



Contributed photo

Students at George Walton Academy conducted a mock protest as part of the kick-off event for a unit on the Vietnam War, titled *I Did It for You*.

## Channeling flower power

**GWA** | Students play hippies in mock Vietnam protest

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It's one of the most discussed, contentious and dramatized moments of American history in the 20th century, interpreted in wildly different ways by wildly different authorities.

The legacy of the Vietnam War, and the impact it had on the homefront, still resonate today in movies, music and the culture at large, but understanding it as more than pop culture sound bites can be daunting for the younger generations who were not there to witness it firsthand.

George Walton Academy has tackled that challenge head on re-

cently, with a new "I Did It for You" study, a nine-week interdisciplinary effort to try and teach students about the breadth of an era.

The school kicked off the new study with a big event. High school students were encouraged to dress in the fashions of the 1960s and as they gathered in the gymnasium for lunch, a band played period music in the corner.

Then, in the midst of the gathering, a student protest broke out, a pre-arranged mock march in which students marched through with protest signs and chanting anti-war sentiments. The event continued with other students being "drafted" for the war during the day.

"I am so excited that GWA decided to undertake the I Did It For You

project," senior Megan McGoldrick said. "Students do not know very much about the Vietnam War because of how unpopular it was during its own time, so this is a great way to educate high schoolers on a topic in which they are unfamiliar. The kick-off went very well with protests, a live band, and information given by students to students. I look forward to learning more about the science, literature and history of Vietnam, but mostly I cannot wait to celebrate the Vietnam veterans and give them the credit that they truly deserve."

The unit will cross over almost all classes, including English, art, history, science and even physical education. Lessons will include not only history lessons, but reading lit-

erature of the era, watching films, including the Ken Burns documentary "The Vietnam War," field trips to museums, interviews with veterans and much more.

"I'm really excited to start the 'I Did It For You' project and connect with Vietnam soldiers through their visits to our classes and the letters we'll be writing to them in Mrs Taylor's class," junior Eliza Malcom said. "Hopefully this school-wide project will help us get a better insight on what the war was really like from the men who had that firsthand experience and we can turn everything we've learned into something others can look at and learn from as well."

Sydney Jerman, a senior at GWA, was part of the protesting crowd and said it really

helped them connect to the material.

"We kicked off the unit with a mock protest and my government class was a part of the counter-protest," she said. "I thought it was cool how we were all dancing and listening to the music, and then the protestors came in and started chanting. It gave us a little look of what it was like during the 60s when many Americans were against the war. I am excited to see what else this unit brings, because I don't know that much about the Vietnam War but I know it created a big conflict that was never exactly resolved. I am excited to hear from the veterans' point of view and learn what life was like during the 60s and 70s."

The unit is projected to continue through the

end of March and students look forward to discovering more about the Vietnam era before it all comes to a close.

"Being able to be apart of a project that could really make a lasting impact is such an honor," junior Jenna Lo said. "I think it's important to get students involved on such a big scale on a project like this and to utilize different areas of school education to help the cause. There are so many unresolved issues from the time period of the Vietnam War, so hopefully this project could help raise awareness for that. I hope veterans see how much the younger generation is willing to learn about a time period they never experienced and how much we want to give the veterans the credit and honor they truly deserve."

**Nathan Franklin**

Walton County School District

## Walton schools striving to provide the best education we can afford

The Walton County School District values our community and the resources that local tax dol-



lars provide for us. We work hard to efficiently use taxpayer dollars to provide a top notch education for all students. You may often hear us say that "we strive to provide the best education we can afford." Our four-star 2017 Financial Efficiency Star Rating places us in the 93rd

percentile of the state. FESR measures an individual school district's per-pupil spending in relation to the academic achievements of its students. We are proud to have received four out of five stars, reinforcing the fact that we continue to be good stewards of funds and provide great educational environments for all students in Walton County.

As we head into National Parent Leadership Month, I want to express my apprecia-

tion to all of our committed parents and volunteers who dedicate their time and energy to our schools. It is safe to say that because of you, WCSD is a better place. Our Parent-Teacher Organizations, Booster Clubs and many other volunteer organizations are indispensable to the work that we do each and every day.

Youth Middle School's 14-classroom addition is on schedule to be completed for the start of the 2018-19 school year. We are ex-

tremely thankful for the continued community support through our ELOST program. The most recent approval of ELOST 5 will allow us to renovate existing facilities, purchase new school buses and maintenance vehicles as well as prepare for future growth. We are in the planning stages of a small expansion and renovation to Loganville High School as the next major project in ELOST 5.

The Board of Education recently elected

Mr. Tom Gibson and Ms. Diane Turner to serve as chair and vice-chair, respectively. I would like to thank former Board Chairman David Breedlove for his committed service to WCSD and the Walton County community. Mr. Breedlove has faithfully served as the chair of the Walton County Board of Education for two years with nine years of total service thus far. Under his leadership, the Board has continually made decisions to

best serve the students in Walton County. In addition, this board has maintained the highest level of governance training, being recognized as one of the few exemplary boards in the state of Georgia. We appreciate the continued work of our Board of Education and their vision for the students of Walton County.

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