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## NEWS RELEASE

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### Thomson Middle School Awarded Georgia STEM Certification



HOUSTON COUNTY, GA - Thomson Middle School has been awarded Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) certification by the Georgia Department of Education (GaDOE). Thomson Middle is one of only 14 middle schools in Georgia, and the first middle school in Houston County, to earn this certification. In addition, Thomson is the first Title 1

middle school to be granted Whole School certification; 12 of the 14 schools in Georgia are program certified and only one other is STEM certified for the whole school.



A GaDOE team visited the school today, May 15, to observe the school's STEM program and to talk with students to determine their STEM knowledge and engagement. The visit began with classroom visits, followed by business partners and parents sharing their involvement with the STEM journey.

Principal Dr. Walter Stephens said, "This is a great day for our Thomson Middle family! Through this process, we have learned that STEM certification is a journey, not a destination. The GaDOE STEM site team affirmed the many years of hard work from our students, teachers, parents and business partners. Our school, in concert with all of our partners, has created opportunities and access to educational experiences for all students. We are truly proud of this accomplishment!"

The GaDOE has rigorous criteria for schools to achieve STEM certification. Schools must present evidence of teacher collaboration, business and industry partnerships, high levels of math and science lessons and a project-based STEM curriculum. The state defines STEM education as an integrated curriculum driven by problem solving, discovery, exploratory project/problem-based learning and student-centered development of ideas and solutions. The saturation of technology in most fields means that all students - not just those who plan to pursue a STEM profession - will require a solid foundation in STEM to be productive members of the workforce.

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Thomson Middle is Houston County's third school to earn this rigorous certification. Northside Elementary and Eagle Springs Elementary earned the certification during the 2015 - 2016 school year. Thomson Middle School is located 301 Thomson Street in Centerville. For more information, please visit <http://stemgeorgia.org>.

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