

Spring
Fashion

Beer
Festival

Alive in
Roswell

Roswell

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Fulton Science Academy

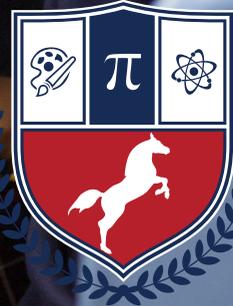
Excellence • Innovation • Character

100+
RESTAURANTS

Events Calendar
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ROSWELL
BEER FESTIVAL



FULTON SCIENCE ACADEMY

— Private School —

We sat down with Principal Kenan Sener of the
Fulton Science Academy
*to learn how they've become such a "stand-out" school
in such a short time here in North Fulton County.*

BY REGINA BARKLEY



Brake lights illuminate Roswell on a brisk spring morning as commuters head into work. But many cars are making a stop before they reach their final destination at a location that more and more people are learning about every day. Fulton Science Academy Private School.

Since becoming a private school nearly six years ago, **Fulton Science Academy** is blazing an impressive path. The school, which serves advanced and gifted students, opened the first phase of a new campus in the fall of 2015. Plans are underway to begin a second phase of construction in 2018 as enrollment continues to increase.

In addition to winning a prestigious "Excellence in STEM Education" award by the Technology Association of Georgia, FSA was also named the "Best Private School" (K-12) and the "Best Private Primary School" in North Fulton/South Forsyth by Appen Media in November 2016.

Without question, FSA's brand is booming. Because of this, we wanted to learn more about this affordable private STEM school, which welcomes many students from Roswell. I took a moment to speak with the school's principal, Kenan Sener, to discuss just a few reasons why FSA is quickly becoming a standout school in North Fulton.

BARKLEY:

First, I'd like to congratulate you on being named "The Best Private K-12 School" and the "Best Private Primary School" in North Fulton by Appen Media. Were you surprised by this honor?

SENER:

We were! I've learned many valuable lessons throughout my educational career, the most important being the value of hard

work and listening to those around me. As such, our administrative team focuses daily on creating a culture where our teachers enjoy coming to work and have the support they need to be successful and innovative in the classroom.

We've found that when teachers are enthusiastic about their jobs and feel valued and supported, this creates a very positive trickle-down effect; students love coming to school as well! To peek into a classroom, a visitor would see that students here perceive learning to be a privilege, not a punishment. Add into that equation our incredible parent volunteers, and we feel so fortunate. The Appen Media Award, while not expected, is certainly appreciated. It has put a spring in everyone's step!

BARKLEY:

Wonderful! I also heard that you won a prestigious "STEM Education Award" this fall. Care to discuss?

SENER:

I would love to. The Technology Association of Georgia hosts a statewide competition annually to recognize excellence in STEM education. This year, our school was recognized from more than 130 outstanding nominations. This is a huge honor for FSA because it speaks to the value of the education we offer. We want to set the standard for STEAM education nationally and internationally and this recognition is one step towards achieving that vision. For a school of our size and our scale, this may seem like an ambitious goal, but this is what we teach our students and what we practice in our lives as well.

BARKLEY:

From what I've heard, extracurricular academic teams are one factor that makes your school truly stand apart from others. Could you explain this?

SENER:

It would be my pleasure. Fulton Science Academy's culture is one



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where our students truly love learning and view coming to school as a privilege, not a punishment. In fact, we often smile because our kids enjoy being here so much that they crave additional opportunities to stay and explore hands-on learning. Joining one of our academic teams is a perfect way to do so. Last year, five of our teams represented Georgia in national and international events. One of our robotics teams won a Strategy and Innovation award at the North American Championships, and our Science Olympiad Team won 20th in the nation out of more than 7,000 teams and, in one category, our students won first place! Our students' goal is to be one of the top five Science Olympiad Schools in the nation within the next several years.

This year, we are enjoying a great winter; our Science Olympiad team just won first place in the regional competition, our Model UN teams are heading to New York to compete later this spring, and our all-female robotics team was just invited to compete in the United Kingdom this summer. It's incredible! We also have very accomplished teams in Destination Imagination, Future City, Math Olympiad, Chess, and Technology Fair. These teams blend STEAM concepts and provide children with critical life skills; teamwork, presentation skills, organization, planning and grace under pressure.

BARKLEY:

Your enrollment is rising and I hear you have blueprints in the works to expand the campus and include a high school. What

are your ingredients for success? What makes your school different from other private schools?

SENER:

There is certainly no shortage of wonderful private schools in Atlanta that we respect greatly. We follow a STEAM curriculum with emphasis on Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts and Mathematics in a setting that serves advanced and gifted students. Yes, our students have access to lots of innovative technology. But they also embrace classes in art and music and relish outdoor time through PE and daily recess. They work hard, but they play hard, too. We believe that success starts with personal happiness and we love to see that many students often don't even want to leave the school at the end of the day.

BARKLEY:

Anything else?

SENER:

I think our school is special because of the value we place on relationships and the sense of community we enjoy here. Everyone longs to be part of a group where they feel comfortable and accepted. At FSA, there is no, "one size fits all" mentality. Each child is different. Each teacher is different. Each subject is different. We ask ourselves daily how we can combine these forces to provide the best educational experience for each individual child. If something works well, we model it for others. If something doesn't, we take immediate action to remedy it. In other words, we call ourselves a

small school with a big heart.

BARKLEY:

Do all of your students plan to go into STEM-related careers?

SENER:

No...we have a very diverse student body and we love every child's uniqueness. We know that our students will be leaders of the future taking important roles in society. Some may choose to work in STEM fields, but we realize that many others will be wonderful journalists, lawyers, economists, professors, and will choose other careers to lead the way for others.

We've always told our students that if you love what you do, work never feels like work. We encourage students to follow their passion and look for careers to fulfill them. From that vision, with hard work and personal discipline, success will follow. The past has proven this to be true; I believe the future will prove it truer, still.

Fulton Science Academy Private School (FSAPS) has fostered a "year to learn" culture where students embrace an innovative, STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts, Mathematics) curriculum. Our extracurricular programs are widely recognized; FSAPS proudly represented the state of Georgia in five national and international academic competitions in 2016. Currently, FSAPS has 455 students in Pre-K through high school. The student body is diverse and reflects award-winning academic teams, competitive athletes, personal entrepreneurs, professional working actors, and award-winning critical thinkers. Built upon core values of excellence, innovation, and character, FSAPS has engineered a school of tomorrow, today. www.fultonscienceacademy.org.