



The Buzz

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Thomas County Board of Education Monthly Newsletter

Thomas County Students Rack Up College Credits

A record number of Thomas County students are earning college credits while still in high school through a combination of Advanced Placement and dual enrollment courses with many students receiving national recognition for outstanding performance on the rigorous College Board exams.

Students at Thomas County Central High School have multiple options for earning college credit. Students may complete up to sixteen College Board Advanced Placement courses or they may participate in one of several Move on When Ready dual enrollment programs.

Thomas County Central High School offers two Associates of Arts (AA) college degree programs on its high school campus. Students may complete a traditional AA degree or an AA degree with a math and science emphasis. The math and science emphasis degree is well-suited for students planning a major in medicine, engineering, or any other math or science-related field.

An Associates of Applied Science degree is available through dual enrollment with Southern Regional Technical College (SRTC). Students desiring an "on campus" college experience may enroll in Move on When Ready



TCCHS maintains perpetual plaques in its high school cafeteria honoring students who are recognized by the College Board for outstanding achievement on Advanced Placement exams. Assistant Principal Dr. Jim Rehberg is seen here adding the most recent names to one of the Advanced Placement scholars' plaques.

courses at SRTC, Thomas University, Valdosta State or any other accredited college or university in Georgia.

Many students get a head start on their college work by combining Move on When Ready college courses with Advanced Placement credits. Thomas County's AA programs with Bainbridge State College are carefully articulated to allow students to apply Advanced Placement credits toward an AA degree if that is the student's goal.

During the 2015-2016

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The Gift of Peace



When I was completing an exegesis (critical interpretation of a text) of the Book of John as a Christianity major at Mercer University more than three decades ago, I discovered John 14:27, and it immediately became one of my favorite verses: "Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid."

As we approach the Christmas season, and thoughts of gift-giving fill our minds and sometimes stress our schedules and even our budgets, we find Christmas in our hearts most profoundly when we claim Jesus' gift of Peace.

Within this context, Peace does not mean the absence of war. It does not guarantee us a life free of heartache, financial stress, pain or suffering. The gift of Peace is an assurance that we are part of an eternal plan that provides Peace that transcends our daily concerns.

I recently visited a family who had just lost a loved-one. As heart-broken as the parents were about the loss of their child, they exuded Peace. Their attitude of Peace even in the midst of the hardest road

that they had ever traveled was a testimony to me and a reminder of the Peace of Christ. I saw Jesus in them.

The celebration of the birth of Jesus-- which foreshadows the sacrifice on Good Friday and the triumph of Easter--offers us the gift of Peace, a gift that the world

cannot give, a gift that does not have to be exchanged, a gift that expects no repayment, and a gift that lasts forever.



John 14:27

This Christmas, claim the gift of Jesus and "let not your heart be troubled."

Merry Christmas and best wishes for a safe and Happy Holiday Season!

Dwight Komegy

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.tcjackets.net under the News and Events tab.

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

“The most valuable resource that all teachers have is each other. Without collaboration our growth is limited to our own perspectives.” - Robert John Meehan

Bus Safety Week Celebrated at Thomas County Schools



Ms. Debbie Carraway's Pre-K class at Hand-In-Hand gathers by the bus after their bus safety demonstration.

Thomas County Schools celebrated National School Bus Safety Week during October 17-21. The school system participated at each school by discussing bus safety with the students on the outside and inside of the bus. School Bus Safety Week is also reminder for all citizens to exercise constant courtesy and caution when near school buses.

Every day, Thomas County bus drivers transport more than 3,000 students to and from school in a safe manner. Thomas County buses travel approximately 936,000 miles each year bringing children to school and taking them home.

“When transportation is required, school buses are the safest way for students to get to and from school,” said Robert Young, Thomas County Schools Transportation Supervisor. “This week is an excellent time to teach and reiterate to students and parents simple measures they can take while going to and from the bus stop, getting on and off the bus, and riding in the bus. It also gives us a chance to thank and honor the professional school drivers who devote themselves to

transporting our most precious cargo.”

For years, school buses have provided safe access to learning for Georgia’s school children through secure and dependable transportation to schools. School buses are equipped with more safety features than any other vehicle and required to meet numerous safety specifications, including state and federal requirements. In addition, all public school bus operators receive rigorous, specialized training on a variety of topics before they can take the wheel behind the big yellow bus.



As she exits the bus, Hand-In-Hand student Raniya Wyche receives a toy school bus from bus driver Forrest Monroe. The age-appropriate keepsakes remind the students of bus safety rules.



TCCHS Student Council members Beth Sharpe, Breanna Cook, Caitlyn Atkinson, Abigail Jense, Caleb Moore, Jeremy Simmons, Michael Cress, Riley Jones, Dev Patel, and Ashton Barwick take a quick photo op outside the National Center for Civil and Human Rights.

TCCHS Student Council Attends Summit, Begins Activities

By Ashlan Layton, student reporter

A new year means a new crop of student leaders ready to make a difference in their school.

Thomas County Central High School Student Council is now in session. Members are planning activities, as well as learning more about how government works.

Ten council members recently attended the Georgia Association of Student Councils Leadership Summit 2016 at the state capitol in Atlanta. Participants were: Brianna Cook, Dev Patel, Abigail Jense, Ashton Barwick, Michael Cress, Caleb Moore, Riley Jones, Jeremy Simmons, Caitlyn Atkinson and Beth Sharpe.

The association has been active for more than 45 years and it is dedicated to training student leaders, per TCCHS Student Council Advisor Teresa Carver. The leadership summit has been held since 2011.

“Thomas County Central has been fortunate to have student leaders attend every leadership session at the capitol since its inception,” Carver said. “Students

leave leadership summits with a familiarity of their capitol, governor, senators, representatives and other key state leaders, in addition to gaining knowledge on building their own leadership skills.”

Carver adds the summit “is always a tremendous experience for student council members.”

“Being able to participate in training sessions at our (state) capitol and meeting key state and national leaders inspires student leaders to think about leadership roles beyond high school,” she said.

Students usually attend workshops, listen to speakers, and observe Georgia House of Representatives sessions. Due to chamber renovations this year, students were unable to attend large group sessions and summit attendees were split into two groups: Visionaries and Change Agents.

Council members participate in various school activities such as decorating for prom, helping with open house, and most currently, signing up teams for Shop with a Yellow Jacket.

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school year, TCCHS students surpassed the national passing rates on Advanced Placement exams, earning credit for 102 courses through AP exams.

Thomas County students had 100% pass rates in Advanced Placement Statistics and Advanced Placement Studio Art.

TCCHS recently had nine students named AP Scholars, three students named AP Scholars with Honor, and seven students named AP Scholars with Distinction.

An AP Scholar is a student who scores a three or higher on three or more AP exams; an AP Scholar with Honor is a student who scores a three or higher on four or more AP exams; and, an AP Scholar with Distinction is a student who receives an average score of 3.5 or higher on all AP exams taken and a three or higher on five or more exams.

Students named AP Scholars are Hailey Bryan,

Richard Hightower, Isabel Medellin, Chloe Pickens, Emily Robison, Natalie Smith, Anna Jense, Lauren Pearson, and Chandler Watson.

AP Scholar with Honor students are Hannah Dixon, Maggie Martin, and Tyler Williamson.

AP Scholar with Distinction honorees are Cole Donovan, John Fuller, Jane Guo, Lucas Jackson, Austin Yeomans, Jordan Bush and Eli Kosciw.

"I'm really honored about this accomplishment, and I'm really thankful for such great AP teachers," AP Scholar Lauren Pearson said. "They've helped me a lot over the years. Thanks to them, I've earned credit for AP World History, AP U.S. History, AP Chemistry, and AP Literature."

Senior Eli Kosciw, who was named an AP Scholar with Distinction at the end of his junior year, took AP courses in psychology, U.S. history, chemistry, literature, and environmental science. He

plans to attend Georgia Tech and said the average student there is an AP Scholar so, to him, earning the distinction "really was a necessity."

"I'm glad to know I managed to reach my initial goal and earn college credit at the same time," Kosciw said. The accomplishment "took a lot of time and effort," he continued "and was worth it."

"In the end, the extra studying and classwork helped thoroughly prepare me for the next four years of my life," Kosciw said.

Recent graduate John Fuller was named an AP Scholar with Distinction. He said this is "a great honor."

"I decided early in my high school career to take as many high level classes as possible to prepare me for college and, honestly, I didn't even know there was recognition for doing well on the exams," Fuller said. "But I worked hard to learn the material and evidently did well enough to get recognized by the College Board for my work."

Fuller took AP American Government, AP Psychology, AP Literature, AP Statistics, and AP Human Geography. He passed all five exams. He said taking these AP classes will ultimately help him save money and time in college as he works toward his future. He is attending the University of Georgia and majoring in biology, pre-med.

Dr. Jim Rehberg, TCCHS assistant principal said, "To consistently demonstrate excellence and high scores across the Advanced Placement curriculum is a fantastic accomplishment."

"They met the challenge of our AP Program head-on and demonstrated that they

were more than capable of performing at a high level of academic rigor," Rehberg said. "I think it bodes well for their futures and what new heights they will attain."

In addition to college credits earned through the Advanced Placement program, 243 Thomas County students earned credit for 765 college courses through dual enrollment options. One hundred forty-six (146) members of TCCHS's class of 2016 graduated with college credits. "Students who enter college with a head start have a greater chance of graduating from college on time," Rehberg said.

"Earning advanced credits helps keep students challenged and engaged," said Thomas County Superintendent Dr. Dusty Kornegay. "Students who see the relevance of their course work take their studies more seriously and move toward their goals with greater passion," he said.

Helping students earn advanced credits starts as early as fourth grade in Thomas County Schools where students have the option to enter an advanced math track. Twenty-five percent of Thomas County Middle School students are enrolled in one or more high school classes, allowing students room in their high school schedules to take multiple Advanced Placement and dual-enrollment college courses. Over four hundred Thomas County Middle School students earned high school credit classes during the 2015-2016 school year.

High school credits available to Thomas County Middle School students include freshman English, Algebra I, high school physical science, Spanish I and II, computer science, and agriculture.



ART SHOW WINNERS - Cross Creek Elementary brings home 30 ribbons at the Exchange Club's Deep South Fair art show this year! Congratulations to all the Cross Creek artists and their art teacher, Ms. Annie Burke. Pictured are: front row (L-R) Monica Domingo, Gracie Powell, Cristian Rivas, Sarah Stolarik, Leah Wisham, Katelyn Bradshaw, Rosa Hurtado; middle row (L-R), Skye Hopkins, Michaela Pallotti, Miley Gregerson, Kyleigh Murphy, Kara Welch, Jojo Castillo, Jenna Clanton, Charlie Emmett; top row (L-R), Ashlyn Gillespie, Meghan Moncrief, Navorion Wells, Avery Turnbull, Riley Barnes, Peyton Ingles, and Nishyah Duncan. Other winners not pictured are Kailyn Gregg, Keysha Tillman, Brendy Becera, Ethan Luke, Jack Taylor, Ne'Kehja Graham, and Savannah Ward.



GARRISON-PILCHER READING RALLY - Garrison-Pilcher students recently celebrated the end of their first nine-week term with a pep rally for reading and literacy. Thomas County Central High School provided the Yellow Jacket band, cheerleaders, and football players. Activities included choosing a free book, eating popcorn, taking photos, getting autographs by the athletes and of course, reading books. Community volunteers help with all of these activities. Pictured are TCHS senior football players Bailey King and Lauren Pearson interacting with Garrison-Pilcher students.

Garrison-Pilcher Celebrates Pioneer Day



Garrison-Pilcher students took a step back in time for the annual Pioneer Day event. Thanks to all of our wonderful presenters and volunteers for sharing their time and making this day a success!

Duke TIP Students Identified

Thomas County Middle School is very proud to recognize 38 seventh-grade students who have qualified for participation in the Duke TIP program this year.

Participants in the Duke TIP 7th Grade Talent Search identify academic strengths, develop abilities and interests, and celebrate their achievements at a crucial time when they are forming their identities and looking ahead to the future.

As part of the talent search enrollment, Duke TIP students at the middle school will take the PSAT as an above-level test.

The test results allow students to have greater insight into their abilities. Taking the PSAT in middle



school gives students the opportunity to preview a college entrance exam. This is the largest group of seventh-graders from Thomas County Middle School to qualify for this honor.

Pictured from left to right are: front row, Matthew

Peterson, Kariana Colon, Caleb Smith, Tisha Stevens, Molly Grace White, Georgia Patton, and Emily Hobbs; second row, Laura Hiers, Cora Polous, Karsyn Bush, Jenaya Coleman, Emma Mitchell, Christopher Cooper, Gavin Gilliard, Cason Dennard, Jack Cantrell, Colby

Thomas, and Mike Jacob; third row, Principal Jamie Thompson, Tyson Tucker, Ethan Nicoll, Caitlyn Arrowood, Norman Desourdy, Grace Parkerson, Kendall Alligood, Robert Rewis, Ben Castillo, Aryan Patel, Persean Taylor, and Jacob Brinson.

Thomas County Schools Celebrate Lights on Afterschool in Georgia



Football players Nathan Sherrod (from left), J. Ben Smith, Ryland Ramhoffer, Carlie Dismuke, Charlie Morris, and Lynwood Thompson wait in line for a hot meal served by Stacey Munford and Marie Ragan and provided by the Kids Cafe Program.

In America today, 11.3 million children are alone and unsupervised after school. To recognize the necessity and importance of quality afterschool programs, hundreds of programs in Georgia joined together on October 20 to celebrate the annual nationwide event Lights on Afterschool.

Since 2000, Lights on Afterschool has emphasized the importance of keeping the lights on and the doors open after school in order to provide students with quality afterschool programs.

The Thomas County School System provides many opportunities for students to attend afterschool programs. One of the newest programs is the addition of Kids Café which provides free meals and snacks for students involved in after-school enrichment activities.

Through the Second Harvest of South Georgia, the Kids Café Program provides a safe place where children and young adults can participate in educational, recreational and social activities under the supervision of Thomas County School System staff members.

“Through this partnership,

we are now able to provide our students at Thomas County Central High School the opportunity to receive a nutritious dinner after participating in after-school tutoring and other after-school activities,” said Lisa Williams, Thomas County School System Assistant Superintendent.

“The evening meals are served Monday through Thursday from 5:15 p.m until 7:30 p.m. in the school's cafeteria.”

Meals began in October at TCCHS, and many students are already taking advantage of the program. Currently, between 100 and 140 athletes are enjoying a healthy meal after practice. All students at TCCHS who participate in tutoring and an enrichment program of any type-- whether it is drama, band, dance, art, theater, or any other school sponsored club activity-- are eligible to receive the dinner meal.

“This program will provide a great benefit to students and families who may have a minimal amount of food at home or may be limited in preparing a nutritious dinner due to time constraints,” Williams said. “Through our

school nutrition program and the new partnership with Second Harvest, the students at TCCHS have the option of receiving breakfast, lunch, an afternoon snack, and dinner all before returning home in the afternoons. We encourage our students to take full advantage of the nutritious meal programs being offered at TCCHS.”

Thomas County School System students in grades 3-8 are also able to receive extra help in academic areas of math, reading, and science, test preparation, homework help, and enrichment activities from certified teachers and paraprofessionals through a partnership with Thomasville Community Resource Center (TCRC).

Through Georgia's Title IV, Part B 21st Century Community Learning Centers program (21st CCLC), the Georgia Department of Education provides federal funds to establish or expand community learning centers that operate during out-of-school hours. This school year, 125 programs will operate over 240 locations serving approximately 27,000 21st CCLC students and their families.

“I think our partnership and collaboration with the Thomas County School System is a great and much needed asset that continues to grow,” said LaTonya Williams White, 21st Century Program Manager at the TCRC. “This partnership allows Thomasville Community Resource Center to have

access to the schools, students, and school equipment. TCRC currently serves students at Cross Creek, Garrison Pilcher, and Thomas County Middle in the Thomas County School System.”

The afterschool program offered through TCRC also allows the teachers to reteach skills, giving students one-on-one attention, when they are having difficulty understanding the skills that are being taught. The smaller group settings, peer-to-peer tutoring, and one-on-one attention are very beneficial to struggling students. The program is also allowing the students to have a safe place to go afterschool. Transportation is provided to the students who attend the 21st Century Afterschool Program at one of the Thomas County Schools.

“We know students often require opportunities and support beyond the regular school day to be successful,” State School Superintendent Richard Woods said. “Through our 21st CCLC programs, children have the opportunity to discover new talents and explore real-world connections that expand and enhance their learning. We are proud of the remarkable work being accomplished after school by students who attend our 21st CCLC programs.”

Lights on Afterschool is a powerful reminder that afterschool programs play a critical role in keeping youth safe, engaged and prepared to be successful adults.

CPR and First Aid will be offered during the from 4:00 - 8:00 p.m. at Hand-In-Hand Primary School on the following dates:

January 24, 2017 First Aid

February 21, 2017 CPR

Please sign up on PExpress to attend!





ROCKING THE VOTE 2016

