



Clayton County Public Schools

Building A Better Tomorrow, Today!

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ADVISORY

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Elite Scholars' Samuel West Named MSA Regional Finalist

JONESBORO - Clayton County Public Schools (CCPS) is excited to announce that Magnet Schools of America (MSA), the national association representing magnet schools and programs, has named Mr. Samuel Wayne West, principal of Elite Scholars Academy, as a 2026 Principal of the Year Regional Finalist.



Mr. West represents Region III which encompasses Alabama, Florida, Georgia, Puerto Rico and the Virgin Islands.

The Magnet Schools of America Principal of the Year Award recognizes exceptional school leaders who demonstrate outstanding commitment to magnet education, student achievement, innovation, equity, and community engagement. As a regional finalist, Mr. West is among a select group of principals nationwide honored for leadership that advances the mission and impact of magnet schools.

Mr. West is steadfastly committed to promoting equity, diversity, and academic excellence among the students and staff of Elite Scholars, a school that spans grades 6-12. His innovative leadership has not only provided equitable academic opportunities for all students but has also fostered an environment of inclusivity and empowerment.

Under his leadership, Elite Scholars Academy has been ranked among the best middle schools in Georgia by the U.S. News and World Report, earning a number one ranking in 2024 and a number two ranking in 2025. The high school has maintained a 100 percent graduation rate since 2014, the year of the school's first ceremony.

"Through Mr. West's leadership, Elite Scholars Academy has served as a beacon of excellence," said Dr. Anthony W. Smith, Superintendent/CEO of Schools. "Speaking on behalf of the Board of Education, district leadership and the entire Clayton County Public Schools Family, I offer congratulations for earning this great honor."

Regional finalists will advance for consideration for the national Principal of the Year Award, which will be announced at the Magnet Schools of America National Conference, April 14-17, 2026, in San Diego.

About Magnet Schools of America

The single largest form of public school "choice," magnet schools are visionary, innovative, and open to all students regardless of zip code. There are currently more than 4,340 magnet schools, serving nearly 3.5 million students across 46 states and the District of Columbia. For more information on magnet schools, visit <http://magnet.edu/>.

-An official document from the Clayton County Public School System-

About Clayton County Public Schools: Clayton County Public Schools (CCPS) is fully accredited by Cognia. The district offers a focused world-class program based on a challenging curriculum which is taught from pre-kindergarten through 12th grade. Serving over 50,000 students, Clayton County Public Schools is ranked among the 100 largest school districts in the U.S. and is the sixth-largest school system in Georgia.

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