ISSUE 9 SEPTEMBER 2025

The MakeWaves Monthly

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



Superintendents' Message

Since the start of the 2025–2026 school year in August, it has been energizing to see our students actively engaged in learning and participating in events across the district. We are equally excited to encourage parents and guardians to get involved in the many activities offered both on and off our campuses. In this September issue of The MakeWaves Monthly, you'll find highlights celebrating our students and staff, along with information about engaging programs and upcoming events. Be sure to check the last page for October calendar updates, a message from the Board of Education President in Board Shorts, and a reminder to download the GSCS Mobile App. Mark your calendars and join us for events like Fall Sports, Tuesday Tours at GSES, Canvas/PowerSchool Informational Meeting, the Sound Waves Choir - GSMS & GSHS Fall Choir Concert, Red Ribbon Week, end of Quarter 1, Shrimp Festival activities, and e-Learning Day. We welcome you to join our Board of Education meetings at The Wave Learning Center on the 1st (4:00pm) and 2nd (5:00pm) Thursday of the month at 1717 East 3rd Street, Gulf Shores, AL 36542.

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

ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

MIDDLE SCHOOL

HIGH SCHOOL

VIRTUAL ACADEMY



Health & Wellness



Athletics



Arts Education



Teaching & Learning

Meet Our Student WaveMakers of the Month

Elementary School



Charlestyn Antoine

Grade: Kindergarten

Area of Recognition: Synergize - Kindness

I'm a WaveMaker because…

Charlestyn is a true role model, and her core values are evident in everything she does. She has a remarkable ability to recognize the emotional needs of others and responds with kindness and empathy—without ever being asked. Whether it's offering a tissue, giving a comforting hug, or helping a classmate with their work, Charlestyn is always ready to support those around her.

Her compassion extends beyond the classroom, too. In just the first week of school, she took it upon herself to clean up litter on the playground during recess—showing her deep care for the environment as well as her peers.

Charlestyn doesn't just care—she acts. To know her is to love her, and we are so thankful to have her in our class.

Middle School



Benjamin "Benji" De Melo

Grade: 8th Grade

Area of Recognition: Great student, Helpful, Always respectful in class and motivated to do well

I'm a WaveMaker because…

Benji is a consistently respectful and kind student who is always willing to lend a hand. He stands out as a well-rounded individual, showing care for others and has a strong motivation to succeed academically. His positive attitude, helpful nature, and dedication to doing his best make him a true asset to our school. Benji sets a great example for his peers, and we are lucky to have him with us.

~Nominated by Rachel Osborn (Registrar) and Wendy Holmes (Counselor)~

High School



Will Begnaud

Grade: 10th Grade

Area of Recognition: Willingness to help

I'd a WaveMaker because…

I am thrilled to nominate Will Begnaud for WaveMaker of the Month. While I was preparing my classroom over the summer, Will happened to be on campus and, without hesitation, jumped in to offer his help.

He took on the heavy lifting–literally–by moving teacher desks, tables, and even copiers back into place. He also tackled the challenging task of organizing student desks, which had to be arranged in a specific numbered order around the room. Will approached everything with a can-do attitude and a strong work ethic.

His help saved me hours of work–and likely a major backache! What stands out most is that he gave his time willingly during summer break, simply to support a teacher in need. That speaks volumes about Will's dependable, respectful, and community-focused character.

Will truly embodies what it means to be a WaveMaker!

~Nominated by Sandy Dempsey (Math Teacher)~

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

Meet Our Staff WaveMakers of the Month

Elementary School
Christy McCarty - 4th Grade ELA Teacher
I'm a WaveMaker because…
Christy has led her students to the highest ELA proficiency scores in the school, with an impressive 97% proficiency rate. Through her dedication, innovative teaching strategies, and unwavering support for her students, she has set a remarkable standard of excellence. Christy's ability to inspire and motivate students to reach their fullest potential makes her a true leader in our school. Christy McCarty is a true WaveMaker!
~Nominated by Christy McKinnon~



Elementary School
Pam Parker - 2nd Grade Teacher
I'm a WaveMaker because…
Pam has guided her students to an exceptional 95% proficiency in math. Her commitment to building strong mathematical foundations, fostering a love of learning, and supporting individual student growth has had a direct impact on her students' success. Pam's dedication and excellence in the classroom make her a role model for effective teaching. Pam Parker is the epitome of a WaveMaker!
~Nominated by Dana Walker~



Middle School
Cinthia Moore - 6th Grade Science Teacher



I'm a WaveMaker because…
Mrs. Cinthia Moore has been an extraordinary force in my transition to Gulf Shores City Schools. From day one, she's eagerly shared resources, patiently answered my questions, and offered unwavering support. Her kindness and genuine care have made all the difference in helping me feel at home.

As a cornerstone of teacher leadership at Gulf Shores Middle School, Mrs. Moore exemplifies excellence. Her ability to analyze instructional challenges and plan strategically inspires everyone around her. Under her leadership—alongside Tori Erdossy—the sixth grade team achieved a remarkable 12% increase in proficiency within just one year. While the data is impressive, her true strength lies in the way she makes every individual—staff and students alike—feel supported and valued. With snacks for morale, wise counsel for guidance, and a welcoming space for comfort, Mrs. Moore fosters both academic growth and community wellbeing. Thank you, Mrs. Moore, for your tireless dedication, your empathetic leadership, and the way you lift everyone in our school with you.
~Nominated by Gracie Goode and Anthony Schaff~

High School
Sandra (Sandy) Dempsey - Math Teacher



I'm a WaveMaker because…
Sandy is an exceptional educator, serving as the Math Department Chair and the unofficial—but highly effective—staff spirit leader at Gulf Shores. Known for her boundless energy and creativity, she transforms math lessons into dynamic, hands-on experiences where students don't just learn—they move, create, and explore. Her passion for making every classroom moment meaningful shines through in all she does, inspiring both students and colleagues alike.
As a newer teacher, I've especially valued Sandy's mentorship. Her thoughtful advice, practical guidance, and timely words of encouragement—like the simple but powerful "you've got this"—have made a lasting impact on my own teaching journey. Sandy's leadership, enthusiasm, and unwavering dedication truly make her the heart of our school community.
~Nominated by Dr. Caroline Hamilton~

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

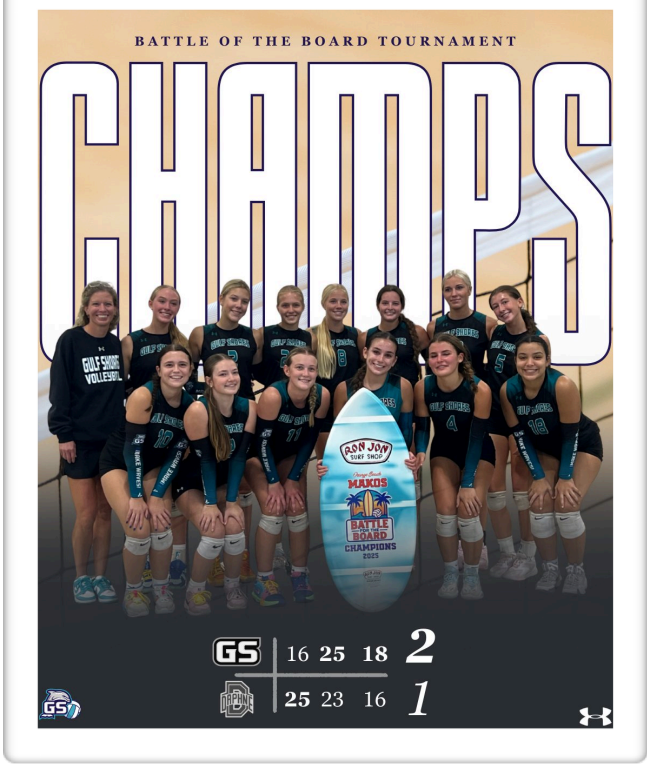
Health & Wellness

Mrs. Robinson's 5th grade class spent a beautiful afternoon outside riding bikes together. The sun was shining, the air felt perfect, and we laughed as we pedaled through the state park. It was a fun way to get exercise and enjoy the day.





Athletics



Arts Education

The photography work by GSMS art students is truly impressive. Their talent will be on full display at the Baldwin County Fair —looking forward to seeing their creativity showcased!

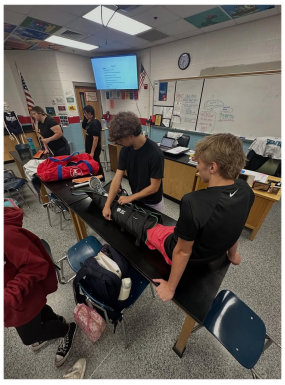


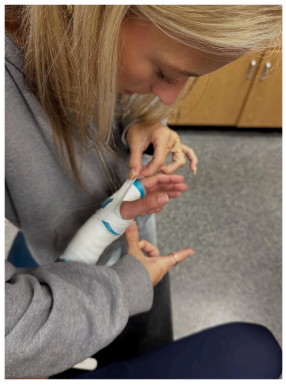




Teaching & Learning

Week 8 = action-packed in Sports Med & Health Science!
Students competed in a medical math relay race, taped up hands, wrists & thumbs like pros, measured ROM & goniometry, practiced wound care and splinting, had our weekly outdoor brain break, and wrapped it all up with everyone's favorite… the wound making lab.





Elementary School

Pumpkin value math in Mrs. Deese's 1st grade class!





Middle School

Coach Caldwell's PE Class wrapped up their competitive series with an exciting game of 6-Base Kickball! Students showed off their teamwork, strategy, and sportsmanship while having a blast on the field.



High School

Congratulations to the Scholars' Bowl team who participated in University of Mobile's "Brain Battle." These awesome GSHS students faced off against strong competitors & finished 4th of 12 teams total.



Virtual Academy

Virtual Academy enjoy a great field trip and end up with a great lunch at Woodside Restaurant in the state park.



Mrs. Klatt's 5th grade class at GSES learned all about bike safety and practiced riding! A little more practice and they will be ready for the bike trails.







Today marked another impressive PT day at Gulf Shores high school NJROTC. Every cadet displayed unwavering commitment, and the improvements since the inaugural week of the NJROTC fitness challenge are substantial. Our cadets from Project Smile participated during second block and achieved outstanding results. Commendations to all cadets.

Mrs. Holmes, GSMS Counselor and Katelyn Hamilton, the GSMS Red Ribbon Leadership Winner, attended the Baldwin County Superintendents' Red Ribbon Leadership Awards Kickoff Celebration at Robertsdale First Baptist Church, September 8, 2025. At the kickoff, parents and family members were told how the Red Ribbon Leaders were selected, reviewed why the Red Ribbon Leadership Awards Program is an important part of prevention, given a timeline of activities, information on the community service project and guidelines as well as yard signs to advertise the student's accomplishments! Congratulations again Katelyn! We can't wait to participate in your project!





Mrs.Madsen's H&T students at GSHS rocked the Spanish Omelet Lab. Excellent start to building knife skills



Community members who may be unaware of the city workers' tireless efforts to maintain our school should be aware that they are truly going above and beyond. The flagpole at the middle school, proudly displaying the United States flag, is exceptionally tall, necessitating alternative repair methods beyond standard boom trucks. In response, our city devised an innovative solution, utilizing the fire truck lift to expedite repairs, thereby ensuring continued functionality. Sincere gratitude is expressed to Greg Canham and Justin Stewart, and Beau Roode as well as the Gulf Shores fire department, for their exceptional service.





Congratulations to our
GSMS National Junior Honor Society Officers
For 2025-26

President: Katelyn Hamilton
Vice-President: Lilly Grace Longshore
Secretary: Savannah Adams
Treasurer: Eloise Johnson
Reporter: Jocelyn Plash

Sponsors: Tori Erdossy and Wendy Holmes

The Gulf Shores City School Board received the 2025 Team Training Achievement Award at the AASB Fall District 1 Meeting. This honor recognizes the Board's united commitment to professional learning and effective governance, ensuring informed decisions and better outcomes for students.



Charlie, GSVA kindergarten students, is practicing her handwriting with great concentration.



Athletes vs Athletes during Homecoming Dress Up Days at GSHS and we think the math department won!





Kindergarten Teachers survived ABC Boot Camp: letters taught, letters learned, mission accomplished!





A quote from video production teacher, Mr. Black : " I've been in this business for over two decades and saw something last night that is very rare. In spite of obstacles and problems, my crew didn't fold or slack. In fact, they doubled down and did something with two weeks experience that takes most people years! I'm so proud of how they focused and took responsibility. Not just making waves. These guys are creating a tsunami!
The Dolphin TV Media Production Team



Homecoming 2025 at GSHS
King: Price Stephens
Queen: Portia Hollis

Congratulations!



NEHS at Gulf Shores Elementary participated in Coastal Cleanup and picked up over 20 pounds of trash!



Huge congratulations to senior Price Stephens for being named the Gulf Coast Athletic Club's Gulf Shores High School Male Scholar Athlete of the Month! This honor also makes Price eligible for the GCAC Scholar Athlete of the Year Award, which will be announced this spring. Way to represent, Price!





What an awesome experience for class of 29' golfer Evelyn Lamar attending the Junior Ryder Cup!





The 2025-2026 Logistics Team have started at GSES and are ready to help lead the school with positive, motivating, and kind actions!







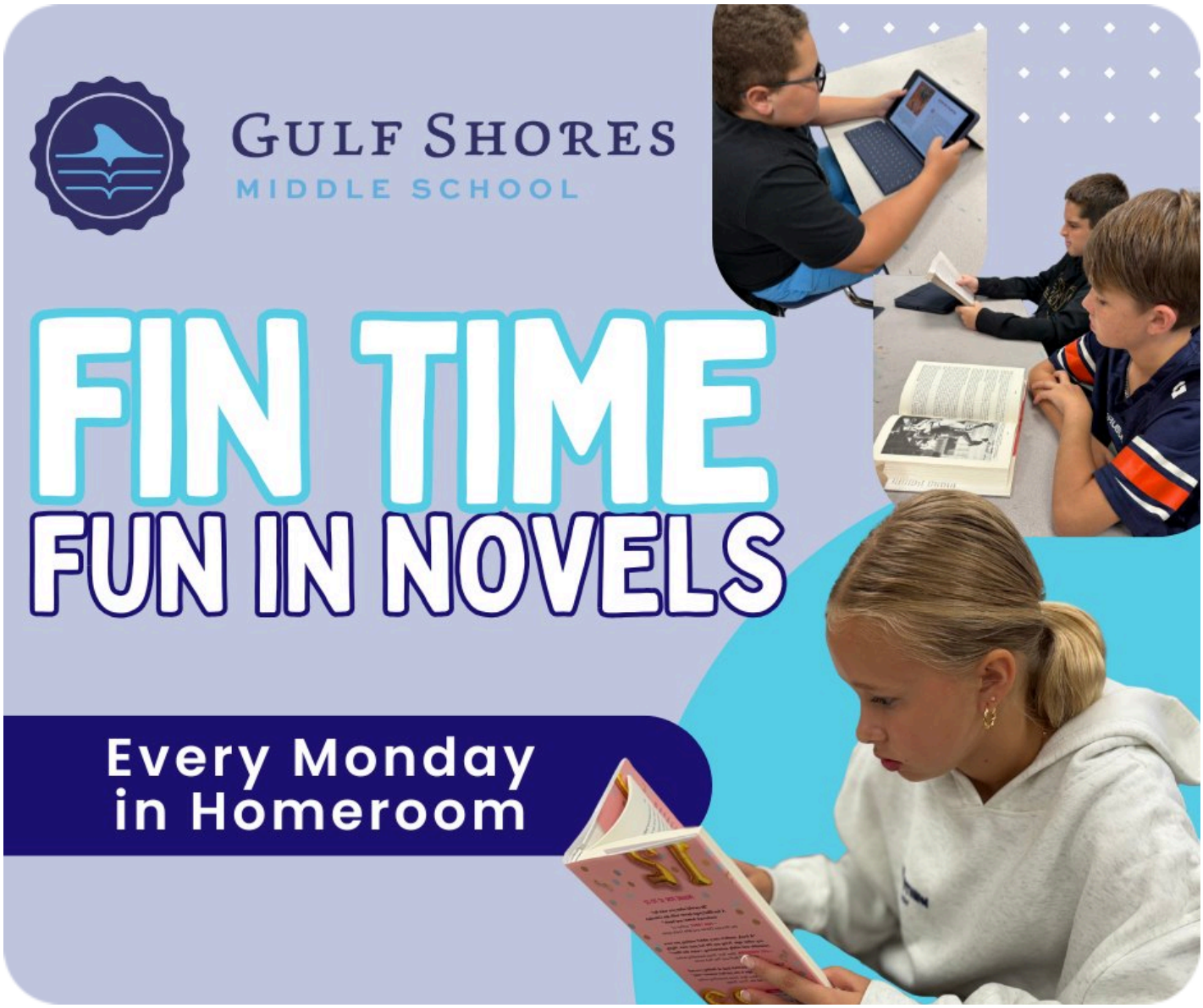
GSMS Independent Reading Program

Gulf Shores Middle School launched a new school-wide initiative called FIN Time (Fun in Novels). Every Monday during Homeroom, students will participate in independent reading.

This is a time for students to:

- Choose a book they will enjoy
- Read quietly and independently

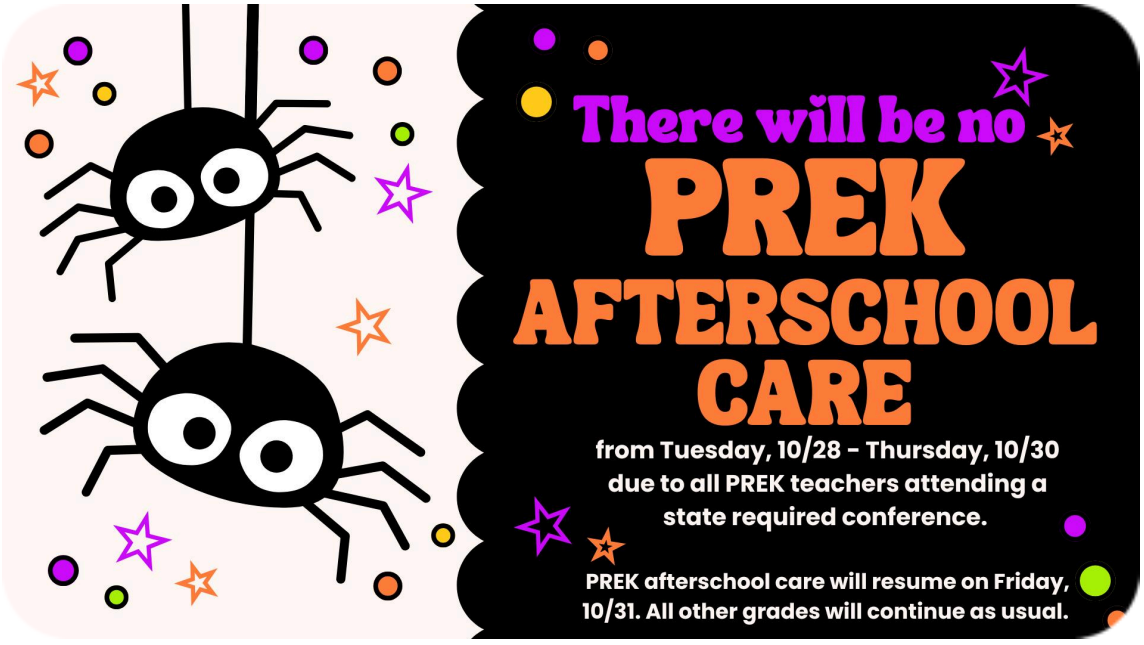
Students can find books through myON, their teacher's classroom library, or bring one from home (with ELA teacher approval).



Join The Cheerleaders for Friday Night Football



Heads up, ASC PreK families! Aftercare will be closed Tuesday, 10/28 – Thursday, 10/30 for a state conference that all PreK teachers will be attending. We'll reopen Friday, 10/31. This will not affect any other grade for aftercare. Thanks for your understanding!



We welcome donations to our Blessing Box in the front of GSES. You or your students may add non-perishable items directly to our Blessing Box. Canned goods, dry goods (rice, beans, boxed dinners, pasta, etc.) or necessities you can think of people may need are all welcomed.
Thank you so much for your ongoing generosity for our community.

Spread Your Kindness

GSES Blessing Box

Our Blessing Box is in need of canned goods and other non-perishable goods. The Blessing Box is located in front of the school near the car line. You are welcome to add your items to it.



Coastal Cleanup Success

The Environmental Club at GSHS rolled up their sleeves and made waves along our shoreline! Together, they collected trash, carefully sorted it for recycling, and left the coast looking cleaner and healthier for the wildlife that calls it home. Every bottle, bag, and piece of debris removed helps protect our oceans and reminds us of the impact we can make when we work as a team. Go Dolphins! A huge thank you to all of our volunteers who gave their time and energy—you are helping build a brighter, greener future!











Blue Angel Experience

Our Navy JROTC cadets and the Project Smile cadets at GSHS were treated to a rare and exceptional experience today, one that few cadets will ever have the privilege of enjoying. We chartered a ferry boat from Pensacola Bay City Ferry Company, providing our cadets with the opportunity to spend the day on the bay in Pensacola, watching the Blue Angels. The experience was truly awe-inspiring. The captain and crew of the ferry demonstrated remarkable kindness and courtesy, ensuring our cadets felt valued and appreciated. For those interested in a unique and memorable ferry excursion, we highly recommend their services. As a commemoration of their participation, all cadets who took part in today's field trip will receive their Sea Service Ribbons during tomorrow's uniform day.















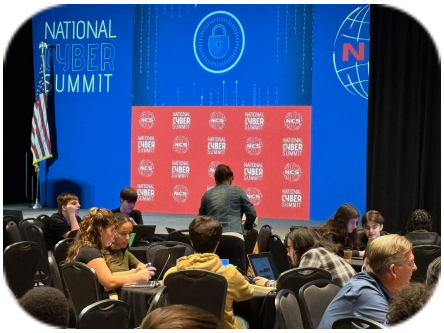


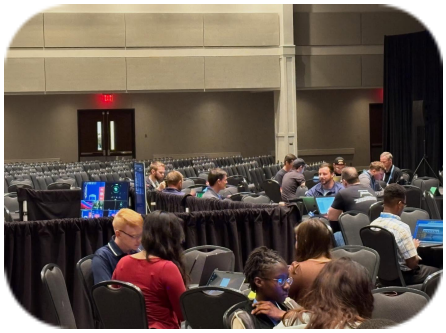


Cyber Cup 2025

Competing with college teams and our first time competing here. A 6th place and 13th finish for our two teams. Congratulations to Mr. McClung and his cyber security team at GSHS! They had an incredible day at Cyber Cup 2025! We are proud of them! Go Dolphins!







Uniform Day for our Navy JROTC!



Gulf Shores Starfish



Gulf Shores Starfish

Your local special needs swim team! Parents can hop in the pool with instructors and volunteers. Children over 8 can compete in the Special Olympics. For more information contact Christy below!

Information:

- Expert Instructors
- All Ages Welcome
- Bodenhamer Center
- Practice Every Saturday
- at 10:00 am



Swim Practice



Special Olympic Meets



Community

CONTACT US

Email
gulfshoresstarfish@gmail.com

follow us on Facebook
Gulf Shores Starfish

Free College Application Week

FREE COLLEGE APPLICATION WEEK

OCTOBER 6-10, 2025

OCT 6th

MONDAY, 11:00, FIRST FOCUS

Seniors have the opportunity to apply to CACC

Coastal Alabama Community College will present the application process for all students during 1st Focus in The Tank gym.

OCT 7th

TUESDAY, 11:00, FIRST FOCUS

Seniors have the opportunity to apply to AU

Auburn University will present the application process for all students during 1st Focus in The Tank gym.

OCT 8th

WEDNESDAY, 11:00, FIRST FOCUS

Counseling Resources Presentation

Counselors will be available to discuss transcipt requests and ACT orders for college admissions and scholarships. Our Big Future Ambassador will present Big Future Scholarships for all students.

OCTOBER 6-10, 2025

Free Waiver Codes Available

All codes will be sent via email from the counseling department Monday morning, October 6.

GSHS Website → Quick Links → Counseling

GSHS Cheer Youth Clinic

October 21st and 23rd
5:00 - 7:00 pm in the GSHS Gym

Scan the QR code or go to
* www.gsboe.org
* Click on QuickLinks at the top
* Go to eSchool payments

Once you are there, follow instructions on the flyer.

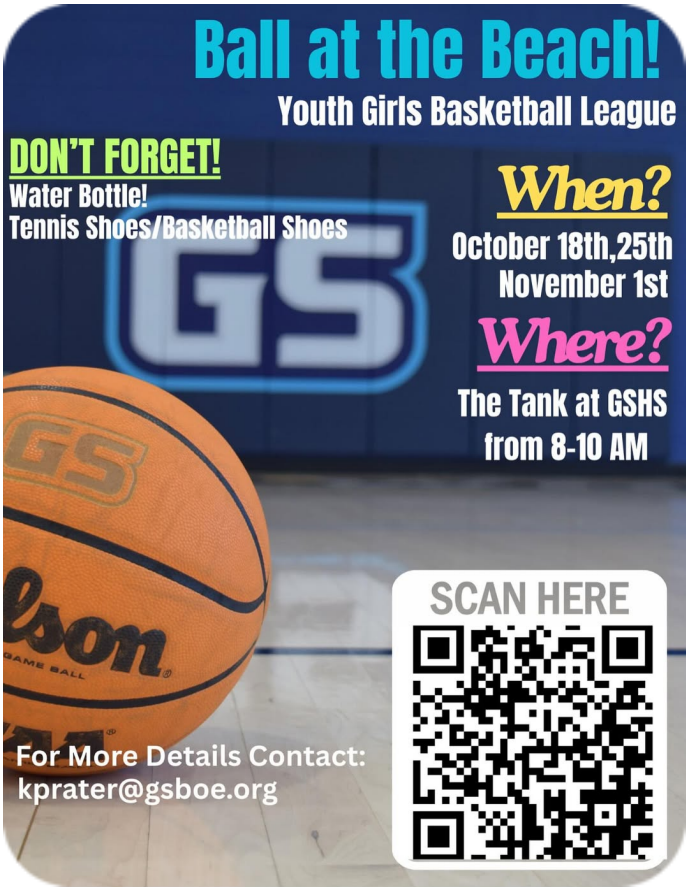
Go Dolphins!



Youth Girls Basketball

Save the Dates!

Gulf Shores Youth Girls Basketball Camps are coming up! GSCS Girls 3rd-7th grade use the QR code to
your spot now!
Invest in the Future of Gulf Shores Women's Basketball!



City of Gulf Shores Announces 2025–2026 Junior City Council Members

The City of Gulf Shores is proud to kick off the second year of its Junior City Council Program, reaffirming its dedication to empowering young leaders and fostering civic engagement among high school students.
This innovative program offers students in grades 10–12 a behind-the-scenes look at how local government operates. Through monthly meetings from September to May, participants will engage with city leaders, collaborate on community projects, and attend City Council meetings—gaining real-world experience in leadership and public service.
This year, 17 students who live within the city limits have been selected to serve on the Junior City Council:

- Amelia Kozyuk
- Satchel Kornegay
- Jameson Leaman-Ferguson
- Isis Eberly
- Graham Archer
- Maddie Mattson
- Carson McKee
- Nora Malone
- Tres Moore
- Ray Pepperman
- Kayla Rose
- Ella Sanders
- Haven Spruiell
- Graham Stewart
- Ana Vo
- Amelie Walker
- Justis Wright

Guiding the group throughout the year are teacher sponsors Ashley Watley and Owen Corcoran, who play an essential role in mentoring the students and helping them navigate their responsibilities as Junior City Council members.



Middle School Art

Congratulations to our talented Gulf Shores Middle School art students! Seventy-five students proudly placed in the Baldwin County Fair Art Contest, bringing home an incredible 86 ribbons in total. We love the Baldwin County Fair and are so thankful for the opportunity it gives our students to share their creativity with the community.





K-5 Virtual Students Travel to Gulf State Park

An adventurous day for our K-5 virtual students and their families!
We kicked things off at the Gulf State Park Learning Campus, where students explored composting and learned all about growing an organic garden
Next up — a scenic trail bike ride through the park with students and parents soaking in nature's beauty.
To top it all off, families gathered at Woodside Café for some delicious food and great times together.















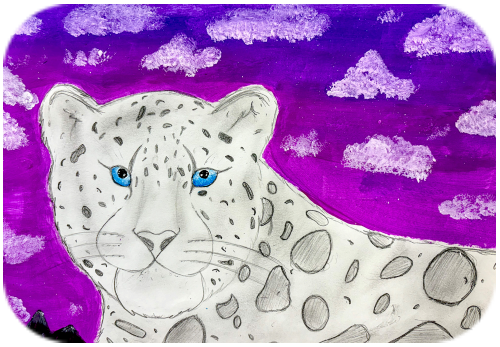


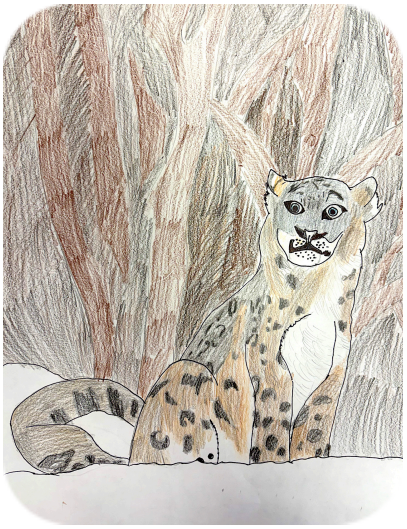


The Vanishing Point Global Art Competition

Congratulations to our three GSMS students who earned Honorable Mention in The Vanishing Point global art competition!
This is an incredible achievement, as the contest is open to young artists worldwide. The Vanishing Point challenges students to use their creativity as a voice for animal conservation, celebrating the beauty of wildlife while raising awareness of the threats they face.
Our 7th and 8th grade GSMS art students proudly took part, creating powerful and meaningful pieces while learning about endangered species such as the Western Lowland Gorilla, Snow Leopard, California Condor, Siberian Tiger, African Forest Elephant, Black Rhino, and Sumatran Orangutan.
We are so proud of our students for using their art to inspire change!









GSHS Tour Extravaganza!

25 students are joining Mr. Salvant & Mrs. Murphy for 3 days to explore health science and engineering programs at Auburn, Samford, UAB, and the University of Alabama!
So proud of our WaveMakers as they plan for their future!



Congratulations GSHS's Portia Hollis

Congratulations to Portia Hollis, our new Distinguished Young Woman of Baldwin County. Rounding out the top five included: Kathleen Harris, first runner-up; Emma Kate South, second runner-up; Sadie Langham, third runner-up; and Veronica Farlow, fourth runner-up.
In addition to the title, Portia was a preliminary winner for self-expression and also won the Bob & Sue Stanley Spirit Award, Be Your Best Self Essay and the Community Service Award.
Other preliminary winners included: Veronica Farlow and Sadie Langham, Fitness; Emma Kate South, Self-Expression and Interview; Kathleen Harris, Scholastics; Sadie Langham and Kathleen Harris, Talent



The Gulf Shores Thomas B. Norton Public Library is hosting a fun community rock painting event featuring two friendly caterpillars, Carl and Camilla!
The challenge? See which caterpillar will grow the longest. A huge shoutout to Paris Ace Hardware Gulf Shores for generously donating rocks for my students! We are so grateful! It is safe to say, Carl is in the lead right now… but there's still time to change that. Grab some paint, decorate your rock, and head to the library to add it to your caterpillar of choice. I have to admit—I'm Team Camilla all the way!



Dolphin Dash 5K & Fun Run



Make Waves of Kindness Day

Make Waves of Kindness Day is coming on November 13th! Get your MWOK gear so you're ready to represent!





GS Athletics Spirit Wear

Pre-order at the link below. Items will also be sold at the Stadium on Game Days.
https://forms.gle/qJMrqBZtpJdyQ3fo6









10/2 BOE: Work Session (The Wave Learning Center) 4:00pm
10/7 GSCS: Canvas/PowerSchool Informational Meeting (The Wave Learning Center) 8:30am
10/7 GSCS: Tuesday Tour (GSES) 9:00am
10/7 GSCS: Sound Waves Choir (MS & HS Choirs Fall Concert) 7:00pm Gulf Shores Methodist Church
10/9 BOE: School Board Regular Meeting (The Wave Learning Center) 5:00pm
10/9 GSCS: Q1 Ends (Early Dismissal 11:30)
10/10 GSCS: Holiday (No School)
10/13 GSCS: E-Learning Day (Students do not attend school)
10/17 GSCS: Q1 Report Card Available
10/18 GSHS: ACT
10/23-31 GSCS: Red Ribbon WeekBegins
10/23 GSMS: School pictures Day
10/23 GSES: Spirit Night (Chick-fil-A) Foley
10/24 GSMS: MS Marching Band Night @ GS SportsPlex 6:30pm

Enjoy these GSCS commercials!

We Believe…

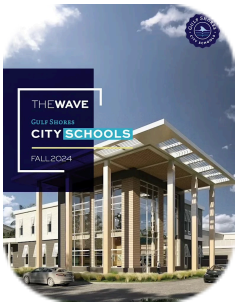
What If…

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 has a new magazine - The Wave! Extra copies are available in school offices, most city offices, the visitors center, and the Chamber of Commerce! Get your copy today!



Gulf Shores City Schools have a new GSCS Mobile App! Available in IOS 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 Speller - Human Resource Coordinator
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 Liz Corcoran - 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
Laura Goulden - Mental Health Coordinator

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

Connect with GSCS

Joe McAleer -Social Media