

March 11, 2021

For Information Contact:

Adam Pugh, Executive Director of Communications & Partnerships  
[adam.pugh@gscs.org](mailto:adam.pugh@gscs.org) 770-229-3710 Ext. 10341 Cell: 770-861-4359

Laura Beaber, Communications Specialist

[laura.beaber@gscs.org](mailto:laura.beaber@gscs.org) 770-229-3710 ext. 10340 Cell: 678-603-7716

**For Immediate Release:**

## **Futral Road Elementary Counselor Sandra Long Named District School Counselor of the Year**

**Griffin, GA** – Futral Road Elementary Counselor Sandra Long is the Griffin-Spalding County School System's (GSCS) 2021 School Counselor of the Year.



***Pictured (L-R): GSCS Executive Director of Communications and Partnerships Adam Pugh, GSCS Executive Director of Secondary Education Dr. Donald Warren, GSCS Superintendent Keith Simmons, GSCS School Counselor of the Year Sandra Long, Futral Road Elementary Principal Ben Steele, GSCS Executive Director of Elementary Education Dr. Norman Sauce, GSCS Deputy Superintendent Dr. Kiawana Kennedy, Futral Road Elementary Assistant Principal Nicki Gore & Futral Road Elementary Academic Coach Nicole Hudson***

Last year, GSCS introduced School Counselor of the Year as a way to show appreciation and give special recognition to our outstanding school counselors.

Nominees must demonstrate many high-quality attributes and skills including, but not limited to the following: the support of students in the areas of career education, social-emotional intelligence and academic development; demonstrating positive leadership; advocacy for students' and staff's best interests; collaboration with other professionals and outside programs and service towards school and community. The nominee must exhibit the highest levels of professionalism and personal ethical standards.

**MORE**



### **BOARD MEMBERS**

R. Syntel Brown  
Barbara Jo Cook  
Will Doss  
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Superintendent

216 South Sixth Street  
P.O. Drawer N  
Griffin, GA 30224  
770-339-3700  
[www.spalding.k12.ga.us](http://www.spalding.k12.ga.us)

Accredited by AdvancED

GSCS School Counselor of the Year candidates may be nominated by school administrators, staff, students, parents or fellow counselors. A committee comprised of three principals (one from each grade-band) select the GSCS School Counselor of the Year based on the nominations that are submitted, supporting documents that include an essay and evidentiary question responses and a formal interview with selected finalists.

In her essay, GSCS Counselor of the Year Sandra Long stated, “As a counselor, I am there to help facilitate sustainable change with measurable outcomes. As an effective leader, I have clear goals and concise action steps. When something is not working, I must be bold and humble enough to admit that something is not working and pivot. Reacting is not leading. Creating a culture of empathy and unwavering hope that every child has the ability to succeed with a champion behind them is how I view my role as a counselor.”

Long’s nominees wrote, “What makes Sandra Long particularly special is that not only does she do all the things listed extremely well, but she also knows the name of every single one of our almost 700 students. She knows them personally, she remembers their families and each of their individual situations. Mrs. Long goes above and beyond each and every day to ensure every student and staff member is taken care of mentally, physically, emotionally, and even spiritually. She provides numerous resources and volunteers countless hours of her time to see that everyone has what they need to be successful, both in the classroom and outside of the classroom. Mrs. Long always lends a listening ear and offers words of advice that can help propel anyone into a positive direction!”

GSCS Executive Director of Elementary Education Dr. Norman Sauce stated, “Words cannot adequately describe my immense respect, appreciation and admiration for Mrs. Sandra Long, the extraordinary professional school counselor for Futral Road Elementary. To know her is to experience her kindness and grace. To know her work is to see a selfless child-centered expert in action. Mrs. Long is a model school counselor who formally and informally mentors’ other counselors within and outside of GSCS. She serves as a founding member of our district’s School Counseling Executive Leadership Team. She has been invited to present at regional conferences and she assists her school and our district to forge and cultivate meaningful relationships with external organizations as a means to expand opportunities for our students and staff. She exudes the highest moral and ethical character, desire and drive to serve the families of Spalding County in all that she does. She is truly a leader worth following. I am so very proud to recognize Mrs. Sandra Long as the 2021-2022 GSCS Counselor of the Year. Congratulations, Mrs. Long!”

“GSCS is thankful for the influence of all our school counselors. Especially, the remarkable work of this year’s Counselor of the Year Sandra Long,” said GSCS Superintendent Keith Simmons.

Long has been the school counselor at Futral Road Elementary since 2000 and has been with GSCS for a total of 28 years.

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#### **About GSCS**

*The Griffin-Spalding County School System (GSCS) is an award-winning, AdvancED accredited district that serves 10,000 students in 11 elementary schools, four middle schools, two high schools, one alternative high school and the Griffin Regional College and Career Academy. GSCS offers everything a child needs to nurture and grow academically, foster and sustain social-emotional development with educators who collaborate using innovative instruction that engages students to succeed. For more information about GSCS, visit [www.spalding.k12.ga.us](http://www.spalding.k12.ga.us), follow us on Twitter at @GriffinSpalding, Instagram at @GriffinSpaldingSchools, visit [www.facebook.com/GSCSS](http://www.facebook.com/GSCSS) or download the GSCS app.*