

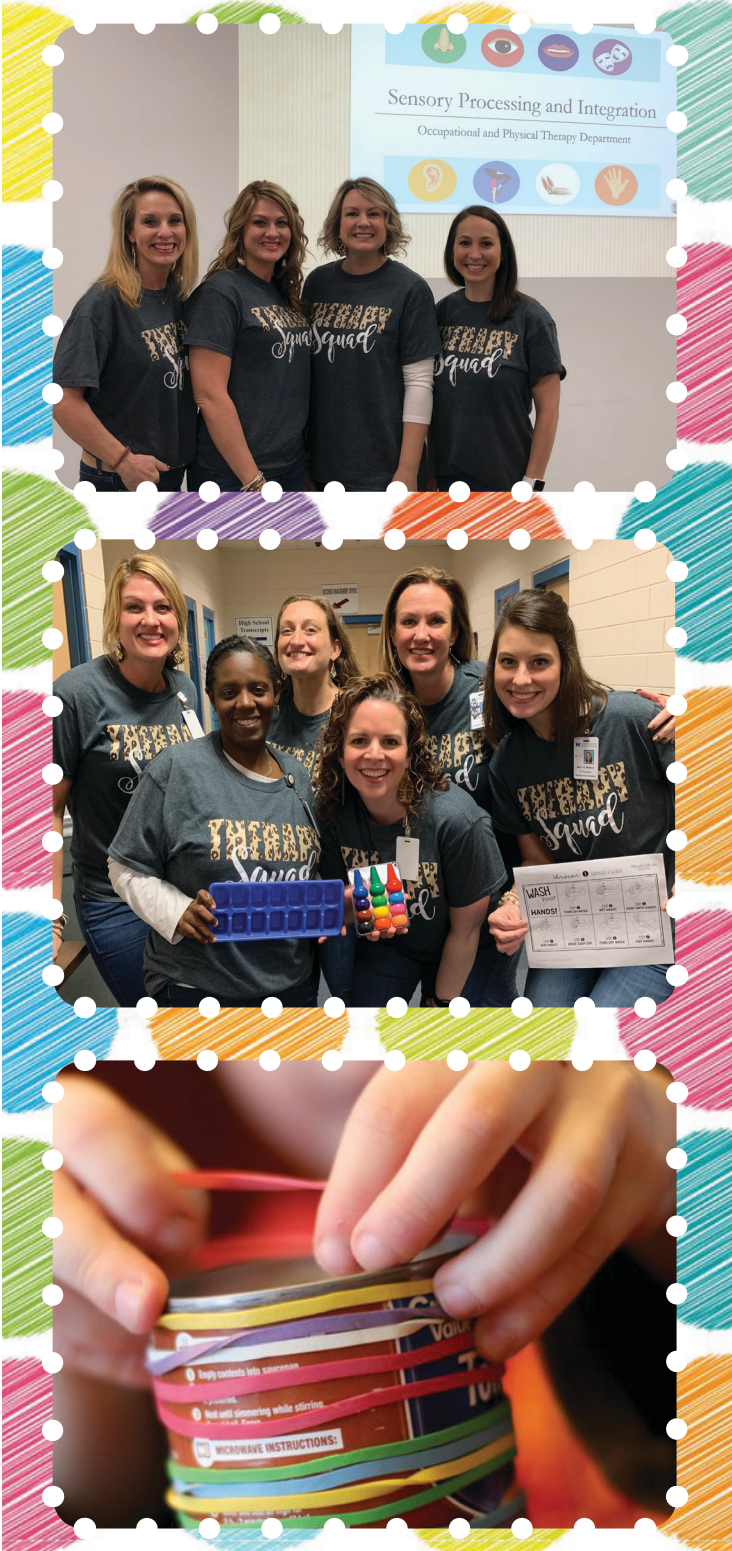


# STUDENT SERVICES REPORT

## Occupational & Physical Therapy Professional Learning

As part of ongoing professional learning in the county, the Occupational and Physical Therapy Department has provided various learning opportunities for several audiences. The department presented Sensory Processing and Integration in the Schools for the Georgia Autism and Behavior Support Initiative (GABSI) at the Herman Ragin Building on February 7, 2020. Participants took part in an interactive, two hour session, discussing sensory theory, classroom observations, and strategies for the classroom. This training provided teachers from the Middle Georgia Region with tools and strategies for students with Autism.

The department also presented during professional learning training for special education teachers on February 18, 2020 at Central Office. The staff covered topics such as staff body mechanics during lifting, student positioning in the classroom, and motor activities for the classroom.





## TEACHER SPOTLIGHT



This month's spotlight is Donna Burkhardt, an Interrelated teacher, at Lake Joy Elementary.

Donna is a product of Houston County Schools, graduating from WRHS. She then attended Mercer University and later earned her Specialist in Curriculum & Instruction from Piedmont University. Her experiences with a childhood friend gave her an appreciation for the characteristics and talents of students who learn differently. Her desire to help those for which learning does not come easily led her to special education. "As special educators, our students come to us not only with differing readiness levels, learning styles, interests, and social/emotional needs, but also from different cultural backgrounds and economic experiences. This high level of diversity makes our job more challenging; yet it adds "spice" to the classroom and makes the experience of teaching rewarding."

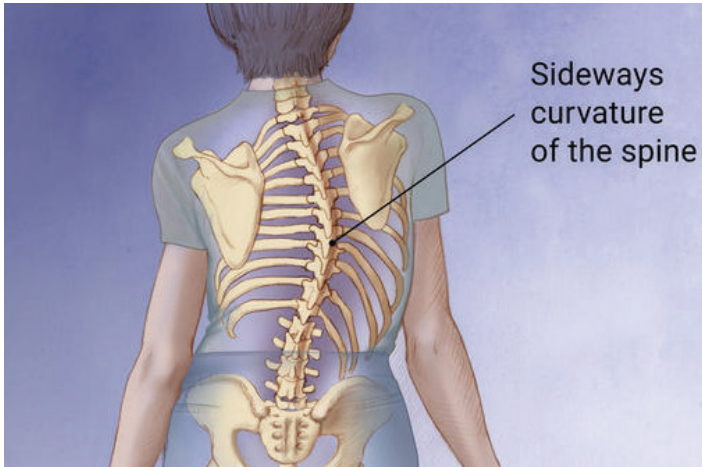
Mrs. Burkhardt incorporates multi-sensory instruction in math and reading to reach all learners. She has been excited to see an increase in her student's decoding skills since implementing Orton-Gillingham strategies and looks forward to more professional development in this area. In her free time she enjoys waterskiing, hiking, and biking with her husband Frank. They have two children, a son and daughter, both Georgia Tech graduates, and have recently welcomed a grandson to the family!

## PARENT TRAINING

Ms. Kristy Harris from Moody and Associates Law Office came and presented to parents of students with disabilities for our February parent workshop. There were 15 people present at the workshop with 12 students with disabilities being represented from Elementary through High School age. Ms. Moody spoke to parents about guardianship for students once they turn 18. She shared with the families the process to obtain guardianship and answered individual questions from parents.



# SCOLIOSIS SCREENING



Georgia law requires screening for Scoliosis of public school children annually for a minimum of two grades during early adolescence. Scoliosis is a curvature of the spine greater than ten degrees. An unsymmetrical shoulder elevation, shoulder blade protrusion, waist fold, or arm hang distance can be signs of a significant spine curve. All students screened that are found to show signs and symptoms are reported to the Health Department. The Health Department will then contact the parents for a follow-up. Screening and referring students early for signs of Scoliosis are very important in preventing future conditions related to posture and compression of the spine.

In cooperation with the Health Department, school nurses screened all 6<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grade girls and boys for Scoliosis from February 10<sup>th</sup>-14<sup>th</sup>. Over 3900 students were screened this school year. The process was a success because of the team work and assistance from the school health techs and staff at the middle schools, Houston County Crossroads, and the Elberta Center. Thank you for your support!



## ASSISTIVE TECHNOLOGY

On January 30<sup>th</sup>, 13 WMAZ reporter Katelyn Heck featured a story on Arielle Knight, a kindergarten student at CB Watson. Arielle was diagnosed with Cerebral Palsy as an infant and given a prognosis of never being able to walk or talk. With the help of her private speech therapist, Arielle was able to purchase a Dynavox eye gaze device and a whole new world was opened. She is able to communicate with adults and peers, and she can even count to 20! She has been integrated in the general education classroom with assistance from a paraprofessional and participates in their daily schedule. In cooperation with her special education teacher, Jan McGuire, her general education teacher, Amber Peoples, news reporter Katelyn Heck and others on her team, Arielle can now show the world that ALL means ALL!

# TRANSITION

# FAIR

*"Transitioning to a World of Possibilities"*



Saturday, March 21<sup>st</sup>

9AM – 11AM

Northside High School  
926 Green Street  
Warner Robins, GA 31093

Teachers, parents, and guardians of Houston County Elementary, Middle, and High school students with disabilities are invited. A multitude of organizations and agencies will attend to provide an opportunity to ask questions pertinent to student's needs as he/she transitions from different stages of life.

For more information, contact

Dr. Jaquel Johnson @ [jaquel.johnson@hcbe.net](mailto:jaquel.johnson@hcbe.net) or Mrs. Renee Lee @ [RENEE.LEE@hcbe.net](mailto:RENEE.LEE@hcbe.net)  
or Call 478-293-7772



# JV SHARKS BASKETBALL

**T**he Junior Varsity Sharks competed for the Basketball State Championship on Saturday February 29th. Although the Sharks fell short of a win, their effort and determination was on full display. With just 33 seconds left on the game clock, the Sharks were down by 3 points. After a technical called on the Muscogee Lions, the Sharks were awarded two free throws and the ball at half court. Michael Alvarez went to the free throw line and made one of the two bringing the game within 2 points.

With the clock ticking down Dalton Crosby hit a 2 point shot tying the game at 20 to 20 with just 18 seconds to go. The Muscogee Lions attempted a 2-point shot but missed. With just 1.6 seconds left on the clock, the Lions rebounded and made a shot winning the game at 22-20. The game was not only intense, but also exciting. The JV Sharks improved tremendously throughout the season, getting better every game. We are proud of this group of athletes and cannot wait for a re-match next year.



# February Professional Learning

The Student Services Department hosted multiple professional learning opportunities for Special Education Teachers, Speech/Language Pathologists, Educational Sign-Language Interpreters, and Paraprofessionals on the February 18th System Professional Learning Day.

The Speech/Language Pathologists viewed three different webinars. The first webinar, *Ethically and Legally Defensible Speech-Language Services in Public Schools*, examined legal cases from around the U.S. that address common challenges that school-based SLPs face when making recommendations and providing services. The second webinar, *Teaching Approaches to Vocabulary and Word Learning*, focused on building strong vocabulary for social, academic, and professional success. The third webinar, *Using iPad Apps to Increase Student Motivation and Engagement During Language- and Literacy-Focused Intervention*, provided details on using the iPad as a means to increase the motivation and engagement of school-age children with various communication difficulties during treatment sessions.

Sixty-Six Elementary Interrelated and Mild Intellectual Disabilities Teachers participated in two half-day professional learning sessions on *High Leverage Practices* and *Reading Comprehension Strategies*. The *High Leverage Practices* training focused on building Cognitive and Metacognitive strategies using mnemonics for teaching mathematic concepts and vocabulary. The *Reading Comprehension* professional learning provided participants with instruction on the *Visible Literacy Instruction Framework* that teaches students to talk and write effectively about what they read.

The Educational Sign-Language Interpreters and Deaf/Hard of Hearing teachers participated in *Mental Health Among Deaf Students in the K-12 Education Setting*. Participants examined topics that included: Language dysfluency and language deprivation, Recognizing the overlap of mental health in the educational setting, Demonstrating an understanding of etiology and its effects on students' learning, and The potential meaning of student behavior.

Grades 6-12 Mild Intellectual Disabilities Teachers participated in *Integrated Instruction for all Extended Standard Content Areas* professional learning that addressed aligning concepts across subject areas. *Subject Integration* focuses on creating meaningful connections for students and allowing them to engage in relevant activities that can be connected to real life.

Over 260 Special Education Paraprofessionals participated in professional learning on *Characteristics and Instructional Strategies and Behavior Management*.

We are pleased to have been able to support the professional growth of so many of our staff members.



# SAVE — THE — DATE

May 7, 2020

The annual School Nutrition Awards Banquet will be held on Thursday, May 7, 2020 at Huntington Middle School. The event will begin at 6:00 pm and will include dinner and a celebration recognizing employees and for schools for their accomplishments for this school year. We will send an email invite in the next few weeks! If you would like to attend, please RSVP to April Bohannon at [April.Bohannon@hcbe.net](mailto:April.Bohannon@hcbe.net).

## #ShakeitupGA!



On February 20th, Houston County School Nutrition cheered on our Perry Middle School FCCLA team as they represented our system at the Student Chef competition for #ShakeitupGA! They prepared an amazing Kale and Couscous side dish and were commended on their impeccable cleanliness in the kitchen! We could not be more proud of this group of incredible ladies!