



The Buzz

AUGUST
2014



Thomas County Board of Education Monthly Newsletter

Message from the Superintendent

To our faculty and staff:

Thank you for the role that you played in making sure that we had a good start to the new school year. I visited every school and most classrooms the first day of school and saw cheerful teachers and well-prepared classrooms. I always feel fortunate to be associated with such a fine staff.

Following an unusually large increase in enrollment last school year, it appears that we are seeing more normal enrollment this year with growth in the 1-2% range. The good news is that we expect to have enrollment growth for the third consecutive year. Enrollment growth allows us to sustain our programs and to begin to put back some of the items that were cut during the worst of the recent recession.

I recently shared five goals for the new school year with principals and district leaders:

GOAL ONE: We will improve academic achievement across all grades and disciplines through implementation of a guaranteed curriculum. Robert Marzano's research identified a "guaranteed and viable curriculum" as the number one school level factor that improves student achievement (*What Works in Schools*). The implementation of the new teacher evaluation instrument last year focused so much of our attention on instructional practices (ways to teach) that in some cases we lost the sense of urgency for making sure that the curriculum was fully covered. In order for our students to reach their potential, we must focus both on practice and on content. This year, you will see in your buildings an emphasis on making sure that we deliver a guaranteed

curriculum using best practices.

GOAL TWO: We must focus added attention on improving student attendance at every school. In the past, the state report card has "scored" school attendance based on the percentage of students who missed school 15 days or less. This year, the state has radically raised the bar, using a "less than 6 days" standard. This change could radically impact our CCRPI scores. We must emphasize the importance of good attendance to students and parents at every opportunity, be more aggressive about getting students who are eligible for hospital homebound services signed up for those services in a timely way, and be diligent about keeping accurate attendance data.

GOAL THREE: We will fully implement the *Teacher Keys Effectiveness System (TKES)* with fidelity throughout the school district. I was very proud of how

well our staff adjusted to the roll-out of the new teacher and leader evaluation system last year. The system will be fully in place this year as the teacher effectiveness measures are incorporated into the equation. Implementing the Student Learning Objective (SLO) evaluations has been a "heavy lift" for our district this summer, and I wish to thank Mrs. Melanie Chavaux for her excellent leadership in guiding this process. Dozens of teachers have worked during the summer vacation on writing and revising assessments, and many school leaders have assisted with the process. I appreciate the conscientious approach that our school district has taken to implementing TKES in a fair and effective manner. The new evaluation system will continue to require more from us, and I appreciate your perseverance and dedication

Message Continued on Page 2



GEORGIA'S PRE-K TEACHER OF THE YEAR - Hand-in-Hand Pre-K teacher Erin Wright has been chosen as Georgia's Pre-K Teacher of the Year by the Georgia Association for the Education of Young Children (GAEYC). Wright will receive the award at a banquet in Atlanta later this fall. Join Thomas County Schools in applauding Erin Wright for her commitment to excellence!

The Thomas County School System does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, or national origin, sex, or disability.

CALENDAR HIGHLIGHTS

Aug. 19 - TCMS Parent Night for 7th/8th Grade, 5:30 - 7:30 p.m.

Aug. 19 - Hand-In-Hand Papa John's Night

Aug. 21 - Hand-In-Hand Watch D.O.G. Dad's Night (for males), 6:00 - 7:00 p.m.

Aug. 23 - Future Jacket Cheer Camp, 8:00 a.m. - 3:30 p.m.

Aug. 26 - Garrison-Pilcher Parent Night, 6:00 - 7:00 p.m.

Aug. 26 - Hand-In-Hand Ident-a-Kid Pictures

Aug. 28 - Cross Creek Ident-a-Kid Pictures & Cross Creek Papa John's Night

Sept. 1 - Labor Day Holiday



Please visit the school websites for a complete calendar of events.

The Buzz is a monthly publication of the Thomas County Schools. Send suggestions or comments to Melanie Hester, 200 North Pinetree Blvd., Thomasville, GA 31792; 229.225-4380, ext. 115; mhester@thomas.k12.ga.us. *The Buzz* is available online at www.thomas.k12.ga.us, News and Events tab.

“Treat people as if they were what they ought to be and you help them become what they are capable of becoming.” - Goethe

Thomas County Schools Have More Heart



Bridgett Rex, AHA Youth Market Director (far left), and Kimberly Moore, AHA Vice President/Youth Market (far right), present certificates to Principals Trista Jones, Sharonda O’Neal, and Clay Stanaland for their record participation in the American Heart Association Jump Rope for Heart fundraiser.

Last year, Thomas County Schools raised \$12,935 to save lives against heart disease and stroke. The number beat the American Heart Association’s best year ever in 2011 with \$11,030 donated.

In return, Thomas County Schools received more than \$1,000 in U.S. Games Certificates to purchase supplies and equipment to further assist students in becoming active and more heart healthy. Free jump

ropes, basketballs, educational materials, posters, and skill banners are provided, as well as year-round support.

Garrison-Pilcher, Cross Creek, and Thomas County Central High School all participated in the fundraiser. Congratulations to Garrison-Pilcher for raising \$9,452 becoming the second highest school out of south Georgia’s 30-county territory and beating out more than 150 schools.



BACK TO SCHOOL BLITZ A HUGE SUCCESS - Sponsored by Thomas County Family Connections in partnership with the Thomas County and Thomasville City School systems, the eighth annual Back to School Blitz was a success. Hosted by Thomasville City Schools this year, the event was held in the MacIntyre Park Middle School gym. Pictured in the forefront from left to right are Lorie Lawing, Tammy Shealey, Melissa Rodgers, and Karen Paulino. In the background are Jim Rehberg, Lamar Matthews, Whitney Robertson, and Melvin Hugans.

Message Continued from Page 1

to implementing the program with fidelity so that it will yield accurate, reliable, and useful data.

GOAL FOUR: We are preparing for a successful SACS review and renewed accreditation. I wish to thank Dr. Bob Dechman for leading our system’s accreditation efforts. The overview provided during the opening district faculty meeting set the tone for several months of work that will culminate with the February visit. You will be asked to complete surveys, serve on committees, and prepare our schools and classrooms for the reaccreditation visit this February. I am thankful for such a dedicated and professional faculty and staff who will make Thomas County proud throughout this process!

GOAL FIVE: We hope to maintain stable student enrollment with modest growth if possible. Three years ago, we were able to reverse a negative enrollment trend and stabilize our enrollment pattern with a couple of years of significant growth. Added competition from state virtual charter schools and other competing systems make it unlikely that we will see large enrollment growth every year. Some of our programs that have attracted students from surrounding districts are now being implemented in other places. For example, we have attracted middle and high school students from Grady County for several years due to our accelerated academic programs.

Grady County has implemented this fall a program modeled after our successful MERIT program. This means that it is likely that fewer Grady County students will be coming our way in the years ahead. We are glad that Grady County students will have these accelerated learning opportunities in their own district. I also applaud the Thomasville City School System for implementing a transportation program for its elementary students. This will, in time, likely reduce the number of city resident students attending our system. I am glad that our district has been a catalyst for change in these surrounding districts. If we are to maintain our position as the school system of choice, we must constantly work to improve. Sustainable strength will be built and maintained not on attracting students from other districts but on being the system of choice for students from our own district. To do that, we must provide excellent, challenging instruction for students of all ability levels, a caring and nurturing environment, and a welcoming environment and excellent customer service to parents. If we concentrate on these objectives, healthy student enrollment will naturally follow.

I appreciate your commitment to helping us achieve our goals and for helping to market our system throughout our community. Our strength is our faculty, and I am honored and humbled to be a part of such a great team.

Dust Komegg

2nd Annual

THOMAS COUNTY ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS



JACK O' LANTERN JOG
5K & FUN RUN

REGISTER TODAY! WWW.THOMAS.K12.GA.US

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 18, 2014

Thomas County School System Receives Award for Financial Excellence

The Thomas County Board of Education recently received an Award of Distinction for Excellent Financial Reporting from the Georgia Department of Audits and Accounts. The Education Audit Division conducts over 235 financial engagements annually, and this year, the Thomas County School System was one of only 34 entities that received this Award of Achievement.

The Department of Audits created the award program to recognize those entities that are audited annually and go beyond standard financial business practices to be considered the best of the best. An award of distinction is presented to organizations that submit quality financial statements and supporting documentation in a timely manner, whose annual financial report is given an unmodified audit opinion and is free of any significant deficiencies or material weaknesses, and

comply with all Transparency in Government requirements.

Kenneth Knight, CPA, and Audit Supervisor with the Leesburg Regional Office from the Georgia Department of Audits, presented the award at the June Thomas County Board of Education meeting.

“First let me take this opportunity to thank you for allowing the Department to participate in your board meeting this evening,” Knight said. “It is with great pleasure that we present the Thomas County Board of Education this award. Your financial staff does an outstanding job and we want you to know how fortunate you are to have them as

part of your organization. School districts such as Thomas County, who are ready and prepared for their annual audit, make our job as auditors much easier and possible.”

Joey Holland, CPA, and Assistant Superintendent for Finance and Operations, received the award on behalf of the school system. “We appreciate the Georgia Department of Audits recognizing the Thomas County

nutrition department, our directors that manage federal grants, and many others in the district that have a hand in school system operations. Being recognized by the Audit Department is evidence that we strive for excellence in supporting the education of the children of Thomas County.”

This award was granted for the fiscal year ending June 30, 2013.

Holland added, “Our audit for fiscal year 2013 was completed in March 2014 and the audit department has compiled the list of systems that complied with all the requirements.”

Superintendent Dr. Dusty Kornegay applauded the efforts of the school system as a whole, as well as the Finance Department.

Dr. Kornegay said, “We take the management of the tax dollars entrusted to us very seriously as we strive to be good stewards of our resources. I appreciate the fine work of Mr. Joey Holland and his entire department.”



Mr. Kenneth Knight (left), State Audit Supervisor, presented a certificate of recognition to Assistant Superintendent Joey Holland for excellence in financial management at the June Thomas County Board of Education meeting.

School System for our hard work,” said Holland. “The annual audit process encompasses the entire school district, and this award is a testament to the dedication of our district finance department staff, our local school accounting staff, our



FFA NATIONAL FINALISTS - Thomas County Central High School recently announced two students who qualified as national finalists at the 2014 National FFA Agriscience Fair. Recent graduate Sunnie Wynn and sophomore Hope Nelson qualified in the Division Four Animal Systems category. The name of their project, Weighing the Situation, focused on the correlation of the weight of the rider on the level of a horse’s performance and impact changes in the distance of a race. Wynn and Nelson will be attending the 2014 National FFA Convention in Louisville, Kentucky, in October. FFA Advisor and TCCHS Ag Teacher Robbie Harrison said the young ladies are excited to have the opportunity to represent Thomas County Central in Louisville this fall. Pictured from left to right are Sunnie Wynn, Robbie Harrison, and Hope Nelson.

Science Academy at TCMS

Thomas County Middle School will be offering an exciting after school science enrichment program followed by an intensive fun-filled four-day science excursion. There will be three sessions offered including separate sessions for sixth, seventh, and eighth graders.

The Science Academy will be directed by Dana Studdard, a sixth grade science teacher at Thomas County Middle School.

The sixth grade session is a study of the history of the space program, the physics behind rocketry, and space spin-off technology. Florida State University’s Magnetic Lab will partner with the sixth graders as they participate in a six week after school program. Following the six week program, the students will “lift-off” on a four-day “mission” to Kennedy Space Center, Disney’s

EPCOT, and Wonder Works.

A journey into the world of marine biology is planned for the seventh graders. Students will study marine life by spending six weeks looking at the characteristics of ocean life. Partnering with Thomas University, the students will study the anatomy of ocean animals. The trip planned includes Sea World, Tampa Bay’s Egmont Key, and Gatorland to work with marine biologists in the field.

The eighth graders have a study planned of the physics behind roller coaster designs. Students will spend six weeks learning how to build and design their own coasters using Newton’s Laws of Motion. Students will have the opportunity to travel to Orlando, Florida, where they will meet with roller coaster engineers at Universal Studios and Orlando’s Science Center.

6th Grade - Feb. 18 - 21 ♦ 7th Grade - May 6 - 9
8th Grade - Nov. 5 - 8

Welcome New Employees!

Bishop Hall

Darrell Brinkley
Chris Huckans
Brandi Miranda
Gwendolyn Mitchell

Board of Education

Renee Anderson
Melissa Flowers

Cross Creek

Russell Braswell
Heather Collins
Kelli Dorminey
Patricia Harper
Melinda Johnson
Michelle Reed
Amanda Rice
Jocelyn Simmermaker
Ivie Stephenson
Meredith West
Jamie Whigham
Jessica Leigh Willis

Garrison Pilcher

Misty Bennett
Jennifer Carlton
Amanda Genter
Martha Hollis
Rebecca Kent
Angela Murphy
Tara Parker
Katy Pineda
Kendall Sanders
Lorenzo Thornton

Hand-in-Hand

Allison Barwick
Teresa Colon
Ashley Cox
Valerie Filer
Catherine Harris

Hand-In-Hand, cont.

Brenda Hester
Blair Hubbard
Charles Mathews
Erin Nestale
Tonia Rowell
Rhonda Whitfield
Jessica Lea Willis
Bernita Yearby

Maintenance

Thomas Adamavage
Trey Ezell
Jordan Hurst
James Kelley
Jordan Klock

Pathways

Crystal Bell
Amy Curtis
Krysti Gambrel
Lamario Johnson
Shavicka King
Kellie Martin
Marcus Singletary
Melissa Smith
Shantel Thompson
Morgan White
Malissa Williams

Renaissance

Joan Braswell

TCMS

Nicholas Beckham
Angela Brooks
Brandi Clapper
Michael Clapper
Olivia Clark
Jenna Coffee
Deborah Cooper
Casie Drew

TCMS, cont.

Stacie Dunn
Grady Jewell
Ashley Martin
Shelby Mitchell
LeAnn NeSmith
Dana Studdard
Samantha Sturrrup
Austin Taylor
Lee Taylor
Jennifer Turnbull

TCCHS

Brian Bellamy
Edward Cole
Dennice Dinkins
Charlotte Donald
Kensey Edgar
Lance Gainous
Brett James
Nakisha James
Paul Johns
Charity Kineer
Jana Petrey
Kristy Maxwell
Chastity Rehberg
Tom Rinehart
Willie Ross
Melissa Thompson
Anthony Voyles

Transportation

Keale Canion
Charles Danforth
Ellen Edwards
Degory Jones
Dorbartha Mickens
Forrest Monroe
Ronald Phillips
Jennie Redmond
Randall Wilcox



Thomas County Schools Summer Reading Challenge!

Garrison-Pilcher and Cross Creek Elementary Schools reported a large number of students who participated in the Summer Reading Challenge. Fifty-six Garrison-Pilcher students and 27 Cross Creek students read the required amount of books. Reading during the summer months is one of the easiest ways to prevent academic decline. The collaboration between the schools and the public library was a great way to keep students reading.

Garrison-Pilcher



Cross Creek



The Thomas County School System is launching an initiative to make a variety of fine arts opportunities more easily accessible to our students. In addition to offering bus transportation for students who choose to take advantage of the programs available at the Thomasville Center for the Arts, the Thomas County School System is partnering with the Thomasville Music Academy, the Dance Academy, and our own faculty to offer a variety of lessons in the afternoons on our own campuses. The Dance Academy will offer classes for Pre-K and K students on Monday afternoons at Hand-in-Hand Primary School. The Dance Academy will also offer classes for students in grades 1-4 on Thursdays and for students in grades 5-8 on Tuesdays at Thomas County Middle School. The Thomasville Music Academy will offer piano, guitar, and violin lessons on Monday, Tuesday, and Thursday afternoons. Students in first grade and above will be provided bus transportation from their school to Thomas County Middle School where they will receive a snack and may have supervised study hall (if needed) in the school's media center before or after their lessons until 5:30 p.m. The school system will offer art lessons beginning in September taught by Thomas County School System art faculty members. Details about art lessons will be provided soon. To learn more about dance lessons, call 226-6845, or call 850-692-9383 for information about music lessons.



See more at www.thomas.k12.ga.us!