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State Awards Paulding School District \$4.5 Million To Boost Literacy

The Paulding County School District has been named a first-time recipient of the Georgia Department of Education's Literacy for Learning, Living and Leading in Georgia (L4GA) Grant, and was the largest awardee of the 38 districts statewide whose grant applications were approved. The grant award means that the Paulding County School District will receive \$4.5 million over three years to apply toward specific literacy initiatives and training.

The grant will fund initiatives to improve literacy at 18 Paulding County schools, plus two local preschools, all located in two key feeder patterns within the district. The feeder patterns for Hiram High School and South Paulding High School were chosen in large part because data from a recent United Way study showed that these areas suffer from limited resources for early learning support, health-care, and other factors that influence a child's overall well-being.

The \$4.5 million grant will significantly enhance the school district's ability to provide struggling readers access to interventions proven to show results and help close the achievement gaps among various student groups. Grant funds will help stock classrooms and media centers at these schools with fiction and non-fiction print and digital media. Additionally, grant funds will cover extensive professional learning for district teachers so they can learn a range of teaching techniques aimed at supporting all students - not just the ones struggling, but also enriching and advancing the learning experience for those already excelling.

"This grant award has the potential to be a game-changer for Paulding County schools in the way it will help us positively impact literacy," said Bonnie Cochran, the school district's Associate Superintendent of Teaching and Learning. "Literacy is the single most reliable indicator of a child's prospects for becoming a successful, productive and healthy individual. The world is changing rapidly, but whatever technology advances lie ahead, there always will be one constant and that is the absolute critical importance of being able to read and write at a high level."

L4GA IMPACT SCHOOLS

PRE-SCHOOLS

Reflections (Ridge Road location)
Noah's Ark

ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS

| | |
|----------|-------------|
| Baggett | Nebo |
| Dallas | New Georgia |
| Dugan | Panter |
| Hiram | Ragsdale |
| Hutchens | Union |
| McGarity | |

MIDDLE SCHOOLS

| | |
|---------|----------------|
| Austin | Scoggins |
| Dobbins | South Paulding |
| Ritch | |

HIGH SCHOOLS

Hiram
South Paulding

As part of the L4GA grant, the school district is including two local pre-schools, Reflections (Ridge Road location) and Noah's Ark, in the literacy enhancement effort. "We know that the sooner we begin interventions to help students become strong readers and writers, the better off their entire educational experience will be," said Ms. Cochran. The focus is aimed at boosting literacy skills from "cradle to college."

According to the state Department of Education, school districts and their community partners were selected through an independent, competitive sub-grant process; they were chosen based on the strength of their applications. The Georgia Department of Education awarded funds to effectively improve outcomes for the largest possible population of Georgia's students, and the broader L4GA initiative will provide support (including professional learning) for all Georgia school districts. However, of the nearly \$62 million awarded statewide, the \$4.5 million awarded to the Paulding County School District was the largest single grant.

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