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NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: NOVEMBER 5, 2018

(Release #2018/98 – 097)

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Hilltop Elementary Receives GaDOE Military Flagship School Award



HOUSTON COUNTY, GA – Hilltop Elementary School has been chosen by the Georgia Department of Education for an inaugural *Military Flagship School Award*. This award recognizes schools that provide a supportive environment for military students and families by recognizing and accommodate their unique needs. Hilltop is one of only six schools in the state to be recognized; 61 schools across Georgia applied.

Hilltop Elementary Principal Dr. Ovedia Glover said, “Serving our military students and families is our honor! Receiving this award is humbling, and we are pleased to be recognized for taking care of our students. We’re like a family, and we believe that Hilltop is one of the best kept secrets in town.”

State School Superintendent Richard Woods will visit the school to present a banner to display in their school promoting that it is a Military Flagship School. “As the child of a military family myself, it means so much to me to recognize schools that are doing an exceptional job caring for Georgia’s military students and families,” Superintendent Woods said. “Being part of a military family is a lifestyle full of transition and sacrifice. As educators and public officials, one way we can show our gratitude and respect for those who serve is providing a welcoming, supportive school environment for their families. I commend each one of these schools for their service on behalf of military families and children.”

Rep. Dave Belton, Georgia House of Representatives Chairman of the Military Affairs Working Group, remarked: “The military provides \$28 billion in economic impact to Georgia every year. The Pentagon has repeatedly told us that education is their number-one issue when looking at bases. That’s why I’m so excited about this Military Flagship program. As a child of a Navy officer, we moved every two years. I know how stressful that can be, especially for a high school junior or senior. This emphasis on military children will go a long way toward making Georgia the most

military-friendly state in the nation. But most of all, it's the right thing to do for the men and women who sacrifice their lives for our freedoms.”

As a part of outreach to military families, Hilltop Elementary has a military buddy system. New students are invited to activities to meet and interact with other new students. Information is also shared about the school and students are encouraged to ask questions about Hilltop Elementary and the community. Hilltop also provides school guidance and counseling services through the School Counselor Wanda Stafford and Military Family Life Counselor Kelly Ward. Students may visit with either counselor to discuss concerns or simply talk with a caring person.

In addition, the Robins Air Force Base Deployment Support Group holds quarterly meetings with Hilltop students whose parents are deployed, just returned from a deployment or about to be deployed. The students work on meaningful deployment projects to make and take home and have someone to talk with who understands the unique challenges of having a parent who is deployed.

Hilltop Elementary has other programs as well, such as:

- a Veterans Day program;
- annual, week-long celebration during April, Month of the Military Child, to highlight military students and their families;
- an After-School Camp for military students with activities such as making friendship bracelets; and
- Military Parent and Child Time (M-PACT) where parents can have breakfast and lunch with their children.

Hilltop Elementary School is located at 301 Robert Bryson Smith Parkway in Bonaire. For more information, please contact Dr. Glover at 478-929-6113, or Ovedia.Glover@hcbe.net.

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