



A NOTE FROM OUR PRINCIPAL- SCOTT KENT

What's Inside?

The Power of Storytelling Recap

Power of Storytelling Day brought together students, alumni, business partners, and community members to share authentic stories that inspired empathy, reflection, and the understanding that every great innovation begins with listening.

Cultivate

Cultivate equips students with the professional and workplace-ready skills they need for future success through mock interviews, networking, and career-focused learning experiences. We're seeking volunteers to share their expertise, mentor students, and help them gain the confidence and skills needed to thrive in college, careers, and beyond.

Innovate IT Conference

Innovate IT brings together high school students, educators, and technology professionals for a day of hands-on learning, industry-led workshops, networking, and exploration of emerging fields such as Artificial Intelligence, Web Application Development, and Data & Security. We're seeking industry volunteers to lead sessions, share expertise, and help inspire the next generation of technology innovators.

The new year at IA has started off strong. We have already hosted several incredible experiential learning events for our students, and I want to thank those of you who have supported us this year. Our community hears a great deal about these special events, and I am proud of the unique learning opportunities we provide. It is equally exciting to see such compelling results on the academic front.

In our first year of eligibility, U.S. News & World Report ranked FCS Innovation Academy in the top 1% of public high schools in the United States. We ranked third in Georgia, behind two schools with significant academic admission requirements.

Our students thrive when they engage with their community, solve authentic problems, and discover that learning is a lifelong endeavor. I hope you will continue joining them on that journey. Whether through Cultivate, a Flex Friday session, or mentoring students as they prepare for the workforce, your support is invaluable. I look forward to seeing and working with you throughout the year.

Fulton County Schools

Where Students Come First



KEEP YOUR TAX DOLLARS LOCAL!

The PEACH Education Tax Credit lets you redirect your Georgia state income tax dollars directly to Innovation Academy — at no additional cost to you. This is a 100% dollar-for-dollar tax credit (not a deduction).

WHY THIS MATTERS

Instead of sending your tax dollars to the state's general fund, you can directly support:

- Mentorships & Internships
- STEM and innovation programs
- Curriculum development
- Teacher professional growth
- Real-world student experiences

ELIGIBILITY LIMITS

- **Single Filer:** UP TO \$2,500
- **Filing Jointly:** Up To \$5,000
- **LLC Member or Pass Through Entity:** Up to \$25,000
- **C or S Corporation:** up to 75% of annual Georgia income tax liability

Same Taxes. Greater Impact.

STEP 1: APPLY

- Apply for the PEACH Tax Credit
- Select "FCS Innovation Academy"
- Receive approval within approximately 10 days

STEP 2: DONATE

- Follow the instructions in your approval letter
- Submit your donation (online or by mail)
- Must be completed within 60 days of approval

STEP 3: CLAIM

- File Form IT-QED-TP2 with your Georgia tax return
- Receive your full dollar-for-dollar state tax credit



gfpe.org/tax_credit/

Power of Storytelling Day Inspires Reflection and Connection

Innovation Academy recently welcomed community members, alumni, and business partners to share personal stories that encouraged students to think differently about their futures, their communities, and the challenges around them. Through reflection and discussion, students connected with stories that were authentic, relatable, and offered new perspectives.

The experience reinforced a key lesson that will guide next year's Phoenix Project: meaningful innovation begins with listening. Students explored themes such as resilience, empathy, purpose, well-being, and community impact, helping them better understand the people and challenges they may seek to serve through future projects.

Teachers observed high levels of engagement and noted that personal stories helped students connect with the people behind professional roles while encouraging curiosity, reflection, and empathy.

Thank you to the business partners, alumni, and community members who shared their experiences. Your willingness to tell your story helped our students see new possibilities, build deeper understanding, and recognize that every great solution starts with listening.

Innovation Academy's Professional Ready Skills Day

10.16.2026

CULTIVATE
CONNECTIONS CONFIDENCE CURIOSITY

What is Cultivate?

THE MISSION OF IA'S PROFESSIONAL READY SKILLS DAY IS TO ENGAGE OUR COMMUNITY IN FOSTERING ESSENTIAL CAREER AND COLLEGE READINESS SKILLS. OUR GOAL IS TO CREATE MEANINGFUL OPPORTUNITIES FOR STUDENTS TO BECOME MORE WELL-ROUNDED AND CONFIDENT, WHILE BUILDING VALUABLE CONNECTIONS WITH PROFESSIONALS FROM BOTH THE BUSINESS SECTOR AND HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS.

How can you help?

WE RELY ON OUR BUSINESS COMMUNITY TO HELP FACILITATE WORKSHOPS INTRODUCING VARIOUS SKILLS. BELOW IS A LIST OF POTENTIAL WORKSHOPS:

- MOCK INTERVIEWS
- ENTREPRENEURSHIP
- TIME MANAGEMENT & STUDY SKILLS
- FINANCIAL LITERACY
- SAVING FOR RETIREMENT
- SCHOLARSHIP SEARCH & APPLICATION STRATEGIES
- PROJECT MANAGEMENT
- JOB OPPORTUNITIES & INTERNSHIPS
- NETWORKING WITH CONFIDENCE
- ETHICAL DECISION MAKING
- ELEVATOR SPEECHES/PUBLIC SPEAKING
- COMMUNICATION SKILLS
- CONFLICT RESOLUTIONS
- NEGOTIATION BASICS
- SOCIAL MEDIA PRESENCE
- COLLEGE RESEARCH
- CIVIC ENGAGEMENT & LEADERSHIP
- TEAMWORK & COLLABORATION

*Please see this form for more information
and to register to participate.*



INNOVATE IT 2026

LAUNCH THE NEXT GENERATION OF STUDENT INNOVATORS

WE NEED INDUSTRY VOLUNTEERS!

Help students build real-world technology solutions!

Lead a Workshop:

- GitHub & Collaboration
 - AI Development
- Agile Project Management
 - Client Discovery
- Web Apps & Dashboards
 - IoT & Smart Systems
 - Cybersecurity & Ethics



Participants:

High School IT Students & Teachers

When:

December 4th

Where:

125 Milton Ave, Alpharetta,
GA 30009

Why:

- Inspire future technology leaders
- Share industry expertise
- Support authentic project development
- Connect with emerging talent

[Volunteer Here!](#)



HIGHLIGHT

DR. CHARLES BLACK

The Good Trouble Project invited Mr. Charles Black to speak to students about his role in the Civil Rights Movement. Mr. Black told the students about being the leader of the Atlanta Student Movement, marching and getting arrested with MLK, Jr. and John Lewis, and leading protests that help end segregation in Atlanta. He inspired the students and showed them that one person can make a difference in our world!



CHARLIE'S ARMY - STEPHANIE CRONMILLER

Charlie's Army was one of the most impactful stories shared during Power of Storytelling Day, ranking among the most frequently mentioned sessions in student reflections. Students connected with its themes of resilience, empathy, and purpose, and many left inspired by the reminder that one person's story can create a lasting impact on others. Thank you to Stephanie for being vulnerable with our students!



KENT LUSK

Kent Lusk has been a dedicated supporter of Innovation Academy, serving as a Senior Bootcamp keynote speaker, sharing career lessons during Power of Storytelling Day, and creating countless connections and opportunities for our students. His commitment to investing in the next generation continues to make a lasting impact on our school community.



ALUMNI SPOTLIGHT

MATTHEW HUANG

Since graduating from IA, I've been chasing my interest in entrepreneurship. I'm currently studying CS at Georgia Tech, where I founded The Hive, a startup community for GT undergrads. More recently, I've been working at Whip, a YC startup, where I run a creator partnership program, doing cybersecurity/forensics research at Georgia Tech's CyFI Lab, and building my own startup in the security space.



Attending IA has been an instrumental part of my development as both a student and a leader. While there, I pursued an IT major and a biotechnology minor, founded the TEDx program, and served as the Technology Student Association and Science Olympiad president.

Coming back to speak with current students on Storytelling Day meant a lot to me — it was a great reminder of where my own drive to build and lead first started



Georgia
Tech®

IA FALL 2026 EVENTS

Sign Up for more information using the QR code or email Laura Taylor at TaylorLS@fultonschools.org



The Power of Storytelling

8.14 The Power of Storytelling Day is designed to connect our students with real voices from our community to help them build empathy, deepen perspective, and better understand the world around them. We are inviting students, educators, families, and community partners to share meaningful stories in 15 minutes increments that highlight real-life experiences, challenges, growth, and insight.



Engineering Flex Fridays

9.18 Engineering Flex Fridays are designed to give our students hands on, real world learning experiences connecting to Engineering. Topics our engineering students are exploring include ENG process design, hand tools, solidworks, 3d printing, pneumatics, welding and more!



Health Science Flex Fridays

9.11 Health science Flex Fridays are designed to give our students hands on, real world learning experiences connecting to health science. Topics our HS students are exploring include patient care, nutrition, EMR, Biotechnology, Surgical tech and more!



IT Flex Fridays

9.4 IT Flex Fridays are designed to give our students hands on, real world learning experiences connecting to Information technology. Topics our IT students are exploring are web development, programming, networking, AI, cryptology, game design and more!



10.16 Cultivate

Cultivate is a dedicated day for immersing our community in teaching professional-ready skills, designed to help students become well-rounded, confident, and connected with business and higher education leaders.



12.4 Innovate IT: IT Conference

Join us as a volunteer for our Innovate IT conference hosted by IA and sponsored by Microsoft. Innovate IT will offer a unique blend of workshops and networking opportunities designed to empower and educate both students and educators.

FLEX Fridays

On any given Flex Friday, we are asking for our Business Partners to help us with any of the following:

- Run a 2 hour workshop on skills relating to your field from either 10:15 - 12:15 or 2:00 - 4:00 (or both)!
- Give a TED talk style seminar
- Teach soft skills needed for the real world
- Present a real world problem solving challenge

SPONSOR **TED^x**FCSIA

Inspire **THE** world



TEDxFCSIA is an **independently run TED affiliated club**. We aim to **empower students to share their ideas** across the TED platform.



However, much of our organization relies on sponsorship. We use sponsorship money for **editing and recording** our TED talks, buying food for **live events**, creating **merch**, and more.



Help us raise **\$400 by December** to fund our March event. Help us **inspire the world!**

[**DONATE HERE**](#)





INNOVATION ACADEMY

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