



2016-17 PRINCIPAL OF THE YEAR KEVIN WHEAT OF ALLEN JAY PREP ACADEMY

Some folks stand out in a crowd.

Principal Kevin Wheat starts each school day with a raucous rally for students and teachers in the renovated "Rock Gym" at Allen Jay Preparatory Academy. This innovative, high-octane, high expectations school for 4th -8th graders is one of more than 50 choice options in the Guilford County Schools system. Wheat led the team that designed the new school modeled on the Ron Clark Academy in Atlanta and Kip Academies across the country. A longer school day, interactive teaching that includes rapping math functions and orders of operations, and a passionate staff team have yielded growth in achievement scores each year since the school's start in 2013. Wheat was recognized for his hard work with the GCS Principal of the Year award. He credits all those who came together to make his dream school a reality. Allen Jay's beautifully renovated facilities were made possible by Guilford County bond dollars. The resources to provide for longer school days and special student incentives came from private donors. GCS provided space, time and resources for innovation. Families took a chance on a new concept. It is a great example of home, community and schools coming together to help kids soar.

GEA co-sponsors the Celebration of Excellence where leaders like Kevin are

honored. **Brandy Robinson-Laws of Andrews High** (pictured right) was honored as the Mentor Teacher of the Year. Mentors shepherd new teachers through their first year providing, advice, counsel and invaluable perspective when times get tough. They take on this responsibility without any additional compensation because they are passionate about teaching. **Jessica Livezey** who nominated Robinson-Laws says the mentor taught her to demand greatness from herself and her colleagues.

Amanda Pickett (center right) of **Sternberger Elementary** is the Rookie Teacher of the Year. **Principal Lisa Williams** credits Pickett with keeping academic expectations high while also helping students become good citizens, learn to accept those with differences, and work together.

Krista Hannah of **Ferndale Middle** (bottom right) teaches 6th grade math. Hannah won the overall Teacher of the Year award. She says her greatest accomplishment was inspiring one of her own students to teach. "You can only imagine the pride and joy I experienced when Shelby emailed me on the day of her first open house to ask me for advice nearly 15 years after she was in my class," said Hannah. "That's how I know I've made a difference."



PRINCIPAL MATTERS



#1 factor cited for teacher job satisfaction and teachers' decisions to stay at their school is the principal.



NC had a 30% decrease in enrollment in the UNC system schools of education.

FAST FACTS

50th

Average principal pay in NC ranks 50 out of 50 states and the District of Columbia.

44th

NC ranked 44th in the country in per-pupil spending in 2015-2016.

41st

Average teacher salary in NC ranks 41st nationally.

52%

52% of NC teachers hold down a 2nd job to make ends meet.

Source: [Facts & Figures: Education in NC 2017, Best NC](#)

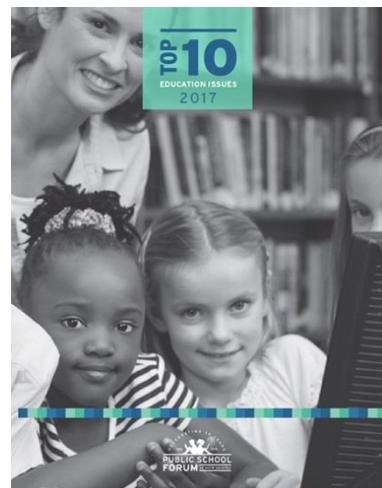


Each year the Public School Forum of NC issues a Top 10 List that brings important focus to critical education issues on the front burner. The list includes those the Forum believes WILL be the top issues, as well as issues they believe SHOULD be at the top of the agenda.

Top 10 Education Issues in 2017

Presented by: Public School Forum of NC

1. **Exercise strong education leadership for NC's children:** build on what has worked, fix what hasn't.
2. **Fund NC's public schools fairly and adequately.** NC ranked 44th in the country in per-pupil spending in 2015-16 and the state spends 8.3% less per student than it did before the recession.
3. **Make teaching in NC great again** by investing in our teachers. The average teacher salary in NC ranks 41st nationally and 52% of NC teachers hold down a second job to make ends meet.
4. **Improve access, equity and accountability in school choice:** hold all schools accountable for serving students well. There are clear gaps in accountability and transparency between district-run public schools and public charters and voucher-funded private schools.
5. **Overhaul principal pay** and invest in preparing the next generation of leaders. Average principal pay in NC ranks 50 out of 50 states and the District of Columbia.
6. **Maintain a strong focus on race in public education.** It is crucial to collect and analyze data and develop policies and practices to mitigate the racially-disparate outcomes that are a hallmark of our education system.
7. **Improve grade-level reading through comprehensive investments in early childhood:** high quality birth-to-five programs for disadvantaged children can deliver a 13% return on investment.
8. **Enable the transition to personalized, digital-age learning models.** The NC Digital Learning Plan, published in 2015, outlines 21 specific and actionable recommendations for State leaders in supporting local education agencies and public schools in the move to digital learning.
9. **Create meaningful and streamlined assessments:** build on the Department of Public Instruction study of interim assessments and align state testing with federal requirements.
10. **Increase support for NC's struggling schools.** There are 489 low performing schools, 20% of all the schools in the state. This is down from 581 the previous year. Federal Race to the Top grants funded the strategies that fueled that drop, but that grant funding has expired.



FOR MORE INFORMATION

To download the full report go to:

www.ncforum.org

EdLeaders Speaker Series Tackles Tough Issues

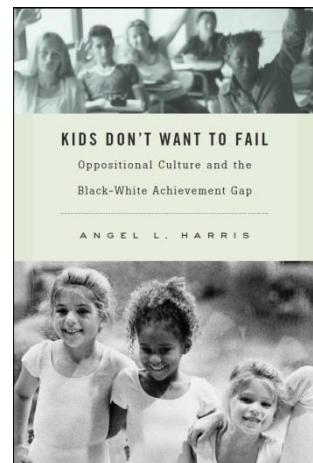
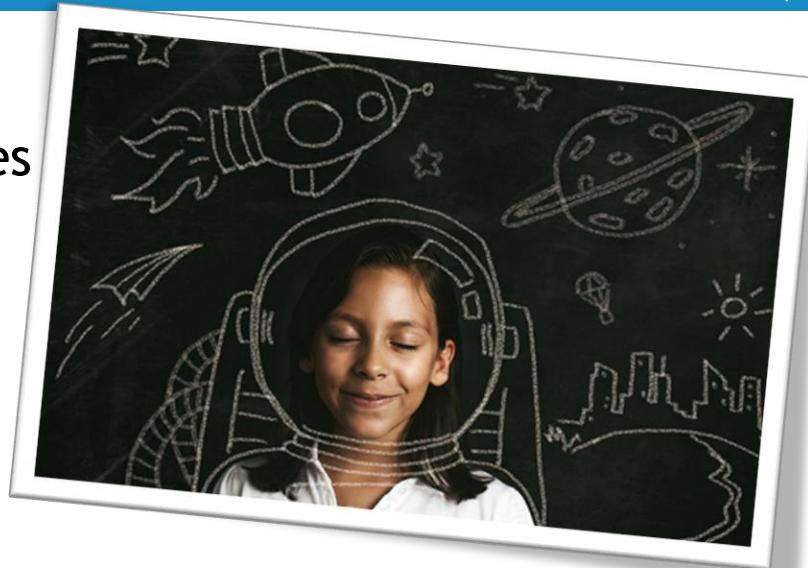
Author Margaret J. Wheatley once said, "All social change begins with a conversation." We agree. To build the best education system and make sure all children reach their full potential, we have to dig in and explore the ins and outs of the most pressing issues.

This school year, community leaders have gathered each month at GEA to delve into complex issues, including teacher retention and the talent pipeline, structural racism, equity and the achievement gap, as well as the funding flows and flaws of the system.

In December, leaders served as *Principal for a Day* to get an up-close look at one of the toughest jobs in our community. Principals and leaders then gathered for lunch and heard from Dr. Angel Harris of Duke University who challenged guests to shift thinking from the probable to the possible when it comes to student potential. Dr. Harris' book Kid's Don't Want to Fail digs in even deeper to the most vexing challenge we must address – the black-white achievement gap. While our district has done ground-

breaking work on equity and achievement, the community conversation and our work is really just beginning. We invite you to take the time to do some reading and join us for future events.

This year's **Education Summit** on April 5th provides an opportunity for small groups to get inside one of 18 GCS schools to hear from principals, teachers and students directly and move from abstract conversation to practical and tangible learning we can apply. Register to attend by going to EdSummit17.org.



HP Principals Reception

GEA partnered with the High Point Chamber of Commerce and the High Point Community Foundation to host the first "Meet the Principals" reception at the High Point Chamber on February 22.

The reception honored the 25 principals who lead GCS schools in the city of High Point and provided an opportunity for those in the business community and area educators to connect and share ideas. Christopher Redhouse, CFO of Thomas Built Buses, talked about his organization's longtime work with Oak Hill Elementary and challenged other businesses to get involved with a school.

Principal Howard Stimpson of the Kearns Academy at High Point Central told guests "It starts when you just pick up the phone and give us a call." He added that the call sparks a relationship and a conversation that allows school and business leaders to work together to craft the kind of partnership that makes sense for students, teachers and business employees.

If you are interested in getting involved with a school, but aren't sure where to start, contact us at GEA and we'll help you make a connection. We'll serve as a resource and facilitator until you find the right match and craft the right partnership.

At GEA contact Louise Courts at 336-841-8041 or lcourts@GuilfordEducationAlliance.org
At the HP Chamber contact Brian Norris at 336-882-5000 or brian@highpointchamber.org



New Board New Superintendent New Course



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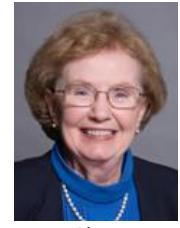
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Dr. Contreras' First 100 Days

were packed. In addition to traveling more than 550 miles to visit 80 schools and more than 1000 classrooms she:

- met with 90 leaders and community groups;
- met individually with more than 30 federal, state and local elected officials and three university presidents and chancellors;
- visited and spoke at multiple houses of worship throughout Guilford County;
- met with parents and community members at 11 Listen and Learn Tour events.

"Through all of these conversations, I've confirmed what I believed when I accepted this job. Guilford County is a community that cares deeply about their children's education, and this is a district open to innovation to improve student outcomes and the quality of life for all Guilford residents," says Contreras. "This also is a district that must raise the bar and close persistent achievement gaps, while expanding school choice and career pathways for all students."

Her first 100 days also included a transition in leadership with the Board of Education. The newly seated members - nine now, rather than eleven - represent newly drawn districts that mirror the county commissioner districts. Since January they have been working with the Superintendent on issues from ongoing construction projects to teacher professional development to the budget and strategic plan that will guide the district moving forward.

To aid them in this work, Contreras has put together a transition team made up of local and national advisors. The team, divided into four sub-committees, has been working since November to find ways to strengthen and improve GCS in four key areas: **student achievement; school choice, equity and excellence; talent development; and organizational effectiveness for optimal learning.**

The transition team's final report, due later this spring, will provide recommendations to Contreras and the Board who will then develop the district's new strategic plan. Feedback gathered through Contreras' 11 Listen and Learn forums and an online survey conducted this fall also will feed into GCS' strategic plan process.

GEA Vice Chair Nathan Duggins said "As a Board, we knew job one for GEA needed to be supporting a smooth transition in leadership at GCS. Folks have hosted events, served on the transition team and our staff - perhaps most importantly - has continued to help the community make connections and navigate the school system in the midst of all the change."

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THE 2017
EDUCATION SUMMIT
IS GOING TO SCHOOL

APRIL 5



WHEN COMMUNITIES,
HOMES AND SCHOOLS
WORK TOGETHER,

KIDS SOAR

Remember the exhilarating feeling of being on a swing? Gaining momentum. Propelling yourself up and up higher until you soar. Gaining confidence and a different perspective as you reach new heights.

Each child deserves the opportunity to see how high they can go. That's why GEA brings together homes, communities and schools. We believe the success of our students and schools is a shared responsibility.

You are an important part of the GEA triangle of support! On April 5th, swing by a school for breakfast and to explore ways we can make sure every child soars!

What people said about last year's event:

"I realized that individually we can't make much of an impact, but collectively we can do a great deal"

"I was deeply moved by the student who told us 'At school I have been able to spend all my days running toward something rather than running away.'"

"I heard rave reviews about the morning. Our management team couldn't stop talking about it."

PARTICIPATING SCHOOLS

Andrews Aviation Academy
Archer Elementary
Aycock Middle
Brooks Global Elementary
Dudley High
Ferndale Middle
General Greene Elementary
Hunter Elementary
McNair Elementary

Middle College at A&T
Middle College at UNCG
Montlieu Academy of Technology
Newcomers School
Northern High
Northwood Elementary
Ragsdale High
The Academy at Lincoln
Western High

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www.EdSummit17.org 336.841.4332



thecommunityfoundation



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BY THE NUMBERS

62,893

Number of pencils TSW has provided teachers since the start of this school year.

7916

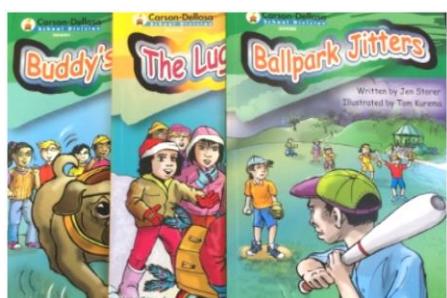
Number of two-pocket folders TSW has provided teachers this school year.

2106

Number of teachers who shopped at the TSW since the start of the 16-17 school year.

55,000

Number of new books donated by Carson Dellosa Publishing. **Leadership Greensboro, Junior League of Greensboro** and other volunteers delivered cases of books and teaching materials to all 67 GCS elementary schools.



LEARN HOW YOU CAN HELP

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"I was so anxious about where to find materials and how much I would have to spend. I stepped into this wonderful place and could've cried from joy!"

Each year, teachers spend an average of \$900 of their own money on classroom supplies. In Guilford County, we're doing something to ease that burden. The Teacher Supply Warehouse's front shelves stay stocked with high-demand supplies like paper, pencils and notebooks, thanks to grant dollars and supply drives. Our back warehouse offers teachers a virtual treasure trove of donated materials from art and science supplies to desk organizers. GCS teachers shop for free!

An astonishing mix of people, businesses and organizations come together to make it all possible. On any given day, a truck from VF show ups with pallets of desk trays; a retired couple brings in supplies donated by their motorcycle club; Junior League volunteers assist teachers; a NC A&T professor works on the inventory tracking system; kids from a local church bundle pens and folders; a woman delivers boxes she filled cleaning out a closet at home, and a member of Leadership Greensboro dresses up like a #2 pencil to collect supplies. You gotta love that!

New partnerships are also helping us expand service. BackPack Beginnings provides snacks that teachers use in the classroom and for afterschool activities. The Salvation Army provides coats through their Give a Kid a Coat program. Local United Ways collect supplies.

There are big and small ways to help. Give us a call or shoot us an email and let's figure out what makes sense for you. Education can be complex, but this is simple!

Thank you to these community partners for their support this year!

Duke Energy	Walmart	Northstate Communications
WFMY News2	Lenovo	Volvo Financial Services
VF Corporation	Target	Greensboro Chamber of Commerce
DMJ & Co. LLC	DS Miller, Inc.	Webster's Import Service
LabCorp	Bernard Robinson	Greensboro Women's Club
Deluxe Corporation	Weaver Foundation	Junior League of Greensboro
Carson Dellosa	The Education Center	Mary Lynn Richardson Foundation
AT&T Pioneers	Piedmont Goldwings	Lincoln Financial Group
ITG Brands	Somerset Properties	Rotary Club of Greensboro
Coalesse	Guilford Medical & Dental Managers Association	Carolina Heartland, USA Dance, Inc.