

# EAGLE EYE NEWS

## SOUTH COBB HIGH FRESHMEN STEP INTO NEW ACADEMY

The administrators at South Cobb High hope the new academy; recent upgrades and new teaching model will set students up for future success inside and outside the classroom.

More than 500 freshmen will step foot into South Cobb High’s new freshmen academy on Monday morning. The nearly 96,000-square-foot building, along with the new arts annex, courtyard and tennis courts are part of the school’s \$28 million updates.

The only other school in the county to also have a freshmen academy is North Cobb High School.

South Cobb High School held its first freshmen orientation program the first week of August in its newly built Freshmen Academy building to introduce students to high school and to a new teaching model. The school will implement the Highly Effective Teaching Model, which has been successful at other schools around the country, including Clarkdale Elementary.

As part of this model, students build relationships with a 15-minute homeroom each day and are taught life skills as well as academics. The students are split into teams, which offers a smaller feel and helps students transition from middle school to high school.

“It’s a growing experience,” said Renee Basinger, Freshmen Academy Transition Coordinator. “The exciting thing is it’s not about the building. It’s about the students...The freshmen are going to take this excitement into their 10th grade year.”

The annex is equipped with new laptops for the students to use.

“We’ll have more computers than we can shake a stick at,” said South Cobb High Principal Ashley Hosey.

Keeping with the team concept of the HET Model, nearly every classroom in the freshmen building will have tables for pairs of students instead of individual desks.

The tables can be easily rearranged and have outlets for laptops or other devices to be used in lessons.



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## SOUTH COBB HIGH FRESHMEN STEP INTO NEW ACADEMY (cont.)



(Left to right), Mr. Ed Thayer - Area 1 Assistant Superintendent, Ms. Melissa Arasi - County Music Coordinator, Mr. Doug Shepard- Chief Administrative Officer- SPLOST program, Dr. Donald Dunnigan - Chief Human Resources Officer, Mr. Hamilton Holmes- Lockheed Martin, Ms. Kathleen Angelucci - School Board Member, and Ms. Alice Stouder - Deputy Superintendent

"Collaboration is in every single lesson," said Renee Basinger, who had taught English at South Cobb for many years before stepping into her new role. "This prepares them for life. We're never isolated. We need collaboration."

The HET Model is different in many ways in that it allows teachers to be more innovative than ever before and also helps students understand that they choose their behavior and also the consequences of that behavior.

"The focus is not on discipline, but on training them to be the student they want to be," Basinger said, adding that the model's "silent hallway" "minimizes classroom disruption, eliminates fear and gives them liberty."

The academy building is outfitted with a separate fully functional cafeteria, designated study rooms, its own media center, a computer lab, the school's new clinic, labs and even a mock courtroom.

The teachers of the freshmen academy mostly came from within South Cobb High.

"We chose teachers who embraced innovative philosophies," Basinger said, adding that the Model teaches effective classroom management "and when we give them the tools to do that, they feel empowered."

Basinger and Hosey explained that when teachers feel empowered, so do the students.

"If kids feel that school is just a place where the bus drops them off," they will not "have respect for the building, institution or people," Hosey explained. "We want to meet their social needs and leave students feeling they have a voice."

For Hosey and Basinger, the most important aspect of the new building will still be the people inside: the students. Having a new place for them to learn and feel comfortable will help them become more successful, the administrators explained.

Hosey said, "This building is just part of a new campus. I joke that I'm going to come back and this is going to be the University of South Cobb or South Cobb State," Hosey said, smiling as he looked out a window in the new freshmen academy to new tennis courts.

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## **SOUTH COBB OPENS NEW FRESHMAN TRANSITION ACADEMY**

The Faculty and Staff of South Cobb High School could not be prouder. He commented with enthusiasm and pride as he performed the ribbon cutting ceremony for the new Freshman Transition Academy. The event, held on August 11 during pre-planning was witnessed by Cobb County School district distinguished guests, including (left to right), Mr. Ed Thayer - Area 1 Assistant Superintendent, Ms. Melissa Arasi - County Music Coordinator, Mr. Doug Shepard- Chief Administrative Officer- SPLOST program, Dr. Donald Dunnigan - Chief Human Resources Officer, Mr. Hamilton Holmes-Lockheed Martin, Ms. Kathleen Angelucc i- School Board Member, and Ms. Alice Stouder - Deputy Superintendent. Members of the South Cobb Student Government Association provided a tour of the facility following the event. The excitement was electric!

Mr. Hosey commented on the phenomenal job that the construction crews, custodians, and other support staff did on preparing the structure for the first day of school. Faculty and staff members clapped as he used a large pair of scissors to open the new building for occupancy. The new Freshman Transition Academy adds yet another dimension to the campus. Also, for the first time in the school's history, and in Cobb County, ninth grade students who enter the academy will be wearing school uniforms.

The Academy takes on a new focus for student achievement-- educating the whole child and using the latest teaching strategies. All this and more is aimed at extracting the highest level of rigor and relevance in teaching. Program Coordinator Renee Basinger, Administrator Brenda Rich, and several staff members have worked for several months preparing the program as well as attending professional development on a new teaching model, called the Highly Effective Teaching model. The Austell community can be proud of this new gem in their midst. South Cobb High School stands proud and ready to achieve extraordinary results from students.

Go Eagles!

## **SPANISH STUDIES FIELD TRIP**

South Cobb's Spanish teachers are planning a field trip for end of October or beginning of November, to the Picasso Art Exhibit, at the High Museum of Art, in Midtown Atlanta.

Students must obtain permission from all teachers in order to participate.

Muchas gracias

## **FRENCH STUDIES FIELD TRIP**

South Cobb's French teachers are planning a field trip for the third week of October to the Alliance Française (French Studies Center) in mid-town Atlanta, and possibly, to the High Museum of Art, to see the exhibit on Picasso Art. Students must obtain permission from all teachers in order to participate.

Merci beaucoup

## **SOUTH COBB ESOL STUDENTS TOUR ARMSTRONG ATLANTIC STATE UNIVERSITY**

Getting up on an early, cool Saturday morning is not what teenagers usually do, however this didn't matter to fourteen South Cobb High School ESOL students. They were already and excited about visiting old Savannah! Florence Hardney-Hinds, ESOL teacher, gladly looked forward to the event. She accompanied her students as they toured Armstrong Atlantic State University. They also had the opportunity to see Savannah and Tybee Island as part of cultural awareness and college preparation.

South Cobb High School ESOL students will visit several colleges and locations to improve cultural awareness and also to explore colleges throughout the year. This was the first event for the students this year. South Cobb High School partners with the International Welcome Center to coordinate these events, and all Cobb County schools get the opportunity to participate.



## **SOUTH COBB HIGH SCHOOL DEBATE TEAM WINS AT LANGSTON HUGHES HIGH SCHOOL**



Hard work does pay off. This cliché was very true for the 2011-2012 South Cobb Debate Team. Led by teacher Natalie Hope, the team won their first completion of the year on October 8, 2011 at Langton Hughes High School in Atlanta. The team competed against several metro area schools, representing DeKalb, Fulton, and other counties.

Team members include Deborah Marke-President, Chinonso Ogojiaku-Vice President, Aja Pollard, Amber Hubert, Geoffrey Lester (not pictured), Curtis Dor, Breanna Troutman, Sunshine Ogojiaku, Lesdy Giseth and Tremelle Pate. We look forward to their continued outstanding achievement for the 2011-12 school year.