CEO/Superintendent’s Message:

New contracts launch Phase 1 for Compensation System

School Year 2016–17 has been a time for frequent celebration in Gwinnett County Public Schools, thanks to you, our employees, and the great job you do each and every day. We mean it when we say you are the school district’s most important resource! That is why we are moving forward with a new way of compensating our employees, beginning with teachers.

When teachers’ contracts are released during the first week of May, we will take an historic step in recruiting and rewarding the very best teachers in the profession. That’s because with these contracts we culminate the years of work and study that led to this point, when we begin to roll out our new Performance-Based Teacher Compensation System. Phase I of that rollout is implementation of a new Performance-Based Teacher Salary Schedule, which is being funded in the proposed FY2018 budget. Find important information about the new schedule on the GCPS website.

Without question, this is the best salary schedule GCPS has offered its teachers in my 21 years as superintendent. In designing it, we listened to what teachers said about the importance of valuing advanced degrees while creating a schedule that bases advancement on performance, not just years of experience. We took steps to simplify the overall structure by reducing the number of certificate levels from 10 to four, and we made the amount of salary increases consistent between the steps within each level.

Instuting these improvements carries a high price tag, but I contend it is one of the best investments this district can make. Moving to the performance-based schedule calls for adding about $9 million to the budget for teacher salaries to ensure no one receives less pay as we transition to the new schedule. Furthermore, teachers’ contracts for the 2017–18 school year will reflect a 2% cost-of-living increase and, if a teacher is eligible based on this year’s TAPS evaluation, a performance step increase. As a result of these salary improvements, the vast majority of GCPS teachers will see a total pay increase of between 3% and 3.9%, and over 16% will receive an increase between 4% and 4.9%.

These salary improvements mean that every teacher will receive at least a 2% increase, 79% of our teachers will receive a total increase that ranges from 3% to 3.9%, and over 16% will receive an increase between 4% and 4.9%.

I often say that when it comes to teaching and learning, nothing has more impact than having a quality teacher in the classroom. In recent years we have embarked on a number of initiatives to ensure that the school system attracts and retains the outstanding teacher

[Continued]
force needed in Gwinnett schools. Launching Phase 1 of the Performance-Based Teacher Compensation System—issuing 2017-18 contracts based on the new salary schedule—is a critical piece of this very important work. So, too, is the ongoing development of Phase 2, in which we will provide Performance-Based Awards to our most effective teachers across the district and at every school. We will share information on Phase 2 throughout the next school year.

Again, thank you to our committed teaching corps and to all of our employees who have made this school year one of our best! You deliver on The Promise of Gwinnett each and every day.

J. Alvin Wilbanks
CEO/Superintendent

2017–18 contracts for teachers, administrative staff to be released in first week of May

The district will issue employment contracts for the 2017–18 school year for teachers and administrative staff during the first week of May. Contracts will be electronically distributed via the Employee Portal for all returning staff who have been recommended to receive a contract. Employees accepting their contracts must electronically sign and submit their contract within 10 days of receipt. New this year, contract language has been updated to more closely align with an employee’s status as a teacher, administrator, support staff member, or executive staff member. The 2017-18 teacher contract contains language that is specific to the new performance-based compensation system, showing teachers where they fall on the new performance-based salary schedule. Contracts will reflect both the proposed 2% cost-of-living increase and the proposed salary-step increase for all eligible employees. Full-time teachers with a complete evaluation of Proficient or Exemplary will receive a performance step for 2017–18. Teachers who work part-time (between 20 and 24 hours per week) must receive Proficient or Exemplary performance evaluations for two consecutive years in order to advance a performance step on the salary schedule the following year. Teachers who have an incomplete evaluation for 2016–17 will not receive a performance step for 2017–18.

Board of Education approves new leaders for two schools

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>New Position</th>
<th>Previous Position</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Shane Orr</td>
<td>Principal, Central Gwinnett HS</td>
<td>Associate Principal, Central Gwinnett HS</td>
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<tr>
<td>Kara Dutton</td>
<td>Principal, Jackson ES</td>
<td>Principal, Peachtree ES</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dr. Virin Vedder</td>
<td>Coordinator of Foreign Language and Dual Language Immersion, Curriculum and Instructional Support</td>
<td>Instructional Coach, Curriculum and Instructional Support</td>
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<tr>
<td>Dr. Shanna Ricketts</td>
<td>Coordinator of Data Analytics–Research and Evaluation, Superintendent’s Office</td>
<td>Senior Data Analyst, Atlanta Public Schools</td>
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<tr>
<td>Dr. Victoria Dodd</td>
<td>Community School Director, Mill Creek HS</td>
<td>Assistant Principal, Mill Creek HS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paula Everett-Truppi</td>
<td>Part-time Director of Special Education–Data Analytics, Human Resources and Talent Management</td>
<td>Part-time Assistant Principal, Radloff MS</td>
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Mr. Orr takes on the principalship of Central Gwinnett HS with the retirement of Maryanne Grimes at the end of the school year. Dr. Ruth Markham’s retirement prompts Ms. Dutton’s transfer from Peachtree ES to Jackson ES.
**Give feedback on proposed LA resources through May 12**

Staff, parents, and community members are invited to review and provide input on proposed teacher resources for Middle School Language Arts Education for grades 6–8. The review will run through Friday, May 12, on weekdays from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. During the review, print resources can be reviewed at the Instructional Support Center in the hallways between buildings 100 and 200.

Before adopting instructional resources for classroom use, Gwinnett County Public Schools (GCPS) holds an extensive review. The offices of Language Arts Education and Instructional Resources and Support jointly convened multiple committees to select resources to consider for adoption submitted by publishers. The resources were reviewed for alignment with the school system's Academic Knowledge and Skills (AKS) curriculum. During the review process, resources are piloted in GCPS classrooms. Data from the reviews and pilots will be considered in making adoption recommendations to the Board of Education in mid-2017.

For more about the instructional resources review process, contact Jadd Jarusinski, director of instructional resources and support, at 678-301-6828.

**Staff members can earn bonus by referring new bus drivers**

Do you know someone looking for employment? GCPS is hiring school bus drivers and you can help— the district, the new driver, and yourself! Current GCPS employees can earn a referral bonus for each new driver who is trained and on the job for 60 days. New bus drivers are provided with a referral form on the first day of training. If you are listed as the referral source, you will earn a $125 bonus after the driver successfully completes training and two months of service.

Gwinnett drivers— also called bus managers— receive competitive hourly wages, starting at $14.78 per hour, as well as excellent benefits and paid training. Drivers work the student calendar year so enjoy the benefit of time off on student holidays and summer vacation. Applicants are required to have a good driving record and hold a high school diploma or GED. For additional information, potential drivers can call 678-225-7670 or learn more at http://www.gcpsjobs.org/bus-drivers/.

**GCPS plans annual Child Find meeting on May 5**

Gwinnett County Public Schools has planned an information meeting in an effort to identify and support students with disabilities who are currently enrolled in private or home school programs in Gwinnett County. Attendees to the Child Find meeting will be provided information about possible services available through the school system to support students with disabilities. The 2017 GCPS Child Find Meeting will be held on Friday, May 5, from 1 p.m. to 3 p.m. in the Central Gwinnett Room (2.111) in Building 200 at the
Child Find (continued)

J. Alvin Wilbanks Instructional Support Center in Suwanee. GCPS is required to locate and identify children with disabilities, ages birth to 21, who are in need of special education and related services. Families unable to attend or those with questions should contact GCPS Parent Mentors Jackie McNair (678-301-7149) and Dawn Albanese (678-301-7212) or Denise Hudson (678-301-7104) in the Office of Compliance.

Books on Board!

An exciting new literacy-initiative-on-wheels is rolling into Gwinnett soon. You’re invited to the ribbon-cutting ceremony for the new GCPS Book Mobile! The event is set for Sat., May 13, at 12:30 p.m. at the Barnes & Noble store at the Mall of Georgia.

The ribbon-cutting is part of a fun-filled weekend at the Barnes & Noble location in Buford, including performances by school groups (10 a.m. to 6 p.m.) and tours of the Book Mobile (noon to 2:30 p.m.) on Saturday. In addition, a percentage of all purchases at the three Barnes & Noble locations in Gwinnett (Buford, Norcross, and Snellville) on May 13 and 14 will be donated to buy books for the Book Mobile. You also can support the Book Mobile through online purchases at bn.com/book-fairs from May 13 to May 19. (Use Bookfair ID 12128344 at checkout.)

This summer, the GCPS Book Mobile will travel a 35-stop route in the Meadowcreek Cluster each week, checking out school library books to students who may not have easy access to the public library. Next school year, local schools will be able to “Book the Bus” as a part of their reading rewards program. During the year, the book mobile will be stocked with new books—purchased with donations or provided by sponsors—that can be provided to students as a reward.

Four-day work week in effect at schools during part of June

Remember that local schools will observe a four-day week for just a portion of the summer—from June 12 to June 30, returning to a normal Monday-to-Friday schedule on July 3. Schools will be closed on the following Fridays: June 16, June 23, and June 30. On Tuesday, July 4, all schools and locations are closed for the Independence Day holiday. The four-day week affects all programs at the local school, including summer school classes, enrichment camps, and other activities. The energy-saving schedule saves money as thermostats are set warmer for the three-day weekends, and lights are switched off. Affected employees work a modified schedule or use vacation time and work a shorter week under the schedule.

Student calendar for 2017–18 available on website

The 2017–18 student calendar is posted on the school system website, and the staff calendar is coming soon. The booklet-style calendar that includes department and division dates, as well as fast facts, a map, and other helpful information, will be available to full-time employees at the start of the new school year.

Speaking of calendars… Depending on the number of days worked for your employee category, you have an “end date” coming up in the next several weeks, between May 19 and June 30. You probably already have that date circled on the calendar, but check the list posted on the Employment Tab of the GCPS website.

Something to celebrate?

Share your good news with your colleagues in Spotlight. If you have earned a state or national award, earned a degree, made a presentation, or had work published, send the information to the Spotlight mailbox via Lotus Notes, or to the Communication and Media Relations Department through the courier. While the deadline has passed to submit honors for the spring issue (due out in May), send in your end-of-year honors so we can share them at the start of the new year (Sept. 1 deadline). In case you missed it, check out a roundup of 1st semester honors in the winter issue of Spotlight.

Get tickets for May 19 Sports Hall of Fame event

Get your tickets now for the Gwinnett County Sports Hall of Fame Induction Ceremony and Dinner, set for May 19. You won’t want to miss the event’s keynote speaker, Atlanta Falcons Head Coach Dan Quinn. The event benefits the GCPS Foundation Fund.

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Louise Radloff, chair; Carole C. Boyce, vice chair; Dr. Robert McClure; Dr. Mary Kay Murphy; and Daniel D. Seckinger, CEO/SUPERINTENDENT
J. Alvin Wilbanks

The mission of Gwinnett County Public Schools is to pursue excellence in academic knowledge, skills, and behavior for each student, resulting in measured improvement against local, national, and world-class standards.

Torch is produced by the Department of Communication and Media Relations. torch@gwinnett.k12.ga.us

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