Community leaders enjoyed a VIP tour of three Cherokee County School District schools on Tuesday, Oct. 21, 2014 as part of the Second Annual “Get on Board! with CCSD Schools” Bus Tour.

The tour kicked off in the morning at Canton Elementary School STEM Academy, where leaders learned more about why STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics) is such a focus in education today and what students are learning at a STEM Academy.

The tour then proceeded next door to Cherokee High School for an overview of secondary education in CCSD, led by Principal Debra Murdock, the Georgia High School Principal of the Year. Participants learned more about Cherokee High’s award-winning Career Pathways courses and the recent athletic complex improvements.

Participants ended their tour at the new Teasley Middle School, where they saw the latest in classroom technology including 3-D printers, learned the benefits of the school’s one-to-one laptop computer initiative, a CCSD pilot program, and enjoyed a CCSD School Nutrition-prepared lunch.
Above: Welding instructor Mike Zoeckler, a past Cherokee High School Teacher of the Year, talks about the high demand for skilled welders from his program. Students in the nationally certified program at Cherokee HS are heavily recruited and can earn a living wage upon graduating high school. Below: Tour participant State Rep. Michael Caldwell checks out the mega microscope built by Tanner Dollyhigh, background, and his classmates at Canton ES STEM Academy.

The vision for “Get on Board! with CCSD Schools” is to better educate local leaders about the outstanding schools in CCSD and how they can be a part of their success. In addition to classroom tours and lunch, the annual event, which is co-sponsored by Credit Union of Georgia, includes the opportunity for participants to share their thoughts and suggestions.

Rand Bagwell of Northside Pharmacy, a graduate of CCSD schools who today is a CCSD parent, said he was most impressed with how teaching and learning has adapted to prepare students for today’s world.

“The kids are in very capable hands,” he said.

Tour participants were wowed by various technology in use at all grade levels, ranging from students video-conferencing in class with a NASA scientist, using laptops and online resources to solve probability problems and designing and creating projects on a 3-D printer.

“The schools here are very technologically advanced and top of the line,” said Tarrah Suggs of Cobb EMC.

School Board Member-elect Clark Menard appreciated the focus on career preparation including the many industry certification and licensing programs offered at CCSD high schools.

“Our schools are not only preparing students for college, they also are offering classes that provide an immediate entry into the workforce,” he said.
Above: Lee Banks, a past Teasley Middle School Teacher of the Year, explains a problem to students Matthew Crosby, Liberty Reilly and Austin Holtzclaw as tour participant Gary Mason, owner of Moe’s Southwest Grill in Canton, looks on. Below: School Board member-elect Clark Menard watches Teasley MS students, from left to right, Jens Rueckert, Andrew Fincher and Eric Jones as they sort rocks and fossils in Nancy Silka's science class.

Amanda Arnold of Credit Union of Georgia said she was impressed by how classroom instruction incorporated so many different types of technology.

“CCSD is doing incredible things!” she said.
“Get on Board! with CCSD Schools” 2014 Participants

Amanda Arnold, Credit Union of Georgia
Rand Bagwell, Northside Pharmacy
State Rep. Mandi Ballinger
State Sen. Brandon Beach
State Rep. Michael Caldwell
Pam Carnes, Cherokee County Chamber of Commerce President
School Board Member-elect Mike Chapman, Morrison Products
Rebecca Cooper, Credit Union of Georgia
School Board Member Kyla Cromer
Rod Drake, Georgia Power
Will Goodwin, Oak Leaf Church
John Hicks, YMCA of Cherokee County
Steve Holcomb, United Community Bank and Cherokee County Development Authority Chairman
Rick Ingram, Community & Southern Bank
School Board Member Patsy Jordan
Misti Martin, Cherokee County Office of Economic Development Executive Director
Gary Mason, Moe’s Southwest Grill
School Board Member-elect Clark Menard
Dr. Ron Newcomb, Chattahoochee Technical College President
Gwen Parker, Renasant Bank
Jamie H. Pritchett, North GA CPA Services
School Board Chair Janet Read
Jeff Rusbridge, Dyer & Rusbridge, P.C. and Cherokee County Chamber of Commerce Chairman-elect
Tarrah Suggs, Cobb EMC
State Rep. Scott Turner and Kelly Turner
School Board Vice Chair Robert Wofford

School Board member Patsy Jordan jumps in to assist students Moises Tercero-Domingo, left, and Roberto Ramirez-Reynoso in a science classroom at Canton ES STEM Academy.
Above: The tour stopped by the Cherokee HS Air Force ROTC program, where a partnership with local business FactoryMation, the CCSD 2014 Partner of the Year, has allowed six students to earn their pilot's license with special scholarships. Below: Cherokee HS automotive instructor Michael Hagan shares the post-secondary options and job opportunities awaiting his students.
Above: Canton ES STEM Academy science teacher David Corn, a past Canton ES STEM Academy Teacher of the Year, assists students Adarius Harshaw, left, and Lathan Mears with an experiment on vascular attributes as tour participants Steve Holcomb, left, and Jeff Rusbridge look on. Left: Tour participants, from left to right, State Rep. Mandi Ballinger, Cherokee YMCA Director John Hicks and State Sen. Brandon Beach watch as Lily Mathews uses science clues to solve a 'crime' in a STEM lab at Canton ES STEM Academy.
Above: Teasley MS Language Arts teacher Greg Koch asks questions about a reading assignment while the class responds on laptops. The technology allows the teacher to see instantly how many students have answered correctly, to determine whether review is needed or they can move on to the next question. Below: In Scott Reece’s technology class at Teasley MS, he reviews an assignment where students have to design, build and market a better thumbtack. The curriculum includes a robotics unit and 3D printer technology.
Above: Bus tour participants applaud tour leader and Georgia Principal of the Year Debra Murdock at the entrance to Cherokee HS. Below: Brooke Putnam and Wade Hodges, two of 14 students in the third-year Certified Nursing Assistant (CNA) program at Cherokee HS, talk about what skills they have learned in the program.