

The Courier Herald

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TUESDAY, JULY 14, 2026

COURIERHERALDTODAY.COM

Dublin City withdraws offer to superintendent choice

School board moves on after unable to reach 'tolerable' contract

By RODNEY MANLEY
Staff Reporter

The cash-strapped Dublin City Board of Education on Friday withdrew its offer to superintendent candidate DeMarcos Holland after being unable to settle on a salary.

While still believing Holland is the man for the job, the board said in a statement that it was "unable to reach an agreement with

Dr. Holland for a compensation package that is tolerable for the board and respectful to the district's current financial situation."

"Recognizing and accepting this outcome of the superintendent search process has been painfully difficult. But at the end of the day, board members collectively could not justifiably expend an amount of the district's extremely finite funds that would have

been necessary to reach an agreement," the statement read. "More importantly, the board could not expect the community to accept such an expenditure."

Instead, the board plans to call off the superintendent search and extend interim Superintendent Marcee Pool's contract in that position through the rest of this month as it develops a plan to move forward.

"As for the immediate

administrative leadership of Dublin City Schools, the board does not want to hastily rush into determining future plans for such an important matter."

The board chose Holland, the chief human resources officer for Marietta City Schools, from 25 candidates who applied during a search conducted by the Georgia School Boards Association.

Pool, who had been the

district's curriculum director, has served as interim superintendent since last September, when Superintendent Fred Williams stepped down to take an early retirement after the severity of the school district's most recent financial troubles were revealed.

State officials last fall projected Dublin City



HOLLAND

DUBLIN SCHOOLS
Continued on page 7



SUMMER READERS: TELLING DINOSAUR STORIES THROUGH MUSIC, VIDEO

Storyteller Josie Bailey had children, and adults, clapping and singing along during Wednesday's Summer Reading Program. Bailey talked to the children about dinosaurs and introduced what she called a baby dino. The Summer Reading Program will return with Beatin' Path Rhythm Events at 2 p.m. on Wednesday, July 15/PAYTON TOWNS III

East Dublin man killed in wreck

By PAYTON TOWNS III
Senior Reporter

A 66-year-old East Dublin man died from injuries after his truck left the road, overturned and hit a tree Thursday.

According to a Georgia State Patrol crash report, Phil Rawlings was traveling south on Ga. 117 in a tan 2004 Chevrolet Silverado when the accident happened at 2:44 p.m. Thurs-

day, July 9. The investigation revealed that Rawlings failed to maintain his lane and went to the east shoulder of Ga. 117. The vehicle traveled for approximately 87 feet while rotating counter-clockwise. The Chevrolet overturned on its roof, causing its trailer to detach. Both continued going south

FATAL WRECK
Continued on page 7

Man sentenced to 15 years in prison for fatal hit-and-run

By PAYTON TOWNS III
Senior Reporter

An East Dublin man was sentenced to 20 years for a deadly hit-and-run incident that killed a 47-year-old woman in March 2025.

Christopher Malcolm Brown, 46, will serve 15 years followed by five years on probation for causing

the death of Angela Christyna Cain on March 21, 2025. He previously pled guilty to two counts of homicide by vehicle in the first degree, driving under the influence, tampering with evidence, hit-and-run, failure to maintain lane and driving

HIT-AND-RUN
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Scooter's Coffee to open here on Thursday

By KYLE DOMINY
Staff Reporter

People in Dublin will soon have a new place to get a cool drink to beat the summer heat or a caffeine jolt with a new coffee shop prepared to open this week.

Scooter's Coffee, at 305 Brantley Crossing, just off U.S. 80 West in Dublin, will hold its grand opening Thursday, July 16. The new site will be the 15th Georgia location of the

28-year-old drive-thru coffee sellers.

"We've had such a warm welcome. We're excited to be a part of this community," said Cade Jones, who helms the business along with his brother Jackson. "It shows what I think will be well worth it."

The shop, which provides drive-thru or walk-up service, offers specialty coffee drinks, hot and cold; soda; lemonades; smoothies; teas; matcha; milkshakes; and, for those craving an extra pick-me-up, Red Bull energy drink-infused beverages. Scooter's Coffee will also offer standard coffee shop fare like

cookies and pastries; it also has a menu of sandwiches and breakfast items.

The Joneses are no stranger to the restaurant world. Cade and Jackson's father operated a Zaxby's franchise for over 20 years. The duo is also working on another Scooter's location in their hometown of Vidalia.

Scooter's Coffee Dublin will open at 5:30 a.m. and serve up drinks until 9 p.m. The new business will generate about 27 local jobs.

Scooter's Coffee was founded in 1998 in Bellevue, Nebraska. There are now about 1,000 locations in 32 states.



Scooter's Coffee is preparing to open its doors, or rather drive-thru window, on July 16. The coffee and drink shop is at 305 Brantley Crossing in Dublin/KYLE DOMINY

Dublin Salvation Army to 'Stuff the Bus' with school supply drive

By PAYTON TOWNS III
Senior Reporter

A local charitable organization is asking the public to donate school supplies during an event on Saturday.

The Dublin Salvation Army will hold its Stuff the Bus drive from 8 a.m. to noon at Walmart, 2423 Highway 80. According to Charika Todd, Dublin Service Center director at The Salvation Army, this event

has provided thousands of school supplies to local students for many years and she would like to have the community, "keep that tradition going."

"We will be there passing out fliers trying to collect school supplies," Todd said. "We plan to donate these school supplies to the city schools. They will distribute them out to the kids who need it."

STUFF THE BUS
Continued on page 7



The Salvation Army will collect supplies for children at Walmart from 8 a.m. to noon Saturday, July 18/FILE PHOTO



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OBITUARIES



Phil Kinard Rawlings

Funeral services for Mr. Phil Kinard Rawlings, of Wrightsville, will be held on Thursday, July 16, 2026 at 11 a.m. at the Community Missionary Baptist Church, 627 James Grove Church Road in Wrightsville. Rev. Jerry Walden will deliver the eulogy. Rev. Brian Ashley will officiate. Interment to follow in the Community Missionary Baptist Church Cemetery.

Mr. Rawlings was born on Monday, Sept. 28, 1959 in Wrightsville, to the parents of the late Ernestine Rawlings and the late Willis Tucker, Sr. He was employed by Lightning Transportation as a truck driver. He was a dedicated Georgia Bulldog fan. He passed away on Thursday, July 9, 2026. He was preceded in death by his parents.

He leaves to cherish his memories to his wife, Elizabeth “Janice” Rawlings; children, Vanshetta (Alfonzo) Wicker, Kenethia Rawlings, Chicquan King, Ane-shia Lewis, Surkeka (Greg) Fisher and Veedra (Leroy) Jones; grandchildren, Naija Harris, T’Zire Oliver, J’Nijah Tillman, Kaysa Tillman, Jateria Fleming, Z’Koria Jones, Ashanti Moore, Tyra Moore, Na’im Moore, Lauren Lewis, Bailey James, Jamille Fisher, Kaniya Fisher, and Ahmir Fisher; five great grandchildren; siblings, Eddie West, Barbara Rawlings, Earnest (Maylonda) Rawlings, Reginald Rawlings, Juanita Tucker, Marcus (Kim G.) Tucker, Sharon (Nyota) Tucker and Willis (Ramona) Tucker Jr.; devoted niece, Carolyn (Patrick) Waters; and a host of other relatives and friends.

Please post your condolences online at Services-byDudley.com. Services by Dudley Funeral Home and Cremations of Dublin.



Donna Browning Jones

Donna Browning Jones, 76, of Dudley, Georgia, passed away at her home on Saturday, July 11, 2026.

Donna was born Nov. 1, 1949, in Dublin, Georgia, to the late Samuel Morris Browning and Marjorie Johnson Browning. She graduated from Laurens High School in 1968 and was a former employee of the Atlanta Journal-Constitution before devoting herself to her family as a homemaker. Donna loved horseback riding, playing golf, and getting lost in a good thriller, but her greatest joy was being “Nonna” to her grandbabies.

In addition to her parents, she was preceded in death by her brother, Kendall Morris Browning; her aunt and uncle, Myrtice Browning Stephens and G.O. Stephens; her uncle and aunt, Rusty and Iris Browning Bullard; her uncle, Gregory Johnson; and her grandparents, Samuel and Maggie Browning and Isaac and Mary Metters

Johnson.

Donna is survived by her husband, Lewis Glenn Jones, of Dudley; her daughter, Leah Jones Patterson (Brooks), of Livingston, Montana; her son, Landon Glenn Jones (Cassie), of Dudley; and her grandchildren, Eva Elaina Patterson, Silas Everett Patterson, Talulah Esmé Patterson and Ari Elliott Patterson, all of Livingston, Montana, and Lucas Glenn Jones and Johnny James Bennett, both of Dudley; and her cousins Nora Kay Medders (Vikki Allday).

A graveside service will be held at 11 a.m. on Wednesday, July 15, at Pleasant Hill Baptist Church Cemetery in Cadwell, with Alec Kuck officiating.

Pallbearers will be Johnny Bennett, Christopher Howard, Caleb Howard, Will Smalley, Nathan Mullis and Garrett Mathis.

Please visit www.townsendfuneralhome.com for service updates and to sign the online memorial register.

HERE'S A TIP!

By JOANN DERSON
King Features

* To keep the kids' sight word skills fresh over the summer, we are playing sight word bingo practically every day now. It was really easy to make and laminate bingo cards. And I use the flash cards we got from school to "call" the words. Bingo is a win-win!

* "Potluck parties and leftovers: Is there too much food left at the end of the party? When throwing a potluck, make sure you remind your guest to bring some take-home containers. Have them fix a few containers of "seconds" and store them in a big cooler by the front door. Hang a few take-out bags on the doorknob and your pals won't forget to take their goodies home!" -- M.W. in Florida

* Kids clamoring about whose turn it is? No fear. You've got the solution in your desk drawer. Simply write each child's name on a self-stick note, and stack them. The kid on top takes the first turn, and then peels his or her name off and moves it to the bottom. Easy peasy.

* Going on a road trip this summer? Check your tire pressure to save money. Maintaining the correct tire pressure can have a direct effect on how many miles you get to the gallon. It can save you in everyday driving, but it really adds up when traveling longer distances. Check your car's manual for the correct pressure. Or, some cars have a sticker in the door well or glove box with that information.

* "In my house, we love straws. Because we're into recycling, we make sure to get the most out of each one. Keep a small jar at the sink, where we rinse straws before setting them in the jar to dry. Reuse at will." -- F.O. in Pennsylvania

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Fight over state of Georgia's voting system escalates ahead of upcoming November elections

By TY TAGAMI
Capitol Beat News Service

ATLANTA — The battle over voter confidence in Georgia's election machines flared up after the Legislature decided last month to keep them until 2028.

Weeks after lawmakers voted to postpone their prior ban on the machines' use of QR codes to tally results, the U.S. Department of Justice planned to surge into Atlanta with 260 FBI analysts. They were coming to help investigate the 2020 election, after the agency's January raid of the Fulton County election warehouse to seize more than half a million ballots.

And the Federal Emergency Management Agency threatened to withhold anti-terrorism funds from states that do not start moving toward hand-marked paper ballots.

But the Trump administration also suffered a serious setback in its efforts to expand the 2020 election probe of Fulton, the most populous county in Georgia and a Democratic bastion.

A federal judge in Atlanta denied the administration's demand for the personal information of thousands of Fulton election workers and volunteers.

The statute of limitations on any crimes in 2020 had long since expired, U.S. District Judge William M. Ray II ruled on July 7, denying the Justice Department's grand jury subpoena.

Disclosing addresses, phone numbers and other sensitive information "threatens to chill participation in future elections, which will surely impact Fulton County," the judge's order said.

Ray decided the administration's subpoena was unreasonable, calling it an "arbitrary fishing expedition."

Fulton Commissioner Dana Barrett said the ruling by a judge who was appointed by President Donald Trump should put the 2020 election to rest.

"The conspiracy theory that the election was stolen and there was wrongdoing, that needs to now recede to the corners of the internet where conspiracy theories live," Barrett said. "Go into the corner where the Jewish space lasers are and Area 51 and the JFK assassination."

Barrett, who ran unsuccessfully in the recent Democratic runoff for secretary of state, said the Justice Department, the State Election Board and the "election deniers of the world" were using fictions about 2020 to sow doubts about Fulton and its ability to run clean elections.

She said it was a pretext for intervention in the county elections operations in 2026 and 2028: "It's about trying to continue the narrative that Fulton County doesn't know how to run elections and therefore either take that ability completely away from the county and put it in the

hands of the MAGA-controlled state election board or put monitors in."

The election board establishes the rules by which elections operate. Four of its five members are Republicans, and several are critical of Georgia's electronic voting machines and of Secretary of State Brad Raffensperger, who selected the system.

This week, the board adopted two rules, one banning the use of optical character recognition to tally votes even though the state's election machines do not use that technology. The other rule would require that Raffensperger allow board members into his election center when county-level vote counts are aggregated on election night.

That rule passed even though Georgia Attorney General Chris Carr told the board it lacked legal authority to implement it, since Raffensperger was elected by voters.

The board also initiated a public comment process on a rule that would disqualify the current voting machines over privacy issues.

Salleigh Grubbs, the author, cited several concerns, including the "huge" displays on the machines.

Sara Tindall Ghazal, the lone Democrat, called it a ruse to force election officials to use the paper ballots they keep for power outages and other emergencies.

Board Chairman John Fervier, a Republican, expressed a similar suspicion. "This isn't just about ballot secrecy," said Fervier, who was appointed by Gov. Brian Kemp. "It's all part of a larger agenda to get to hand-marked paper ballots."

Fervier said that if the current machines were disqualified over secrecy concerns, it would cause "massive" problems for election officials, who are already busy recruiting and training poll workers on the current system. Local election leaders have repeatedly said they lack the time to switch systems before the general elections in November.

The measure passed, setting it on course for adoption.

Democrats have been dubious about the ongoing assault on Georgia's voting machines.

Two years ago, Republican lawmakers pushed through a ban on the use of QR codes to tally votes, which would have made Georgia's current system illegal effective July 1.

But they failed to approve and pay for an alternative system, so Kemp called them back to the Capitol last month to address the looming deadline.

They postponed the ban until 2028.

Just before the special session, Democratic lawmakers from across the South gathered in Atlanta to strategize ahead of the special session. With them was Rep. Carolyn Hugley, D-Columbus, the minority leader of the state House.

"The QR code is a manufactured issue to begin with because a certain person could not accept the fact that he did not win Georgia," Hugley said at that event, referring to Trump.

Raffensperger has consistently pushed back against his GOP critics, asserting that his machines are all but flawless.

This week, his office announced the results of a review of all 91 contests in last month's runoffs. The audit of all 1,111,856 ballot images found 23 discrepancies with hand-marked ballots and none with the digital voting machines.

"We run elections with nearly perfect accuracy, and we will never stop reminding the public their machines are accurate, their counts are accurate, and that elections in Georgia are accurate," Raffensperger said in a statement.

His office calculated that the hand-marked error rate would create about 3,500 discrepancies in a presidential election year with 5 million ballots cast.

The state Republican Party and many GOP lawmakers, dismiss such audits as window dressing, saying flaws in the system make errors difficult or impossible to detect.

The national fight over elections has taken a toll on voter confidence.

A PBS News/NPR/Marist poll in March found that two-thirds of Americans are confident in fair and accurate elections, down from 76% in late 2024.

Georgia GOP voters had a different take.

A survey in late April of likely Republican primary voters by the firm Cygnal had more than 78% expressing confidence that their votes would be counted fairly in 2026, with 28% "very" confident and more than 50% "somewhat" confident.

The poll was commissioned by the bipartisan Democracy Defense Project, which is trying to counter "false narratives about 'stolen elections'" that it blames on a "proliferation of politicians" who are trying to bolster their own campaigns.

The project's Georgia board members include former Democratic Gov. Roy Barnes and former Atlanta Mayor Shirley Franklin. On the Republican side are former U.S. Sen. Saxby Chambliss and former U.S. Rep. Drew Ferguson.

Ferguson and Franklin appeared at the DeKalb County elections center during the runoff last month to push back against doubters.

They pointed to record turnout in recent years.

"What we have found is 80% of voters on a bipartisan level feel very strongly that the elections are being run fairly and safely here in the state of Georgia," Ferguson said.

But the Democracy Defense Project's own polling indicates lingering suspicion.

The Courier Herald



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No one wants to see the AARP version of 'Grease'

Months before the curtain rose for “Annie” I was being asked if I had intended to try out for a part in this week’s “Grease.” My answer was a quick, “No!”

The only way I would think about it is if there was a part for Coach Vince Calhoun, who was played by the great Sid Caesar. That part has always been one of my favorites, especially when he ended his pep rally by saying, “And, after the slaughter is over, we’re gonna come back here and ring that victory bell. Like we always wanted to.”

Sadly, Coach Calhoun is not in the stage version, and neither will I. There is no role for a 50-something, bald-head man even if I was offered a wig. Eventually I told someone, “nobody wants to see the AARP version of “Grease.”

Not to mention I heard they have been cutting a rug for this production. Thankfully, I will be watching them do this from the comfort of my seat in the theater.

From last summer’s production of “Guys and Dolls,” to the November shows of “The Best Christmas Pageant Ever,” and last April’s “Annie,” I had been involved in many practices

and performances. In fact, I figured out that except for two months between May 2025 and April 2026, I was involved in a DCT production.

I enjoyed every minute of those productions, yes even those that were stressful and frustrating. Those moments helped prepare us for the future performances.

Even before DCT began in 2023, I had the opportunity to interview and write stories about Dublin Main Street Players, a group of people who enjoy putting on a variety of shows from drama to mystery. These shows were usually done in small settings, though they did do a few at Theatre Dublin.

In 2023, Glenda Berry, now the Theatre Director for the Downtown Development Authority, brought with her the idea of starting DCT. In my first interview with Berry when she was hired, she said, “Coming to downtown should be a special experience for people, and that’s what we want to do.”

By that summer DCT was taking its first steps with participants auditioning for “Bye Bye Birdie.” By late July, the show opened, and in my opinion, DCT has



By **PAYTON TOWNS III**

not looked back. Instead of not much going on at Theatre Dublin, now we can count on five if not six productions a year.

“The theatre was established, really in the hope that we could have a community theater that was going to reach a larger audience and involve more people,” Berry told me when I interviewed her for the “Bye Bye Birdie” preview.

Many people from not only our community, but the middle Georgia area, have shared their talents in a DCT production. This includes the bands, sound and light technicians and back-stage helpers.

Everyone doing their

part to put on a great show for the many who have continued to show up for the performances. There is something about watching these productions come together. Yes, at times it is stressful, but the ship always seems to right itself before opening night.

Along the way, the cast and crew you work with become a family. And as much as you are ready for the performances, there is some

sadness when the final bow comes in that last performance. After all, you have spent months putting in a lot of hours to memorize lines, learn choreography, and in the days leading up to opening night, where the props need to be for various scenes.

It comes together like magic. I’ve been in three DCT productions, and when I see former castmates out and about, it is always fun

to stop and chat about how they are doing and if they are in or plan to be in any upcoming shows.

For this week, Jill and I will take a seat in the audience to cheer on and enjoy “Grease.”

I know a lot of hard work has been put into it. We never know about our future acting roles, but for now, we will be spectators and root on our DCT family.

Break a leg!



LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Stop imagining, think. Free! Free! Free!
And when the free runs out, everyone will contribute according to his ability and will receive according to his need. Ah, so! Lenin’s socialist utopia, Lennón’s (John) “imaginary” world: “The brotherhood of man - no countries (borders), no religion, no possessions, no greed, no hunger, all the people sharing - imagine, it’s easy if you try.”
I agree!
It is easy to imagine in the beginning: All the peo-

ple sharing from a huge reservoir of resources taken from Musk, Bezos, LeBron, et al.
What is not so easy to imagine is all the people sharing when the reservoir runs dry. There will be trouble.
Some utopians will not give their fair share, and some will take more than their fair share! Thus comrades Mamdani, Bernie, AOC will need to give according to their ability: oversight.
There will be “compul-

sory sharing” - doublespeak for slavery. There will be a new version of ICE, inequality correction and eradication as once again the socialist brotherhood of man becomes a brotherhood of slaves subject to new masters.
As always, the socialist dream is smashed upon the Gibraltar of human nature. The socialist imagines man to be by nature good but corrupted by environment, capitalism for instance.
Ha!
Our Sunday school kids

know better than this: Adam and Eve sinned in paradise not a corrupt culture.
Uh, oh!
We have too few in Sunday school now. Small wonder that “no religion” is always a socialist plank. Come to think of it, however, it is not just Christians who know that man is not intrinsically good. So do all preschool teachers who’ve had two toddlers and one toy!
Don’t take my word for it - nor that of fat cat American socialists enjoying our freedoms and prosperi-

ty. Rather ask the folks in Cuba, Venezuela, China or Russia - folks who have experienced the real thing, not the imaginary kind.
America has proven to be the greatest nation of all time. She has provided the greatest freedoms, the greatest opportunity, the greatest wealth - far outstripping all others.
She has better tamed/ chained the monster of human nature than all others in spite of some serious inconsistencies and failures. We continue to work toward

a more perfect union.
But as great, as powerful as America is, she sits upon a precarious pinnacle - the rising generation!
God forbid that we, the current generation, fail to train up our children theologically and historically that they might resist the seduction of the socialist dream!
We are getting dangerously close!

*Tony Price
Dublin, Ga.*

TELL IT!



CALL 272-0375, EMAIL CHTELLIT@GMAIL.COM, OR TELL IT! AT COURIERHERALDTODAY.COM

Recently there were interviews on TV35 of those who graduated from local high schools and came back to Dublin to live. Mind you a small few. Why do most not return: the lack of vision and employment.

It sure would be nice if The Courier Herald would have a delivery service again. We get ours through the Dudley mail service now. It’s usually 7 p.m. when the mail is delivered, which is poor, poor customer service.

Now that The Courier Herald has USPS delivery service will this organization please remove these boxes and poles from all over Lauren’s County please!

City Code Enforcement should require the store next to Chick-fil-A to clean up. Everyone in the drive-thru sees it, and it reflects poorly on Dublin. Clean up this mess.

A divided system limits us—a unified Dublin—

Laurens unlocks potential, strengthens leadership and builds momentum for generations. Talk to your commissioners about consolidation. It’s a must.

Consolidation is not just about saving money—it is about building one identity, one direction and one future for everyone who calls the community home. Talk to your commissioners about consolidation.

Ever since my little 13-year-old dog passed three days ago, I have been wondering why are their lives so short? Is it because we are put on this earth to learn how to love? And unlike us humans, they get it so quick, so complete, so unconditional that they are out of here.

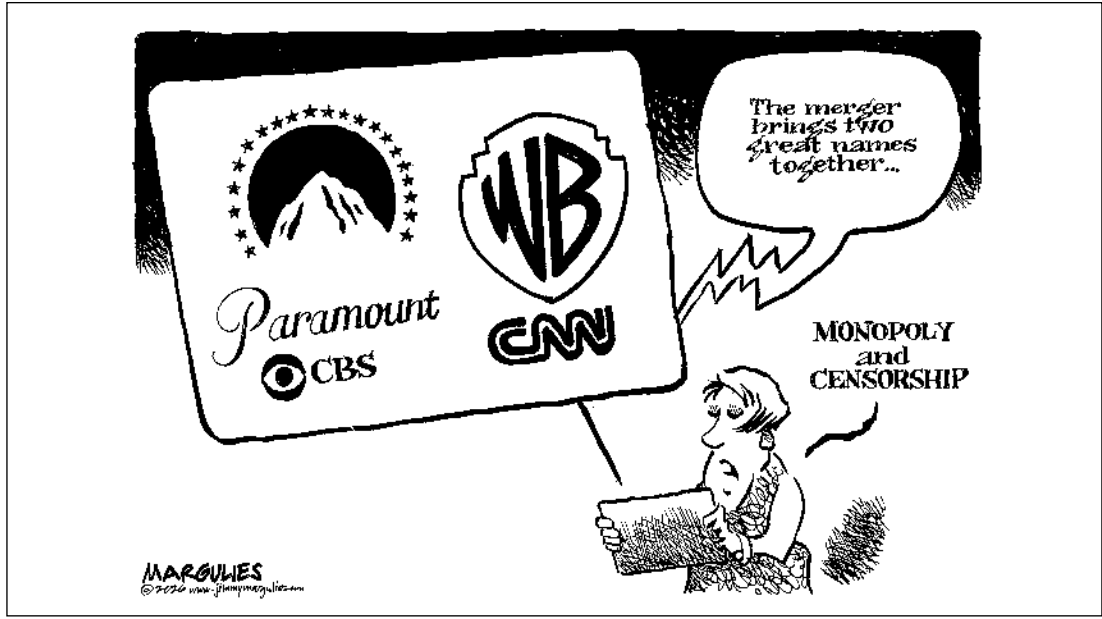
The Dublin City Schools has let the system play out far too long. The taxpayers that pay taxes are the ones that are complaining. There are so many people out there who do not pay taxes.

I’m confused. It’s 2026. Dublin City Schools has just now addressed gross fiscal, possibly criminal mismanagement discovered three years ago. The Dublin City Board of Education approved a corrective action plan last week to address findings in its 2023 audit to include tighter controls on finances, personnel records and credit card usage...” After internal audits, independent audits, two state audits and an ongoing GBI audit, the board is just now, three years after the fact, approving a corrective action plan. It took them three years to decide on a corrective action plan? I suppose it will take another three years to implement this plan?

TELL IT! GUIDELINES

Have something to say about life in Dublin and Laurens County? We want to hear it. Tell It is a space for community voices: praise, frustration, questions, and everything in between.

- SUBMISSION GUIDELINES
- Keep it local. Submissions should focus on issues, people, and places in Dublin and Laurens County. We are not the right venue for commentary on national politics or public figures outside our community.
 - Be civil. Personal attacks, profanity, and hate speech will not be published. Criticism is welcome; name-calling is not.
 - Stick to the facts. Submissions must not contain false statements of fact about identifiable individuals or organizations. We cannot publish content that is defamatory or exposes the Courier Herald to legal liability.
 - The Courier Herald reserves the right to edit submissions for length and clarity, and to decline any submission at its sole discretion. Submission does not guarantee publication.



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LOCAL MATTERS



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This newspaper is committed to the idea that the press should tell the truth without prejudice and spread knowledge without malicious intent.

THOUGHT FOR TODAY...

"I never plan tomorrow because I don't even know what I'm doing today."
- Coco Rocha

DAILY SCRIPTURE...

"The Spirit then lifted me up and took me away, and I went in bitterness and in the anger of my spirit, with the strong hand of the Lord on me."
- Ezekiel 3:14

EVERY DAY'S A HOLIDAY...

July 14, 2026 is...

- Shark Awareness Day
- National Tape Measure Day
- Pandemonium Day
- National Mac and Cheese Day
- Cow Appreciation Day
- Bastille Day

Legislative panel to confront Georgia's 'broken' post-conviction system

By MAYA HOMAN
Georgia Recorder

A legislative study committee aimed at improving the appeals process for those convicted of crimes in Georgia will hold its first meeting Friday to address a system that Georgia Supreme Court Chief Justice Nels Peterson labeled “broken” and “a mess” in an opinion issued earlier this year.

The case centered around Joshua Sanders, an Alabama man who was convicted in 2023 of killing two Georgia women in Vidalia. The day after he was sentenced, he filed a motion for a new trial, which was later denied. In an appeal to that denial, he claimed that his court-appointed lawyers were ineffective during his trial, and that the lawyers who filed the appeal did not mention his ineffective counsel claims when requesting a new trial.

Joshua B. Smith, Sanders’ current attorney, argued that his client’s claim of ineffective counsel fulfilled a two-prong requirement that the legal representation be deficient and that the deficiency alter the outcome of the case. The trial court attorney, he said, failed to properly shape his client’s narrative, leading him to reveal incriminating information about his drug use and plans to start an escort business to the jury.

“All competent lawyers know to avoid asking their clients questions on the stand that would paint them as pimps or drug dealers, and do nothing to add or support any potential defense,” Smith wrote in a brief filed with the Georgia Supreme Court.



Legislators convened at the Nathan Deal Judicial Center to address Georgia’s post-conviction landscape, which Supreme Court Chief Justice Nels Peterson labeled “broken” and “a mess” in an opinion issued earlier this year/**JOHN MCCOSH, Georgia Recorder**

But briefs filed by both the Georgia attorney general’s office and the Middle Judicial Circuit district attorney’s office dispute Smith’s claims, arguing that the claim of ineffective counsel would not have prevented Sanders’ conviction and didn’t follow proper procedure that requires such claims to be raised during the motion for the new trial.

Sanders “has not shown that

there would be a reasonable probability of a different outcome at trial if this testimony had been curtailed,” the attorney general’s office wrote in their brief.

The state Supreme Court ultimately upheld the conviction in an unanimous decision released in March. But in a concurring opinion, Peterson wrote that the case highlights a much broader set of problems within the state’s legal

system. Most states allow ineffective trial claims to be filed through a habeas corpus petition, which can be filed even after a defendant has exhausted all other options for appealing their case.

The fact that Georgia requires ineffective counsel claims to be raised during the motion for a new trial, Peterson argued, makes the state an “outlier,” bogging down the system and ultimately increas-

ing costs for both district attorneys and public defenders.

“No rational person would have chosen the system we have today if presented with it as a whole,” Peterson said in his opinion. Improving the system unilaterally “far exceeds the judicial power,” he added, calling on the Legislature to address the issues.

“In short, the system is broken. We did a lot of the breaking. But it will require legislative action to fix it,” Peterson wrote.

Rep. Scott Holcomb, a lawyer and Atlanta Democrat on the committee, said he expects legislators to examine how other states handle claims of ineffective counsel, and possibly work to “decouple” such claims from requests for a new trial.

For trial court lawyers who are legitimately inadequate, Holcomb said, “that person is not going to say ‘I didn’t do my job and I was ineffective.’ So you have to bring in different lawyers to do that, which then slows down the system because that person has to get completely up to speed.”

According to Holcomb, separating those two processes will likely have bipartisan support. But the question of how to provide legal representation to allow defendants to file habeas petitions “is going to be a little bit more complicated, and there will be some potential costs to the state,” Holcomb said.

The committee is scheduled to meet Friday afternoon at the Nathan Deal Judicial Center, which is home to the Georgia Supreme Court, in Atlanta.

Ron Daniels receives award from State Bar

By LOGAN REYNOLDS
GTLN

Ron Daniels, the official attorney for the Montgomery County Board of Commissioners and a number of other Georgia local authorities, received the Ross Adams Award from the Young Lawyers division of the State Bar of Georgia’s 2026 annual meeting.

The Ross Adams Award is the second highest honor he can receive as a Georgia lawyer, Daniels said, right after the Lifetime Achievement Award, which he said he is far too young to receive.

“It really is the penultimate award a young lawyer – a former Young Lawyer division president – can receive other than the Lifetime Achievement from the State Bar of Georgia, and I obviously am nowhere near the point in my life where I should be getting a lifetime achievement award,” he said. “So, it’s pretty much the highest honor I could get.”

Daniels served as the 76th president of the Young Lawyers division from 2022 to 2023, where he had to make the decision on who would receive the Ross Adams award. He described the process as “grueling” as he was unsure who to pick, eventually settling on John C. Sammon.

“It’s hard for me to imagine myself getting this award, and I hope that as much as people think I earned it, that I actually do all those things, and keep doing them and keep earning it,” said Daniels. “Because, I don’t think it’s just something you go put on a shelf. I think it’s a commitment to this is what you’ve done, and this is what you’re going to keep doing.”

Daniels was not originally committed to becoming a lawyer. He likened his early career ambitions to his young daughter who, when asked what she would like to be when she grows up, answers “a pirate astronaut.”

“The closest thing I had to... any experience with lawyers was watching Matlock with my grandparents during the summer,” said Daniels.

Daniel’s version of the pirate astronaut became a desire to be a history teacher as he became the first in his family to go to college. He began considering law school at the suggestion of some friends, and eventually found himself in a business law course while attending Georgia Southwestern State University in Americus.

“I enjoyed it, and I asked [the professor] if I could come intern with him for a semester and get class credit for it, and he agreed to,” said Daniels.

The jury trials and municipal work he assisted with during his internship spurred Daniels to apply for law school. He graduated in May 2012, took the bar exam in July and received his results in October.

Daniels began his work representing government authorities with the Heart of Georgia Regional Airport Authority in Eastman, assisting the authority during a transition period. Through his work in Eastman, he caught the attention of the Perry-Houston County Airport Authority and eventually local governments.

Today, Daniels represents several local government authorities, including Montgomery County, Telfair County, the Eastman-Dodge County Development Authority, the Heart of Georgia Regional Airport Authority, the city of Ryan, the city of Milan and the Perry-Houston County Airport Authority. He also represents the seven Department of Corrections facilities in the local circuit, as well as the circuits division of child support services.

“I have a fun calendar,” said Daniels.

In Montgomery County, Daniels serves as the appointed attorney for the Montgomery County Board of Commissioners. In addition to representing the board and other Montgomery County departments in court, he also provides them with legal advice during government meetings, as well as enforcing parliamentary procedure.

“It’s to, if they have legal questions during the meeting, to opine about those things and give them an opinion,” said Daniels.

During most Montgomery County Board of Commis-



As representative for several local government agencies and authorities, Ron Daniels maintains an organized schedule to properly serve his many clients. "It is a lot of being very structured and organized on the front end," said Daniels. "It keeps me where I'm supposed to be." /**LOGAN REYNOLDS**

sioners meetings, Daniels sits alongside the board members, ready to provide legal counsel when called upon or when the topic calls for a legal expert.

For many questions, Daniels already has an answer at hand, such as whether or not the board can implement an ordinance mandating residents only own a green car (according to Daniels, the answer is no). He also has access to his laptop during meetings in order to research any issues which he may not know.

“Sometimes you get questions that you have to go look, and I’m always somewhat careful about that, just because sometimes you are surprised with what’s out there, what you can and cannot do,” said Daniels.

Another one of Daniel’s responsibilities as county attorney is to assist in drafting local ordinances and other legislative documents. When working on these documents, Daniels attempts to research similar legislation in Georgia to guide his drafting process.

“There’s a lot of research that goes into that just right out of the gate, because what I have found in 14 years of practicing law is that somebody most likely has done it before, and there’s some benefit to that because you see what works and you see what doesn’t work,” said Daniels.

He also makes an effort to anticipate what his clients – the board – will want in a particular ordinance and incorporate those desires into the document as best he can. For example, when the board discussed a potential land use ordinance regarding data centers on July 9, Daniels preemptively incorporated a suggestion from Commissioner Leland Adams into the ordinance draft, as he knew the board members would likely ask for its inclusion.

He also tries to future-proof ordinances in order to avoid amendments due to changes and oversights, since “if you do it right the first time, you shouldn’t need to go fiddle with it a thousand times.” Although, he admits not every problem can be foreseen in advance.

“Ronnie Piper had a quote when he was doing his proms, [it’s], ‘Just when they think they have all the answers, I change all the questions,’” said Daniels. “I think that’s very true about life.”

Spotted lanternflies inching closer to crops

By ELLIE FIVAS
Georgia Recorder

These invasive insects may not be a familiar sight yet, but researchers predict the spotted lanternfly population in Georgia will continue to increase in the coming years, which could spell trouble for the state’s fruit crops.

Elizabeth McCarty, an associate professor at the University of Georgia who studies invasive insects, said the spotted lanternflies thrive while feeding on trees of heaven, a fast-growing and highly invasive tree in Georgia. She emphasized the importance of tracking the growing spotted lanternfly population.

The invasive insect was first seen in Georgia in 2024 but has so far only been observed near Atlanta.

“Right now, it’s monitoring the population and looking for it,” she said. “Some agencies have monitoring programs where they’re looking for it in areas that are higher risk, closer to Atlanta. And so far, they have not found it outside the Atlanta area.”

But McCarty said the species’ confinement is likely to change based on its migration patterns in northern states.

Spotted lanternflies first arrived in the United States in 2014, but have rapidly spread from their initial sighting in Pennsylvania across much of the East Coast. Fulton County is the farthest south that the insects have been detected, according to an online mapping tool developed by UGA’s Center for Invasive Species and Ecosystem Health.

In June, the online map system reported 28 spotted lanternfly sightings in Fulton County, all verified by an expert.

“It seems that it’s most problematic on grapes,” McCarty said. “That’s the industry we expect to be most directly impacted, but it will also feed on things like peaches and plums, and potentially affect those crops as well.”

When you see a spotted lanternfly, McCarty and other invasive species experts encourage Georgians to smash the insects and report them.

A growing spotted lanternfly population threatens one of the Peach State’s top industries: agriculture, which brings in more than \$70 billion annually. For farmers across Georgia, early detection of the invasive insects will be key, according to McCarty.

State Rep. Robert Dickey, who owns a peach and timber farm in Musella, said he’s aware of the risk that spotted lanternflies may pose to Georgia farmers.

“It will always be another pest to have to control during the growing season, and so it will be expensive and potentially an economic drain,” Dickey said.

But Dickey was optimistic, saying he thinks Georgia farmers are “resilient” and will be able to face spotted lanternflies along with other insects, disease and weather. He noted the importance of implementing both short-term prevention and long-term eradication programs, adding that UGA’s invasive species center has already started working on those efforts.

The Georgia Department of Agriculture advises people to follow the same prevention protocols that McCarty recommends when they spot the invasive insects: take a photo, smash the bug and report the sighting to the Georgia Invasive Species Task Force’s online tool.

“As time goes on, we are seeing the known population area expand,” McCarty said. “That’s where public education is important.”

PEARLS BEFORE SWINE

I WANT TO DO THIS THING, BUT I DON'T KNOW WHAT OTHER PEOPLE WILL THINK.

DO YOU WANT THE GOOD NEWS OR THE BAD NEWS FIRST?

THE GOOD NEWS.

I PROMISE NO ONE ELSE IS THINKING ABOUT YOU.

WHAT'S THE BAD NEWS?

I PROMISE NO ONE ELSE IS THINKING ABOUT YOU.

I DON'T KNOW WHETHER TO BE SAD OR COMFORTED.

GARFIELD

I SEE YOU CLEANED YOUR PLATE.

UH-HUH.

AND MINE!

CORRECTO MUNDO.

WHY?!

READ MY LIPS. YOU...PUT...FOOD...ON...THEM.

OVERBOARD

I HEAR YOU ALL..

..AND WE'LL BE BACK TOMORROW, AND I WILL FIND YOU ALL!

WOW, I LOST A LOT OF BALLS TODAY, LOUIE.

YA THINK?

DEFLOCKED

CUSTOMER SERVICE IS SO ADVANCED THESE DAYS.

WITH AI, THEY CAN NOW RECOGNIZE YOUR PHONE NUMBER AND CUSTOMIZE THE MUSIC YOU HEAR WHILE ON HOLD.

...STILL CRAZY AFTER ALL THESE YEARS. OH, STILL CRAZY AFTER ALL THESE YEARS.

WHO WERE YOU CALLING?

MY THERAPIST.

ZIGGY

...ALL STEREOTYPING ASIDE, I'M GLUTEN-INTOLERANT!

PLUGGERS

OW.

Thanks to Warren Smith, Denver, Colorado

For a plugger, the spring in his step has become a hitch in his git-along.

THE Daily Commuter Puzzle by Stella Zawistowski

- ACROSS**

1 Iridescent gem

5 Big gulp

9 "That's not what ___": 2 wds.

14 Actress Shawkat

15 Prom vehicle

16 Opposite of "sur" in Spanish

17 Jolly Rancher, e.g.: 2 wds.

19 Aroma

20 Remove from office

21 Shohei Ohtani's sport

23 Rapper Dr. ___

24 Screw up

25 Stayed out of sight

28 Educated guesses

33 Come up

35 Messenger molecule: Abbr.

36 Crash into

38 Opposite of major

39 Boxer Laila

40 Ethical

42 "Wait one ___!"

43 Dispensable sweet treat

44 In reserve

45 Calamitous events

49 Ready to go

50 One or more

51 Bank convenience: Abbr.

53 Aircraft with two pairs of wings

58 Horse sounds

62 Eye surgery

63 Sydney's country

65 Banded mineral

66 Steadfast

67 Group of shops

68 Bits of dust

69 Put in the mail

70 Doing nothing
- DOWN**

1 Waikiki's island

2 "What's the ___, Stan?"

3 Runs on TV

4 Filled a cargo hold

5 Lists of candidates

6 Victory

7 Film lover's site: Abbr.

8 Canned-beans brand

9 Enclosure

10 Mexican hats

11 Scope of activity

12 "___ all work out"

13 PC manufacturer

18 Professional calling

22 Chicken of the ___

25 ___ and eggs

26 Colored eye part

27 Ate out

29 Ensnared

30 Arm of the sea

31 Color of corn

32 Indian garments

34 Regular partygoer

37 Created

40 Virtuoso

41 "___ bygoness be bygoness"

46 Serpents

47 Author Rand

48 Loudly complained

52 Florida city

53 Explosive sound

54 "Othello" villain

55 High school jr.'s exam: Abbr.

56 Consumes

57 Certain

59 "I'm ___ to help!"

60 Actor Jonah

61 Discount event

64 Our star

In-Law's Sunny Comments Get on Woman's Nerves!



DEAR ABBY

By ABIGAIL VAN BUREN

DEAR ABBY: My husband and I have four children, two of whom have congenital health issues we've been managing. One child is leading a "normal" life and is a spunky little kid. Our other child may be more impacted down the road, and we continue to seek answers. If people ask how either one of them is doing, we are open to sharing. Depending on how close we are to family or friends, we may share a bit more or a bit fewer of the details. It's an approach that has been working, and in return, we mostly receive supportive feedback.

The issue is that my father-in-law always has a comment to make. I am sure he means well, but he tends to give responses like, "Oh, that's probably nothing," "Well, she looks fine to me," or "One day, this will all be behind you." It gets under my skin. His responses are either dismissive of our concerns or they downplay the extent of the illness, especially when it's related to the underlying health concerns.

I always bite my tongue. With our more impacted child, I have been hesitant to share anything because I don't want to hear his comments. The matter is serious from what we know right now, and my husband did share some of it with his parents because he felt

your exploding upon hearing what may be his attempt to be supportive.

DEAR ABBY: I am writing for your help in bringing attention to a disability issue I find unacceptable. I am partially deaf. I use closed captions on televisions and online. However, I am increasingly frustrated that televisions in public places like hospitals, doctors' waiting rooms, restaurants, etc., never have closed captions activated. Public places are required to have disability parking, so why can't my disability be accommodated? I'm hoping you can make these public places aware of this simple accommodation for the hearing-impaired public. -- CINCINNATI CC ADVOCATE

DEARCCADVOCATE: In many regions and many businesses, it is the norm to mute the volume and turn on the captions for the comfort of everyone. Often, the television chatter is an unwelcome distraction, or, in a more social space, it would be impossible to hear the audio even if you wanted to.

For those who haven't caught on that this is the practical way to go, I'm happy to spread the word. In public areas, television programs are better seen than heard!

DEAR DIL: Your father-in-law may be attempting to put a positive spin on a difficult subject when he downplays the problems your child is facing. The way to deal with this would be to gather your thoughts and have an honest conversation with him about how it makes you feel. If you do, there is less likelihood of

GOREN BRIDGE

WITH BOB JONES

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WEEKLY BRIDGE QUIZ ANSWERS

Q 1 - North-South vulnerable, as South, you hold:
♠ K Q ♠ J 9 ♣ Q 8 3 ♣ 9 7 5 4 3

With the opponents' silent, North opens 1D. What call would you make?

A - You have the requisite 10 points and five-card suit for a 2C bid, but that strikes us as a poor choice with such a weak suit. We prefer 1NT.

Q 2 - Neither vulnerable, as South, you hold:
♠ A K Q J 9 4 ♠ J ♠ K J 10 7 ♠ K 6

SOUTH WEST NORTH EAST
1♠ Pass 2♣ Pass 3♠ Pass 4♠ Pass

What call would you make?

A - A suit of this quality doesn't need support from partner. Bid 4NT. Blackwood, and then bid the appropriate number of spades — 5S if he shows one ace and 6S if he shows two. Should he have no aces, submit your request for the title of "Unluckiest Man in the World." There is a long waiting list.

Q 3 - East-West vulnerable, as South, you hold:
♠ K J 10 8 ♠ A K 10 9 5 2 ♠ 4 ♠ A 7

EAST SOUTH WEST NORTH
1♠ 1♥ 2♦ 3♣

What call would you make?

A - We have getting pushed around like this, but this hand has too much potential to sell out just yet. Bid 3H.

Q 4 - Both vulnerable, as South, you hold:
♠ A 8 3 ♠ K 10 3 2 ♠ A K 9 8 ♠ A 10

SOUTH WEST NORTH EAST
1♠ Pass 1♥ Pass 1♥ Pass 1♥ Pass

What call would you make?

A - This hand, with all its' values in prime cards, can easily be valued at 20 points. Bid 4H.

Q 5 - East-West vulnerable, as South, you hold:
♠ A 10 9 5 2 ♠ A 4 ♠ K J 5 ♠ K 10 4

As dealer, what call would you make?

A - There has been much discussion over the years about opening 1NT with a 5-card major. There are pluses and minuses both ways, but there are no re-bids to show 15-17 points. You only have one chance to show a balanced hand in that range. We like 1NT.

Q 6 - Neither vulnerable, as South, you hold:
♠ 7 ♠ K 6 5 3 ♠ A K 9 8 ♠ K 10 9 5

Right-hand opponent deals and opens 1D. What call would you make?

A - This would be a mandatory opening bid, but it is usually right to pass with hands like this after an opponent opens. No 5-card suit and no spade support for a takeout double. Pass.

(Bob Jones welcomes readers' responses sent to Tribune Content Agency, LLC., 16650 Westgrove Dr., Suite 175, Addison, TX 75001.)

SUDOKU

Fun By The Numbers

Like puzzles? Then you'll love sudoku. This mind-bending puzzle will have you hooked from the moment you square off, so sharpen your pencil and put your sudoku savvy to the test!

Level: Beginner

Here's How It Works:

Sudoku puzzles are formatted as a 9x9 grid, broken down into nine 3x3 boxes. To solve a sudoku, the numbers 1 through 9 must fill each row, column and box. Each number can appear only once in each row, column and box. You can figure out the order in which the numbers will appear by using the numeric clues already provided in the boxes. The more numbers you name, the easier it gets to solve the puzzle!

ANSWER:

For school districts, the financial party is over after years of flush spending

By JEFF AMY
Georgia Recorder

After years of spending rapidly increasing revenues on new programs and pay increases, many of Georgia's school districts are beginning to tighten their belts.

Most of the state's 180 traditional K-12 public school districts have set spending plans for the budget year that began July 1. While a few are still giving pay raises, others are eliminating vacant positions as enrollment falls and property tax growth flattens. Many districts are dipping into savings accounts that ballooned during the pandemic to avoid spending cuts, at least for one more year.

What's happening isn't a financial crisis, like the aftermath of the Great Recession, when Georgia school districts laid off thousands of teachers and imposed pay cuts on many more. Districts are avoiding raising property tax rates amid voter discontent over tax bills. But there's a definite shift in the wind, with contraction on the horizon, as student numbers shrink and Republicans clamor for property tax cuts.

"We're at the point where things are about to shift," said Valdosta Superintendent Craig Lockhart.

Thanks to increases in state spending, growth in property values and a deluge of pandemic-era federal aid, Georgia's school systems saw big growth in recent years.

Total revenue and spending both rose by almost 50% from 2018 to 2024, according to data from the Georgia Department of Audit and Accounts. Districts rolled up big savings accounts, with unassigned fund balances jumping from \$2.4 billion statewide in 2019 to \$5.2 billion in 2024.

Schools boosted pay. The average Georgia teacher made \$67,641 in 2024, according to the Southern Regional Education Board, up from \$56,329 in 2018, although that increase fell be-

hind the rate of inflation.

Districts also hired more. From 2019 to 2025, schools statewide hired the equivalent of 18,000 more full-time employees, boosting headcount by 8% even as enrollment fell 1%, according to the Edunomics Lab at Georgetown University.

"They weren't only piling the money up, they were adding staff in a lot of cases," said Kyle Wingfield, president and CEO of the Georgia Public Policy Foundation, a free-market think tank.

But during budget discussions in May and June, many district leaders said the party's over.

"There will be hurdles that we have to overcome from a revenue standpoint, especially to maintain our current educational service level," Coweta County Superintendent Evan Horton told school board members May 18.

The 23,000-student district eliminated teaching positions, mostly in high schools, administrators said.

"Through attrition, we're reducing 47 teaching positions. No one is losing a job," Assistant Superintendent Keith Chapman told Coweta board members.

A number of districts are balancing budgets by dipping into reserves. The Georgia Recorder found that six of Georgia's 10 largest school districts plan to spend down accumulated cash this year, using \$175 million in savings overall.

Some withdrawals are small – Cobb County plans to spend \$6 million, an amount that frugal spending or higher-than-expected property tax collections could make up. But Fulton County plans to spend \$57 million of its \$269 million fund balance. The district with 85,000 students says it's using its savings as a cushion while it whittles down expenses to a sustainable level over multiple years.

Some reductions could be painful. Fulton County's budget includes a furlough day next May, cutting pay for all employees by one day. Districts relied heavily on furloughs to save money

during the recession.

The furlough day may not happen. Fulton County also proposed a one-day furlough in the just-ended budget, but found enough money to pay employees for their full contracts. But Chief Financial Officer Marvin Dereef said he couldn't remember when Fulton last furloughed employees. "I guess it has been a very long time," he said.

Some districts are still spending. Cherokee County plans a 3% pay raise. Atlanta is giving a 1% pay raise and plans to cut its property tax rate. But most districts fear revenue constrained by limits on property taxes and declining enrollment, while insurance and pension costs keep rising.

Enrollment in Georgia peaked at 1.77 million students in 2019, never fully recovered after the pandemic, and has been falling since 2023, driven mostly by fewer children being born. State aid is generally sent to districts on a per-student basis, so fewer students means less state money.

"The new reality for most of these districts is going to be declining enrollment," Wingfield said.

Districts could turn to local taxes for more revenue, but angry taxpayers and Republican lawmakers are limiting their taxing power. Gov. Brian Kemp signed a law in May that caps property tax assessments at the rate of inflation, meaning districts won't benefit as much from collecting the same tax rate on rising property values. The 2026 law came after most districts opted out of an earlier cap passed by voters in 2024.

Some districts are already hitting limits on property tax collections. Fulton County has been under a local assessment cap, and after lawmakers approved additional senior citizen exemptions, the district expects property tax revenue to fall from \$856 million to \$830 million. In 40,000-student Cherokee County, district officials say that 30% of total property value is now exempt from taxation.

DUBLIN SCHOOLS
Continued from page 1

would end of the current fiscal year with a \$13.4 million deficit. The district has significantly cut spending – which included mid-year terminations of several dozen teachers and other staffers – but still owes the state about \$5 million in overdue payments to the State Health Benefit Plan.

Here is the complete statement issued Friday the school board:

"As the community is aware, the Board of Education has spent a great deal of time, effort, and energy searching for a superintendent to lead this District. On June 17, 2026, the Board named Dr. DeMarco Holland as the sole finalist for the position because we believed he was the right person to pilot the District at this critical juncture and for many years to come.

While that sentiment has not changed, the Board has been unable to reach an agreement with Dr. Holland for a compensation package that is tolerable for the Board and respectful to the District's current financial situation. While the Board and Dr. Holland recognized that he would necessarily experience a salary reduction to become Superintendent of Dublin City Schools, it ultimately became apparent that any potential agreement would pose too great of a sacrifice for either Dr. Holland or the Board of Education. As a result, Dr. Holland was notified earlier today that the Board was concluding the superintendent search process and regretted being unable to reach an agreement.

Recognizing and accepting this outcome of the superintendent search process has been painfully difficult. But at the end of the day, Board members collectively could not justifiably expend an amount of the District's extremely fi-

nite funds that would have been necessary to reach an agreement. More importantly, the Board could not expect the community to accept such an expenditure.

The Board does not fault Dr. Holland for this outcome in any way, and wishes him the best in his future endeavors. While we were ultimately not able to reach an agreement for him to lead Dublin City Schools, we believe that he will likely be seen leading another school district to success in the very near future.

As for the immediate administrative leadership of Dublin City Schools, the Board does not want to hastily rush into determining future plans for such an important matter. The Board intends to extend Interim Superintendent Marcee Pool's contract in that position through July 31, 2026, and over the next few weeks will work to develop a plan to move forward."

The board also made other personnel changes, including a principal, Neshika Coney Devine, for the new Irish Gifted Academy Magent School.

- Resignations: Chelsea Maddox, administrative assistant, Dublin High; Aylin Delgado, paraprofessional, Irish Gifted Academy
- New hires: Jarad Neasman, director of transportation, bus shop; Danielle Shenk, nurse, Dublin Middle; Tameco Pauldo-May, academic coach, Susie Dasher Elementary; Betty Corbitt, contracted services, Central Office; Joyce Davis, contracted services, Central Office; Neshika Coney Devine, principal, IGA Magnet School; Dimtra Veal, teacher, Dublin Middle; Susan Thornton, teacher, Dublin High; Maritza O'Neal, SPED administrative assistant, Central Office

STUFF THE BUS
Continued from page 1

The last time this even was held at Walmart, The Salvation Army was able to collect approximately 2,000 school supplies. Every notebook, pencil, backpack and even a pack of paper would help a student start the

school year off on the right step, she said.

"If everyone donated just a pack of paper, just think about how many stacks of paper we would have," Todd said.

Those wishing to participate can take a list and purchase as many school supplies as they would like and

drop them in the bin on the way out of the store. They can also donate money and specifically say it is for the Stuff the Bus campaign.

"If they do that, we'll go out and purchase the items," Todd said. "Whatever people can do will go a long way in helping the students. You think many are able to go to

school prepared, but then you will be surprised how many do not have anything."

If people do not participate in this weekend's event, they can drop off new school supplies or a donation at the local Dublin Salvation Army, 2378 Highway 80.

For more information, call (478) 275-7336.

HIT-AND-RUN
Continued from page 1

too fast for conditions.

Dublin District Attorney Harold McLendon said Brown had two DUIs in Dodge County in February of 2025 and one in Laurens County before the events of March 2025. The state produced a victim statement from Cain's mother and a friend.

"I lost a daughter," her mother said. "There are no words. She no longer has a voice. She deserves to be here to watch her children grow."

Her friend said Brown made a choice to drink and drive.

"He drank and left her on the side of the road," she said. "Christy was more than a victim. Please send a message that this will not be allowed."

Public defender Jack Dixon agreed that the incident was a bad situation.

"I know he is extremely remorseful," Dixon said. "He would like to very badly take the time back."

Brown was given a chance to speak, informing Cain's family that he is aware that he caused her death and their pain.

"I was in a dark place and let demons take control," Brown said. "I ask God for forgiveness and hope you

can forgive me."

Dixon asked for his client to be sentenced to eight years. McLendon disagreed.

"He has repeatedly driven under influence," the DA said.

The Georgia State Patrol's Specialized Collision Reconstruction Team investigated the incident that happened on Ben Hall Lake Drive.

According to a GSP motor vehicle crash report, Brown was driving a Toyota Camry north along the road, negotiating a left curve. The vehicle failed to maintain its lane and entered the east shoulder with its passenger side and struck Cain, who was walking along the shoulder of the road.

After hitting the pedestrian, the Toyota failed to stop at the scene.

"Her brother was on the porch and saw this happen," McLendon said. "(Brown) went home and covered up the car. He believed he got away with it. He said he hit a deer. He did not hit a deer. The GSP was able to get evidence out of the grill of the car and it matched the victim.

"Some (vehicle homicides) are so egregious that you have to do something," he added. "This shows how serious I think this was. If you are going to drink, don't drive."

FATAL WRECK
Continued from page 1

on the east shoulder for about 47 feet.

The trailer overturned and came to an uncontrolled final stop. The Chevrolet went approximately 34 feet overturned, with the back of the vehicle striking a tree. The truck came to an

uncontrolled stop, about 24 feet from the road.

No other vehicle was involved in the incident.

Rawlings was pronounced dead a the scene at 3:38 p.m. by Laurens County Deputy Coroner Alfred Pearson.

"It is a sad situation," said Coroner Richard Stanley.

Dublin community Theatre



GREASE

JULY 16-19, 2026

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July 17 - 7 PM

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to reserve seats & pay at door.



KIDS' CORNER

Vol. 019 | Join Herald the Hound every Tuesday on Kids' Corner from [The Courier Herald](#)



Puzzles4Kids

by Helene Hovanec

CODED RIDDLE

Change each letter to the one that comes immediately BEFORE it in the alphabet to find a riddle and its answer.

Here's a copy of the alphabet to guide you:

A B C D E F G H I J K L M N O P Q R S T U V W X Y Z

X I Z B S F T X J N N F S T H P P E

B U T D I P P M Q S P K F D U T ?

HERALD'S COLORING CHALLENGE

Herald the Hound has returned with a new coloring challenge! Color the illustration above and send your artwork to read@courierheraldtoday.com. It just may be featured in a future edition of Kids' Corner!

MINI SUDOKU

		6			
			4	1	
4	6		1		
6		3	5		
	5			3	

Place a number in the empty boxes in such a way that each row across, each column down and each small 6-box square contains all of the numbers from one to six.

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ANSWER KEYS

MINI SUDOKU ANSWERS

5	6	4	3	2	1
2	1	6	5	4	3
3	4	1	2	5	6
6	5	1	3	4	2
4	2	3	6	1	5
1	3	5	4	6	2

Puzzles4Kids Answer

Why are swimmers good at school projects?
They dive right in.



TEACHERS AND STUDENTS

Teachers, do you want us to visit your classroom next school year? Students, do you have artwork, poems or stories you want to submit for possible publication? Email us at read@courierheraldtoday.com.