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## **Three Richmond County students named to State Superintendent's 2026-2027 Student Advisory Council**

(AUGUSTA, GEORGIA) – Three Richmond County School System students have been selected to serve on State School Superintendent Richard Woods' 2026-2027 Student Advisory Council, giving them an opportunity to represent student perspectives in conversations about education across Georgia.

Justin Jones of the Academy of Richmond County, Makayla Harris of A.R. Johnson Health Science and Engineering Magnet School and Donovan Stratford of Hephzibah Comprehensive High School were selected from 1,427 applicants statewide. They are among 84 students chosen to serve on the council this school year.

"We are incredibly proud of Justin, Makayla and Donovan for earning the opportunity to represent their schools and the Richmond County School System at the state level," Superintendent Dr. Malinda Cobb said. "Our students bring valuable perspectives to conversations about the future of education, and I am excited to see them use their voices, share their experiences and grow as leaders through this opportunity."

Throughout the school year, council members will meet with Woods to share their experiences, discuss education-related issues and provide feedback on how state policies affect students and their plans for the future.

Council members will also serve as ambassadors for the state superintendent and complete service projects benefiting their schools and communities. The projects are designed to give students opportunities to put their ideas into action, develop leadership skills and address needs they see in their communities.

Students in grades 10-12 were invited to apply for the council by responding to essay questions about challenges in education, experiences that have shaped their perspectives, issues they would like to discuss with the state superintendent and ideas for a service project. Members were selected based on the strength of their responses and the goal of representing rural, suburban and urban communities across Georgia.

The council's first meeting of the 2026-2027 school year will be held in October at the Georgia Department of Education offices in Atlanta.

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