



The Buzz

OCTOBER
2013



Thomas County Board of Education Monthly Newsletter

GHP

Nominees Announced at TCCHS



TCCHS Governor's Honors Program nominees include (front row, left to right) Emily Kornegay, Laken Rutland, Sophie Anderson, Christina Sellars (back row, left to right) Noah Harris, Charles Maggitas, Jacob Hiers, Justin Knapp, Ryan Trull and Austin Yeomans. Not pictured is Maggie Bowden.

Thomas County Central High School has named the following 11 students as its 2014 Governor's Honors Program (GHP) nominees:

- Academics: Justin Knapp, Emily Kornegay, Austin Yeomans and Noah Harris.
- Fine Arts: Laken Rutland, Sophie Anderson, Charles Maggitas and Margaret Bowden.
- Career/Tech: Ryan Trull
- Agriscience: Christina Sellars and Jacob Hiers.

The Governor's Honors Program is a residential summer program for gifted and talented high school students who will be rising juniors and seniors next summer. The program offers instruction significantly different from the typical high school classroom and is designed to provide students with the skills, knowledge,

and attitudes necessary to become independent, lifelong learners.

"We have a good bit of preparation to do before

interviews in January, but right now I'm just really happy for the opportunity it presents our nominees," Dr. James T. Rehberg, director of gifted and accelerated instruction said. "Last year we had a very strong showing, five students, for the 50th Governor's Honors Program and they all came back elated they had the experience they did. I think the four weeks really made an impression on our finalists, and I hope their alumni enthusiasm for the program will translate into continued excitement for this year's nominees."

Finalists for GHP will participate from June 22 to July 19, 2014.



GRANDPARENTS DAY AT GARRISON PILCHER - Wayne Drawdy, from left, visits with granddaughter Sidney Drawdy, and other grandparents Janice and Tommy Dolan. They spent time in Mrs. Ginny Hopper's classroom. Grandparents Day was also celebrated at Hand-in-Hand, Cross Creek, and Thomas County Middle School.

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

CALENDAR HIGHLIGHTS

- Oct. 4 - Varsity Football vs. Bainbridge in Bainbridge
- Oct. 7 - Oct. 11 - Fall Break
- Oct. 11 - Varsity Football vs. Northside Columbus in Columbus
- Oct. 14 - Teacher/Student Holiday
- Oct. 17 - Chorus Fall Showcase, 7:00 p.m., TCCHS Cafeteria
- Oct. 18 - "HOMECOMING" Varsity Football vs. Lee County at the Jacket's Nest
- Oct. 18 - 26 - "Celebrate My Drive" campaign at TCCHS
- Oct. 24 - CLCP Literacy Fair, 5:30 - 7:30 p.m.
- Oct. 25 - "SENIOR NIGHT" Varsity Football vs. Hardaway at the Jacket's Nest
- Oct. 28 - Nov. 1 - Red Ribbon Week (ALL SCHOOLS)
- Nov. 11 - Veteran's 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.

Author Lois Ruby Visits TCUE Students



Students from Thomas County Upper Elementary School met Lois Ruby, author of *Steal Away Home* and other popular novels. Pictured at top, right is Ruby with student Katie Cleveland.

Thomas County Upper Elementary students recently welcomed author Lois Ruby to the media center. The fifth grade students read Ruby's novel *Steal Away Home* during their first unit of study in language arts. Students were able to meet Ruby in an event hosted by Erin Rehberg, TCUE/TCMS Library Media Specialist.

During the meetings with Ruby, students learned how authors create characters, stories, conflicts, and plot lines. Ruby explained that many times she begins a story with a character and lets the story flow from that character. Ruby discussed the central theme of courage in her book *Steal Away Home* and helped students think about how different characters in the novel are courageous in their actions. Students also learned of the challenging process of getting a book published.

“I had to write the book twelve times,” said Ruby as she encouraged students to listen to their teachers when asked to revise their own writing. She even told students that

one publisher sent the book back with 150 sticky notes containing suggested changes to her work.

One fifth grader, Katie Cleveland, was excited to meet Ruby as she recently read and created a project on one of her other novels, *The Secret of Laurel Oaks*. She was able to talk with the author about specific parts of her novel and how she came up with the idea for writing it.

Gail Trotter, fifth grade language arts teacher, said, “It is inspiring for students to meet an author, especially when they have read the author's work. It makes the reading experience personal to them, and they feel invested in the story. It encourages students to know that professional writers go through the same writing process of writing and rewriting several times to get the finished product.”

Lois Ruby wrote other novels including *The Moxie Kid*, and *Strike! The Story of Mother Jones and the Colorado Field War*. She resides in Albuquerque, New Mexico.

Dechman Attends U.S. Dept. of Education Math Science Partnership Conference

Bob Dechman, Ed.D., Director of Federal Programs, Accountability and Assessment, attended the U.S. Department of Education Math Science Partnership Conference September 10-11 in Washington D.C.

The Mathematics and Science Partnership (MSP) program strives to improve teacher quality through partnerships between state education agencies, institutions of higher education, high-need local education agencies, and schools to increase the academic achievement of students in mathematics and science.

“Attending a National Conference such as the MSP allowed me to see the wide variety of professional learning projects underway in states across the nation,” Dechman said. “Although the methods and project focus is unique to each MSP project, we are unified in the pursuit of increasing teacher effectiveness.”

Now in the second year of partnering with Abraham Baldwin Agricultural College, our 18 member cohort of 4th - 8th grade math teachers are compiling advanced coursework in trigonometry and statistics.

Dechman agrees that strong professional learning is the best way to support teachers as they implement the Common Core Georgia Performance Standards. “Supporting teachers is at the heart of professional learning,” added Dechman.

According to Dechman, The National MSP conference presented the topic of professional learning in the context of research based study. Program managers are keenly interested in measuring the impact that professional learning has on student performance. Study after study continues to demonstrate increased content knowledge has a direct positive relationship with improved student performance.



GARRISON PILCHER RECEIVES NEW FLAG - Woodmen of the World is one of the nation's leading fraternal benefit societies. In addition to serving a dual mission, it is a patriotic organization, and members regularly presents flags and flagpoles to schools, parks, churches, and other non-profit organizations. In the past 60 years, Woodmen of the World members have presented more than 1.7 million U.S. Flags. Pictured above is Garrison Pilcher's Assistant Principal Richard Potter (left), and Elliot Kirby from Woodmen of the World.



TEACHING & LEARNING

from Melanie Chavaux, Associate Superintendent for Teaching and Learning



The Strategic Planning Action Teams met on September 16 to develop Performance Measures, Targets, Initiatives and Action Steps.



Pictured is Beth Adams reviewing Initiatives with the team members.

Beginning With the End in Mind....

On September 16, the Strategic Planning Action Teams met to develop Performance Measures, Targets, Initiatives and Action Steps. Currently, team members are reviewing these layers and will soon send the Strategic Plan to the Superintendent and Board of Education for review, approval, and adoption.

At the end of the Strategic Planning process, Thomas County Schools will have structured a strategic plan that is driven by our beliefs, mission and vision, that will guide the school system's progress for the next 3-5 years.

When I think about Stephen Covey's simple, but profound statement of "Beginning with the end in mind," I reflect on the steps of the planning process as we developed the Strategic Plan and how the development of the plan for the system is much like the planning of assessments, units and lessons. As teachers, we think about what we want our students to know and be able

to do that they didn't know and couldn't do before.

Last year as we were implementing the Common Core Georgia Performance Standards (CCGPS), I realized that it was more about designing the "pathway" for the CCGPS than it was about the actual standards. We had already been working with standards in Georgia for several years, and ninety percent of the Common Core Georgia Performance Standards (CCGPS) is actually the Georgia Performance Standards (GPS). Looking over the Strategic Planning process that began last March, I reviewed the steps that we followed on Days 1 and 2 as we developed the plan. On Day 1, we gathered the data. On Day 2, we used the data.

As we work this school year to improve writing in grades K-12, teach literacy with a disciplinary lens, and support and teach students to become responsible for their own learning, I encourage you to think about how you use students' data when creating

formative and summative assessments, units, and lessons. Will you "Begin with

the End in Mind" as you create the pathways of learning for your students?

Melanie Chavaux

Parent Advisory Council Fall Meeting Held at Vashti



Superintendent Dr. Dusty Kornegay talks to the Parent Advisory Council about the school system's strategic plan developments, new construction, and technology.

The Thomas County Schools Parent Advisory Council (PAC) met recently at Vashti to discuss past progress and future developments for the school system.

Led by Bob Dechman, the meeting allowed all of the schools to share individual school goals for the 2013-2014 school year.

Chris Odom, who serves on the State Parent Advisory

Council, gave an update from State Superintendent Dr. John D. Barge. Dr. Kornegay updated the committee on the strategic planning process as well as new construction and technology being implemented at the schools.

Parent Involvement Coordinator Dr. Cheryl Larkins, shared that the parent compacts will be revised and distributed soon.



NATIONAL HISTORY DAY PROJECTS UNDERWAY - MERIT students are beginning work on their NHD projects. Students are working closely with the Thomasville Historical Society and the Thomas County Public Library System. Pictured are sixth grade students at the Thomasville Historical Society.



WOODMEN OF THE WORLD DONATES BOOKS - Woodmen of the World representatives visited the middle school recently to give out books about American History to our 5th grade students. Pictured from left to right are Principal Kathy Keown, Woodmen of the World Representative Judy Lane, Jessica NeSmith, Marcus Skidmore, Brandon Campbell, Abriyauana Manning, and Jessica Lane (Woodmen of the World).



DIGITAL CITIZENSHIP EXPLAINED TO STUDENTS - Dr. Woody Thompson talks about digital citizenship during his social media presentations to students at Thomas County Middle School. Dr. Thompson spent several days at TCMS, and every student had the opportunity to participate.



Kendall Alligood- 4th



Brentson Moncrief- 3rd



Sydney Ferrel- 4th

ARTWORK FROM CROSS CREEK ELEMENTARY - October is a very busy month for Cross Creek artists! They will be entering several shows and competitions including the Deep South Fair art show (Oct. 8 - 12), the Plantation Wildlife Arts Festival children's art contest, and a Cross Creek exhibit at the Thomas County Public Library in the children's section. Cross Creek's artists are also featured at our central office during the month of October. We invite you to come out and see their art!

THOMAS COUNTY ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS

JACK O' LANTERN JOG

5K and FUN RUN 2013
October 19 @ 7:00 pm

Join us for a night of festive fun and fitness!
Registration is open!

Forms available at www.thomas.k12.ga.us

\$10—Fun Run
\$20—5k

T-shirts for all participants.
Participants are encouraged to wear appropriate costumes.