



The Buzz

AUGUST
2013



Thomas County Board of Education Monthly Newsletter

Message from the Superintendent

I wish to thank all of you for your hard work in getting the 2013-2014 school year off to a smooth start. Except for the normal first day traffic congestion, we had a nearly perfect start to the new school year!

It appears that we will have a significant gain in enrollment for the second year in a row. Our first day enrollment count was up 264 students as compared to the first day of the previous year. We enrolled an additional 48 students the second day. The largest enrollment gains were at Hand-in-Hand and Garrison-Pilcher, but we saw growth across the entire system. I appreciate the patience of our teachers, students, and staff as we work to balance class loads and adjust class rosters. I anticipate that at least two additional teaching positions will be added to help cover growth.

This year promises to be both exciting and challenging. We will implement the Teacher Keys Evaluation System and the Leader Keys Evaluation System in every school, and our system will have its three-year visit for re-accreditation by the Georgia Accrediting Commission.

Our MERIT program enters its second year. During the program's first year, we saw record academic achievements from our students and a greater diversity of students completing honors and accelerated course work than

ever before. I expect to see even greater achievements this year. Last year, we significantly increased the number of gifted and high achieving students enrolled and being served in our system, we increased the number of middle school students earning high school credits, and the number of high school students earning college credits.

Our new middle school career-science center will open this fall and will offer the most comprehensive exploratory course options for middle school students in our area of the state. We are entering the second year of a

three-year plan to enhance the implementation of adaptive technology for special needs students.

The Thomas County School System has an academic program to meet the needs of every student, and career and extra-curricular options to cultivate talents and hone skills in virtually every interest area.

I hope that you have a great year. Please let me know if I can help you in any way.

Warmest regards,



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 seventh annual Back to School Blitz was a success. Hosted by Thomas County this year, the event was held in the gym at TCCHS. Pictured from left to right are Emily Ross, District ESOL Instructor, and Karen Paulino, Migrant Student Service Provider, discussing their programs and requirements for enrollment with Rich Johnson, Principal of Bishop Hall Charter School.

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

CALENDAR HIGHLIGHTS

Aug. 9 - Sept. 4 - Cross Creek Card Sales

Aug. 12 - Bishop Hall Open House, BH Chapel, 5:30 p.m.

Aug. 13 - Board of Education Meeting, PLC, 7:00 p.m.

Aug. 13 - Cross Creek Parent Night

Aug. 15 - Bishop Hall Board Meeting, Superintendent's Conference Room, BOE, 1:00 p.m.

Aug. 15 - Watch D.O.G. Dad's Night, Hand-in-Hand

Aug. 19 - 23 - TKES and LKES Training with DOE, Central Office, PLC

Aug. 23 - Varsity Football vs. Thomasville High School at the Jacket's Nest

Aug. 29 - School Council Meetings for all elementary schools

Aug. 30 - Varsity Football vs. Valdosta High School in Valdosta

Sept. 2 - 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.

“Most of us end up with no more than 5 or 6 people who remember us. Teachers have thousands of people who remember them for the rest of their lives.” Andy Rooney



School administrators, teachers, staff members and community members meet to set goals and priorities that will guide the district for the next five years.

Strategic Planning Process for TC Schools

In March of 2013, the Thomas County School System (TCSS) began the Strategic Planning process with a Community Engagement Meeting where several hundred people had the opportunity to share their thoughts and ideas on the future of the system. A follow-up survey gave people who were not able to attend the meeting an opportunity to provide input as well.

Feedback was gathered from the following questions:

1. To become the best school district in the country, what should the TCSS preserve/keep?
2. To become the best School District in the country, what should the TCSS change/get rid of/do differently?
3. What do you think are the top challenges faced by the TCSS?

4. What do you think are the top challenges faced by the students in the TCSS?

5. As a community, what do we want our public schools to provide for our students?

Then on June 17 and 18, parents, community members, school system partners, teachers, administrators, students, and board members met and worked as a Strategic Planning Team to set goals and priorities that will guide the district for the next five years.

Within the next month or so, small focused groups will meet as Academic, Continuous Improvement, Learning Environment, Operational, and Parent Involvement Teams in order to complete the framework and develop a plan that will guide and shape the direction of the Thomas County School System for the next five years.

'TIS THE SEASON FOR FLU SHOTS!

The Thomas County School System in partnership with the Thomas County Health Department will offer flu vaccines for students at all of our schools this fall. Employees and/or their family members who would like to participate may receive a vaccine on the same day. Permission forms are available on our website at www.thomas.k12.ga.us.

Complete the form and return it to your school nurse or the front office by Friday, August 16.



Milton Bracewell Honored for 48 Years of Service with School System

Long time employee Milton Bracewell dedicated 48 years of his life to the school system. Mr. Bracewell joined the school system as a bus mechanic in November 1965.

“Thousands of children have had safer, more dependable transportation to and from school, thanks to Mr. Bracewell’s hard work,” said Superintendent Dr. Kornegay. “During his time with the system, he has done some of everything that needed to be done to make the transportation system run well.”

In recent years, he has been known best for his distinctive voice on the radio. “His distinctive voice will be missed on the Thomas County Transportation airways, but his contributions to our



Dr. Kornegay presents a plaque to Mr. Bracewell for 48 years of service.

school system will never be forgotten,” Dr. Kornegay added.

Congratulations and best wishes for a great retirement, Mr. Bracewell!

Terri Matthews Will Be Remembered as a Trailblazer for Thomas County Schools



GP Assistant Principal Richard Potter congratulates Terri Matthews on her retirement.

Terry Matthews, RN, retired from Thomas County Schools after working as the school nurse at Garrison Pilcher. When she joined the system in 1993, she was practically the school system’s nursing program. She did it all from tending to emergencies, to

managing chronic health cases, to providing AIDS awareness training at the high school.

“It was her vision, her passion, and her advocacy that helped our school system develop a school nursing program that is the envy of nearly every other rural Georgia school system,” Superintendent Dr. Kornegay said. “She advocated at both the local and state levels for funding for school nurses, promoted her program, and pushed hard for what her program needed.”

Mrs. Matthews will always be remembered for her role in building a nursing program that will serve Thomas County students for years to come. Happy Retirement, Mrs. Matthews!



TEACHING & LEARNING

from Melanie Chavaux, Associate Superintendent for Teaching and Learning

Teaching and Learning in the Thomas County School System

On July 22, 2013, State School Superintendent Dr. John Barge and Gov. Nathan Deal announced that Georgia was withdrawing from the Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers (PARCC) test development consortium.

As Georgia builds new assessments, the assessments:

- will be aligned to the math and English language arts state standards;
- will be high-quality and rigorous;
- will be developed for students in grades 3 through 8 and high school;
- will be reviewed by Georgia teachers;
- will require less time to administer than the PARCC assessments;
- will be offered in both computer- and paper-based formats; and
- will include a variety of item types, such as performance-based and multiple-choice.

As a system, our summer professional learning

calendar focused on the alignment of K-12 writing, literacy in the academic disciplines, and the use of DOK (Depth of Knowledge) question stems. As we work this year to align our benchmarks to the Common Core Georgia Performance Standards, it will be important to include a variety of item types that will be of high quality and rigorous within each newly aligned benchmark. As you familiarize yourself with the types of questions and use the DOK question stems, it will be important to scaffold your students in their daily instruction by using the DOK question stems in class discussions as well as in weekly assignments.

As educators, we wear many hats and twirl lots of plates at one time leaving us with no time to waste. I encourage you to make use of the new TRL (Teacher Resource Link) that can be found within the SLDS. You will find excellent teaching tools and resources that align to all of the standards at your fingertips without wasting

precious time searching for resources for your lessons.

We are well under way with the system-wide implementation of the new teacher and leader (TKES and LKES) evaluation system. A team of Thomas County administrators was trained in Macon, Georgia the week of July 22nd and the

STAY IN THE KNOW WITH ELA RESOURCES

Common Core GPS English Language Arts

HIGHLIGHTS!

- Register for the ELA Summer Training Institutes
- New ELA Professional Learning Webcasts are now featuring teachers discussing how they are implementing the Common Core. See below for available titles.
- Join the English Language Arts listserv for updates and announcements by sending a blank email to one of the following addresses:

ELA K-5	Join-ela-k-5@list.doe.k12.ga.us
ELA 6-8	Join-ela-6-8@list.doe.k12.ga.us
ELA 9-12	Join-ela-9-12@list.doe.k12.ga.us
ELA District Support	Join-ela-districtsupport@list.doe.k12.ga.us
ELA Administrators	Join-ela-admin@list.doe.k12.ga.us

ELA Common Core Wikis

Elementary (K-5)	ELA Reporter November 2012	K-12 ELA CCGPS/Educator Resource
Middle (6-8)	ELA Reporter December 2012	ELA CCGPS Facts & Terms
High (9-12)	ELA Reporter January 2013	ELA Glossary of CCGPS Terms
	ELA Reporter February 2013	
	ELA Reporter March 2013	
	ELA Reporter April 2013	
	ELA Reporter May 2013	
	ELA Reporter June 2013	
	ELA Reporter July 2013	

ELA Professional Learning Webcasts

Kindergarten	Grade 3	Grade 5	Grade 9
Grade 1	Grade 4	Grade 7	Grade 10
Grade 2	Grade 5	Grade 8	Grade 11
			Grade 12

Links for previously recorded webinars are posted on the English/Language Arts Professional Learning Sessions page: <https://www.georgiastandards.org/Common-Core/Pages/ELA-PL-Sessions.aspx>

Literacy Professional Learning Webinars

Galileo Overview NEW LINKS

- Galileo to the Core: Leveraging Digital Resources for Literacy (Elementary K-5)
- Galileo to the Core: Leveraging Digital Resources for Literacy (Middle 6-8)
- Galileo to the Core: Leveraging Digital Resources for Literacy (High 9-12)

remaining administrators will be trained during the week of August 19-23 by a team of GaDoe evaluation specialists in the PLC at the Thomas County Board of Education.

Next week, we begin administering screeners in grades K-8 as part of our system's progress monitoring process. Please study and analyze the data that you collect and use it to guide your daily instruction. We used the data collected from the yearly screeners from last year and reported it as one of the CCRPI indicators known as Innovative Practices for our school system this year.

Last year at this time, I shared my thoughts on the Pathway to the Common Core and how the difficulty seemed to be more in the understanding of the Pathway than with the standards. This year, as we complete the Strategic Plan that will guide our system for the next five years, it is evident that we have created a successful college or career pathway for all students in the Thomas County School System.

Welcome Back to the 2013-2014 school year and to the Hardest Job You Will Ever Love!

Melanie Chavaux

Like Thomas County Schools on Facebook & Stay Connected!



THE MORE THAT YOU READ, THE MORE THINGS YOU WILL KNOW. THE MORE THAT YOU LEARN, THE MORE PLACES YOU'LL GO. -DR. SEUSS

BISHOP HALL CHARTER SCHOOL

announces new Board of Directors



Susan Ford

Thomas University

Joyce Halstead

SWGTC

Cynthia Drayton

GA Department of Labor

Don Sims

Chamber of Commerce

Grant Plymel

Retired from TCBOE

Terrell Solana

Local Foundation

Morris Williams

Local Foundation



MERIT STUDENTS CREATE MOSAIC BENCH FOR TCMS - Thomas County Middle School Merit students designed a mosaic bench that will beautify the front entrance to the school. Led by Thomas County School's Arts Specialist Marty Haythorn, the students participated in three art classes totaling six hours. The students who participated in the mosaic bench project chose it as part of their community service. Some of the tiles used were made by eighth grade students during the previous school year, but most of the tiles were made by the Merit students. Haythorn provided the tools, materials and instruction, but the students used their imagination to design the tiles. Pictured on the front row from left to right are Anna James, Reagan Johnson, Kayla Shoup, Kelsie Shoup; back row (L-R) Landon Trotter, Nathan Gibson, Katelyn Hancock, Marty Haythorn, and Isaiah Manning.

Welcome New Employees!

Bishop Hall

Steve Mavity

Cross Creek

Lacey Broome
Herbert Hicks
Chester Hightower
Sandy Fitzgerald

Crossroads

Scott Trammell

Garrison Pilcher

Jermaine Dennis
Ray Jean Dickerson
Jessica Duncan
Brandy Majors
Jennie Rich

Hand-in-Hand

Bobbi Barlow
Suzanne Brown
Patti Butler
Rhonda Harkness
Lamar Laquinda
Kristi Lewis
Cindy McLain
Angel Powell
Erin Searcy

Pathways

Rayna Andrews
Paul DeSaulniers
Tabitha Key
Tywana Ponder
Ashley Stephens
Shantel Thompson

Project Source

Brenda Thomson

TCMS

Ariel Balla
Patricia Beach
LaQuoyia Hayes
Emily Holton
Katelynn Lea
Dina Ortiz
Ashley Palmer
Megan Palmer
Whitney Robertson
Alice Wilson
Stephanie D. Wilson

TCCHS

Tracey Brown
Nicole Davis
Carmen Devane
Maureen Harris
Virginia Harvell
Samantha Jackson
Ronalda Keaton
Chris Miranda
Robert Rogers
Joe Waterbury
Erika Wyatt

Transportation

Thomas Applewood
Eugene Brooks
Octavia Bryant
Larry Delaney
Bonnie Hurst
Nikka Paul
Jennifer Turner

Artwork

by Megan Johnson



This artwork represents a portion of Megan Johnson's AP (Advanced Placement) Studio Art portfolio submission for 2013. It is part of her series works, "Women of the World." Megan's artwork is currently displayed in the lobby at the central board office. AP Studio Art is offered for college credit at TCCHS for highly dedicated students who have prerequisite art skills and self motivation to complete 24 quality artworks. Standards and evaluation are through The College Board.