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## NEWS RELEASE

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### **Tucker Elementary ~ Leader in Me Lighthouse School of Academic Distinction**



HOUSTON COUNTY, GA – Tucker Elementary School has been honored as a 2017 *Leader in Me Lighthouse School of Academic Distinction*. Tucker earned Lighthouse School status in 2012. At that time, they were the first school in Georgia and the 21<sup>st</sup> in the world to earn this status. 2018 is the first year the school has received this additional honor due to the school's academic success. The recognition ceremony was held at the Leadership Symposium on Feb. 1 in Macon at the Middle Georgia State University Conference Center.

This academic distinction award was created to recognize Leader in Me Schools that meet both the rigorous requirements necessary to achieve and maintain Lighthouse School Certification and that have shown exemplary academic growth as measured by state accountability standards. In one year, Tucker Elementary's College and Career Readiness Performance Index (CCRPI) score increased from 63.9 to 82.5 percent. This is the highest gain among all Houston County Elementary Schools. Tucker Principal Dr. Kim Halstead attributes this 18.6-point increase to her staff's laser-like focus on addressing not only student needs but student interests in reading and math.

Dr. Halstead said, "Our Guiding Coalition is made up of key staff leaders who have worked diligently to fulfill our school's vision. Before and after school math tutoring has been offered by educators Meredith Fletcher, Megan Merrell, Jessica LeBrun and Heather Hayes. Khaki Whiddon and our summer literacy team spent more than \$15,000 on classroom library books. Another teacher, Beth Bemby, created a tiered teacher mentoring program, and Christen Pass continued training our teachers and students on the 7 Habits of Highly Effective People/Teens/Kids. In addition, we have assembled an 'all-star' staff who work together to make sure our kids are safe, supported, and synergized!"

Pictured at the Leader in Me event are (from left): Christen Pass, Chynna Murphy, Principal Halstead and Anne Fox. Tucker Elementary was also recognized for national leadership contributions at this symposium. More than 150 educators from schools across the state of Georgia were in attendance.

According to the Leader in Me organization, academic distinction is determined through data analysis by an independent nonprofit, Schooldigger.com. The Schooldigger.com algorithm scores on a percentile ranking and compares like schools across the state. To meet the academic growth standard, the school must be at or above the 50<sup>th</sup> percentile and have shown a five percent growth from the previous year's percentile ranking. The percentile ranking for Tucker Elementary School rose in 2017 to 58.5, up from 43.5 in 2016, showing exemplary academic growth.

Dr. Halstead invites the community to join the school for its eighth annual Leadership Day held in March. Tucker Elementary is located at 1300 Tucker Road in Perry. For more information, please contact Principal Halstead at 478-988-6278 or [Kimberly.Halstead@hcbe.net](mailto:Kimberly.Halstead@hcbe.net). One may also visit <http://www.theleaderinme.org/>.

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