ISSUE 9 SEPTEMBER 2024

The MakeWaves Monthly

We develop students to become the best versions of themselves, so they can transform the world.



Superintendents' Message

Our 2024-2025 school year is off to an exciting start. Since we began school in August, seeing our students participate in activities throughout the district has been invigorating. We strive to encourage our parents and community to get involved in the various events available on and off our campuses. As you read The MakeWaves *Monthly* September Issue, enjoy the students and employees recognized along with the engaging learning activities. Information on the last page is filled with upcoming calendar events offered throughout October, Board Shorts from the BOE President, and a reminder to download the new GSCS Mobile App. Mark your calendar and join us for all of these upcoming events: Walk To School Day, GSMS & GSHS Fall Choir Concert, Red Ribbon Week, and e-Learning Day just to name a few.

Dr. Matt Akin - Superintendent makin@gsboe.org
Dr. Stephanie Harrison - Assistant Superintendent sharrison@gsboe.org



Health & Wellness



Athletics



Arts Education



Teaching & Learning

ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

MIDDLE SCHOOL

HIGH SCHOOL

VIRTUAL ACADEMY

Meet Our Student WaveMakers of the Month



Elementary School
Sophia McCrory
Grade - 5th Grade
Area of Recognition - Thinking Win-Win
Kindness & Compassion

I'm a WaveMaker because...

Sophia is selfless and innately helps others succeed. She recognizes a need and takes on the responsibility of assisting others to complete tasks with which they struggle, find their way if they are confused, or establish a routine if they are new. She does all of this while attending with precision to the teacher's expectations, as well as her own. She is a model student whom others should aspire to be like. Sophia deserves to be honored for her contribution to the success of her peers, herself, and the school system.
– Nominated by Kim Pennington

Sophia is an amazing student and friend. She demonstrates kindness and respect across all settings and with all students. The first day of school Sophia recognized a friend from last year that required a little classroom assistance. When he walked in Sophia raised her hand and suggested that he be her table mate as she is familiar with needs. She has maintained her position everyday ensuring that her friend is on task, emotionally sound, and included by peers. These actions are the embodiment of what is means to be a Wavemaker!
– Nominated by Mary Oglesby



Middle School
Jeremiah Mote
Grade - 8th Grade
Area of Recognition -
Leadership

I'm a WaveMaker because...

Our Gulf Shores Middle School family is honored to nominate Jeremiah Mote as our September Student WaveMaker. Jeremiah embodies the core values of respect, consideration, and integrity that define this prestigious recognition. One of Jeremiah's most impressive qualities is his unwavering commitment to doing the right thing, even when no one is watching. His actions consistently reflect a strong moral compass and a deep sense of personal responsibility. Whether it's helping a classmate, helping a staff member, or offering a supportive word to someone in need, Jeremiah acts with genuine care and sincerity. His willingness to assist his peers and others, going above and beyond, helps foster a collaborative and positive environment within our school. His readiness to lend a hand or share his support without expecting anything in return speaks volumes about his character. In addition, as a student-athlete, Jeremiah leads by example both on and off the football field.
In every interaction with our school family, Jeremiah demonstrates a level of respect and consideration that is both admirable and inspiring. His exemplary behavior and attitude enrich our school community in countless ways. He truly embodies the spirit of a WaveMaker, having a significant and positive impact on those around him.
– Nominated by Tim Webb



High School
Amanda Larenas
Grade - 11th Grade
Area of Recognition -
Leadership

I'm a WaveMaker because...

Amanda is an excellent student leader with potential to impact those around her into having a positive year. She was the first ever Sophomore Drum Major of the Marching Band and is now serving as the Head Drum Major as a Junior. Amanda consistently strives to hold herself and those around her to the highest level of excellence while all along being a genuine, caring person with the best interest of all.
– Nominated by William Mixon

Virtual Academy

Coming In October

Grade -
Area of Recognition -

I'm a WaveMaker because...

What is a WaveMaker? Someone who incites action or activity.

Meet Our Staff WaveMakers of the Month

Elementary School



Jesse Harrell
System Technology

I'm a WaveMaker because…
Jesse is the definition of a team player! Regardless of his current situation and workload, he meets all requests with a smile and a "can-do" attitude. He is prompt with response times and goes out of his way to ensure every teacher has what they need to succeed in their classrooms. Jesse goes the extra mile in all that he does for our teachers. By taking a proactive approach, routinely circulating through buildings to check in with teachers, Jesse often catches issues before they become school-wide issues and can have solutions ready. We can always count on Jesse to diagnose and correct a problem quickly but know that he will do so gladly with a positive attitude. Jesse has a kind word and smile for every person he encounters, whether student, staff, or parent, and exemplifies being a WaveMaker in all his actions and interactions.
Nominated by Dana Walker

Middle School



Ram Talantis
Assistant Principal

I'm a WaveMaker because…
Our Gulf Shores Middle School family proudly recommends Ram Talantis for our WaveMaker Award. Mr. Talantis helps manage a wide variety of responsibilities, from overseeing daily operations to implementing school-wide initiatives. His ability to prioritize and manage various tasks, such as coordinating events, supervising staff, and addressing student needs, has greatly enhanced the efficiency and effectiveness of our school. Mr. Talantis is deeply committed to the success of our school. Whether staying late to address unforeseen issues going the extra mile to support a struggling student or staff member, he consistently shows an unwavering commitment. His dedication extends beyond daily tasks, as he actively seeks ways to improve and innovate within our school environment. Mr. Talantis constantly demonstrates an unwavering focus on our students. He is dedicated to creating a supportive and nurturing environment that fosters student growth and success. He actively engages with students, listens to their concerns, and implements programs that address their needs. His efforts to personalize learning and provide additional support have made a significant difference in the lives of so many of our GSMS family members. Mr. Talantis continually makes substantial contributions to the positive climate and culture of our school, playing a crucial role in promoting a collaborative and inclusive atmosphere. Just as one example, his leadership of our House initiative has fostered a much stronger sense of community and belonging among students, staff, and parents. In summary, Mr. Ram Talantis embodies the qualities of a WaveMaker. Daily, he sets the example for what a WaveMaker should be!
Nominated by Tim Webb

High School



Ashley Watley
History Teacher

I'm a WaveMaker because…
Mrs. Watley joined the Modern Classroom professional training this summer. She has embraced this new style of teaching, focused on mastering the standards before moving forward. Although she is a veteran teacher, she has been open to the new ideas of changing the way her classroom operates and has implemented a solid plan to help students at whatever level of learning they are. It is clear that adopting a Modern Classroom style requires much more work for the teacher. However, she is still excited about this new opportunity and is actively thinking of ways to make it more engaging and challenging for her students. I think her acceptance and willingness to try a new teaching method makes her a WaveMaker!
Nominated by Amanda Talantis

What is a WaveMaker? Someone who incites action or activity.

Elementary School

A Book Called Abel!

In Mrs. Shirley's First Grade Class, the students read a book called Abuela so the students took an imaginary field trip to Mexico. They were able to enjoy chips and salsa too! Sooo much FUN and Learning in First Grade!





Middle School

Fins Up! A New School Button Shop!

Mrs. Arnold's marketing class is starting a school button shop! The game day buttons will be designed by students and incorporate the game day themes. This was their test run for today's game. Be on the look out for game day buttons for the middle school football game!



High School

Bungee Drop in AP Stats

Mrs. Dempsey's AP Stats students learned that extrapolation is bad. Students were given only seven rubber bands to take measurements with and then write a mathematical equation to predict the number of rubber bands needed for a bungee drop of 25 feet. Congratulations to the winners, Abigail and Kayla.



Virtual Academy

Cool Name Plates

6th grade GSVA student, Jaxon, has a new 3D printer and he designed these cool name plates for Dr. Nelson and Ms. Ellie!





Connect With Us! Stay informed on what's happening with Gulf Shores City Schools!

District/Schools Websites. - Facebook - Twitter - Instagram - You Tube - GSCS Mobile App

Health & Wellness

GSCS Walking School Bus!

A huge thank you to the **Gulf Coast Center for Ecotourism & Sustainability** for leading us on an amazing nature hike with the Walking School Bus last Friday! Your passion for the environment and the knowledge you shared made the experience both fun and educational for everyone. We appreciate all you do to inspire our community to connect with nature and promote sustainability.





Take Time For The Dolphin Walk!

Arts Education

Grades 6-12 Musical Auditions!



Athletics

GSHS Senior: Tyler Burkett

Gulf Shores offensive lineman, Senior Tyler Burkett got wonderful news from his latest biopsy. There is no longer any sign of Hodgkin's Lymphoma in his neck. (If you are just hearing about this young man and his struggles this last year click on the link) **https://www.wkrg.com/.../only-on-news-5-gulf-shores-high.../**





View our Athletics website!

Teaching & Learning

National Teddy Bear at GSES

National Teddy Bear was “Beary” fun for the students and their teddy bears. SRobinson’s students started off on the right foot with a Read Aloud by Sgt. Phillips of GSPD. Next, they learned about the history of the teddy bears, graphed some gummy bears and finished off the day with some Teddy Grahams.





Another fun, packed week for my 6th and 7th grade scientists! We had a great time practicing our biking skills for future trips. Huge thanks to Mr. Schaff for helping us with this!
6th graders kicked off their learning of Earth Materials by investigating minerals. Students identified minerals, such as quartz, desert rose, and calcite, using streak tests, hardness tests, observing color and luster, and testing for magnetism. Their favorite mineral seems to be pyrite (Fool's Gold)!
7th graders continued their learning about cells, and they enjoyed observing plant and animal cells under the microscopes. While they didn't particularly love the way our classroom smelled during our onion cells lab, they were pretty amazed to discover that these tiny cells are the building blocks of all life!
Our year is off to a great start!







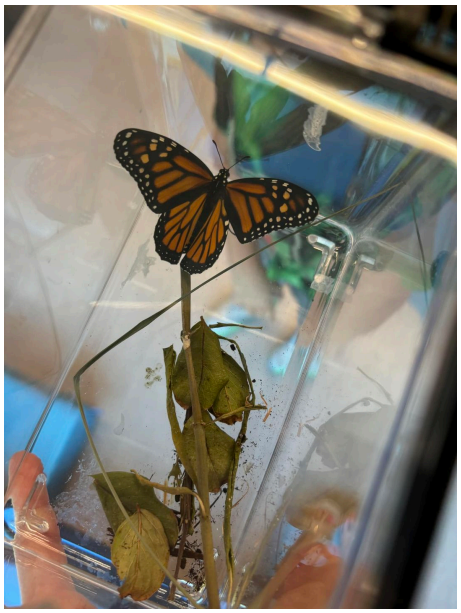
CONGRATULATIONS to these 8 ladies on making the AVCA Phenom Watchlist!
We're so proud of you! You represent Gulf Shores volleyball well!
-Macey Moore (S,RS)
-Kayla Rose (RS)
-Allie Greer (L)
-Kenly Nelson (MH)
-Chastyn Covington (L)
-Allie Lawson (OH)
-Velmira Sobol (S,RS)
-Callie Hopkins (OH)



Thank you to the GSHS varsity swim team for volunteering for the 17th Annual Labor Day PHINMAN Youth Triathlon. Your help is greatly appreciated.



Mrs. Pearse's class at GSES has been waiting on our caterpillar, Bob the Builder, to turn into a butterfly and the day arrived. We walked in to a beautiful monarch and released him this morning! It sure was fun watching the butterfly life cycle firsthand.



Intermediate and Advanced Sports Medicine students are learning all about the shoulder! They completed their bony and soft tissue palpations last week, checked off on a few skills, and now will be learning range of motion and goniometry measurements!! We will wrap up the unit with their Shoulder Injury Projects!!





It's not every day you get to see an abandoned 1970's plane get taken apart and restored by high school students! They're currently working on restoring an old Piper Cherokee 140.

The kids at Gulf Shores High School are doing amazing things and I can't wait to see it once it's ready to fly!
If you missed the story…
https://www.wkrg.com/.../gulf-shores-aviation-students.../

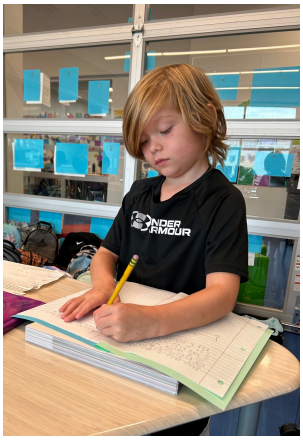
WKRG Taylor Boysen





Writing personal narratives in ELA in Ms. Cocke's 3rd grade class at GSES.





GSHS Student Ambassadors attended the First Friday Forum this morning and learned all about the impact of tourism on our area, thanks to the newly branded Alabama Beaches and Coastal Alabama Business Chamber. It was such a great opportunity to get out and meet business leaders to learn first hand about our amazing community.



Alabama High School Athletic Association in partnership with the Army National Guard recognized Kolin Wilson as the Player of the Week for his outstanding performance this past week when the Dolphins took on MGM. Congratulations Kolin Wilson!



Thank you Dr. Ferrell and Ferrell Family Dental for coming to do our Pre-K at GSES dental screenings again this year. We appreciate you so much



Our librarian, Ms. Weekley, at GSES would love to receive magazine donations that your students may be finished with at home. National Geographic, Ranger Rick, or any children's magazines would be great to have in our school library.



We are thrilled to announce that ALEXANDRIA VODI is our 2024 National Merit Semifinalist! Over 1.3 million students entered this competition in October 2023 by taking the PSAT/NMSQT. Nationwide, less than one percent of seniors will earn this title.
We are so proud of Alexandria's accomplishments and look forward to seeing what is next! Go Dolphins!





Congratulations to Carleigh Jurkiewicz who participated in the Distinguished Young Women of Baldwin County Scholarship Program. Carleigh was awarded scholarships for being the preliminary winner in the fitness category and for being named the 2nd runner up for the night. We are proud of you! Go Dolphins!



Congratulations to Aireonna Johnson, a senior at Gulf Shores High School. Aireonna was recognized at this week's school board meeting for her winning artwork which will be featured on the 24/25 Make Waves of Kindness shirts and accessories. Many thanks to Tacky Jack's Gulf Shores , a long standing sponsor of this initiative, for donating a $100 gift card to the winner. Make Waves of Kindness Day will take place on 11/13/24. More details coming soon.





Gulf Shores High School Choir is representing Gulf Shores City Schools at the University of Southern Mississippi for the Southern Invitational Choral Conference. They will be performing as part of a mass choir with nearly 500 other students across Mississippi and Alabama.

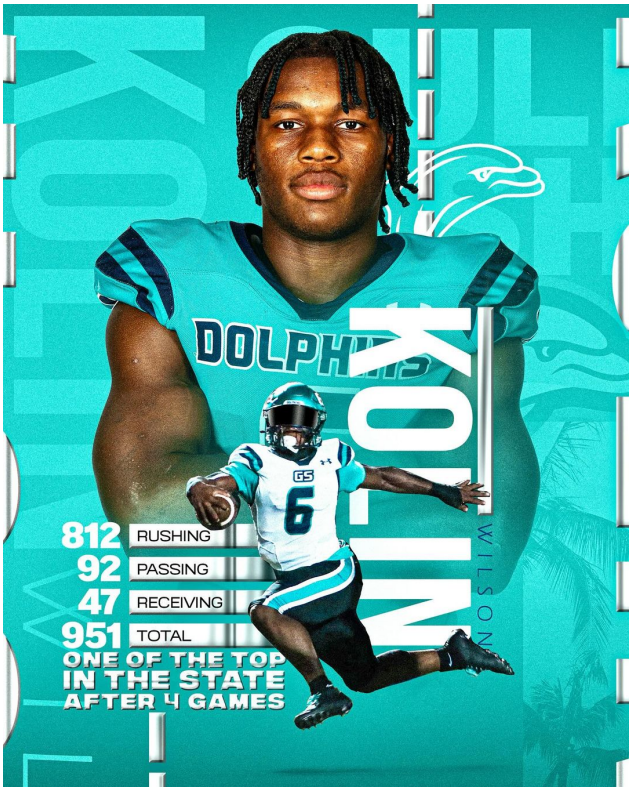




Our Gulf Shores Police Department let us tour the Mobile Command Unit! We appreciate our community helpers coming to visit us! Mrs. Beal and Ms. Portia's class!

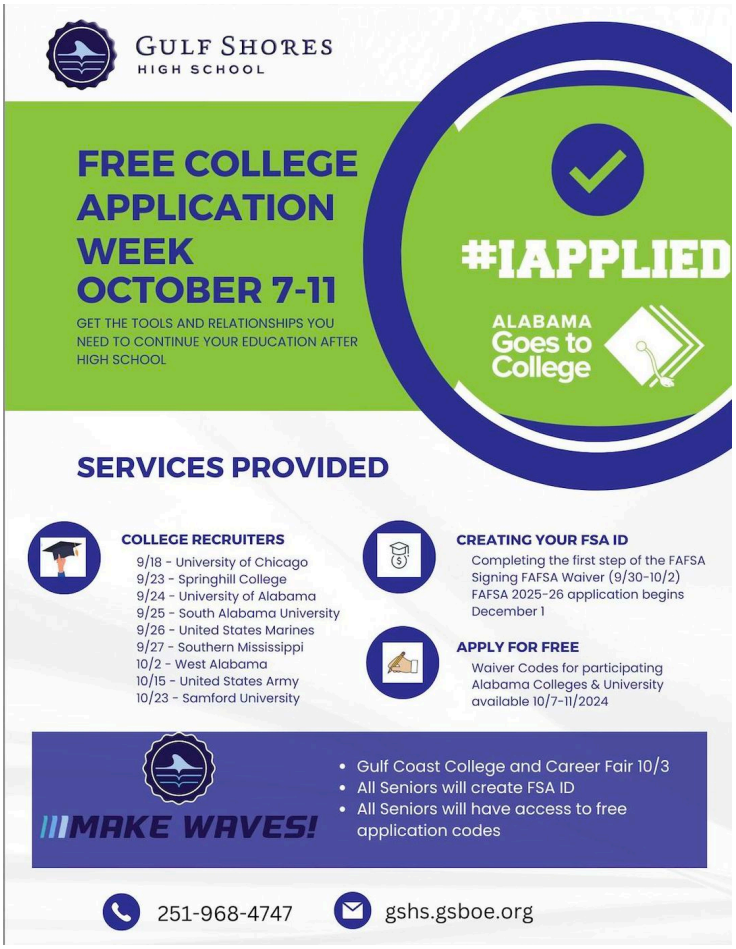






Academy Night 2024 is October 2nd (6:00 - 8:00pm) at St. Paul's Episcopal School for all high school students who are interested in learning about any of our five US Service Academies!
U.S. AIR FORCE ACADEMY
U.S. COAST GUARD ACADEMY
U.S. MERCHANT MARINE ACADEMY
U.S. MILITARY ACADEMY
U.S. NAVAL ACADEMY
Please see the flyer for details and don't miss this amazing opportunity to learn more about admission requirements. It is never too early to learn how to navigate this process.





Peer Helpers at GSHS met this week to complete helper training on connecting with other students they may not know to help provide them with assistance. They also began discussing their Poinsettia sales so stay tuned for more information on that!



These Dauphin Island Sea Lab campers had a great time slogging through salt marshes to find blue crabs and periwinkle snails, dissecting squid, trolling Mobile Bay, seine netting the Mississippi Sound, testing water quality at the Audubon Sanctuary, exploring the Alabama Aquarium, and unwinding with games on the beach. Special thank you to the chaperones who helped make this trip possible, as well as the many contributors to our Dolphin Foundation who helped fund our learning adventure. The number one question yesterday was, “When can we do this again?”







Scholarship season has begun. These young ladies interviewed this week for the PEO Star Scholarship. Be sure to stay informed about all scholarship opportunities by visiting our counseling page at **www.gsboe.org/gshs**, checking emails, and Remind messages.



Huge shoutout to the incredible students from Gulf Shores High School's Environmental Club, Key Club, and Ambassadors who came together yesterday for Coastal Cleanup at Gulf State Park!

Together, they removed litter and helped protect our beautiful beaches and marine life. It’s inspiring to see our young leaders making such a positive impact on the environment. Every small effort counts, and these students are showing us what it means to care for our planet!



Congratulations to Gavin Burttram and Claire Colvin for being named as a Commended Students in the 2024 National Merit Scholarship Program. Commended Students are recognized for the exceptional academic promise demonstrated by their outstanding performance on the PSAT/NMSQT.



Exciting day for **Liam Bickham**. His championship ring for his WINS in the 100 Fly and 100 Backstroke last year, was presented in front of his teammates today, while doing what he loves as a part of the Gulf Shores Beach Rescue team.



Congratulations to our GSCS student representatives for the Baldwin County Superintendents' Red Ribbon Leadership Awards. Each student will have the opportunity to host a campaign based on this year's theme, "We love our veterans and first responders" and compete for a scholarship.
Congratulations
Claire Colvin - GSHS
Emma Kakish - GSMS
Elizabeth Bodenhamer - GSES



Healthcare Industry Tour currently underway @uofsouthalabama



Thank you to **Kevin Atlas**, D1 basketball player for his incredible presentation to our students at GSHS. His engaging stories and inspiring messages truly resonated with everyone. Our students were captivated and deeply moved by his experiences. He is such a genuine person, and we truly believe that his advice has made a significant impact on our student body!





Thank you, **Tacky Jack's Gulf Shores**,
for the generous donation of the $100 gift card for our Make Waves of Kindness T-Shirt Art award winner!

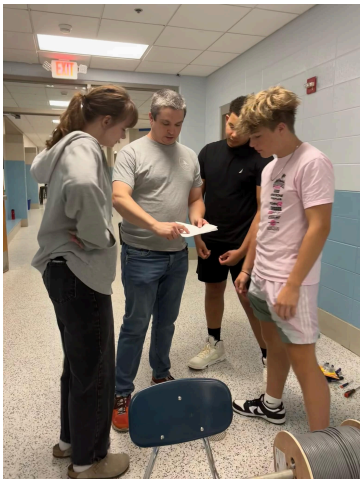
National Elementary Honor Society 2024-25 Officers
Pictured (l to r):
Mailey Hixon - Historian
Piper Wade - President
Maya Henry - Secretary
Eliza Bodenhamer - Vice President
Zaden Bautista - Treasurer

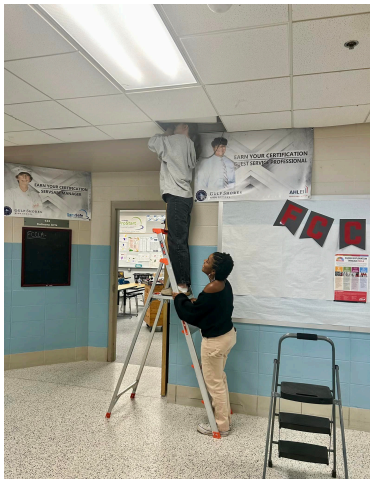


Mr. Dey's 5th grade class at GSES class made kale chips out of kale they grew in the classroom.



Student leadership leads to student projects leads to student ownership! Mr. Simmons and his students at GSHS are adding new speakers to the halls! Can't wait to HEAR what comes out of them!





Thank you Coach Paul Rhoads for taking some time to talk with our volleyball team at GSHS.



Each year we collect can tabs for the Ronald McDonald House. Today with the help of Mrs. Robinson at the Gulf Shores Elementary school we picked up over 20 more pounds. Freshman Cadet Killough was instrumental in making this happen.



Mrs. Talantis and her Hospitality and Tourism students at GSHS took a field trip to The Lodge at the Gulf State Park. Their gracious staff gave students an interesting and informative behind-the-scenes tour of the hospitality industry. Students learned about their sustainable practices, one-of-a-kind certifications and awards, and a variety of jobs available. Many thanks to @lodgegsp for a great experience!





Our Esports program at GSMS would like to give PlayVS and NintendoVS a HUGE thank you! They received a new Nintendo Switch with games and an online account from them. The new Switch console and games allow more players to participate, and they are very appreciative of the contribution, which allows more students to be involved! Thank you SO much for supporting our students and school!

Ms. Cocke's third grade students at GSES engage in collaborative discussions about poetry. Students learned different ways to be good listeners and speakers prior to their small group working time.





Asexual reproduction is involved in all sorts of daily life. Students at GSMS started the week by reading about fungal life cycles and spores. Then, we rode our bikes into Gulf State Park to look for mushroom samples to examine with our microscopes. Wednesday, we identified the different phases of mitosis by observing onion root tips under the microscope and labeling an example of each phase. Finally, we rounded out the week by tracking the movement of bacteria by examining “germ tracker” under the black light before and after we washed our hands.





MakeWaves of Kindness Grants

Congratulations Mrs. Gwen Merchant. She was awarded a Make Waves of Kindness Grant for a sensory table for her Kindergarten classroom.



Congratulations, Ms Kim Kalinauskas. She was awarded a Make Waves of Kindness Grant for a calm down cube for her First grade classroom.



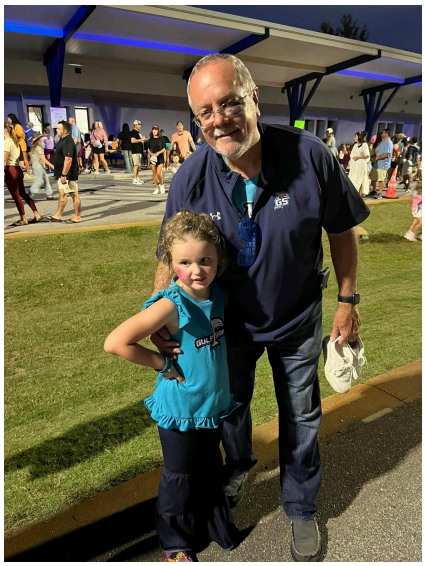
Congratulations to Mrs. Cynthia Moore at GSMS. She was awarded a Make Waves of Kindness Grant for flexible seating for her Science classroom.



GSES: Harvest Festival 2024

What a fun Harvest Festival 2024! Thank you to our amazing **GSES PTO** including the many parents who helped make this happen, our generous sponsors, the GSMS and GSHS students who helped operations with the rides and activities, and GSES admin on the clean-up team!





















GSHS Homecoming Dance



Gulf Shores Middle School Tuesday Tour

Gulf Shores City Schools is providing the opportunity for our community members, parents, etc. to tour each of our schools to see the wonderful things going on in our classrooms. Our "Tuesday Tour" will take place on Tuesday, October 8th from 9:00am -10:30am at Gulf Shores Middle School. Visitors will have a chance to look inside our classrooms and experience the culture and innovation of Gulf Shores City Schools.

To sign up, click on the following link: Take The Tuesday Tour



GSCS International Walk To School Day

GULF SHORES
CITY SCHOOLS

International Walk to School Day

Gulf Shores Elementary, Middle, & High Schools

October 2, 2024
Meet at Meyer Park at 7:10 AM
Walk at 7:15 AM

Join the movement of **International Walk to School Day** that inspires the entire community to come together and promote health and safer routes for students to walk to school. This is a fun event to build connections between families, schools, and community leaders as students walk to Gulf Shores City Schools.

All students & their teen/adult chaperones will meet school leaders at Meyer Park at 7:10. Students along with their chaperones will then walk along the designated route to the elementary school, middle school, or high school.

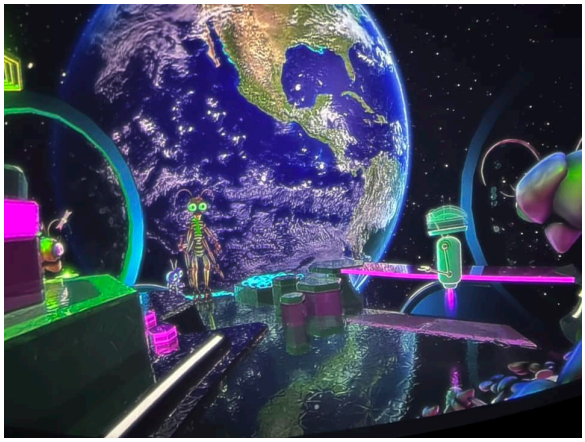
GSHS Seniors

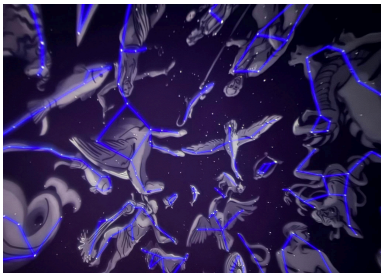


Virtual Academy Field Trip

The GSVA students, parents, and teachers enjoyed our field trip to the planetarium at Pensacola State College today. We watched a delightful animated movie about an alien family trying to choose which planet to vacation on this year, which taught us many facts about each planet. We also got to see what the night sky would look like tonight and you can bet we'll be out looking for the planets and constellations!









GSMS Baldwin County Fair Art Contest

Congratulations to the SEVENTY TWO Gulf Shores Middle School students who received first place blue ribbons in the Baldwin County Fair Art Contest. The students won a total of 83 ribbons. We are so proud of them and Mrs. Michaelson!











10/2 GSCS: International Walk To School Day 7:15am
10/2-3 GSES: Vision Screening Grades K,2,4
10/3 BOE: Work Session 4:00pm
10/5 GSHS: Homecoming Dance
10/8 GSCS: Tuesday Tour at GSMS
10/8 GSMS & GSHS: Fall Choir Concert (Gulf Shores Methodist Church 6:30pm)
10/9 GSHS: Gateway to Great Careers Industry Tours for Aviation
10/10 GSCS: 1st Quarter Ends
10/10 GSCS: Early Dismissal For Students 11:30am
10/10 BOE: Regular Board Meeting 5:00pm
10/11 GSCS: Fall Holiday - No School
10/14 GSCS: e-Learning Day - Students Not at School
10/15 GSHS: PreACT
10/17 GSES: Spirit Night (Cactus Cantina - GS Location)
10/17 GSHS: WorkKeys
10/18 GSCS: Report Cards
10/23-31 GSMS: Red Ribbon Week
10/24 GSHS: PSAT
10/25 GSHS: Senior Ads Due for Yearbook
10/28-11/1 GSES: Red Ribbon Week
10/29 GSHS: ACT with Writing
10/29 GSES: Coffee With The Counselors 8:45am
10/29 GSMS: Fall Picture Day

GSCS Board Meeting Round Up: Too busy to attend school board meetings, but still wanna know more? Check out the episodes of **"Board Shorts"** to stay up-to-date.

Happening at GSCS:

District
Elementary School
Middle School
High School
Virtual Academy

Gulf Shores City Schools have a new GSCS Mobile App! Available in Apple and Android Stores, the GSCS mobile app will give you immediate information! Download yours today!

Connect With Us:

MAKE WAVES!

Matt Akin - Superintendent
Stephanie Harrison - Assistant Superintendent
Sandi Harris - Office Manager
Chad Green - CSFO
Marcelina Parrish - Human Resource Manager
Chezley Neth - Data Management & Reporting Analyst
Jason Watts - Athletic Director
Joey Drews - Director of Educational Technology & Student Support Services
Beau Roode - Director of Operations
Sonya Price - Director of Exceptional Education
Carrie Barragan - English Second Language
Tanya Hill - Child Nutrition Program Coordinator
Randall Carlisle- Student Engagement, Transportation and Safety Coordinator
Jessica Sampley - Career Tech Coordinator
Karen Pearson - District Testing Coordinator
Sara Parker - Mental Health Coordinator

Do you have a suggestion or comment you would like to share with us?

Connect with GSCS

Joe McAleer-Social Media