



The Buzz

NOVEMBER
2013



Thomas County Board of Education Monthly Newsletter

Message from the Superintendent

I am happy to report that the Georgia Accrediting Commission (GAC) completed its visit to the district last week and recommended that Thomas County Schools receive its "Accreditation with Quality" designation for the next five years. I would like to thank Mrs. Melanie Chavaux, who coordinated preparation for the visit, and all of the principals, teachers and staff members who not only prepared for the visit but who also create and maintain our outstanding school system that earned the highest accreditation rating given.

Visiting team members had positive comments about each school. Excerpts from the accreditation report follow:

Hand-in-Hand: "Beautiful facilities and well-maintained. This is an outstanding program and one that the school officials are excited about. . . This program has been well-organized and structured to meet the needs of this age level."

Garrison-Pilcher: "This is an outstanding lower school environment facilitated by a very competent administrative team. . . I observed good teaching and compassionate nurturing of the students."

Cross Creek: "A very structured, loving and safe climate that is so important for this grade level. . . A very competent and conscientious staff making every effort to

enhance the educational process...great leaders beginning at the top."

Thomas County Upper Elementary/Middle School: "This is a beautiful and efficiently organized facility housing a recently completed career-science wing that enables students to expand their learning beyond the classroom environment."

Thomas County Central High School: "This is a most impressive educational facility composed of a very diverse academic curriculum. This environment affords the opportunity for students to engage themselves in a variety of experiences according to their liking. Each of these areas of learning is a top-flight program."

Bishop Hall Charter

School: "Bishop Hall is a charter school with a non-traditional flair . . . students have access to more individualized instruction than in a traditional setting."

We will now begin preparation for our five-year visit from the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACS) which will occur next school year.

I feel very fortunate to work in an outstanding school system with a positive, professional staff. I hope that this month brings you many opportunities to reflect on your many blessings and that you and your family have a wonderful Thanksgiving Holiday!

Garrison Pilcher Elementary Holds Reading Rally



Band members, cheerleaders, and athletes from TCCHS were at Garrison Pilcher for the recent reading rally.

SEE FULL STORY ON PAGE 2!

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



CALENDAR HIGHLIGHTS

- Nov. 1** - TCMS Fall Festival, 6:00 - 8:30 p.m.
- Nov. 1** - OPEN (no football)
- Nov. 8** - Varsity Football vs. Harris County in Hamilton
- Nov. 11** - Veteran's Day Holiday
- Nov. 12** - Board of Education Meeting, 7:00 p.m.
- Nov. 21** - TCMS Spelling Bee
- Nov. 25 & 26** - Teacher/Student Holidays
- Nov. 27 - 29** - Thanksgiving Holidays



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.



Anthony Paulino (second from right), TCCHS Foreign Language Department Head, presents two projectors to Principal Mr. Roquelino Mendez in October, a gift from Thomas County Schools to Toledo Community College, Belize.

Donation from TC Schools Benefits Community College in Belize

During fall break, Anthony Paulino, head of the foreign language department and Spanish teacher at TCCHS, made a trip back to his hometown Punta Gorda in the country of Belize. On October 11, he presented two projectors to Toledo Community College (TCC), the secondary school where he started his career as a secondary education teacher of Spanish.

With the help of Dr. Dusty Kornegay and John Hebron, Paulino was able to obtain those projectors for which the Board of Governors and administration of the Toledo Community College were very appreciative. Principal Roquelino Mendez said that

these items will be very beneficial to faculty and students and to the institution as a whole. He also noted that they have been in the process of trying to obtain a projector for each of the schools' departments. Mendez also shared with Paulino that he hopes that this would be the beginning of an educational relationship between Toledo Community College (TCC) and Thomas County Schools and expressed heartfelt gratitude from the Board of Governors, administration, faculty, and staff for such a timely gift.

One of the projectors was assigned to the general studies department and the other to the technology department at Toledo Community College.

GP Reading Rally (from front page)

Garrison Pilcher recently celebrated with a reading rally, an annual event to promote reading and literacy.

“This is such a fun event for our students,” Darlene Cook, Media Specialist, said. “We celebrate their success in reading and encourage them to read every day.”

Proceeds from Garrison Pilcher’s recent book fair were used to purchase a book for every child. The rally began with students choosing his or her free book from a wide selection of titles. TCCHS band members, athletes, and cheerleaders were at the reading rally to help provide a pep rally atmosphere.

“The cheers and music motivated the kids, and students from TCCHS are

fantastic role models for our students,” said Cook. “The high school students reminded our students to study hard, stay in school, read books, and be a role model Thomas County Yellow Jacket. The athletes and cheerleaders interacted with our students.”

The rally also included time for popcorn, photos, and, of course, reading a book. Volunteers from the community supported this event from beginning to end.

Bill Shaver, TCCHS head football coach, said, “Our young men enjoy going to the schools and spending time with our fellow Yellow Jackets. We always stress to our young men the importance of being a good role model in all aspects.”

TCS Organizes an All-American Salute to School Lunch

More than 32 million children eat school lunch everyday across the USA, and to celebrate the healthy lunch choices in Thomas County, schools celebrated National School Lunch Week in October. The theme, “School Lunch Across the USA,” included events and activities that helped to promote the benefits of healthy school lunches. It also celebrated the flavors, ingredients, and culture of various regions of the USA.

Each school decorated their lines in American attire as well as dressed themselves to represent each area that was celebrated. Prizes were handed out for students who enjoyed the healthy meals each day. Information was given to the students and their families discussing the week and how it



TCMS students Destini Brinson, left, and Madelyn Cone enjoy chili cheese fritos during National School Lunch Week.

benefits the students.

Thomas County Nutrition Director Katie Eidson appreciated all the hard work from her staff during National School Lunch Week, as well as in the daily preparation of healthy, delicious meals to more than 5,000 students.

STAY CONNECTED!

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Thomas County School System Participates in Literacy Event



Pictured are the CLCP Board Members including (L-R) Nancy Tillinghast, Cindy Wooten, Vanessa Dawson, Jeanna Mayhall, Melanie Comerford, Ellen Terrell, Laura Pike, Bob Dechman, Mae Hatcher, Kat Comerford, and Cynthia Drayton.

The Thomas County Certified Literate Community Program (CLCP) recently held a literacy fair at the Thomas County Public Library. More than 150 books were given out, parent involvement information was shared, and the Thomas County School System was well represented in this important community literacy event.

Eric Litwin, author of the *Pete the Cat* series, presented two read aloud sessions free

to fair attendees, community organizations shared public service information, and hot dogs and popcorn were offered to everyone present. It was a well-attended event.

CLCP promotes literacy in Georgia by involving the whole community. By making literacy a community-wide commitment, a diversity of key resources are mobilized to promote and support literacy training.



“LEARNING THROUGH GROWING PROJECT” - Cross Creek K-kids were awarded the “Lowes Grant” for the 2013 – 2014 school year. The club was awarded grant money in the amount of \$4,800 to construct an outdoor classroom. The outdoor classroom is beginning to take shape. Recently, a concrete pad was poured to serve as the classroom area. Cross Creek is now in the process of constructing raised flower beds and purchasing equipment to complete the gardening areas. Project completion is scheduled for November 9, 2013. Along with the Lowes Grant, Cross Creek received grant money and donations from Thomasville Wal-Mart to help with costs of flowers and plants. They are so excited about the progress and want to thank Bee Partners, Wal-Mart and Lowes, for making this project a reality for their students. Pictured are Loxley Slocumb, from left, Kendall Alligood, and Brooklyn Cohen with teacher Laura Daughtry leveling new pavers.



TCMS STUDENTS ATTEND SCHOOL DAYS EVENT – The 8th grade MERIT team at Thomas County Middle School, Zulu Company, recently attended the annual Lower Muskogee Creek Tribe's 2013 School Days and Pow-Wow in Whigham, Georgia. The students learned about the history and culture of the Muskogee Creek people. Students learned about the importance of storytelling, the skill of hunting, and the art of Native dancing.



HAND-IN-HAND CELEBRATES GEORGIA PRE-K WEEK – State Representative Darlene Taylor and several other locals recently participated in Georgia Pre-K Week by reading a favorite children's book to the students at Thomas County's Hand-In-Hand Primary School. During Georgia Pre-K Week, numerous state, community and business leaders participated in the week long celebration of Georgia's Pre-K Program and its 20th Anniversary. Georgia Pre-K week is a tremendous effort to highlight the importance of early education across the state. Pictured is Representative Darlene Taylor reading to Erin Lipsey's class.

“Live as if you were to die tomorrow. Learn as if you were to live forever.” –Mahatma Gandhi

Esra and Minns Present Sessions at GCTM Conference



Billy Esra, left, and Darrin Minns, TCCHS math teachers, recently attended the GCTM conference.

Billy Esra and Darrin Minns, TCCHS math teachers, have attended the Georgia Council for Teachers of Mathematics (GCTM) Conference several times over the last five years. The three day conference covers topics of interest at all levels of mathematics instruction, from kindergarten through post-secondary.

This year, Minns and Esra presented two sessions at the conference. One session focused on the senior level math class, Advanced Mathematical Decision Making. They shared hands-on statistics lessons that they use in their classrooms. The most popular activity presented required participants (primarily other math teachers from around the state) to build launchers and then propel gummy bears into the air in order to collect data and work through the process of experimental design. They also led a round table discussion of the implementation and

results of the new fourth year mathematics options.

Minns said, “We wanted to give teachers around the state the opportunity to share their experiences with the new senior math classes. We wanted to create a forum for discussion that would be mutually beneficial to everyone.”

The round table discussion was attended by teachers from around the state, as well as several representatives from the state board of education.

Esra Chosen as Regional Representative for GAAPMT

The GCTM hosts a conference within a conference on Friday for high school AP mathematics teachers. While at this year’s Georgia Association of Advanced Placement Math Teachers (GAAPMT) Friday business meeting, Esra was confirmed as a regional representative for GAAPMT for the next two years. Esra said, “I’ve been thinking about becoming more involved in the GCTM or GAAPMT for several years. The GCTM conference is one of the best conferences that I’ve attended, and I’m excited about the opportunity to be more involved with AP math teachers throughout the state by serving as a regional representative to GAAPMT.”

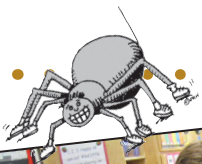


THOMAS COUNTY TEACHERS CHOSEN TO PARTICIPATE IN THE PAGE TEACHER LEADERSHIP INSTITUTE - Teachers were nominated to participate in a three session teacher leadership institute hosted by PAGE and RESA. The Schlechty Center presented the training. The Schlechty Center is a private, nonprofit organization committed to partnering with school leaders across the country to transform their classrooms, schools, and school districts into engagement-focused organizations. Every session has the ultimate goal of increasing student engagement and increasing profound learning for students. Nominated teachers formed school teams that learned strategies to develop engagement-focused classrooms and schools. This was the first time that a Teacher Leadership Institute had participants function as teams. Pictured from the high school team are Judy Holwell (left), Sharon Davis, and Teresa Carver. Another team from Thomas County included Michele Dechman, Carrie Holland, and Heather Ward.

State School Superintendent Visits Thomas County Schools



Dr. John D. Barge, State School Superintendent, shares his thoughts with the Thomas County Board of Education and system administrators on the Common Core Georgia Performance Standards (CCGPS). Dr. Barge shared that much of the CCGPS was implemented when Georgia moved to standards based instruction with the roll out of the Georgia Performance Standards. Dr. Barge had the opportunity to tour several classrooms in the P.R.E.P. Academy before his visit with the Thomas County School System ended.



NHS Delivers Goodies to Hand-In-Hand Students



The National Honor Society students at TCCHS completed a community service project by making goodie bags for the elementary school students. NHS Advisors are Christine Patton and Feraby Moye. Pictured are the NHS students giving Halloween goodie bags to Hand-In-Hand Primary students. Above, from left, are TCCHS students Kaylee Shaver, Sam Long, and Angel Michaels with kindergarten students Audrey Keve, Colton Nix, and Malachi Gaskins. Also pictured, from left, are TCCHS students Reggie Mobley and Cooper Mayhall with PreK students Perla Morales, Connor Mills, and Anthony Hill.



HARVESTING LITERACY IN A PUMPKIN PATCH - The 3rd Annual Literacy Pumpkin Patch at Cross Creek cropped up in Mrs. Dechman and Mrs. Mobley's classes. Students selected their favorite book to read, summarized the book, then used their imaginations to create a "pumpkin character" from the story. Students did an outstanding job, and the pumpkins were amazing. The pumpkin patch was visited by parents, community members, and other classes throughout the day. Pictured from left with their pumpkin characters are Keaton Stephens, Luke Pierce, and Abel Gibson.

Thank you to the staff and students for making **RED RIBBON WEEK** a success!



DUCK DYNASTY VISITS CROSS CREEK - Teachers on Stinger Street at Cross Creek were in costume on Halloween sporting Duck Dynasty attire. The students loved seeing their teachers dressed up! Pictured kneeling are Lacey Howard (left) and Kari Holm; teachers standing are (L-R) Carrie Tharpe, Gini Billingsley, Delisa Barrow, Susan Milam, Ashley Finch, Jordan Taylor, and Heather Butler.



Bring Your Own Technology!

A team of teachers and administrators from Thomas County Middle School recently visited Fayette County to learn more about the Bring Your Own Technology (BYOT) initiative. Pictured are students at TCMS using their cell phones during class to complete an assignment.



1st Annual

THOMAS COUNTY ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS

JACK O'LANTERN JOG



FIRST JACK O'LANTERN JOG A SUCCESS - The Thomas County Elementary Schools hosted the first Jack O'Lantern Jog where more than 230 people participated. All proceeds from the walk will go to the Thomas County Elementary Schools. There were 149 one mile runners with awards given to children ranging in ages 2- 12. Eighty-seven people completed the 5K Run/Jog with ages ranging from 7- 62. Dog World and Two Nutty Chicks were available for concessions. A big thank you to Al Whatley, Alison Parker, Bill Wilhelm, Jenn Bendewish, and MERIT volunteers for making the jog a success!

Next Year's Jog: October 18, 2014 (tentative)

TOP FINISHERS!!!

One Mile Fun Run:

1st	Brandon Hopper	11 yo	6:11
2nd	Anna James	10 yo	6:18
3rd	Jimmy Cipriani	12 yo	6:25

5K Walk/Jog/Run:

1st	Conley Wilhelm	15 yo	20:00
2nd	Chad Johnson	42 yo	20:32
3rd	Al Whatley	43 yo	21:11

TCMS Art Students Win Ribbons at Deep South Fair

Pictured left to right:
Samuel White, 6th,
Colored Pencil; Miriam
Van Veen, 6th, Crayon;
and Thomas Tran, 8th,
Pencil.

CONGRATULATIONS!

