


# Home schooled students welcome at Riverbend's 'ASA'

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GAINESVILLE - Hall County School Board members Monday night gave the green light for Riverbend Elementary School to become an Advanced Scholars Academy starting next fall.

That means accelerated learning and it means something more. It means that for the first time in a Hall County School, or possibly in any school in the state, Home schooled students are invited to participate.

Riverbend Principal Debra Smith said students would be allowed to move at their own pace and if they're ready for advanced learning, they will get it and that includes home schooled students, pending state approval.

"We would love to have home schoolers come in," Smith said. "They may want to have some flexible scheduling on different aspects of our curriculum, they may want Singapore Math, they might want to come in for a reading component or they may want to come in and study Chinese but not everything. We're going to get with the state and see if we can get it approved to allow those kids to come in and do that."

Smith said the Advanced Scholars Academy would be flexible, slowing instruction down for some children or even moving them to another grade level to allow them to study subjects at a different pace.

"It's hard to be flexible like this in most schools but we have a small school and we've come up with some ways in our scheduling to allow our kids to move on with a flexible grouping we use to meet those needs," Smith said.

## HALL CONNECT

An on line system that promises to 'transform learning' gained approval from school board members with a review that included a teleconference with a Dell Computers representative. School System Technical Director Dr. Aaron Turpin said 'Hall Connect' is going in place to allow students anywhere, anytime learning.

"It doesn't matter if they are in Mrs. Smith's third period English One class or if they are at Grandma's house," Turpin said.

Dell corporate support and 'Race to the Top' federal grant funds are supporting the program; Turpin plans to have 15 percent of Hall's students using Hall Connect by the end of next school year.

## BETTER BIDDING, BETTER BUYING

Pending attorney review and approval, board members approved system participation in the Georgia Education Cooperative, which promises better competitive bidding and prices for food products and equipment. Twenty-three school systems now belong to the co-op, which offers stronger buying power according to School Superintendent Will Schofield.

"We would almost double the current volume of this 23 system group in West Georgia and I think there is some real opportunity for us to see some more competitive pricing," Schofield said.

Schofield told board members he contacted Forsyth County school officials and learned that system was also interested in joining the cooperative.

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