

The Board approved the CARES Act ESSER II LEA Bonus budget ratification in the amount of \$5,450,868. The State Board of Education authorized Savannah-Chatham County Board of Education Federal Funds to give bonuses to employees who worked through COVID-19. These funds were previously expended for employees and were spent as follows: Salaries \$5,372,960/Benefits \$77,908. The ratification was a required action for budgeting to ensure correct account lines on the expended funds. This is not a new expenditure.

<http://go.boarddocs.com/ga/sccs/Board.nsf/goto?open&id=C9RN285AB4C4>

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### SCHOOL BOARD

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## Student of the Month Recognized

The Superintendent's Student of the Month for December is Adin Wigfall, a sophomore from the School of Liberal Studies at Savannah High. Congratulations, Adin!

<http://go.boarddocs.com/ga/sccs/Board.nsf/goto?open&id=C9QP325BDB5F>



## Board Matters

### Election of Board Officers

Board Officers Vice President, Vice President Pro-Tempore and Assistant Secretary for 2022 were elected. Each term is for a one year period. See the results

here: <http://go.boarddocs.com/ga/sccs/Board.nsf/goto?open&id=C9QP3K5BDB70>

### Meeting Calendar Approved

The Calendar of Board of Education Meetings in 2022 was approved with a modification to the September 7 meeting start time. The September meeting will now begin at 6:00pm. All other dates remain unchanged. See the calendar here: <http://go.boarddocs.com/ga/sccs/Board.nsf/goto?open&id=C9QP3N5BDB73>

### Committee Appointments

2022 Committee, Delegate, and Liaison appointments were announced. See the list here: <http://go.boarddocs.com/ga/sccs/Board.nsf/goto?open&id=C9QP3R5BDB76>

## Policy First Reads

### Policy DID and Regulation DID-R (Deletion) – Audits (Four Year Review – Changes Recommended)

Pursuant to Board Policy BDE- Policy Review, District Administration has reviewed Board Policy DID Audits along with the supporting regulation and determined a need to delete the regulation and update the policy to align with current processes.

<http://go.boarddocs.com/ga/sccs/Board.nsf/goto?open&id=C9QP3D5BDB6A>

**Policy ED and Regulation – Student Transportation Management (Four Year Review – Changes Recommended)** Pursuant to Board Policy BDE- Policy Review, District Administration has reviewed Board Policy ED along with the supporting regulation. District Administration has determined a need for changes in both the policy and regulation in order to update the language to reflect current practices and to align the regulation to the policy.

<http://go.boarddocs.com/ga/sccs/Board.nsf/goto?open&id=C9QP3G5BDB6D>

## **Good News**

### **STEM Excellence in Teaching Award**

SCELA and high school science teacher Gini Lea Ennis has been honored with the Labster STEM Excellence in Teaching Award. Ms. Ennis is one of only 10 award recipients nationwide! Recipients are recognized for their passion for teaching, advancement of experiential learning, creativity in curriculum design, innovation in instruction, and commitment to student success.

### **National association names Dr. Ann Levett among 2021 Superintendents to Watch**

WSAV, December 17

Dr Levett joins 19 other superintendents nationwide who were selected for the honor in recognition of their innovative and effective use of technology to engage and inform the school community, and to expand two-way communication and outreach efforts.

<https://www.wsav.com/news/local-news/national-association-names-dr-anne-levett-among-2021-superintendents-to-watch/>

### **WSAV presents Music In Our Schools**

WSAV, December 17

WSAV filmed local holiday performances from schools across the Coastal Empire and Lowcountry to air on TV Christmas Day and share with students' friends and families online.

<https://www.wsav.com/musicinourschools/>

### **SCCPSS students help animals at Oatland Island Wildlife Center celebrate the holidays**

WTOC, December 24

Around 350 students from seven schools picked countries from around the world, and created displays featured inside and outside the animal enclosures highlighting holiday traditions from that country.

<https://www.wtoc.com/2021/12/24/sccpss-students-help-animals-oatland-island-wildlife-center-celebrate-holidays/>

### **Academic, writing coach Elizabeth Whalen meets needs of Savannah teachers, students**

Savannah Morning News, December 28

Veteran teacher Elizabeth Whalen likes how being an educator never gets old and serving as an academic and writing coach brings freshness to her teaching career. "I'm the kind of person who wants to learn new things all the time and when I change positions in this role, or in this school, I'm learning something new," she said. "I feel like the more I learn, the more that I can give to my students."

<https://www.savannahnow.com/story/news/2021/12/31/savannah-ga-charles-ellis-montessori-academy-teacher-elizabeth-whalen/6501346001/>

### **No need for grades when Beach High library media specialist helps students, teachers**

Savannah Morning News, December 29

Helping students and teachers is what Lauren Fuquea enjoys most while working as library media specialist at Beach High School, allowing her to have an impact beyond the classroom.

<https://www.savannahnow.com/story/news/2021/12/29/savannah-ga-beach-high-school-teacher-lauren-fuquea/6501419001/>

### **Former journalism student Melody Senia finds true calling as Savannah schools educator**

Savannah Morning News, December 30

"I got interested in education because I felt like I was called to do this," she said. "I didn't graduate with an education degree; my bachelor's was in communications, but I was feeling unfulfilled. When I became a teacher, I feel like this is what I am good at and I feel I have accomplished something that was fulfilling."

<https://www.savannahnow.com/story/news/2021/12/30/savannah-ga-southwest-middle-school-teacher-melody-senia/6461420001/>

### **Barbara Rupnik uses sign language to communicate with her Savannah students**

Savannah Morning News, December 31

After Barbara Rupnik's dream working for NASA didn't work out, she fell in love in with American Sign Language after having two professors who communicated with ASL.

<https://www.savannahnow.com/story/news/2021/12/29/savannah-ga-american-sign-language-teacher-barbara-rupnik/6501387001/>

### **Gina Smith leaves auto industry career behind to become a Savannah teacher**

Savannah Morning News, January 3

After working 25 years in the auto industry, Groves High School teacher Gina Smith made the move to the classroom. "I decided, from sitting in the finance chair, looking at credit and talking to a lot of 18-year-olds, I decided, maybe I need to go into the teacher world," she said. "Spectators can complain, but instead of complaining, become a participator and help with educating these students."

<https://www.savannahnow.com/story/news/2021/12/30/savannah-ga-groves-high-school-teacher-gina-smith/6500767001/>

### **Savannah Arts Academy student gives back, creates multiple-school program**

Savannah Morning News, January 4

Creating the organization Students Helping Students Succeed or SHSS during her junior year, Dorminey has hopes it will meet the needs of Savannah and Chatham County children. She said it was created to assist elementary students academically and socially in response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

<https://www.savannahnow.com/story/news/2022/01/04/savannah-arts-academy-student-ava-dorminey-creates-mentoring-program/8752587002/>

### **Local students' recipes featured in cookbook**

Connect Savannah, January 5

Fifteen elementary students who are budding gardeners and cooks were selected to be published in a new cookbook that is being produced by Center Parc Credit Union and the Savannah Urban Garden Alliance (SUGA), in partnership with four Savannah elementary schools. The cookbook documents the students' vegetable garden experience at the participating schools.

<https://www.connectsavannah.com/savannah/local-students-recipes-featured-in-cookbook/Content?oid=17667507>

### **No changes to Savannah-Chatham schools' COVID policy after holiday break**

WTOC, January 5

Savannah-Chatham County Superintendent Dr. Ann Levett says COVID protocol will remain unchanged after the holiday break. Superintendent Levett says that decision comes after looking at a significant rise in COVID transmission since the first of December.

<https://www.wtoc.com/2022/01/05/no-changes-savannah-chatham-schools-covid-policy-after-holiday-break/>

### **Books for Kids**

SCCPSS has joined with WTOC to support a new Books For Kids initiative. You'll be hearing more about this initiative in the coming weeks. The program is designed to put books in the hands of children who need them most. Almost 400,000 children do not have books at home. Children who own books are more than six times as likely to have a reading age higher than expected, research suggests. We thank WTOC and sponsor Ken Nugent for stepping in to help our young readers.

### **International Paper Supports Students**

International Paper recently donated literacy kits to the students at Garden City Elementary. In addition, they conducted a coat drive among their employees for "Operation Warm Coat" for their partner school, Garden City Elementary. We thank International Paper for their continued support of our schools.

### **Shoes From The Heart Comes to SCCPSS**

White Bluff Elementary School and Windsor Forest Elementary were selected as the first schools in Georgia to have a "Shoes from the Heart" event. Shoes from the Heart is a Missouri-based organization that believes in making a difference in the lives of those who have been affected by unforeseen circumstances by simply providing a basic need that we cannot live without.....Shoes. 50 students from each school received one pair of new tennis shoes and educational resources from Title 1 Family Resource Center.

### **Coastal Middle School Cares for Community**

Our students and staff at Coastal Middle School were busy during the holiday season. First, led by the Student Council, the school collected 973 lbs. of food during their recent food drive. The food collected will provide 811 meals to those in need in our community. Next, students and staff collected donations for Happy Bags for the Homeless. Thanks to the entire team at Coastal Middle School!

### **Cherie Dennis Delivers Commencement Address at GSU**

Georgia Teacher of the Year Cherie Dennis delivered the address at the Georgia Southern University Fall commencement exercises. Her message to her fellow Eagles was simple and heartfelt. "Go out into the world with your eyes and hearts wide open...go out into the world and make something beautiful out of its cracks and imperfections...it starts with something so very simple, something so very possible and within your reach...Just being kind."

### **SCCPSS and GSU Partner for Dual Enrollment**

Dual enrollment in Georgia is a phenomenal opportunity for high school students to take college level courses. We are fortunate to have such strong state support for this program. Recognizing that recent changes to dual enrollment state funding have limited the number of courses students can take, Georgia Southern and SCCPSS have developed a special scholarship opportunity to facilitate dual enrollment opportunities beyond the state funded 30 credit hours for select students enrolled in Savannah-Chatham County high schools. We thank Georgia Southern for their continued support!

### **DATES TO REMEMBER**

#### **Audit Committee Meeting**

Thursday, January 20, 2022 - 8:00 a.m.

Whitney Administrative Complex, Building G. 2 Laura Avenue

#### **Board Meeting**

Wednesday, February 2, 2022

Informal Meeting – 11:00 a.m.

Regular Meeting – 2:00 p.m.