

For Immediate Release
October 23, 2018

Contact: Alisha Evans, Communications Director
65 Gilreath Road NW, Cartersville, Ga. 30121
alisha.evans@bartow.k12.ga.us
770-606-5800 x3815



PRESS RELEASE

BARTOW COUNTY SCHOOL SYTEM HONORED FOR FARM TO SCHOOL EXCELLENCE AT 2018 GOLDEN RADISH AWARDS

BARTOW COUNTY, Ga. (October 23, 2018) – The Bartow County School System won Platinum recognition at the 2018 Golden Radish Awards held at the Georgia Freight Depot in Atlanta October 22!

Georgia Organics, Georgia’s Departments of Agriculture, Education and Public Health, the Department of Early Care and Learning, and University of Georgia Cooperative Extension publicly recognized 84 Georgia school districts for best practices in farm to school programs, such as local food procurement, exposing students to new foods through taste tests, and incorporating gardening and cooking activities into the curriculum.

The Bartow County School System has earned the Golden Radish Award for four consecutive years. However, this is the first year attaining the program’s highest level of honor.

“Each year, School Nutrition Director Pam Blakeney and her staff set their sights on introducing future generations to the world of agriculture and its benefits,” says Bartow County School System Superintendent Dr. Phillip Page. “Through their continued efforts, the school system received Bronze, Silver, Gold, and now Platinum designations. I couldn’t be more pleased with the innovative ideas that are propelling this system to new opportunities that ultimately benefit the entire community.”

During the 2018 Golden Radish Awards, Bartow County was specifically recognized by the Georgia Department of Agriculture as a Georgia Grown System of Distinction for its Georgia Grown Test Kitchen program.

Golden Radish partners also noted Bartow County’s extraordinarily high level of community involvement. The Bartow County Extension Office, Bartow Master Gardener Association, Bartow County Farm Bureau, Georgia Highlands College, Keep Bartow Beautiful, and many more local associations and businesses help maintain the school system’s 15 edible gardens. Students learn gardening techniques directly from local farmers. For example, a local farmer visits Clear Creek Elementary School on a regular basis to assist students with their aquaponics system. Local Chef Chris Lyons of Table 20 even donates his time and resources to teach culinary students how to create locally inspired menus infused with home-grown vegetables.

“Farm to school teaches our children the importance of food that helps bodies grow healthy and strong and food that promotes learning,” said J. Patrick O’Neal, M.D., commissioner of the Georgia Department of Public Health. “When children learn as early as possible where their food comes from, they are more likely to eat fresh, nutritious foods that will sustain healthy choices that spread to families and communities.”

Collectively, the districts honored for farm to school excellence, served more than 109 million school meals with locally grown food items during the 2017-18 school year. School Nutrition Director Pam Blakeney is confident that number will only increase after she adds farm to preschool programs and student chef competitions in the near future.

###