



The Buzz

NOVEMBER
2014



Thomas County Board of Education Monthly Newsletter

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

Thomas County Schools Awarded Connections for Classrooms Technology Grant



Amaya Williams, Caleb Davis, Kaylee Plymale, and Kaylee Lewis complete educational activities in Garrison-Pilcher's new computer lab.

The Thomas County School System was awarded more than \$309,000 to be used to improve the technology infrastructure at Garrison-Pilcher Elementary and Cross Creek Elementary Schools. Thomas County's grant proposal was in the top five from among 140 Connections for Classrooms proposals submitted state-wide.

In an effort to increase bandwidth for every school district in Georgia, the State Board of Education voted to contribute more than \$14.8 million in bond funds toward grants that will allow 103 local education agencies (LEAs) to improve their Internet infrastructure, part of a larger effort to ensure all classrooms have the high-speed broadband access required for digital and blended learning.

"I appreciate the hard work of Assistant Superintendents Joey Holland and Melanie Chavaux and Technology Implementation Coordinator Aaron Stolarik in writing the award winning grant," Superintendent Dr. Dusty Kornegay said. "These funds will allow us to provide faster and more reliable Internet connections in the classrooms at Garrison-Pilcher and Cross Creek and will enhance our instructional technology infrastructure. This grant will save local tax dollars that would have otherwise been required to make these improvements."

The Connections for Classrooms grant program is part of a broader effort that includes expanding the University System of Georgia's (USG) Peachnet network to connect every school system to its high-

speed network. Connections for Classrooms broadens this expansion to ensure that schools have sufficient network infrastructure to effectively utilize that increased bandwidth at the classroom level.

Assistant Superintendent for Finance and Operations Joey Holland said, "This grant will provide a much needed upgrade to our computer networks at Garrison-Pilcher and Cross Creek. Our school system is committed to providing digital learning environments in every classroom, and this grant will assist us in accomplishing this for our students in grades 1- 4."

Connections for Classrooms is a collaborative funding effort between the Georgia Department of Education (GaDOE), the Governor's Office of Student Achievement (GOSA), and the One Georgia Authority (OGA).



The 2015 Governor's Honors Program Nominees were recognized at a reception held in their honor. Pictured on the first row are Hope Nelson, from left, Asia Gurule, Laken Rutland, Katie Simmons, and Sophie Anderson. Pictured on the back row are Guanghui Li, from left, Jacob Hancock, Chandler Watson, Parker Owens, Logan Leik, and Cole Donovan. See complete story on page 2.

CALENDAR HIGHLIGHTS

Nov. 13 -FCA Banquet, TCMS Cafeteria

Nov. 18 -TCMS Schoolwide Spelling Bee

Nov. 18 -Cross Creek "Give Thanks for Mom Day"

Nov. 20 -Hand-In-Hand School Council Mtg., 4:30
Parent BEE Booster Mtg., 5:30

Nov. 24 - 28 -Thanksgiving Holidays

Dec. 1 -Thomasville Christmas Parade, Downtown

Dec. 6 - Hand-In-Hand Winter Family Fun Day, 8:30 - 11:30 a.m.



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.

*"It is the supreme art of the teacher to awaken joy in creative expression and knowledge."
- Albert Einstein*

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Governor's Honors Program Nominees Announced at TCCHS

Thomas County Central High School's 2015 Governor's Honors Program (GHP) Nominees were recognized at a reception held in their honor.

GHP is a four-week summer residential instructional program designed to provide intellectually gifted and artistically talented high school students challenging and enriching educational opportunities not usually available during the regular school year. GHP is fully-funded by the Georgia General Assembly, with no cost to the participant.

Rising juniors and seniors are eligible for the program. Nominees are from academic, fine arts and CTAE areas.

TCCHS nominees in academics are Cole Donovan, Latin; Jane Guo, science; Guanghui Li, mathematics; Kathryn Simmons, science; and Chandler Watson, science.

Fine arts nominees are Sophie Anderson, visual arts;

Logan Leik, music, voice/bass; and Laken Rutland, music, woodwind/clarinet.

CTAE nominees are Asia Gurule, technology; and Jacob Hancock, Hope Nelson and Parker Owens, all agricultural science.

More than 2,900 students from across the state were nominated last fall by their schools in various majors. These nominees will submit extensive applications in hopes of getting invitations to state-level interviews in January and February. There, judges and interviewers will select the program's 690 finalists.

If selected, the finalists will attend the program this summer beginning June 14. They will attend classes in their major, select another area for their minor, and participate in seminars, activities, and performances. The intensity of the experience is almost universally described by its alumni as "life-changing."



NHS SPONSORS A DONATION DRIVE- During the month of October, the Thomas County Middle School National Junior Honor Society sponsored a "Spooktacular Donation" competition. Fifth grade students donated canned foods for the Thomas County Food Bank, sixth grade students donated paper towels for Miss Kitty's Feline Sanctuary, seventh grade students donated paper towels and toilet paper for Hands and Hearts for Horses, and eighth grade students brought dog and cat food for the Thomas County Humane Society. The fifth grade students brought the most donations. Pictured is Ed Williams, Thomas County Humane Society, with National Junior Honor Society members Brook Beasley (L-R), Sarah Fulghum, T'Naya Ivey, and Jared Russell.



RED RIBBON WEEK AT TCMS - During the week of October 27-October 31, students at Thomas County Upper Elementary and Thomas County Middle School participated in several events to help them understand the importance of saying "no" to drugs. Each day, students participated in different dress up days. Wednesday was Red Ribbon Day and students wore red as a reminder of the importance of living a drug-free life. Also on Wednesday, all students attended an assembly during which they learned more about the harmful effects of using drugs. They witnessed a K9 police dog in action as representatives from the Thomasville Police Department and Thomas County Sherriff's Office were on hand at the event. Thomasville Police Sergeant Waylon Parker spoke at the event and told students that drug use not only affects the user, but also his or her family and the community. The Red Ribbon Week events were sponsored by TCMS counselor Patricia Barron and TCUE counselor Kevin Keve.



NOVEL STUDY AT CROSS CREEK- Recent reading projects went along with a novel study. Students read and studied several resources about the Titanic and made projects about the ill-fated ship. One boat had a string pull which actually made the ship sink. Cross Creek fourth-graders are showing their creativity while learning in all academic areas. Pictured on the front row are (L-R) Ashton Hines, Mauricio Becerra-Parra, and Sarah Edgerton. On the back row are Logan Newton (L-R), Cadence Allen, Lily Stone, and Erica Burgos.

STEM Science Nights at Cross Creek and Garrison-Pilcher Engage Whole Family



Second grader Gaines Small, from left, works with teachers Misty Bennett and Jeremy Sellers at Garrison-Pilcher's science night.

STEM education is quite elementary, and it proved to be just that for the elementary students in Thomas County at both Garrison-Pilcher and Cross Creek Elementary Schools. Garrison-Pilcher and Cross Creek each hosted family STEM science nights where students and parents gathered in the gyms at both schools to experience up to 19 different hands-on learning activities in science, technology, engineering and math.

Both students and parents had the opportunity to rotate from station to station as students choose from activities such as "Life Vest Challenge" where students had to work to keep a soup can afloat or "Building Tall Towers" which required students to use their problem solving skills like an engineer to build the tallest building without going over a budget.

The students enjoyed the activities. "The golf game was really fun," said Zach Williams, first grader. "My ball went further than the others. It was the smallest and the softest,

but the teacher had to stop it! I also did a fun experiment with gas and liquid."

Leaving STEM Science Night, second grader Carson Creech said, "This was the best night ever! I loved that roller coaster station! Once I got there, I didn't want to leave."

Sarah Edgerton, a fourth-grader in Carolyn Clifton's class at Cross Creek said that the STEM night was really cool and fun. "I've always thought science was amazing because of all of the things you can do," said Sarah. "Participating in STEM night made me think that I am more capable of doing things than I thought I was."

In elementary school, STEM education is curriculum based on the idea of educating students in science, technology, engineering and mathematics in a blended learning environment where students are shown how the scientific method can be applied to everyday life. The goal is to pique students' interest so that their first experience begins to develop

before they reach the middle and high school years.

"Our Family STEM science night provided a wonderful opportunity for parents to be fully engaged and to participate in what their children do every day," Brecca Pope, Assistant Principal at Cross Creek Elementary said.

A STEM-focused education allows for more student collaboration, communication, critical thinking, and problem solving. It was evident during the STEM Family Science nights at both Garrison-Pilcher and Cross Creek that students and their parents were engaged in the process of learning together as they communicated and collaborated with other school families.

"Our Family STEM science night was a fun-filled learning experience for our students, parents, and teachers," said Garrison-Pilcher Principal Sharonda O'Neal. "It was exciting to see our students engaged and using their problem solving skills in the STEM activities. Our teachers

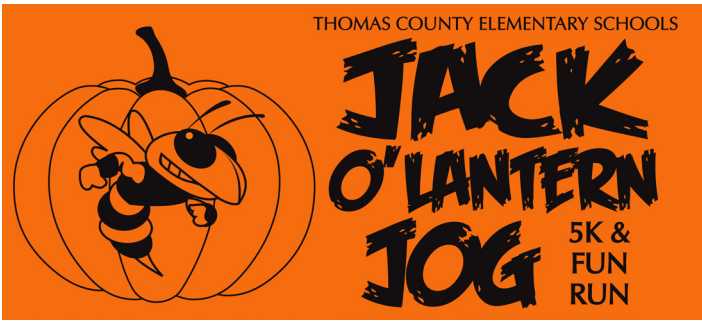
are also very excited about continuing to blend STEM activities into their teaching."

Melanie Chavaux, Associate Superintendent, stated, "STEM education supports innovation and best practice. The Family STEM science nights at both Garrison-Pilcher and Cross Creek allowed our elementary students' parents to be involved in authentic learning opportunities while at school."

The Thomas County School System is dedicated to providing innovative opportunities in preparing world class students by providing high quality educational opportunities in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) fields.



Cross Creek teacher Lisa Salveter helps Sarah Edgerton, fourth-grader, at the roller coaster station.



SECOND ANNUAL JACK O' LANTERN JOG - The Thomas County Elementary Schools hosted the second annual Jack O'Lantern Jog where more than 140 people participated. All proceeds from the walk will go to the Thomas County Elementary Schools. There were 99 one mile runners with awards given to children ranging in ages 2 - 12. Forty-one people completed the 5K Run/Jog with ages ranging from 7 - 62. Two Nutty Chicks Boiled Peanuts and Blue Bell Ice Cream were available for concessions. A big thank you to all teacher and student volunteers for making the jog a success!



FIELD TRIPS @ Garrison Pilcher



Vicki Warren's Garrison-Pilcher students visited two local Thomasville bakeries, the Bread Wagon and Flowers Bakery. The students compared and contrasted the bakeries, finding many similarities and differences.



Students in Lynn Burton's class at Garrison-Pilcher enjoyed a recent field trip to St. Marks. They observed natural habitats of the river, the butterfly migration, and the St. Marks Lighthouse. Students are shown on the observation tower overlooking the salt marsh.