



6630 Camp Street Riverdale, GA 30274  
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**October 7, 2016**

## **Georgia State Superintendent of Schools Visits Utopian Academy for the Arts**

**RIVERDALE** - Students at Utopian Academy for the Arts have been welcomed with yet another esteemed visitor. State Superintendent of Schools Richard Woods visited the academy of 270 students in Riverdale on Wednesday, October 5, 2016. Superintendent Woods visited Utopian Academy following an invite from the school's executive director, Artesius Miller.

As an active supporter of arts education, Superintendent Woods sat in an assembly alongside an audience of Utopian students, staff, parents and other supporters. Prior to the arts assembly, students from the culinary arts class served Superintendent Woods and guests breakfast menu items. Hosted by student council president Jabari Godfrey, the program agenda included the National Anthem sang by Utopian chorus members, monologue selections by theatre students, a short film produced by broadcast/video production students, and special remarks by Superintendent Woods.

Kayla Stokes, an eighth grader at Utopian Academy performed with an ensemble of dance and visual arts students to an original piece entitled, "The Color of Reality". "Our performance today represents life, our goal was to bring reality to the stage and we did", said Stokes.

Shortly following the arts showcase, Superintendent Woods traveled the colorful halls of Utopian's facility and visited classrooms, alongside Utopian's principal, Candice Jimerson-Johnson and executive director, Artesius Miller. "He expressed his support for the arts and his desire to see more students have the opportunity to participate in this dynamic discipline. We strive to develop academic and artistic students, and we fully understand how important having the support of our state leaders will be in assisting us in achieving our goals", said Jimerson-Johnson.

While visiting Ms. Howard's third period math class, Superintendent Woods met Dominique Carment and 20 other seventh grade female students. Dominique Carment recalls her experience from Superintendent Woods, "He asked me how was Utopian Academy different from my previous school. At Utopian, you get more of an education, I love my school". Monica Daniel, another eighth grader at Utopian had the pleasure of having Superintendent Woods visit her broadcast/video production classroom. "The ability to talk to a person as him (Superintendent Woods) was an inspiration...he really does care for us", said Daniel.

Superintendent Woods commended Utopian Academy for the Arts for offering a quality arts educational program, a curriculum that students in Georgia would greatly benefit. "It is an honor for Superintendent Woods to observe the talents that we help (our) students discover and develop at Utopian Academy for the Arts," said Ebonne Craft, arts program coordinator of Utopian Academy.

Other program attendees included Bonnie Holliday, executive director of the State Charter Schools Commission; Sharon Daniel, Utopian Governance Board Chair; Matt Underwood, executive



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director, Atlanta Neighborhood Charter School; Jessie Goree, Clayton County School Board Member; David Mitchell & Kelli Bacote-Boone, Better Outcome for Our Kids (BOOK); Utopian PTA/PTO officials, and local religious leaders.

Utopian Academy for the Arts provides a significant educational benefit of serving as Clayton County's only charter middle school, and the only public school in Clayton County that uses a single-gender instructional approach. Utopian Academy for the Arts is the only charter middle school in Georgia to offer a comprehensive educational program in the dramatic, media, and culinary arts.

To learn more about Utopian Academy for the Arts, please visit [www.utopianacademy.com](http://www.utopianacademy.com)

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