

December 13, 2011

Heard-Mixon Elementary School Named 2011 Georgia School of Excellence

Georgia School Superintendent Dr. John Barge announced today that Heard-Mixon Elementary School is a 2011 Georgia School of Excellence in Student Achievement! Each year, the Georgia School of Excellence program honors 26 schools that have shown the greatest improvement or highest achievement across the state. Dr. Barge noted that each of these schools will receive a \$1,000 check from Georgia Natural Gas to be used however they wish.

“I am elated to hear that we were awarded a school of excellence for our district,” said Lee Peck, principal of Heard-Mixon Elementary School. “I am honored to work with a school community that is so dedicated to ensure academic success for all students. I would like to personally thank the county office administrators, my assistant principal and staff, students and parents for all they do each and every day for the children we serve together.”

“We are extremely proud of Heard-Mixon students, staff, and administration,” said Newton County School System (NCSS) Superintendent, Dr. Gary Mathews. “It is indicative of a long standing commitment to academic excellence.”

According to information provided by the Georgia Department of Education (GDOE), the program places emphasis on student achievement as measured through state-mandated criterion assessments. Each year, the GDOE identifies schools from each Congressional District as Georgia Schools of Excellence in Student Achievement. Heard-Mixon Elementary School is located in the 8th Congressional District.

One public school from each Congressional District is chosen in each of the two categories:

1. **Top 10%**- Schools, regardless of demographics, that are in the top 10 percent of schools in Georgia as measured by assessments in reading and mathematics in at least the last grade tested.
2. **Greatest Gains in Congressional District**- Schools, regardless of demographics, that demonstrate greatest continuous gains in student achievement for the past three years as measured by assessments in reading and mathematics.

Schools must also meet the following additional criteria in order to be considered for the recognition:

- Meet AYP for a minimum of three consecutive years
- Meet or exceed state mean scores in Science and Social Studies (with the exception of K-2 schools, which do not test in this area)
- Not be considered a “Persistently Dangerous School” under the Unsafe School Choice Option of No Child Left Behind
- Offer a minimum of two AP courses (grades 9-12 only)
- Be in existence for five years, and
- Not be under any type of state investigation within the last year

Heard-Mixon Elementary School earned its School of Excellence designation in the Greatest Gains category.

“Mr. Peck and his staff do a wonderful job of instructing students, monitoring the students’ progress, and revising their teaching to meet the needs of ALL students,” said Dr. Ken Proctor, NCSS Executive Director for Elementary Schools. “I’m very proud of the work being accomplished at Heard-Mixon; this honor is well-deserved.”

Heard-Mixon Elementary School is located in Newton County’s District One and District One Board of Education Representative Jeff Meadors praised the administrators and staff at the school for this tremendous achievement.

“I could not be more proud of the work being done at Heard-Mixon,” said Meadors. “I sat down with Principal Lee Peck this past March and we reviewed achievement data in all academic areas. I observed high quality teachers narrowly focused on student achievement. Now comes the payoff. The real winners will always be our students.”

Meadors added, "It takes school leadership and teachers committed to a collective mission of increased student achievement to earn a Georgia School of Excellence title. I feel strongly that, while this title is earned over a span of three years of increased achievement, the strong instructional leadership of Dr. Gary Mathews has raised the bar on student achievement . "

Georgia’s complete list of 2011 Schools of Excellence includes:

GREATEST GAINS

Congressional District	School	System
1	Matilda Harris Elementary	Camden County
2	Potter Street Elementary	Decatur County
3	Rosemont Elementary	Troup County
4	Pine Street Elementary	Rockdale County
5	Clairmont Elementary	City Schools of Decatur
6	Sprayberry High	Cobb County
7	Level Creek Elementary	Gwinnett County
8	Heard-Mixon Elementary	Newton County
9	Settles Bridge Elementary	Forsyth County
10	Demorest Elementary	Habersham County
11	Hillgrove High	Cobb County
12	Ester F. Garrison School of Visual and Performing Arts	Savannah-Chatham County
13	Stockbridge Elementary	Henry County

TOP 10%

Congressional District	School	System
1	Oglethorpe Point Elementary	Glynn County
2	Westside Elementary	Lowndes County
3	Peeples Elementary	Fayette County
4	Oak Grove Elementary	DeKalb County
5	Morningside Elementary	Atlanta Public Schools
6	Vanderlyn Elementary	DeKalb County
7	Shiloh Point Elementary	Forsyth County
8	Alexander II Magnet	Bibb County
9	Vickery Creek Elementary	Forsyth County
10	Stevens Creek Elementary	Columbia County
11	Jones Elementary	Bremen City
12	Savannah Arts Academy	Savannah-Chatham County
13	Holly Springs Elementary	Holly Springs Elementary

"These schools are showing that excellence can be achieved when they are focused on providing a world-class education for their students," said Dr. John Barge. "I offer my sincere congratulations to our 2011 Georgia Schools of Excellence and my appreciation to Georgia Natural Gas for continued support of our schools as the title sponsor. As we continue to deal with tough economic times, schools are always looking for ways to generate revenue to benefit their students. I would highly encourage principals and parents to consider getting their schools on board immediately to generate much-needed money."

For more information contact the Newton County School System Department of Public Relations at 770-784-2908.
