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NEWS RELEASE

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Houston County Wins 8 State Public Relations Awards



HOUSTON COUNTY, GA – The Georgia School Public Relations Association (GSPRA) honored Director of Community and School Affairs Beth McLaughlin with eight state awards at its annual conference held in December. Houston County brought home four Gold awards, two Silver, a Bronze and a “Best of the Best” award which was introduced this year.

Gold awards were given for the following: *HCBOE Headlines*, the system’s E-newsletter; *PR Toolkit*, used to help schools generate positive public relations; Campus Dedication samples; and *Winning School Grants*, a step-by-step guide on writing and finding school grants. The E-newsletter also won a “Best in Category” award. Silver was given for the handbook, *A Houston County Parent’s Guide to Understanding the No Child Left Behind Act*, and for a sampling of school brochures. The system’s Vision and Mission Credo Card garnered a Bronze.

Entries were judged by a panel from the North Carolina School Public Relations Association. About the entries, judges commented:

- ★ “Excellent E-newsletter. Filled with great information, well written, short articles and great pictures. This is something that parents and employees will read. Very good color. We enjoyed this piece.”
- ★ *PR Toolkit*: “Excellent resource for teachers and administrators – great work!”
- ★ *Winning School Grants*: “A very useful publication, a lot of work went into this guide. Great idea. We love the resource list at the back. Excellent work.”
- ★ Guide to Understanding the NCLB: “Great information for parents, we like the fact you have it in Spanish too.”

Bill Maddox, the communications director for the Georgia Partnership for Excellence in Education, manages the annual contest for GSPRA. He explained that it was because of Houston County’s consistently professional achievements that a change was made in the evaluation system. “In 2007, Houston’s efforts in several categories far outdistanced the field with several gold winners, but there was no way to honor the system separately. We knew that had to change. A “Best in Category” honor was added for the top 2008 achievers. Houston County took home several gold awards again this year and also claimed one of the top honors for their professional efforts in the electronic communications category.”

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Each year Georgia public relations professionals are invited to submit publications, photographs and electronic media, falling into 13 categories, for evaluation by a public relations group in another state. Awards include Bronze, Silver, Gold and Best in Category. A judge scores each entry on a 100 point scale, evaluating overall look and whether or not the piece achieved the intended goal. For more information on GSPRA, visit www.gspra.org.

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NOTE: McLaughlin is pictured (on right) with Sloan Roach, GSPRA President and Executive Director of Communication and Media Relations for Gwinnett County Public Schools.