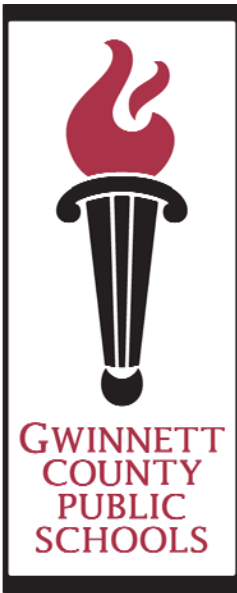


# NEWS RELEASE



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**THE MISSION OF  
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*is to pursue excellence  
in academic knowledge,  
skills, and behavior  
for each student,  
resulting in measured  
improvement against  
local, national, and  
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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:** October 15, 2008

*Contact: Communication and Media Relations, 678-301-6020*

## **Five Forks Middle, Trickum Middle, North Gwinnett High: Gwinnett Fine Arts program well-represented in Georgia Art Education Association Awards Program**

Three **Gwinnett County Public Schools** (GCPS) fine arts teachers recently earned recognition for their commitment to their students' academic success, and their professional attention to quality art education from the Georgia Art Education Association (GAEA). **Debi West** of **North Gwinnett High**, **Loria Crews** of **Five Forks Middle**, and **Aimée Burgamy** of **Trickum Middle** brought home three of the 13 awards presented to teachers from around the state and to supporters of fine arts programs.

### ***Debi West, North Gwinnett High – 2009 Georgia Art Educator of the Year***

“Being nominated for any award is so humbling ... I don't think it has sunk in yet that I actually won! ... They (her students) make me look good. I am amazed at their talent, their pure goodness, and their desire to succeed. I will accept this award on behalf on my students and my children.”

Ms. West joined GCPS 16 years ago as an art teacher at Sugar Hill Elementary. She later taught Rock Springs Elementary students for five years, and helped open Level Creek Elementary as its art teacher, before arriving at North Gwinnett High two years ago. The lead visual arts teacher at North Gwinnett High who teaches advanced draw/paint classes, holds an Educational Specialist degree from the University of Georgia.

In the past, this National Board Certified Teacher was named the 1999 GAEA Elementary Level Art Educator of the Year, the 2001 Southeastern Elementary Art Educator of the Year, and the 2005 National Elementary Art Educator of the Year. She now moves to compete for the Southeastern Art Educator of the Year title.

**--More--**

***Loria Crews, Five Forks Middle – 2009 Middle Level Art Educator of the Year***

“I am simply flattered. In middle school, it is essential to provide students the artistic training, preparation, and scholarship necessary to achieve excellence in the future. Art is vital in learning about today’s cultural heritage and in educating and embracing diversity. It can bring every subject to life and turn abstractions into concrete reality. I believe a teacher can make a difference through the arts.”

A Five Forks Middle Teacher of the Year in 2007, Ms. Crews has dedicated her entire teaching career to Five Forks Middle students since beginning her career in the fall of 2001. She holds an Educational Specialist degree in Educational Leadership and Administration from Lincoln Memorial University.

***Aimée Burgamy, Trickum Middle – 2009 Outstanding National Junior Art Honor Society Sponsor Award***

“I was thrilled to be recognized. Trickum’s Jr. National Art Honor Society, founded in 2007-08 ... was very small but served as a leader for achievement in the arts and community service through art. We did many exciting and innovative projects last year, including a painted mural inspired by the work of Sol LeWitt, and an outdoor mural in clay that promotes environmental awareness. I think the diversity and quality of projects we selected, given the small size of our club, is part of why I was selected as Outstanding JNAHS sponsor for Georgia this year.”

A former curator of education for the Montgomery Museum of Fine Art, Ms. Burgamy joined Trickum Middle in 2005, four years after joining the system. This former college professor is currently working on her doctoral degree from the University of Georgia.

The Gwinnett teachers will be recognized at the Awards Banquet at the 2008 GAEA Fall Professional Learning Conference-“Art for All”, at the Classic Center in Athens on November 7, 2008.

*For more information about fine arts in Gwinnett, please contact Robert Andrews, fine arts director, at 678-301-7004.*