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Athens-Clarke County Library and Clarke County School District partner for student library cards

ATHENS, Ga. — The Athens-Clarke County Library and Clarke County School District have partnered in a campaign to make it easier for Athens children and teens to get library cards as part of a student library card initiative this spring.

The library and school district are working together to distribute library card applications – in English and Spanish – to each public school in Athens-Clarke County. All elementary school students received library card applications in January. Middle and high school students will receive applications this month.

“Your library card is one of the most important school supplies there is. The library provides free access to educational and enrichment resources for students of all ages, both in our physical buildings and online. These resources can greatly enhance a student’s academic career,” Athens Regional Library System Executive Director Valerie Bell said. “We understand that for many busy families, it can be a challenge to get to the library to apply for a card. That’s why we’re teaming up with the schools to make it simpler for Athens families.”

“When a student develops a love of reading, it helps foster a love of learning – an amazing gift we can give our children,” states Dr. Xernona Thomas, Clarke County School District’s interim superintendent. “We are thankful for the partnership with the Athens-Clarke County Library to provide library cards to all our students. This community partnership encourages students and families to expand their horizons through a variety of exciting events and activities.”

The students receive the library card applications from their homeroom teachers and then can return completed applications to the schools. Library staff will collect the applications from each

school, process the applications and then deliver the new library cards to the schools where teachers will distribute them to the students later this spring. For students who already have library cards but may have fines associated with their accounts, the library will offer a one-time fine waiver.

"We believe in giving everyone equal opportunity to be successful in life, and giving young students access to the information and services that a library offers is critical to that goal. By providing a one-time fee waiver, the Board hopes to provide all Athens-Clarke County students the same initial access regardless of the financial resources available to them," said Ian Thomas, chairman of the Athens-Clarke County Library Board of Trustees.

This student library card initiative is part of the library's work associated with the Community Catalyst grant from the Institute of Museum and Library Services, which calls for the library to work with community partners and activists to address trauma.

PINES library cards can be used at libraries throughout Georgia to check out materials, including books, DVDs and even passes to museums and parks. Some services available on the library's website, such as downloadable eBooks and magazines and certain databases require a library card for access.

The Athens-Clarke County Library is located at 2025 Baxter Street, Athens. To learn more about library programs and services, call the library at (706) 613-3650 or visit athenslibrary.org/athens.

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