



DAVID CARPENTER, SUPERINTENDENT

**BOARD MEMBERS**

TOM WALMER, VICE CHAIRMAN  
W. G. CLEMENTS  
DR. MARIANNE MELNICK

PAMELA GREENWAY, CHAIRMAN

DR. CHARLES M. (TOBY) HILL  
SKIP DAWKINS  
FRED WILSON

## NEWS RELEASE

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: May 30, 2008**

Contact: Beth McLaughlin, Director of Community & School Affairs, (478) 988-6390 ext. 0, [BMcLaughlin@hcbe.net](mailto:BMcLaughlin@hcbe.net)

### **Matt Arthur Elementary Wins Georgia School Bell Award**



HOUSTON COUNTY, GA – **Matt Arthur Elementary School** has been chosen as a **2008 Georgia School Bell Award** winner by the Georgia Association of Elementary School Principals (GAESP). The GAESP presents this award annually to schools with outstanding programs in the area of curriculum and organizational leadership. No more than 10 schools receive this award each year.

Matt Arthur Elementary was chosen for its Partner's Club program. Partner's Club members participate in activities with special needs students during their break or recess time. Activities include playing on the playground, playing simple games in the classroom, assisting with pushing wheelchairs and walkers, demonstrating age appropriate skills for eating and solving simple problems, and modeling basic life skills. Members also assist special education teachers by walking with the special needs students to and from the bus and by taking the students to other classes throughout the school. The club members also have the opportunity to invite their special needs peers to eat lunch with them in their classrooms for special occasions.

Principal Dr. Jolie Hardin remarked, "I am incredibly proud of this program. The teachers who sponsor the club, Jeanie Vining and Christy Nobles, have made a huge difference in the lives of both regular education and severe special education students. The friendships that are formed between the children is incredible, especially considering that many of the special needs students involved are never given the opportunity to socialize with peers their own age due to the barriers between them.

MORE

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The club members have helped the special needs students to be accepted as an integral part of the school environment. The club members get to experience the enjoyment of helping others and the love of their special needs friends. One of the long term benefits of the Partner's Club is that our students learn to accept children who are severely disabled and are not intimidated to interact with them. We are honored to receive this award. "

Hardin will be presented the award during the Fall Principals Conference, which will be held in November at Sea Palms Resort, St. Simons Island, Ga. She will be accompanied by Vining and Nobles.

Past Houston County recipients of the School Bell award include:

- Eagle Springs Elementary, 2007;
- Shirley Hills Elementary, 2006 and 2001;
- David Perdue Elementary, 2005;
- Linwood Elementary, 2005;
- Northside Elementary, 2003;
- Morningside Elementary, 2002;
- Quail Run Elementary, 2000; and
- Centerville Elementary, 1998.

Matt Arthur Elementary is located at 2500 Highway 127 in Kathleen. Principal Hardin may be contacted at either [jhardin@hcbe.net](mailto:jhardin@hcbe.net) or (478) 988-6170.

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NOTE: A photo of the Matt Arthur Elementary Partner's Club members is attached. Pictured are: (front row, from left) Brianna Sanders, Chase Brown, MacKenzie Franklin, (second Row) Mrs. Christy Nobles, Michael Hobbs, Chase Hollingsworth, BJ Brown, Jackson Farrell, Mrs. Jeanie Vining, (third row) Will Cooper, Jacob Neal, Rebecca Ulch, Jason Web, and Nathan Burch.