

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: 24 April 2018**

## Trackmobile Funds STEM Field Trip for Over 175 Troup County Students



**LaGrange, Georgia. April 24, 2018:** When Michael Young, the Trackmobile North American Sales and Marketing Manager, entered Berta Weathersbee Elementary in LaGrange, GA, he had heard the stories about student achievement being low and student discipline being high. What he witnessed was different.

The Trackmobile sponsorship funding was delivered to Cooks and Nolan by Young after

taking a tour of the building, talking to students and teachers, and visiting renovated areas like the media center. At that time, Young remarked, "After hearing about the school's recent troubled reputation, I experienced a much different environment than I had envisioned." He added, "It was remarkable to see the level of discipline, courtesy, and positive engagement the students exhibited during my tour."

That is what made the donation from Trackmobile to fund an educational field trip for over 175 Berta Weathersbee students mean something. All students and teachers in the 3<sup>rd</sup>, 4<sup>th</sup>, and 5<sup>th</sup> grade will travel to the Mercedes Benz Stadium in Atlanta thanks to this generous donation. The students will learn about architecture, design, and other elements of Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math principles that are much needed in future career opportunities that will be offered in Troup County over the next five years.

Willie Cooks, Berta Weathersbee Principal, said, "This will be a cultural experience for the student population at Berta. Our free and reduced lunch rate is over 85% and many of our students do not get to experience trips like this, quite frankly, due to funding needs. This opportunity will be life changing for some of our students and we are excited Trackmobile has provided the financial resources for us to make this happen."

In the past, Berta Weathersbee had a reputation for severe discipline issues and low student achievement. With new building personnel like Cooks, and Instructional Specialist Christy Nolan, leading the charge in facilitating pride and instilling character values within the students, offering opportunities for parent

participation, and calling on partners like Trackmobile to provide educational experiences like field studies, that perception is shifting.

Cooks, a 20-year veteran that served as a Drill Sargent in Fort Benning, Georgia went into the education field after retiring. His sense of community and desire to continue serving by helping to mold and guide youth within his community drove him to begin a new career in early education. "I realized the importance of starting early with good fundamental discipline and direction. School administration seemed like a natural fit," explained Cooks. "Taking what I learned in the military and using it to support the underserved children in our communities to set an example of responsible behavior and goal-oriented direction gives my life new purpose," added Cooks.

The funding for the field trip on May 7<sup>th</sup> will be one of the ways the new administration will help Berta turn the corner.

"We are proud to support the future of Troup County through sponsoring these students", stated Mr. Young.

**About Trackmobile® LLC:** Trackmobile, a Georgia based Marmon Group / Berkshire Hathaway Company, is the founding innovator and leading manufacturer of the bi-modal railcar mover with over 11,000 sold globally. Creating the railcar switching and movement category in 1948 as a solution to specific customer needs in railcar switching, Trackmobile remains focused on what customers need. Their singular purpose is to provide the most efficient, cost effective, railcar switching and movement equipment that is safe and effortless to operate. While highly customizable for unique customer applications, Trackmobile railcar movers provide the best value and the lowest operational lifetime cost in the industry.

**About Bertha Weathersbee Elementary School:** originally named the Southwest, Elementary School, it was renamed for its beloved former principal of 41 years in 1974, The School has been a source of pride to the LaGrange community by serving school children of the south zone of LaGrange, Georgia for the past 70 years.

**About Troup County School System:**

Troup County School System is an accredited educational system with over 11,900 students in grades K-12. TCCSS does offer a free Pre-K program at each elementary school. The system is comprised of eleven elementary schools, three middle schools, three high schools, one college and career academy, and one alternative learning center. Students within the school system are taught a rigorous and relevant curriculum that helps them make college and career choices beyond graduation and succeed in life. The system 2017 graduation rate rose 6.6 percentage points in three years to 78.0 percent. To learn more about [Troup County School System](http://troup.org), visit [troup.org](http://troup.org) and the Troup County School System Facebook page.

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