



Clayton County Public Schools

"Building A Better Tomorrow, Today!"

1058 Fifth Avenue, Jonesboro, GA, 30236 | Tel: 770-473-2700 | Web: www.clayton.k12.ga.us

NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Division of Communications, Public Relations, & Marketing
Jada K. Dawkins, Chief of Communications | Tel: 770-472-7257

February 6, 2023

CCPS Announces Partnership to Enhance School-Based Services *Mental Health Initiative Supported by \$8 Million U.S. DOE Grant*

JONESBORO - Clayton County Public Schools (CCPS) is pleased to announce a partnership that will expand access to school-based mental health services in the district. The partnership is supported by an \$8 million, five-year grant from the U.S. Department of Education. That grant will fund the Advancing Innovative Partnerships and Pathways to Address Mental Health Workforce Shortages in Georgia Schools initiative as developed by The [Georgia Health Policy Center](#)'s (GHPC) [Center of Excellence for Children's Behavioral Health](#) at Georgia State University.

The pilot internship program will begin in six CCPS schools, a district identified as a high-need district, and will train, place and supervise graduate-level students from three metro Atlanta universities. These graduate level students will work to provide support for CCPS students and will ultimately grow the child behavioral health workforce in the state of Georgia. It is estimated that in 2023, 200 CCPS students will receive mental health services through the pilot in 2023. That number is expected to grow as the number of Graduate Level interns increases.

"We are excited about entering this partnership and the potential positive benefit it will bring to our students and their families," said Dr. Anthony W. Smith, CCPS Interim Superintendent. "This initiative is an excellent example of our commitment to *Building A Better Tomorrow, Today* for all district stakeholders."

About the Initiative

This partnership among Georgia State University (GHPC and the [School of Social Work](#)), the [Department of Social Work and Human Services](#) at Kennesaw State University, the [Whitney M. Young Jr. School of Social Work](#) at Clark Atlanta University, the [Georgia Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Disabilities](#) (DBHDD Office of Children, Young Adults & Families) and CCPS will build on the infrastructure of the existing [Georgia Apex Program](#), a statewide, school-based mental health program that served 13,778 students in 738 schools during the 2021-22 school year.

"Limited access to children's behavioral health providers is a challenge both in Georgia and nationally," said principal investigator [Ann DiGirolamo](#), director of behavioral health at GHPC. "This is a tremendous opportunity to better meet the mental health needs of children in Clayton County and to ultimately strengthen the capacity of the mental health workforce in Georgia by providing training and entry pathways for emerging school mental health professionals."

-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.

###