

NEWS RELEASE

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Gwinnett honored with three state counseling awards

Known throughout Georgia and the nation as leaders in the counseling field, the **Gwinnett County Public Schools (GCPS)** advisement and counseling team has earned three additional state honors. The Georgia State Counseling Association (GSCA) recently recognized the Gwinnett educators at its annual conference, where they won three of the association's four top honors.

"Gwinnett school counselors remove the barriers to student achievement by providing preventative and responsive services through classroom guidance, small group and individual counseling," says **Dianne Thompson**, director of advisement and counseling. "What elevates counseling in GCPS are the high quality programs delivered at all levels. GCPS seeks out counseling candidates who understand child development, are team players, and can demonstrate and articulate the use of data in evaluating and continuously improving the counseling program."

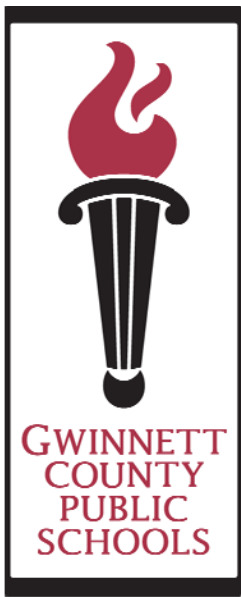
Gwinnett's most recent state honorees are:

- **Karen Griffith, Berkeley Lake Elementary**
2008 Georgia Elementary School Counselor of the Year

Ms. Griffith joined GCPS in 2005 as a school counselor at Berkeley Lake Elementary. Before joining Gwinnett, the award-winning counselor also had been recognized as the Rockdale County Elementary School Counselor both in 1999 and in 2000. On both occasions, she also received the Region 4 honor. Ms. Griffith holds a bachelor's degree from Sanford University in Elementary Education, a master's degree from the University of Tennessee in Special Education, and a specialist degree in School Counseling from Georgia State University.

- **Dr. Helen Clark, Dacula High**
2008 Georgia Secondary Counselor of the Year

Dr. Clark begins her third school year as a counselor at Dacula High. She first joined the school system in 1994 as a counselor at South Gwinnett High. She holds a Bachelor's degree in Education from Indiana Wesleyan University, a Counselor Education specialist degree from the University of South Carolina, and a second specialist degree in Educational Leadership from North Georgia College and State University. Dr. Clark obtained her doctoral degree from Nova Southeastern University in Child and Youth Studies.



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- **Keith Chaney, Grayson High Principal**
2008 Georgia Counseling Advocate of the Year

Keith Chaney has been at the helm of Grayson High since 2003. He first joined the school system in 1994 as a paraprofessional at Brookwood High (94-95), later becoming a teacher at Dacula High (95-99) before he became an assistant principal at the school in 1999. Mr. Chaney received a bachelor's degree in Marketing from Kennesaw State University, and Master's and specialist degrees in Education, both from UGA.

Before being named the state's top winners, these three professionals were Region 2 winners, and among four educators recognized as local school district winners. These three Gwinnett representatives now move on to compete at the national level.

For more about the award winners and the counselor's role in GCPS, contact Dianne Thompson, director of Advisement and Counseling, by calling 770-277-4488.