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CLAYTON COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS

1058 Fifth Avenue | Jonesboro, GA 30236

770-473-2700

www.clayton.k12.ga.us



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Department of Communications, Public Relations & Marketing

Jada K. Dawkins
Chief of Communications
Telephone: (770) 472-7257

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Newest School Named for Former First Lady Michelle Obama *Eddie White Elementary becomes Michelle Obama STEM Elementary Academy*

JONESBORO - Clayton County Public Schools (CCPS) is proud to formally announce the name change of one of its elementary schools. The school, formerly known as Eddie White Elementary School, has been renamed the Michelle Obama STEM Elementary Academy.

This action comes after a series of steps that began with a request from the district's staff back in May 2020 that the Clayton County Board of Education initiate the process to name the new STEM (Science, Engineering, Mathematics and Technology) elementary school facility under construction in the panhandle or southern end of the county. Once built, the facility will become the new home for elementary students presently housed on the Eddie White campus.

The process, which included a stakeholder survey, arrived at two potential names. The Board, during its October 5, 2020 meeting, chose to name the school after former First Lady Michelle Obama. In compliance with Board Policy FDC, the district had to submit a request to Mrs. Obama seeking permission to use her name for the school. In mid-October, permission was received and on December 3, 2020, the district was informed that the Eddie White Elementary name had changed to Michelle Obama STEM Elementary Academy within the Georgia Department of Education (GaDOE) facility school registry.

“We are so excited that the former First lady accepted our request to have her name associated with our school,” said Ms. Marcia Payton-Edwards. “We noted in our request that it was fitting that our school be represented by the name Michelle Obama due to the ancestral connection of her great, great, great grandmother, Melvinia Shields McGruder, who was enslaved on a family farm in the Clayton County community of Rex.”

“This prestigious name sets high expectations for our students as we enter a new era of education with innovative pedagogy infused with technology driven practices,” she added. “Mrs. Obama is a global icon, who has led initiatives such as Let’s Move, Reach Higher, and Let Girls Learn. Her influence will inspire our children to think beyond Hampton, Georgia, and to know that they can make a difference globally.”

“This new campus will truly be worthy of embracing the name of Michelle Obama as it will be a state of the art and one-of-a-kind STEM academy, built to serve students in pre-kindergarten through fifth grade,” said Dr. Morcease J. Beasley, CCPS Superintendent/CEO. “Focusing on engineering,

agriculture, and environmental science, this school will provide unique and innovative learning and teaching opportunities to inspire those who attend as students and those who work there as staff.”

About Michelle Obama STEM Elementary Academy

The school, based on the Eddie White campus in Hampton, currently serves approximately 700 students and supports over 70 staff members. During the 2019-20 school year, staff began working towards STEM certification to be recognized by the state of Georgia. The new facility, scheduled to welcome students in August 2021 and located about a mile from the existing campus, will provide space for 75 standard classrooms, two technology labs, six STEM labs, one engineering lab and outdoor classrooms with solar panels. The property has a wetland conservation area with an indoor/outdoor classroom space to provide a hands-on environmental learning lab.

About Clayton County Public Schools

Clayton County Public Schools (CCPS) is fully accredited through AdvancED – Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Council on Accreditation and School Improvement. The district offers a focused world-class program based on a challenging curriculum which is taught from pre-kindergarten through 12th grade. Serving over 55,000 students, Clayton County Public Schools is ranked among the 100 largest school districts in the U.S. and is the fifth-largest school system in Georgia.