

October 7, 2009

**Newton County School System Receives
21st Century Community Learning Centers Grant for After School Programs**

Newton County School System (NCSS) has been awarded a federally funded 21st Century Community Learning Centers grant from the Georgia Department of Education that could net the school system over \$1 million over the next three years. The grant includes \$350,000 for the current 2009-2010 school year and the district is eligible for renewal of the grant for 2010-2011 and 2011-2012 based on annual program evaluations and availability of federal funds.

The 21st Century grant will be used to expand Newton County School System's After School Academic Program (ASAP), targeting children identified as needing after-school services and remediation, but whose families cannot afford the tuition-based program already in place. Parents of students who qualify for the program based on federal guidelines for the grant will be notified by the program coordinator, Deena Sams.

Funding from the program will allow the district to serve 250 additional students tuition-free in its After School Academic Program (ASAP) in 5 locations, including four schools, Porterdale Elementary, Middle Ridge Elementary, Liberty Middle, the Challenge Charter Academy, and a community-based program at the Washington Street Community Center. Plans are to begin the program at these sites on October 26, 2009. The school system currently offers the ASAP program on a tuition basis at Ficquett, Porterdale, Live Oak, West Newton, and Rocky Plains elementary schools and Fairview and Clements theme schools.

"We are pleased that the grant writing efforts of the team are enabling the school system to offer ASAP to students," said Dr. Steve Whatley, Superintendent of Newton County Schools. "This program will be an additional source of help to students in academic need".

The 21st CCLC ASAP is a collaborative effort involving the Newton County Community Partnership, the Recreation Department, the Arts Association, Newton County Reads, and the Covington Police Department. The school system has a long-standing relationship with the Community Partnership, which includes representatives from a number of organizations such as KidsNet, the Literacy Coalition, Gwinnett/Rockdale/Newton Mental Health, the Juvenile Courts and Juvenile Justice, and the Health Department, who together with the school district, continue to seek ways to improve the lives of young people.

Dr. Kathy Garber, Newton County Schools Grants Coordinator, expressed excitement about receiving this grant, saying that "this program will provide funding for many of our children who are in need of remediation and after-school supervision. We are very hopeful that this opportunity will be a tremendous asset in helping them to achieve academic success."

Objectives of the ASAP program include improved performance in core academic areas with an emphasis on reading and math; improved homework completion, class participation, and behavior; opportunities for students to be more involved in the arts and recreation; and increased parent involvement in their children's education and development. Activities will be learner-focused with enrichment and remediation presented through innovative lessons, student projects, small group learning, and technology.

Students will use computer labs daily for Internet research, educational games, and software such as Study Island and iSucceed, which provide online practice in math and reading skills based on Georgia Performance Standards. Homework assistance and tutoring will be provided on a daily basis, and lessons will be planned to meet the needs of individual students as well as small groups. Other enrichment activities that support academic success will be offered in language arts, including English and Spanish, the arts, and recreation. Thematic units will integrate all subject areas and field trips will be taken. Students will participate in discussions and lessons on proper behavior, decision-making, and study skills, with middle school students using materials from the All Stars program. Parents will participate in Parent Education classes using materials from Parents Assuring Student Success (PASSport to Success) and the All-Stars program, and those in need of Literacy and GED Preparation classes will be served by Newton County Reads.

“This program will offer students and their families support through after-school and parent services that will enhance learning during the regular school day,” said Deena Sams, 21st Century Community Learning Centers Program Coordinator for Newton County School System. “The 21st Century ASAP will feature activities that students will not only enjoy, but will learn simultaneously. We are extremely excited to have this program in Newton County.”

For more information, contact Deena Sams, 21st Century Community Learning Centers Program Coordinator, at 770-787-1330 ext. 1271.
