

# CLARKE COUNTY SCHOOL DISTRICT

## 2016 Districtwide Bullying Prevention Essay Contest



Professional  
Development  
School District



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# ABOUT THE CONTEST

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The first annual Clarke County School District (CCSD) Districtwide Bullying Prevention Essay Contest was held in January and February of 2016. Jasia Clark, a twelfth grade student at Clarke Central High School, envisioned the contest. Dr. Katherine Raczynski, Districtwide Professor-in-Residence for School Climate in the Professional Development School District partnership between CCSD and the University of Georgia (UGA), worked closely with Jasia to organize, launch, and manage the contest.

CCSD students in grades 6-12 were invited to nominate a CCSD employee who has made an impact by standing up to bullying or helping someone who has been bullied. Although student nominators were required to be in middle or high school, they could nominate an employee at the elementary, middle, or high school level. The person nominated could be a teacher, administrator, counselor, or some other adult, but they were required to be employed in CCSD. Students were asked to describe how this person has made an impact by preventing bullying or helping those who have been affected by bullying. Essays ranged from 250-500 words. The contest was publicized through posters delivered to each middle and high school and informational emails sent to middle and high school principals.

Entries were accepted from January 13 to February 10, 2016. A total of 78 entries were received. Of these, 64 met the eligibility requirements (i.e., nominated a current CCSD employee). Across these 64 entries, a total of 31 CCSD employees from 12 schools were nominated.

UGA graduate students in English Education served as judges for the contest, under the supervision of Dr. Sara Kajder. Each essay was read by five different raters and scored according to a common rubric. The four domains assessed were relevance, rich detail, captures acts over time, and tone.

The team of judges selected the top essay written by a middle school student and the top essay written by a high school student. In addition, the contest organizers selected winners in three special recognition categories.

# ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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The organizers of the conference would like to acknowledge the contributions of the following people and companies for contributing to the success of the contest:

- Charles White from **Quality Trophies** for award plaques (Athens, GA)
- Derrick Bray from **Diamond Global** for promotional posters (Athens, GA)
- The employees at **First Data** for financial contributions (Atlanta, GA)
- **Phil Lanoue**, Clarke County School District
- **Anisa Jimenez**, Clarke County School District
- **Dawn Meyers**, Clarke County School District
- **Sara Kajder** and the **graduate students** in LLED 7408 (Spring Semester 2016), University of Georgia
- **Janna Dresden**, University of Georgia
- **Erica Gilbertson**, University of Georgia
- **Tara Bond** and the **Gladiator Bully Stoppers**, Clarke Central High School

# ESSAY CONTEST AWARD WINNERS

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## Middle School Level

Nominating Student: **Jimena Somilleda**; Burney-Harris-Lyons Middle School

Nominated Adult: **Laura Porter**; Oglethorpe Avenue Elementary School

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## High School Level

Nominating Student: **EllaRose Millsap**; Classic City High School

Nominated Adult: **Tiffani Knight**; Classic City High School

# SPECIAL RECOGNITION AWARD WINNERS

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## Leading By Example Award

*For inspiring the creation of the contest*

**Melanie Sigler**; Burney-Harris Lyons Middle School

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## Making a Difference Award

*For most student nominations received*

**Jamie Hogan**; Burney-Harris Lyons Middle School

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## Student Compassion Award

*For extraordinary compassion exhibited by a CCSD student*

**Rosevin Nimely**; Classic City High School

# WINNING ESSAYS

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## Middle School Level

Nominating Student: **Jimena Somilleda**; Burney-Harris-Lyons Middle School

Nominated Adult: **Laura Porter**; Oglethorpe Avenue Elementary School

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Ms. Porter was one of the most inspirational teachers I have ever had. Ms. Porter is currently a fifth grade teacher at Oglethorpe Avenue Elementary. Throughout the year that Ms. Porter was my teacher I noticed how she stood up for students being bullied and how she would protect the students so the students would feel safe. She would always make the students feel welcomed and like they belonged which was a very nice and generous thing to do. When I had Ms. Porter bullying wasn't really a big issue with the group of students I went to school with but occasionally you would hear about how so and so said this and how someone got their feelings hurt. Even so Ms. Porter put in effort to ensure that the students were content and weren't feeling down. She would cheer us up by making funny comments during class and just do things to lift our spirits.

Ms. Porter is the type of teacher to pull you aside if she noticed something was wrong and you could always count on her with whatever it was you needed. She has a close bond with her students, a bond where she can just look at a student and know there was something wrong with them. I remember she would even have class discussions about what it's like to be kind and not spread hate. We all learned that bullying was not something we should participate in but instead something we should stand up against and help prevent.

I think it's important for a teacher to have a strong bond with the students. Without that bond I think bullying would have been a bigger issue and something that was more common. The way Ms. Porter stood up against bullying really inspired me to stand up for bullying myself. Fortunately bullying isn't as common as it used to be but I still see forms of bullying every now and then and when I do see some sort of bullying I say something about it.

## High School Level

Nominating Student: **EllaRose Millsap**; Classic City High School

Nominated Adult: **Tiffani Knight**; Classic City High School

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When thinking upon the subject of bullying, the first teacher that comes to mind is an assistant math teacher named Ms. Knight. Math has always been a frustrating subject for myself and often times my peers, but Ms. Knight finds a way to teach students with different learning abilities in a comprehensive manner. She creates an environment where students are not fearful of being themselves or asking questions, but instead seek to grow academically.

Her light attitude and high spirits keep humor in the classroom and help her young students show her respect naturally. We relate to her on a personal level because she listens when we speak and helps us solve problems. Ms. Knight keeps us focused on the more important things and explains why mistreating someone is a significant waste of time and energy.

Ms. Knight makes sure to go out of her way to remind us of how much she believes in us. She refuses to let us say, "I can't." She inspires us to help out the students around us, because all together we make one class. As one unit we work together to understand the subject. Within the classroom walls there is no bullying. When we come into the room we respect one another and hold each other accountable to get the grade we deserve. There is no time for bullying when Ms. Knight keeps us intrigued in the subject of Algebra. She understands our difficulties as students and teenagers and always reminds us that we have a future ahead of us and to stand tall with confidence.

# OTHER NOTABLE ESSAYS

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Nominating Student: **Olivia Ngu**, Burney-Harris-Lyons Middle School

Nominated Adult: **Jamie Hogan**, Burney-Harris-Lyons Middle School

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I nominate my teacher for the Bullying Prevention contest because during class, we have discussions that deal with current world issues and issues happening during the school day. Her room has the environment that makes it easy to talk about your opinion or things that may be happening in your own life. In the classroom, we talk about very personal things (such as worries we have, things that we have experienced that may be uncomfortable, etc.) With these conversations, we gain a better understanding of each other, and no opinion is a bad opinion, it's a no bullying zone.

In one instance, I overheard a conversation about someone calling someone names and just making their school experience really unenjoyable. Mrs. Hogan helped them out, telling them what they should do and also getting people to try to fix the situation. You could tell by the expressions on their faces that they felt comfortable sharing what was happening to them and trusted that she would help them stop the bully.

It's nice to know that there is someone you can talk to about your problems, without having to worry about judgement or ridicule. People are more open to talk about their problems if they have someone or a place that is in a comfortable environment (and one where there isn't many people). Sometimes, there are things that you just can't talk about with your friends, some things that need to be told to an adult. I feel like Mrs. Hogan would be that adult that you can come to.

Nominating Student: **Isaac Ramirez-Godinez**, Burney-Harris-Lyons Middle School

Nominated Adult: **Melanie Sigler**, Burney-Harris-Lyons Middle School

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Melanie Sigler is my principal and she has contributed a lot to stop bullying. She has put up many posters that shows what to be at Burney-Harris-Lyons (BHL). There is many posters that say things like "Stop Bullying". She has also authorized students to put up many posters that help bully prevention. She has also said many announcements that raised our hopes about completely erasing bullying. There has also been a lot of programs like G.R.E.A.T and D.A.R.E that tell us not to bully and that bullying is wrong to do.

We have had an assembly to stop bullying. In many of my classes, the teacher says that Ms. Sigler has told him/her to start talking about bullying. Also, just in general, Ms. Sigler sometimes came herself to talk to us and refresh. We have punch cards that get punched when we are not acting nice or bullying a lot.

That disciplines us to act nice with everyone. She has had some "therapy" classes with students that have been bullied. She has made some "special" classes for people that have been bullied. She has encouraged people to report bullying. She has talked to people that have bullied other people. She acts cool and when people ask why she acts cool, she says because she is helping to stop bullying. If I could add one more thing about her, it would be something good because she is the person that I chose because she--like I said--has contributed a lot to STOP BULLYING.



Nominating Student: **Leslie Garcia**, Burney-Harris-Lyons Middle School

Nominated Adult: **Veronica Johnson**, Burney-Harris-Lyons Middle School

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I nominate Mrs. Johnson. I nominate her because she is the best counselor. She is a counselor you can talk to about anything. Whatever you talk to her about, it stays there. If you ever have a problem you can just go to her office or email her. She has helped a girl with bullying. This girl used to sort of get bullied by two other girls. However when Mrs. Johnson found out about this, she figured the situation.

She helped the girls solve their problems and how to just ignore each other. When there is someone who you don't like or doesn't like you. You can just ignore them and not start anything. Mrs. Johnson can always stop problems. Doesn't even matter what the situation is, she can solve it. She is always there to help. You can always go up to her if you are being bullied.

Mrs. Johnson always encourages us to ignore situations that don't need to happen. She inspires me a lot, for a counselor. She is like a school therapist. If you are ever hurt you can talk to her. Bullying is never the answer, especially when you are hurting. Some people bully because they have their own problems. However that doesn't mean it's ok to hurt others. Mrs. Johnson is an amazing counselor, she always stands up to bullying. She also makes sure everyone is ok and doesn't have problems. If you are ever bothered by someone else, talk to her. Mrs. Johnson always knows what's the best for you. Mrs. Johnson has helped three girls with bullying. The girl that used to get bullied talks to one of the girls. However she doesn't with the second girl. She rather ignores her because she knows something wrong will happen. So instead of talking to her and maybe starting something, she ignores the situation. This is all thanks to Mrs. Johnson for helping them. This is why i nominate Mrs. Johnson, she is the best counselor! Mrs. Johnson is always a person you can talk to. She always understands you and makes you feel like somebody.



Nominating Student: **Carlos Alvarez**, Burney-Harris-Lyons Middle School

Nominated Adult: **Jamie Hogan**, Burney-Harris-Lyons Middle School

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She helps us understand the differences in our lives, compared to my classmates. She helps me get a point of view on everyone else's lifestyle and way of living. We see each others' backgrounds and ways we view each other. She helps us see the world in different ways. She treats me like an adult, with respect and doesn't leave any details out of the stories we talk about. She knows about the things we go through everyday and tries to help us.

Her love for us changes my life and thoughts. We talk about what goes around the world. We talk about the things that happened back then and the things that go on around the continent. She talks about how much she hates bullying in general, and how people should not bully one another about race or ethnicity.

I have many friends that are different races, racism is just something we have to learn how to forget. We are all equal, like Doctor Martin Luther King Jr. said we should judge each other by the content of our character not by the color of our skin.

I wouldn't know all this information about bullying if it wasn't for her. She helps me learn and guides us along the path of life. Everyone gets bullied, I did when I was younger, they teased me about how overweight I was. I decided to start lifting weights and I noticed very few changes at first, but overtime I gained muscle. Ms. Hogan is my inspiration and she always knows what to say. I have learned so much from her, especially in Grammar and Communication. We should always to speak to other people the way we want to be spoken too.

# ALL NOMINATED ADULTS AND PARTICIPATING STUDENTS

The following Clarke County School District employees were nominated by students for their role in preventing or responding to bullying.

Nominated Adult	Adult's School	Nominated By	Student's School
Cindy Alexander	Whitehead Road ES	Jaila Salley	Burney-Harris-Lyons MS
Cornelia Barnes	Whitehead Road ES	Rafael Figueroa	Burney-Harris-Lyons MS
Cornelia Barnes	Whitehead Road ES	Ariel Robinson	Burney-Harris-Lyons MS
Cornelia Barnes	Whitehead Road ES	Khyle Cowan	Burney-Harris-Lyons MS
Cornelia Barnes	Whitehead Road ES	Jaydon Dennis	Burney-Harris-Lyons MS
Joanna Beck	Burney-Harris-Lyons MS	Alexis Carachure	Burney-Harris-Lyons MS
Cameron Brooks	Chase Street ES	Sasha London	Burney-Harris-Lyons MS
Kira Burns	Whitehead Road ES	Jessica Ngu	Burney-Harris-Lyons MS
Kira Burns	Whitehead Road ES	Joselin Ulloa-Jaimes	Burney-Harris-Lyons MS
Tanesha Callahan	Hilsman MS	Nayely Perez	Burney-Harris-Lyons MS
Lori Camden	Burney-Harris-Lyons MS	Imani Sykes	Burney-Harris-Lyons MS
Ashley Destefania	Hilsman MS	Mauria Smith	Hilsman MS
Ashley Destefania	Hilsman MS	Montavus Malone	Hilsman MS
Katie Drake	Fowler Drive Elementary	Allison Mejia	Burney-Harris-Lyons MS
Linda Herring	Oglethorpe Avenue ES	Samaiyah Ra'aid	Burney-Harris-Lyons MS
Kong Heu	Hilsman MS	Perry Thomas	Hilsman MS
Shawn Hinger	Clarke MS	Caitlyn Jackson	Clarke MS
Jaime Hogan	Burney-Harris-Lyons MS	Noeli Loya	Burney-Harris-Lyons MS
Jaime Hogan	Burney-Harris-Lyons MS	Oscar Robles	Burney-Harris-Lyons MS
Jamie Hogan	Burney-Harris-Lyons MS	Amir Warren	Burney-Harris-Lyons MS
Jamie Hogan	Burney-Harris-Lyons MS	Amy Gaona	Burney-Harris-Lyons MS
Jamie Hogan	Burney-Harris-Lyons MS	Bianca Uriostegui	Burney-Harris-Lyons MS
Jamie Hogan	Burney-Harris-Lyons MS	Diego Villafana	Burney-Harris-Lyons MS
Jamie Hogan	Burney-Harris-Lyons MS	Kayo Say	Burney-Harris-Lyons MS
Jamie Hogan	Burney-Harris-Lyons MS	Olivia Ngu	Burney-Harris-Lyons MS
Jamie Hogan	Burney-Harris-Lyons MS	Kaylee Alexander	Burney-Harris-Lyons MS
Jamie Hogan	Burney-Harris-Lyons MS	Sherlin Alvarez	Burney-Harris-Lyons MS
Jamie Hogan	Burney-Harris-Lyons MS	Emily Vargas	Burney-Harris-Lyons MS
Jamie Hogan	Burney-Harris-Lyons MS	KenAsia Gainer	Burney-Harris-Lyons MS
Jamie Hogan	Burney-Harris-Lyons MS	Carlos Alvarez	Burney-Harris-Lyons MS
Jamie Hogan	Burney-Harris-Lyons MS	Samuel Pleitez	Burney-Harris-Lyons MS
Jamie Hogan	Burney-Harris-Lyons MS	Crystal Fox	Burney-Harris-Lyons MS
Julie Hubbard	Hilsman MS	Xavier Stovall	Hilsman MS
Tammy Johnson	Burney-Harris-Lyons MS	Tanecia Haynes	Burney-Harris-Lyons MS
Veronica Johnson	Burney-Harris-Lyons MS	Payden Pruitt	Burney-Harris-Lyons MS
Veronica Johnson	Burney-Harris-Lyons MS	Porter Ehlers	Burney-Harris-Lyons MS
Veronica Johnson	Burney-Harris-Lyons MS	Kayla Niare' Hull	Burney-Harris-Lyons MS
Veronica Johnson	Burney-Harris-Lyons MS	Mercedes Evans	Burney-Harris-Lyons MS
Veronica Johnson	Burney-Harris-Lyons MS	Ava Sims	Burney-Harris-Lyons MS
Veronica Johnson	Burney-Harris-Lyons MS	Leslie Garcia	Burney-Harris-Lyons MS

Tiffani Knight	Classic City HS	EllaRose Millsap	Classic City HS
Tiffani Knight	Classic City HS	Miekela Thomas	Classic City HS
Tiffani Knight	Classic City HS	Jamari Raylee Marrow	Classic City HS
Timothy Lees	Burney-Harris-Lyons MS	Uzochukwu Anukam	Burney-Harris-Lyons MS
Timothy Lees	Burney-Harris-Lyons MS	Alejandro Moreno	Burney-Harris-Lyons MS
Leigh Lindsey	Oglethorpe Avenue ES	Kitzia Godinez	Burney-Harris-Lyons MS
Benjamin Mize	Oglethorpe Avenue ES	V'Shaunah Bradford	Burney-Harris-Lyons MS
Meagan Nix	Hilsman MS	Jequiria Wesley	Hilsman MS
Heather O'Keefe	Cleveland Road ES	Rachel Robinson	Burney-Harris-Lyons MS
Natasha Patterson	Cedar Shoals HS	Rinakia Jones	Cedar Shoals HS
Laura Porter	Oglethorpe Avenue ES	Lela Black	Burney-Harris-Lyons MS
Laura Porter	Oglethorpe Avenue ES	Maggie Kelleher	Burney-Harris-Lyons MS
Laura Porter	Oglethorpe Avenue ES	Jimena Somilleda	Burney-Harris-Lyons MS
Laura Porter	Oglethorpe Avenue ES	Carlymira Obana	Burney-Harris-Lyons MS
Karen Rhodes	Burney-Harris-Lyons MS	Zachary Johnson	Burney-Harris-Lyons MS
Melanie Sigler	Burney-Harris-Lyons MS	Gregory Taylor	Burney-Harris-Lyons MS
Melanie Sigler	Burney-Harris-Lyons MS	Isaac Ramirez-Godinez	Burney-Harris-Lyons MS
Haylee Smith	Burney-Harris-Lyons MS	Stephanie Martinez	Burney-Harris-Lyons MS
Amanda Stallings	Timothy Road ES	Kamryn Johnson	Burney-Harris-Lyons MS
Elijah Swift	Clarke Central HS	Charnequah Williams	Clarke Central HS
Denise Vickery	Cleveland Rd. ES	Francisco Silva	Burney-Harris-Lyons MS
Kathleen Williams	Burney-Harris-Lyons MS	Lauren Brown	Burney-Harris-Lyons MS
Kathleen Williams	Burney-Harris-Lyons MS	Trinity Ward	Burney-Harris-Lyons MS
Kathleen Williams	Burney-Harris-Lyons MS	Yaiana Tamia Pitts	Burney-Harris-Lyons MS

The following students also submitted entries to the contest.

<b>Student's Name</b>	<b>Student's School</b>
Myesha Clarke	Classic City HS
Tanea Gable	Classic City HS
Alphonzo Gonzalez	Burney-Harris-Lyons MS
Kedarius Hill	Classic City HS
Nia Hogans	Classic City HS
Nokia Howard	Classic City HS
Jovitta Julius	Burney-Harris-Lyons MS
Rosevin Nimely	Classic City HS
Lauren Pollock	Burney-Harris-Lyons MS
Landon Salgado	Burney-Harris-Lyons MS
Ndeye Amy Sarr	Hilsman MS
Brandon Turner	Burney-Harris-Lyons MS
Tristan Weik	Classic City HS
Akia Woodruff	Classic City HS