



# NEWS RELEASE

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## **Gwin Oaks ES' Amolo named Media Specialist of Year**

A Gwinnett County educator known for her passion for reading was named the 2013 Gwinnett County Public Schools Library Media Specialist of the Year. The honor was presented to **Sharon Amolo of Gwin Oaks Elementary** in the Brookwood Cluster.

“She has been instrumental in the success of our school through numerous school-wide practices—the most important of course, is focusing on the importance of reading every day,” says Tonya Burnley, principal of Gwin Oaks Elementary in describing Ms. Amolo’s work. The principal adds, “Mrs. Amolo’s belief in the value of reading resonates in all she does. She is one of the most dynamic teacher leaders I have had the pleasure of working with.”

As a reading enthusiast, Ms. Amolo has developed a number of programs to support Gwin Oaks Elementary students in their quest for success. “The most important aspect of my job is to instill a lifelong love of reading and thereby increasing student learning,” she says. One of those initiatives is the school-wide reading program that she began close to 10 years ago. Each year, she creates a different theme requiring students to read 20 minutes a day at home while they simultaneously learn about the theme. In close to 10 years of the program’s existence, student participation has increased from 65% to 95%.

Another example of how Ms. Amolo engages students to share her joy for reading is through the use technology to host author visits through Skype. “During these visits, students have in-depth discussions with the author about the characters, plot, and the author’s life,” she explains. The students prepare for the visits by reading and writing about their books during their book clubs. Ms. Amolo was not the only one who noticed how this innovative program has helped student learning. “The teachers remarked on how their students were able to delve deeper into the books with their discussions and questions, while students marveled at how wonderful it was to have the author answer their questions and be part of their book club,” she explains.

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Ms. Amolo was named Gwinnett's Library Media Specialist of the Year for her contributions in the library media field through service to students, teachers, and the community. Selection for this honor by a GCPS library media committee is based on an individual's promotion of reading and literature, his or her leadership role, and the work completed to involve parents and community members as partners. Parents, teachers, and administrators are invited each year to nominate a media specialist for the countywide honor.

Sharon Amolo holds a bachelor's degree in Education from Howard University, a master's degree in Library Media from Georgia State University, and a specialist's degree in Instructional Technology from Valdosta State University. In 2009, she was named Gwin Oaks Elementary's Teacher of the Year.