

McGinnis Woods Buzz



November 2014 Volume 9, Issue 3



McGINNIS WOODS
Country Day School

*Inspiring Students with
the Passion to Excel*

The latest buzz . . .

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DATES TO REMEMBER

11/24- 11/28	Thanksgiving Break
12/05	Parent's Night Out 6-9 p. m.
12/08/ 12/12	Holiday Shoppe
12/12	7:30 PA Coffee
12/15	Discovery Club Forms
12/19	Holiday Parties
12/19	Parents Night Out 6-9 p.m.
12/22- 01/02	Winter Break

McGinnis Woods Mission Statement

*Our mission is to provide
superior academics
through hands-on
approaches, which foster
self confidence and self
esteem that inspire a life-
long love of learning.*

A Message From Ms. Mary



One of the most rewarding aspects of working in a school community is the privilege of seeing students overcome their individual challenges and become confident, proud learners. At McGinnis Woods, our entire staff works to identify and meet the needs of each of our unique learners. We accomplish this goal through our small class sizes, hands-on activities and extra support provided by our strong support staff including our beloved Nurse Penny, School Counselor, Ms. Jenn and Academic Support Teacher, Ms. Kristen.

McGinnis Woods also offers Speech and Occupational Therapy services to students in need of specialized services. Our goal for each of our students in Pre-K through 8th grade is to help them grow as much as possible, developmentally, socially and academically, each year and to cheer them on one day at a time as this goal is reached.

We are so thankful to work with each of our amazing students and their families. Our students' determination, creativity, smiles, energy, and humor encourage us daily, so as we enter the holiday season, we want you to know that we count our McGinnis Woods community as one of our many blessings.

This issue of the McGinnis Woods Buzz is filled with interesting news, updates and opportunities for you to make an impact here at the school. We hope that you not only enjoy what you read but learn something new about this special place.

We hope you have a very Happy Thanksgiving!

Ms. Mary

Parent Association Update



Hello McGinnis Woods Family! Happy November!

With the hectic month of October behind us, we have had a quieter November as a PA Board. Thank you again to all who donated and participated in our Fall Festival Basket Raffle. All of the funds raised will certainly help make a difference in our efforts to adding more to our new gym!

With November being the month of Thanksgiving, our minds naturally turn to helping others. As we have done in the past, the PA Board is working hand in hand with North Fulton County Charities and adopting families for the Christmas season. Our trees are up in the entrance of both the preschool and the elementary school building decorated with ornaments indicating wishes from those without this holiday season. Please grab an ornament and help us make the holidays special for another family. It is a great opportunity to teach our children what philanthropy really is all about!

It is almost time for our Annual Secret Holiday Shoppe! Our PA Board elves have been working long and hard in the workshop to prepare for this year's Secret Holiday Shoppe. The MCGW Secret Holiday Shoppe will be open from Monday, December 8th to Friday, December 12th. We will also have a "night shopping experience" on Wednesday, December 10th until 6:00 p.m.

For those you who are new to the school, the Secret Holiday Shoppe is a "store" set up for the students to purchase items on their own for family, friends, teachers or even themselves. Younger shoppers will have the guidance of a parent volunteer while they shop. The items will be wrapped for the kids. The majority of the items are priced from \$5 to \$25. Each class will have a designated time to shop. As parents, you are of course welcome to shop, too!

We had a preview table during the Thanksgiving Feast events, so you could see a selection of wonderful gifts we will have in stock! You'll be able to guide your child's shopping by filling the shopping form and decide the amount and the recipient of the gifts. Next week your child's "shopping form" will come home, so stay tuned for more information.

As you can imagine, we need lots of volunteers to make this event the "Best Secret Holiday Shoppe" ever! If you have an hour or two to help us and specially to help the kids shopping, we would appreciate it! We will send a Sign-up Genius soon.

We are very excited about our Secret Holiday Shoppe. We hope that you will choose to participate. It is both a fun and educational experience for the kids whether they observe a gift-giving December holiday or not, and all proceeds will go towards the purchase of items needed for our new gym.

This month we will be having a PA Hot Cocoa event instead of a PA Coffee! Join us in the Secret Holiday Shoppe on December 12th starting at 7:30 a.m. The shoppe will open early and we look forward to talking to all the parents that drop in to see us!

As we mentioned last month—we are still looking for more families to get involved with the PA Board. We have one of our largest fundraisers approaching in February—the Boosterthon Fun Run—and would love someone to step up and volunteer to lead this project! If you want to know more about the opportunity, please drop us a message and we'll be happy to share what it entails!

November is a time to be thankful! Why not share your talents with our board as a way to demonstrate your gratitude for the incredible school McGinnis Woods is! Nothing feels better than giving back and nothing is better than the smiling faces of our students when they see their parents or their friend's parents spending time at the school!

Wildcat Chat

This is an exciting time in Wildcats Sports as we have both an “A” and a “B” team for our boys’ and girls’ basketball teams. We are thrilled so many students have joined our teams this year. Our season began with the boys and girls “B” team games at Atlanta Academy on Nov 13th.

Our girls’ basketball team is looking forward to hosting our first home game December 4th. Our girls’ “B” team will play at 4:00 and our girls’ “A” team will play at 5:00.

Our boys “A” team will be traveling to Brandon Hall on December 4th. Our boys are being coached by Ms. Heather Bailey and Mr. John Montgomery. Heather has been coaching the boys’ basketball team at McGinnis for four years. She loves teaching the fundamentals to the younger players. Heather has attended numerous coaching clinics and enjoys watching her athletes become better players on the court. This is Mr. John’s first year coaching at McGinnis, but he is not new to McGinnis. He is better known as ‘Ethan’s dad’. Mr. John has been coaching basketball at the YMCA for 8 years. He played basketball in high school and on an intermural team in college.

Our girls’ are coached by Ms. Robyn Hogan and Ms. Brittany Henderson. Ms. Robyn has been coaching our girls’ basketball team for five years. She played in high school and loves working with the girls’. Ms. Brittany has been playing basketball since she was five years old. She also played for the University of Kentucky. Her position on the team was a forward. Ms. Brittany was voted Outstanding Player in the 2010 SEC tournament.

We are happy to welcome both Mr. John and Ms. Brittany to our McGinnis Woods coaching staff! We are looking forward to a great season!

GO WILDCATS!



New Discovery Clubs Options in January

Our second session of discovery clubs is underway and will continue until the week of December 15th. Registration forms for the January session will be sent soon and due on December 15th. We are excited to be offering some new clubs including Chess and Golf in the next session beginning the week of January 12th.

We are also excited to offer Golf with Golf Time. These lessons with these golf pros will teach proper grip, putting, swing technique, hand-eye coordination, scoring and more. There will be a demo on Monday, December 15th for PreK - 5th grades. See website at www.GolfTimeMcGinnisWoods.com for more info or to register.

Preschool Corner

Our preschool classroom spotlight shines on our Senior Toddlers during November. This age group is our older toddlers who are becoming more independent. Their gross motor skills are increasing as they learn to run. Their language skills are increasing rapidly as they begin to speak in short sentences. Senior toddlers also begin to pretend when they play, such as feeding a doll that they are playing with.

Our Senior Toddler I teacher is Ms. Christine. Ms. Christine has been on staff for a little over one year. She enjoys teaching the children through silly songs. The children love to hear songs that help them learn. Ms. Christine has two older boys and one baby who attends our preschool.

Ms. Lisa C. is our Senior Toddler II teacher. Lisa has been at McGinnis Woods for eight years. Ms. Lisa helps the children learn basic concepts like colors, numbers and shapes. The children are also learning how to do things by themselves, such as putting on their own jackets. Ms. Lisa has one son, JJ, who is a student here at McGinnis Woods in the elementary school.



Stop in and say hello to our Senior Toddlers and you will see how much fun and learning takes place in these two classrooms!

We had a wonderful visit from Lee Bryan, that Puppet Guy, who performed *The Big Bad, Little Red, Pig Show* for the preschool on Thursday November 13th. Even our youngest children enjoyed the puppets and fast paced story filled with twists and turns!



Scholastic Book Fair Visits Our Library



Our Fall Book Fair delivered a kingdom of delightful and dazzling books for every type of reader! *Sir Readalot's* Castle was the theme for this book fair and there were many knights, dragons and princesses lurking about. There was even a knight's shield of armor and breastplate on display!

Each class was thrilled to visit the book fair and make their very own wish list. Teachers were just as excited to create classroom wish lists too. Classroom wish lists place books in the hands of students in their very own classes. A special thank you goes to all of the families who purchased books and contributed to their child's class wish list.

This year McGinnis Woods parents downloaded a Scholastic Book Fair app to help select books for their child. Many parents liked having this tool as a resource to assist in finding the right books for students.

If you were unable to make it to the book fair please visit our online book fair website. The link is: <http://bookfairs.scholastic.com/homepage/mcginniswoods>. The online fair dates are from November 8th to November 28th. Online you'll still find a wide assortment of books including books not available at our book fair. Additionally, all purchases ship for free directly to the school.

Thank you for all of your support and we'll see you at the next Scholastic Book Fair in the Spring!

Word of the Month: Gratitude

The Word of the Month for November is *gratitude*. We define gratitude as letting others know you see how they have helped you. We have spent the month pointing out students who are working hard to show gratitude. Some students who worked exceptionally hard to master this character trait this month will be rewarded on the morning announcements with a Chick-fil-A coupon. The word of the month for December is *generosity*.



Student Council Update

Student Council is in full swing. We had an amazing *Red Ribbon Week* and are in the process of organizing our first order-in day. We will tally orders our next working lunch and on December 1st the sandwiches will be here for all who ordered! We think it is a nice treat to return to after Thanksgiving Break. We also had our first class representative meeting on Monday, November 17th at 8 a.m.

Red Ribbon Week Wrap Up



During the last week of October we celebrated being drug free with our *Red Ribbon Week* lessons and activities. Student Council organized many fun activities centered around our theme, *Love Yourself-Be Drug Free*. Since being drug free starts when students are young, a board full of teachers' baby pictures were created and classes and teachers who guessed correctly received rewards. Also, classes were given an age appropriate quiz on drugs, alcohol and medications. Those winners received prizes, too. Lastly student council handed out tokens to each student to remind them of our goal. PK-2nd grade were given theme pencils, 3rd and 4th were given pencil sharpeners, and 5th-8th were given ear buds.

Beta Club Update

Jr. Beta Club has been very busy planning our charity events for the year. We have also welcomed several new members to our club. Each club member is working on a team to serve one of five designated projects. The organizations the students have chosen to highlight, as well as some of their creative ideas of ways to work with the groups and meet their needs, are listed below:

The Humane Society: Ice Cream for \$1 on November 21st will help us to fund projects like toy making, blanket making, and the baking of dog biscuits.

An Assisted Living Facility: Create cards and letters, visit and play BINGO, and care packages.

Cystic Fibrosis: Bake Sales, a visit from an expert, and additional fundraisers.

McGinnis Woods: Planting flowers, cleaning up the grounds, and additional school beautification projects.

Orphanage in Kazakhstan: Gently used toy drive and fund raisers.



The Third Grade Team



The third grade students are lead by three teachers who diligently collaborate to create dynamic, hands-on experiences for their students. The teachers are committed to integrating technology, setting high expectations, and meeting the needs of each student.

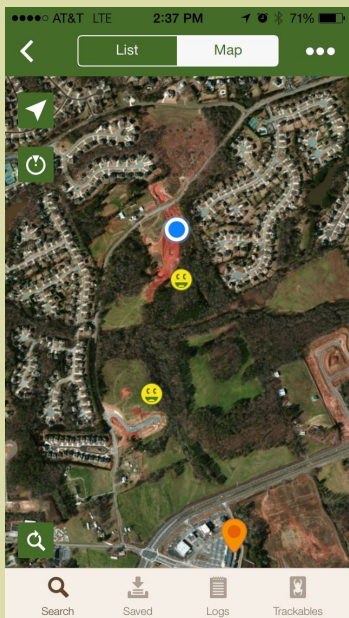
The Third Grade Owls are taught by Mrs. Ruth Adams. Mrs. Ruth is a graduate from Kennesaw State University with a Bachelors of Science in Elementary and Early Childhood Education and a certificate in Leadership Studies. She is a current attendee of Liberty University where she is pursuing her Masters of Education in Gifted Education. Ms. Ruth will obtain this degree in May. She has a Valley Bulldog named Diesel who is eight years old and an American Bulldog Boxer mix named Khalee. She loves to spend time with Diesel, Khalee, and her wonderful husband, Matthew. She believes that all students have the capability to learn, and she believes in setting high expectations for all students.

The Third Grade Dogs are taught by Ms. Sam and Ms. Carey. Ms. Sam grew up in Sandy Springs and graduated with a Bachelors of Science in Elementary Education from Kennesaw State University. This is her ninth year at McGinnis Woods. She loves teaching third grade and coaching the middle school volleyball team. She has been married to her husband Brian for 15 years, and they have two children, Cole and Alexandria, and Koda, her dog. Cole graduated from McGinnis Woods last year and is now a freshman at Lanier High School. Alex is in seventh grade here at McGinnis Woods. Ms. Sam spends a lot of time at the soccer field watching Cole play and watching Alexandria on the volleyball court. In her free time, Ms. Sam loves to spend time with her family, reading, cooking and enjoys watching TV.

Ms. Carey Stachler graduated from Georgia College and State University with a Bachelor's Degree in English with a concentration in Literature. This is her second year as a teacher's assistant at McGinnis Woods. She really enjoys working in the classroom. During her spare time, she likes to hike, watch movies, and spend time with her family and friends. She especially loves going out to eat and trying new restaurants around Atlanta! This is her first year in Third Grade at McGinnis Woods, and she is having a great time working along with Ms. Sam and all of the amazing third graders.

Outdoor Adventure Elective Goes Geocaching

Early this month, the *Outdoor Adventure* elective students went geocaching. For those not familiar with geocaching, it is a world-wide scavenger hunt, using latitude and longitude coordinates, a compass and maybe even a few hints. Caches are placed all over the world by everyday people while others use the tools listed above to find them. Inside the caches are logs for those that find the cache and maybe even some goodies or “swag” to trade. Students traveled to Caney Creek Preserve with Ms. Nicole and Ms. Jenn to find two caches hidden there. Students and teachers had to navigate to the caches location and then hunt for the hidden cache. Students traded “swag” they had brought with them and took turns signing the log. We made sure to B.Y.O.P. (geocache lingo for bring your own pen). The best part was hiding a trackable specifically for the group. A trackable is an item imprinted with a code specific to that item which can then be moved all over the world while you track its progress. Some trackables can even have a mission! Our trackable was an American flag with a frog. Students placed the trackable in one of the caches, with its goal being to travel into as many schools and classrooms as possible, teaching students about geocaching! Amazingly, our trackable was picked up two days later by someone traveling to Florida, with the promise to get our trackable into a school! To close our geocaching adventure, students helped to plan their own cache which we hope to “hide” here at the school. Students pulled together paperwork, coordinates, a log and “swag” for our cache. Hopefully all you geocachers out there will soon be able to “get schooled” with our cache. Check out geocaching.com or their app for more information or to start your own adventure!



1st Graders Learn About Japan

Through an unexplained chain of events, the first grade classrooms were magically transformed into the amazing, island country of Japan! During November, our sushi-loving students devoured all the knowledge they could sink their teeth into about the unique culture.

Learning about Japan's rich history was brand-new and completely fascinating to the students. They enjoyed how starkly different their culture was, and still is, from typical American society. The children's favorite things about Japan included: the ninjas, the fun holidays they celebrate (specifically, the kite-flying holiday of Children's Day) and the field trip to Benihana where we experienced exquisite, Japanese cuisine. It was a challenge for many of us to eat with chopsticks!

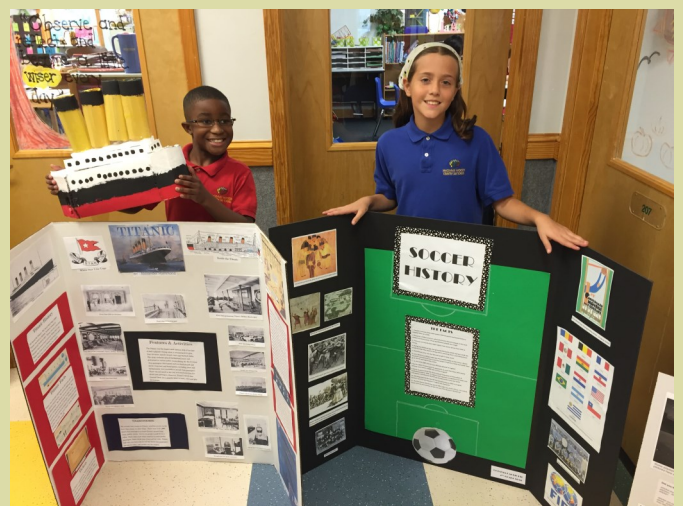
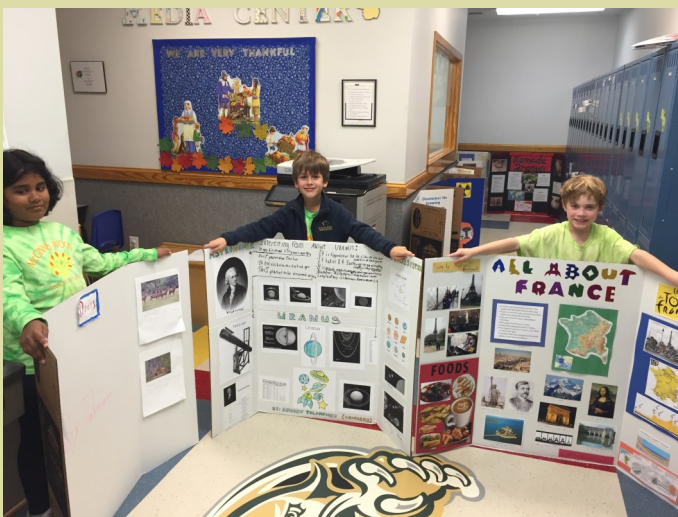
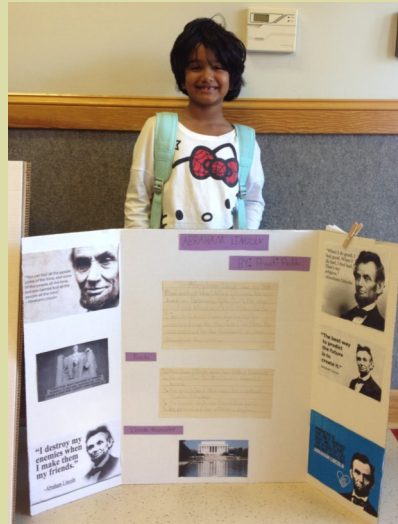
The first grade ninjas, or students, wrote fun stories using a mixture of English and Japanese characters. They read non-fiction and folktale stories about Japan. The students even did mini-presentations on a Japanese topic of their choice. They picked a topic (Japanese sculptured gardens, for example), learned all about it, and then presented to the class. The students always love a chance to be the teacher!

The first graders think "Temporarily Turning Japanese" was Terrific!



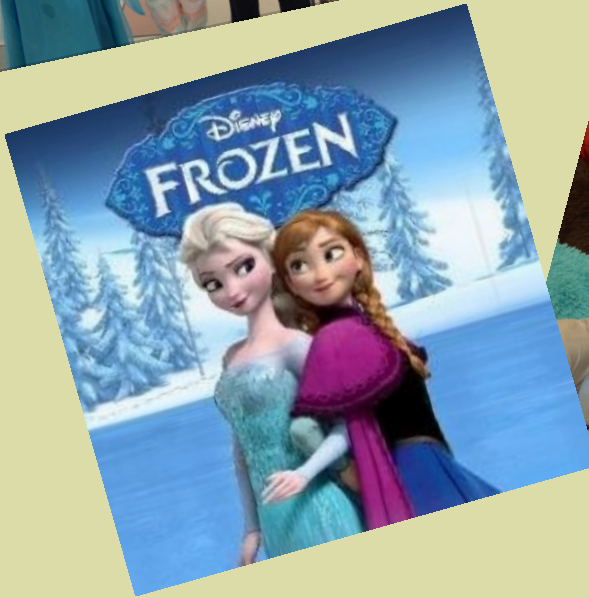
Project Showcase Taught Us All

On Tuesday, November 4th, all of the first grade through eighth grade students of McGinnis Woods became teachers! Project Showcase presentations were given by each of our students, and they shared their knowledge about a topic using a tri-fold board or Power Point presentation. So many great skills were used to complete Project Showcase including researching, public speaking and creating captivating visual presentation! Students were very excited to share their newfound knowledge which they were so passionate about. The boards were displayed throughout the hallways, and we hope you were able to view some of the colorful boards. Some of the students favorite topics included animals, famous people, and marvelous places. We are so proud of each and every one of our bright, articulate presenters.



Parents Night Out

On Friday evening, November 7th, from 6:00-9:00 p.m., there was a group of students still here at school! They were here to enjoy some dinner, a movie, crafts and science projects with Ms. Sam and Ms. Wendy while their parents had a Parent's Night Out! Frozen was the theme for the evening! The group of 17 children had a sing-a-long, made ice cream, painted and made Olaf, the snowman. Many of the students came all cozy in their pajamas, and then snuggled on pillows to watch the movie *Frozen* and eat popcorn. A great time was had by both parents and children! If you missed this opportunity, do not worry because the next Parent's Night Out is on Friday, November 21st! *Despicable Me 2* is the theme for this evening with games, experiments and crafts designed to compliment the movie.



Coming tonight,
November 21st!



Nurse Penny Loves Teaching Students About Health



Nurse Penny has been our school nurse for 14 years. She sees children and manages medical care for the Preschool, Elementary and Middle schools. She also teaches health education to students ages three years old to 8th grade.

Nurse Penny received her Bachelor's of Science from Valdosta State University. She has worked in various areas of both hospital and home health care settings. She attends school nurse update classes from *Children's Health Care* and is involved in various organizations of school health.

Penny is originally from Macon, Georgia and has lived in Alpharetta for the last 18 years. She is married to Scott and has two sons. Addison is 21 and is a senior at Georgia College and State University majoring in Management/Finance; Andrew is 14 and a freshman at South Forsyth High School. She also adores her two cocker spaniels, Cami and Spencer.

When Nurse Penny is not at work, she enjoys time with her family, yoga, reading, baking and volunteering at her church. What she loves most about her job is being able to be the nurse of the school and also teach the children health concepts for life.

Here are some important health tips from Nurse Penny for you to consider as we enter the winter months:

-Please make sure your child is wearing a warm coat every day. Some days the weather can change without warning, and we want students to be comfortable and prepared. Gloves, scarves, and hats are needed for recess times. Students will go outside for scheduled recess time on days when the temperature is 42 degrees or higher.

-Flu season is upon us. Please remind your student to wash his/her hands often to encourage good health.

-PLEASE DO NOT SEND YOUR CHILD TO SCHOOL IF THEY HAVE A FEVER OF 101F OR HIGHER. If your child stays home sick, please notify the school and take him/her to the doctor for evaluation. We closely monitor children who are not feeling well and work to keep illnesses at low levels. Teachers, students and all staff are clean frequently as well.

-Head Lice are harmless insects that are very contagious. They live and lay their eggs in hair/scalp. To prevent these pesky bugs, do not allow your child to share coats, hats or any clothing article that is worn on or near the neck/head area. PLEASE REPORT ANY CASES OF HEAD LICE TO THE SCHOOL.

-During November and this time of Thanksgiving, please make it a priority to give your kids healthy meals and snacks. Most recipes these days have healthier options and are very kid-friendly. Small changes can really make a difference in reducing salt, sugar, and fat intake. These changes will **make you and your child happier and healthier.**

Have a happy, healthy Thanksgiving!

Service and Sweets Success

The 4th-8th graders hosted our first Thanksgiving Feast Day on November 18th in the new gym. We were thrilled to fill the space with colorful decorations, wonderful food, family, friends, and service. The students presented a short readers theater about the ABCs of the First Thanksgiving and then sang two songs for their parents and friends.

Following their presentation everyone enjoyed delicious desserts before the students got down to business and worked together to prepare 120 sack lunches for those in need this holiday season. The sack lunches included sandwiches, chips, apples, cookies, water, and homemade Thanksgiving cards made by the 4th graders.

The students were so proud of their opportunity to share their plenty with others. Their enthusiasm and care brought smiles to all of the adults who had the privilege of watching them serve in such a tangible way. The lunches, loaves of bread and hundreds of bottled waters were dropped off at The Place of Forsyth County.

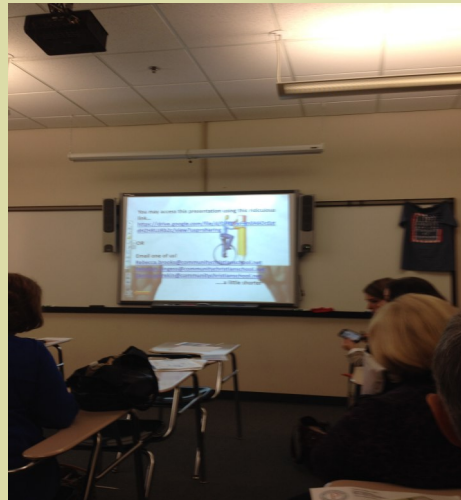


GISA Conference

On November 3rd the McGinnis Woods teacher joined thousands of other independent school teachers for the annual Georgia Independent School Association Conference hosted by Mount Pisgah. The conference is wonderful opportunity for teachers to collaborate with other teachers from around Georgia, meet educational vendors, attend breakout sessions and hear amazing keynote speakers.

This year the conference featured two keynote speakers, Dr. Ben Carson, the author of a number of books including *One Nation*, and Paul Tough, the author of *How Children Succeed: Grit, Curiosity and the Hidden Power of Character*. The speakers were incredibly inspirational and reminded teachers and administrators of just how an important of a role they play in the lives of students, their families and our nation.

The sessions that the teacher attended ranged from topics regarding meeting the needs of special needs children to technology in the classroom. One popular session was entitled "Gamifying Your Classroom". Each of our teachers gathered information from their sessions which they then shared with the rest of the staff at our most recent staff meeting. These sessions gave us all much to consider and apply to continue to strengthen instruction at McGinnis Woods.



SACS Survey

We will be sending out our annual SACS survey via email after our Thanksgiving Break. Please take the time to complete the survey as our School Improvement Team will be using this data as we formulate additional goals for our school improvement plan. Your opinion is important to us!

We are always looking for parents who would like to serve on a variety of teams that meet at McGinnis Woods each month. If you would like to volunteer and participate, please contact Ms. Mary at mjohnson@mcginnisoods.org.

Pictures from Around the School

