



# The Buzz

MARCH  
2015



## Thomas County Board of Education Monthly Newsletter

### Thomas County Schools Excel on Accreditation Report

The Thomas County School System recently completed its five-year annual external review by AdvancED, the world's largest K-12 accrediting agency. The district has been re-accredited for a new five-year period. The rigorous four-day visit included dozens of classroom visits, scores of interviews with students, parents, and community members, a review of student performance data, and analysis of facilities and operational procedures.

The exit report provided to the Thomas County Board of Education included five commendations to the district, areas where the district is considered to have extraordinarily powerful practices. These areas include course offerings, early learning, leadership, instructional technology, and facilities.

"I am very proud of the very favorable report and the

recommendation for continued accreditation by the world's most prestigious accrediting agency," said Superintendent Dr. Dusty Kornegay.

The exit report was provided by the external review lead evaluator, Dr. James Brown, a retired school district administrator from Florida who also taught in the educational leadership department at Florida State University.

Dr. Brown spoke briefly about each of the areas of commendation.

**Course offerings:** Dr. Brown said, "A variety of pathway options are available to meet the needs of students including those of Career, Technical, Agriculture, Fine Arts, Foreign Language, and Advanced Academic areas. For a system your size to be able to offer all the course offerings you have available is commendable. There is no

reason a student shouldn't leave here and be prepared," he said.

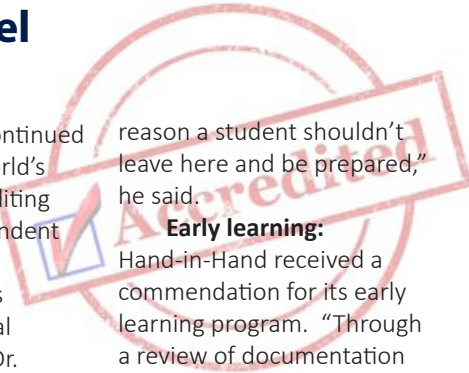
**Early learning:**

Hand-in-Hand received a commendation for its early learning program. "Through a review of documentation included in the Early Learning Self-Assessment, interviews with various stakeholders, observation of instruction and interactions, it is evident that [Hand-in-Hand staff] members are committed to utilizing developmentally appropriate strategies for all groups of students and embracing the families of the children they serve. The success of these efforts was confirmed through survey data as well as stakeholder interviews. Parents feel that Hand-In-Hand provides a safe supportive learning environment for their children," he added.

Hand-in-Hand was also recommended for the "Quality Rated Designation" for its early learning program. Hand-in-Hand is the only Pre-Kindergarten program in the area to have this prestigious national rating.

**Leadership:** In

noting the changes that have occurred since the district made a change in superintendents, Dr. Brown observed, "The development and implementation of a



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### CALENDAR HIGHLIGHTS

**March 20** - Report Cards Issued

**March 21** - Hand-In-Hand LUCKY Scramble Golf Tournament, Country Oaks

**March 24** - System Technology Committee Meeting, 1:00 p.m.

**March 24** - Holocaust Survivor George Rishfeld Speaks, 7:30 p.m. BOE Auditorium

**March 26** - Rising 1st Grade Parent Orientation, Garrison-Pilcher

**April 6 - 10** - Spring Break



**April 20 - 24** - Georgia Milestones Assessment Test (grades 3 - 8)

Please visit the school websites for a complete calendar of events.



A parent group from Hand-inHand met with an AdvancEd accreditation reviewer, Saralyn Stapleton, during the visit in February.

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.

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## Expanding Learning Opportunities

### TCCHS, TCMS students participate in AP Day Exercise



TCMS students (left to right) Ben Wilhelm, Chase Darley and Carter Groom work with TCCHS student Garrett Crozier during a joint lab in Laura Kornegay's AP Chemistry class as part of AP Day activities.

Young minds from two Thomas County schools joined forces this week for a unique learning experience centered on Advanced Placement (AP) classes.

Tuesday, Feb. 17, was AP Day in Georgia. Thomas County Central High School celebrated the day in a variety of ways, including "I Heart AP" buttons for AP students, an AP Open House, and a special opportunity for younger students to experience an AP course through the eyes of its students.

Students in Clayton Woodfin's eighth grade Physical Science class at Thomas County Middle School took a trip to TCCHS in order to work with Laura Kornegay's

AP Chemistry class. The two classes joined forces for an introductory activity on the kinetics of a crystal violet reaction.

"Students were collecting data to determine the relationship between color intensity and light absorbance," Kornegay explained.

Woodfin, who majored in chemistry in college, said any opportunity to promote student interest in chemistry is a welcome one.

"I enjoy having older students available to help younger students learn," he said. "Sometimes they will listen to someone closer to their own age before they listen to me. I hope my students got to see that Chemistry is fun and

useful, and maybe it got them interested in pursuing at least AP Chemistry, if not a career in Chemistry."

Student Chase Darley found the opportunity to be "a cool experience."

"I learned how light can be used to determine concentration of a liquid," Darley said. "I became more interested (in Chemistry) than I was before because the experiments seemed really cool."

Kornegay's high school students were likewise enthused about the opportunity.

Jane Guo said the experience "was like advertising AP classes."

Cole Donovan thought the exercise educational for both age groups.

"I thought it was good for the kids," he said. "It gave

them a taste of the course and showed them it could be fun. For me, I liked engaging the kids in our lab."

AP classes, according to the Georgia Department of Education website ([www.gadoe.org](http://www.gadoe.org)) "are college-level courses offered by trained high school teachers in the regular high school setting."

Kornegay hopes the younger students gained some knowledge about the importance of preparing for AP classes.

"The ground work for being prepared for AP level work begins several years before students begin AP classes," she said. "Hopefully this visit allowed some students to see why it's important to work hard and take challenging courses early to prepare them for rigorous work in the future."



**TCCHS PLACES IN SCIENCE OLYMPIAD EVENT** - Expanding the possibilities and testing the limits of science took front and center for Thomas County Central High School's Science Olympiad team. The team competed recently in a Science Olympiad Tournament held at Georgia Perimeter College in Clarkston. Students placed/medaled in several events. First place medals were awarded to Huntley Rodgers and Justin Knapp in "Bungee Drop;" Noah Harris and C'lee Kornegay in "Mission Possible;" and, Emily Kornegay and Eli Koswci in "It's About Time." Pictured are the TCCHS 2015 Science Olympiad medal winners including Huntley Rodgers (L-R), Justin Knapp, Erin Alford, C'lee Kornegay, Eli Koswci, Noah Harris, and Emily Kornegay.

## NEED CPR? FIRST AID?

CPR will be offered on Tuesday, April 21, at Cross Creek from 4:00 - 8:00 p.m. Please sign up on PExpress to attend the training session.





**HAND-IN-HAND STUDENTS LEARN ABOUT SAFETY** - Jessica Vicks' pre-K class at Hand-In-Hand Primary School is learning about community helpers. Thomas County Deputy Buddy Rhoden shared with the boys and girls about his job. The kids enjoyed getting to see his car and learn more about safety.

## TCMS Earns First Place in Region MATHCOUNTS Competition



MATHCOUNTS participants include Dillon Reneau (L-R), Abby Allensworth, Deep Patel, De'Aisa Daniels, Eli Newsome, and Danielle Sauls.

Thomas County Middle School students recently traveled to Darton College to participate in the MATHCOUNTS Region competition.

The MATHCOUNTS Competition Series is the only competition program of its kind with live, in-person events. At the local, state, and national level, students win hundreds of thousands of dollars in scholarships and prizes every year.

The students competed in an exciting "bee-style" contest against other area middle schools. With the highest overall score, Thomas County Middle School earned first place in the Darton College Region

MATHCOUNTS Competition.

These students will advance to the 2015 Georgia MATHCOUNTS competition at Georgia Tech in March. The Georgia MATHCOUNTS competition is presented by the Georgia Society of Professional Engineers (GSPE).

With a decline in students entering college to major in Engineering and/or Technology fields, the GSPE has become a strong advocate and host of the Georgia MATHCOUNTS to encourage students at the middle school level to strive for excellence in math and science.

The team is coached by teachers Debbie Lasseter and Terry Dukes.

## Watson Selected for Governor's Honor's Program in Science



Chandler Watson experiments with bases and acids in chemistry class.

Thomas County Central High School has one student selected to participate in a summer enrichment intensive geared toward specific fields of study.

The Governor's Honors Program, known as GHP, has announced its honorees for the 2015 event, and TCCHS student Chandler Watson has been selected in the Science field.

"It feels amazing," Watson, 16, said. "I honestly thought there were more candidates there who were more prepared. I'm just a sophomore. I'm shocked."

GHP goes beyond the regular classroom instruction in order to enrich a student's selected area of strength through workshops and special sessions with similarly-talented and motivated youths.

"We are very pleased to have Chandler selected," Dr. Jim Rehberg, director of gifted & accelerated instruction said. "It really validates our curriculum and the amount of rigor we promote."

Students compete against youths all over the state for a limited number of spots.

"Governor's Honors is a

state-wide recognition and resource," Rehberg said. "We have many students who are very capable of study in a highly-focused environment. Chandler definitely deserves to experience that level of immersion in an area which could impact his entire life."

Watson feels the recognition honors his dedication to his chosen field, one he's had an interest in from a young age.

"It basically shows how much I've worked over the last few years," he said. "I've been doing science ever since I was little. My dad worked at the Challenger Learning Center."

This year's program is June 21- July 18 at Valdosta State University.

Rehberg said TCCHS, the Thomas County Schools system, and the community like seeing their students succeed.

"The citizens of Thomas County really have a valuable asset in the school system they provide and to be able to nurture and develop these talented individuals who go on to great things is what we are trying to accomplish," he said.

## Garrison-Pilcher Raised More than \$11,500 for Jump Rope for Heart



From left are Clay Croft, the top earner for Jump Rope for Heart, Garrison-Pilcher coach Veletta Reed, and Laylen Hines, who earned the second highest amount.

Garrison-Pilcher Elementary School held its annual Jump Rope for Heart (JRFH) last week to raise money for the American Heart Association. The students raised a total of \$11,528.30 while learning the value of community service and becoming empowered to contribute to their community's welfare.

Students raised money in person or online. All money stayed local and was donated to the American Heart Association. Online donations, totaling \$3987.00, are particularly helpful because students helped Garrison-Pilcher earn gift certificates for free P.E. equipment.

Principal Sharonda O'Neal said, "Our students, parents, and community showed a great deal of support for the American Heart Association by raising over \$11,500.00. Coach Reed and Coach Peoples worked to encourage our students and our faculty and staff to live healthy lives through exercise and healthy eating."

The coaches believe this year was successful because

of the continued use of the duck incentives the students received as they raised money. They received a "Quacky Duck" with a \$5 donation and a "Ninja Duck" with an online donation.

"The ducks play a huge role in helping to raise funds for us," said Garrison Pilcher Coach Veletta Reed. "This has really been an exceptional year for us. The students have really wanted to help other kids. I think the duck incentives and the way we promoted them here really helped us with fundraising."

The top earner was Clay Croft, second-grader in Stacy Davis' classroom, who raised \$1010.00. Second-place earner was Laylen Hines, first-grader in Topreka Hayes' class, who raised \$500.00. The classroom with the highest contribution was Topreka Hayes totaling \$1709.00.

JRFH is a national education and fundraising event sponsored by the American Heart Association and the American Alliance for Health, Physical Education, Recreation and Dance (AAHPERD).



**ZOODLE VISITS CROSS CREEK** - Cross Creek hosted two exotic animal shows giving third and fourth graders the opportunity to see a baby kangaroo, as well as other creatures including a bearded dragon, chinchilla, blue-tongued skink, ball python snake, and an African hedgehog. There were separate shows for the two grades, and students were given the chance to have their picture taken with the exotic animal of their choice. The speaker provided an educational zoological program and involved the students in the presentation. Picture is Zoodle employee Kyle Goodwin with the blue-tongued skink.

## Justin Knapp Chosen as National Merit Scholarship Finalist

Thomas County Central High School senior Justin Knapp has been chosen a finalist in the 2015 competition for the National Merit Scholarships.

"The National Merit Scholarship Program is a very selective process that gives students like Justin Knapp an opportunity to shine on a national platform," Director of Gifted, Honors, and Accelerated Instruction Dr. Jim Rehberg said. "With his combination of quality personal traits, academic achievement, and elite test scores, it is not surprising that Justin not only excels in the classroom, but also in all he undertakes."

To become a finalist, a semifinalist must have an outstanding academic record

throughout high school, be endorsed and recommended by the high school principal, and earn SAT scores that



**JUSTIN KNAPP**

confirm the student's earlier performance on the qualifying test. The semifinalist and a high school official also must submit a detailed scholarship application.

"To be selected as one of the finalists out of such a talented pool of semifinalists is such an honor," Knapp said. "It's really been a humbling experience."

Knapp will have an opportunity to continue in the 2015 competition for scholarship awards worth more than \$33 million. The first round of scholarships will be announced starting in April.



**HAND-IN-HAND SPECIAL DELIVERY** - Hand-In-Hand received a special delivery recently from Teacher Harvest in Valdosta. Each teacher in the school received a free YOObi box of supplies to be used in the classroom for instruction. The YOObi boxes included folders, markers, pencils, erasers, and pencil bags. The teachers and students were excited about their surprise delivery. Helping to unload are kindergarten teachers Stephanie White (from left), Carole Bevis, Keri Johnson, and Linda Ivey. Also helping are Danny Dukes, director of our local Second Harvest, and Hannah Peverill from Teacher Harvest in Valdosta.



**WACKY WEDNESDAY AT CROSS CREEK** - Mandy Rice's and Sandy Fitzgerald's 3rd grade classes from Cross Creek celebrated Dr. Seuss's birthday by dressing silly for Wacky Wednesday. Marion Williams, pictured from left to right, Jay'Wain Gurley, Nevan Wickham, KaNia McIntyre, Aleriyah Brown, Pierce Shaffer, Kenneth Souls, Kennedy Jester, Totianna McNair, and Kinsley Humphries pose in their Seuss attire (Zachary Grant, front).

## Georgia Educational Technology Fair Winners Announced



Students who placed in the state competition include Hayes Nelson (L-R), Abby Allensworth, Tessa McCorkle, Logan Sanders and Vance Stephens.

Students from Thomas County Middle School and Thomas County Central High School along with Danna Cooper and Selina Bell traveled to Macon recently to compete at the state level in the Georgia Educational Technology Fair.

Five students placed in the top three of their category and division at the state level including Hayes Nelson, 11th grade, 2nd Place in Technology Literacy in Division 5; Abby Allensworth, 6th grade, 3rd place in Technology, Division 2; Tessa McCorkle, 12th grade, 2nd place in Web 2.0 Internet Applications, Division 5; and Logan Sanders and Vance Stephens, 12th grade team, 3rd place in 3D Modeling, Division 5.

All of these students placed first in the regional level fair in January to earn their spot in the state level competition. There were numerous technology categories in which students competed including, but not limited to, 3D Modeling, Web 2.0 Applications, Digital Photography, Digital Video Production, and Programming.

Students who attended the Georgia Educational Technology Fair included Abby Allensworth, Morgan Ward, Douglas Hopkins, Devon Bryan, Austin Luna, Amber Allen, Amber Forrester, Hayes Nelson, Logan Sanders, Vance Stephens, and Tessa McCorkle.



Robin Cartright, Instructional Coordinator, manages a blog titled "Instructional Insights." In addition to posting useful information on technology and teaching strategies, Cartright produces a monthly newsletter. The March newsletter titled "Keep Calm and Test On!" includes effective test-taking strategies.

The Instructional Insights blog can be found on the Thomas County Schools website under the Thomas County Middle School tab. There is a link to the blog on the Teacher Links page (right side of the TCMS homepage).

[www.thomas.k12.ga.us](http://www.thomas.k12.ga.us)



**CELEBRATING A BIRTHDAY** - Hand-In-Hand Primary School celebrated Dr. Suess' birthday with many fun activities through the week. Staff members presented the play "The Cat in the Hat" on stage for all students. The lunchroom served "green eggs and ham" while everyone enjoyed learning. Staff members participating were Julie Swann (from left), Megan Lewis, Hanah Taylor, Valerie Boban, Lucy Thompson, and Elizabeth Maxwell.

## Holocaust Survivor to Speak to the Community



**GEORGE RISHFELD**

Almost 70 years ago, George Rishfeld's desperate parents tossed their infant son over a barbed-wire fence in Poland, into the arms of a non-Jewish family friend. The young woman vowed to raise George as her own if his parents did not return, but they did return to reclaim their son.

On Tuesday, March 24, at 7:30 p.m., Rishfeld will share his story at the Thomas County Board of Education Auditorium. Sponsored by the Thomas County Board of Education in conjunction with the Georgia Commission on the Holocaust, the event is

open to the public.

Rishfeld was born a few months prior to the Nazi invasion of Poland in September of 1939. This move by the Nazis thrust Europe into World War II. George, whose original name was Jureck, came into the world at the worst possible moment for the Jews of Poland.

If Rishfeld was going to survive, his family had to have a plan to get him out. Prior to the chaos in Warsaw, George's father had owned a fur business. In that business he employed a non-Jewish gentleman, Mr. Fronckvics and his daughter, Halinka. The Rishfelds developed a close relationship with this family and through their friendship, George's life was saved.

Rishfeld's story will highlight the heroism of the Fronckvics family who saved his life and his relationship with Halinka and the Fronckvics. His story is both frightening and inspiring.

## Several TCCHS Artists Win Awards in Youth Arts Show



Samantha Starling, from left, Matthew Powell, Sophie Anderson, Jessi Hopland, Emily Corbitt, and teacher Mrs. Jocelyn Rivard pictured at the exhibit reception.

Art works of all shapes, sizes, colors, mediums and themes can be found in the annual Thomasville Center for the Arts 2015 Youth Arts Show, Competition and Exhibit, including numerous pieces from Thomas County Central High School students.

The kickoff reception was held March 2 and several TCCHS artists received recognition. Emily Corbitt, 17, earned top prize of \$1,000 scholarship in the portfolio competition.

"When I heard that my portfolio won I was more surprised than anything, but I was very excited to have been awarded this honor," Corbitt said. "I think the variety in my artwork stood out the most. Everything had different meaning and different media."

TCCHS art teacher Jocelyn Rivard and Corbitt pulled together the young artist's best pieces from her time in five art classes. Mediums included in the portfolio are colored pencil, mixed media, ink, tempera, marker, collage, watercolor pencil, graphite, and charcoal. Titles include "Woven Sunflowers," "Ink House," "Apple and Hand," and

"Shattered Red Barn." Eight of her creations are featured in the show, including three in the window display.

Corbitt intends to use the scholarship funds at Pensacola State College, where she plans to be an art major.

Sophomore Katelyn Sotomayor earned second place and a \$75 prize with her papier-mâché rhinoceros mask, a large piece painted in greens and yellows that has placed at other youth art shows this year.

Other TCCHS awards include "Award of Excellence" (\$25) to junior Sophie Anderson, "Outstanding Freshman" to Savannah Barrett, and "Outstanding Sophomore" to Samantha Starling. Honorable Mentions went to sophomore Matthew Powell and junior Jessi Hopland.

The exhibit will be open until March 27 in celebration of Youth Art Month. It is housed at the center's downtown space known as "TCA on Broad Street" or "The Center on Broad," located at 116 Broad St. next to Grassroots Coffee. Hours are 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. Wednesday through Saturday. For more information, call (229) 226-0588.



Eighteen projects and 28 students from TCCHS are advancing to National History Day State Competition.

## TCCHS Advances 28 Projects to NHD State Competition

History continues to motivate young minds at Thomas County Central High School.

Eighteen projects and 28 students from TCCHS are advancing to National History Day State Competition. These projects qualified after students placed first, second or third in the region competition held Friday, Feb. 27.

"TCCHS students did an awesome job at the region contest," Christine Patton, TCCHS Social Studies teacher and NHD coordinator said. "We brought home 18 out of 23 awards."

Steven Tran, whose group placed first in "Group Documentaries," enjoyed region competition.

"The competition is fun if you are into history," he said. "It takes some dedication to finish (a project), but it is worth it once you know you are getting through the

competition."

Kelly Quintiana's group placed first in "Group Exhibits." She and partner Gabby Schminky chose Adolf Hitler.

"We were very excited that we could go from third at the school to first at the regional competition," she said. "We are nervous about state, but we are looking forward to seeing the outcome."

Now, students advancing to the next level of competition will have a little more than a month "to revise their projects" in order to compete at state, which will be held in April at Mercer University, Patton said.

"I'm really excited about moving on to state," Mikayla Jordan, who placed second in "Individual Website," said. "It's a really cool experience and it's a great opportunity to learn some interesting things about history."

## TCMS Awarded Best in SWGA Regional Bridge Building Contest



Nathaniel Barber, from left, Ryland Ramhofer, Chandler Fiveash, Clayton Woodfin, and Nick Herndon gather after the competition.

Thomas County Middle School students recently competed in the Southwest Georgia Regional Bridge Building Contest held at Albany State University. The contest, held annually for the past thirteen years, is part of the celebration of National Engineering Week at Albany State University and is sponsored by the Georgia Space Grant Consortium.

During the competition, students must build bridges out of balsa wood and glue that meet certain design specifications.

"It's not all about how much the bridges hold but also how much the bridge weighs itself. They calculate a ratio between the two and that's how the bridges are scored," explained Clayton Woodfin, Thomas County Middle School coach/sponsor for the event.

This year seventh graders Chandler Fiveash and Ryland Ramhofer placed first in the middle school division with fifth grader Nathaniel Barber placing second. Eighth grader Nick Herndon also competed and scored just outside of the top three.

Thomas County Middle School was awarded the Best in Middle School Division trophy as a result of the hard work of these young men.



First place winners Chandler Fiveash, left, and Ryland Ramhofer look on as their bridge is scored.

### National History Day Region Competition Winners from TCCHS

#### GROUP EXHIBITS

1st: Gabby Schminky, Kelly Quintiana  
2nd: Drew Lloyd, Tori Stringer, Natalie Wyatt

#### INDIVIDUAL EXHIBITS

1st: Hailee Wilder  
3rd: Madison Everett

#### GROUP WEBSITES

1st: Micah Dodson, Riley Jones  
3rd: Jonathan Castillo, Baily Williams

#### INDIVIDUAL WEBSITES

1st: Kenlie Harvey  
2nd: Mikayla Jordan  
3rd: Brooke Taylor

#### GROUP DOCUMENTARIES

1st: Eli Kosciw, Lillie Horton, Steven Tran  
2nd: Sanny Patel, Shivani Patel

#### INDIVIDUAL DOCUMENTARIES

1st: Kyle Clark  
2nd: Alan Brinn  
3rd: Ashley Thomas

#### GROUP PERFORMANCES

1st: Marion Rose Young, Kennedy Ward  
2nd: Elena Love, Gretchen Turnbull

#### HISTORICAL PAPERS

1st: Brody Smith  
3rd: Tony Mathews

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comprehensive strategic plan and the stabilization of leadership and responsiveness to the system and its constituency is commendable. Innovation takes bold and stable leadership. The Superintendent has demonstrated courage and conviction in improving teaching and leading in the system."

**Instructional technology:**

Dr. Brown stated, "The system demonstrates a commitment to increase the use of technology by providing a wide range of computer-based learning opportunities and equipment throughout the schools. Every classroom in the system is equipped with an interactive whiteboard which is used by both teachers and students. Students at all campuses have access to computers, to include many computer labs throughout the school system."

**Facilities:**

Dr. Brown observed, "The Thomas County School System maintains school campuses that are safe, clean, and have overall positive climates. Evidence including survey data, interviews with parents, and on-site visits

clearly show that Thomas County Schools are places where students can learn in a safe, clean, and healthy environment. Custodial staff, the school nutrition team, school resource officers, school nurses, and all members of the faculty, staff and administration help to ensure these outstanding facilities."

In order to maintain its progress, Dr. Brown recommended that the school system carefully align all professional learning with strategic plan and school improvement goals in order to improve the academic performance of students in all sub-groups. He also encouraged the district to create a formal communication plan to communicate its good work both within the system and throughout the larger community.

Superintendent Dr. Dusty Kornegay expressed his appreciation to everyone who participated in making the accreditation visit a success. "This would not have been possible without the students, parents, community members,

teachers, administrators, board members and support staff members who went the extra mile to prepare for the visit and participate in the process. I want to especially thank Dr. Bob Dechman who coordinated the process and other district office team members who prepared sections of the report and reported to the visiting committee—Associate Superintendent Melanie Chavaux and assistant superintendents Joey Holland and Lisa Williams."

Dr. Bob Dechman commented, "The district accreditation process was a positive experience. The common theme of our efforts at the school and district levels was teamwork. The results of this review show why Thomas County is the premier educational agency of our area."

Associate Superintendent Melanie Chavaux commented, "When the climate of a school system is committed to its vision and focused on students with committed teachers, the AdvancEd process validates

the continuous improvement process and the monitoring of the effectiveness of the services we provide. I am extremely proud of our system's accreditation and the opportunity to have been a part of the team."

Assistant Superintendent Lisa Williams noted how the accreditation process has helped to frame the work of the district in the years ahead. "In order to build on the success of our system's accreditation, we will begin monitoring, tracking, managing, and reporting on the system's strategic plan through the use of eBOARD, an online program recommended by the Georgia School Board Association. This program will help ensure the alignment of our system and school level plans including professional development and school improvement to our system's strategic plan. We are excited as a system to be able to provide this level of transparency to all of our stakeholders. The accreditation team validated our system's mission: Teaching Students, Ensuring Success," she said.



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Mandy Rice's and Sandy Fitzgerald's third-grade classes experienced a college class on rocks and minerals at Valdosta State University. Dr. Edward Chatelain, VSU geology professor, presented a PowerPoint on rocks, minerals, and soil. The students also had the opportunity to explore rocks, minerals, and fossils as he taught the lesson. While on campus, the students toured the Hugh Bailey Science Building where they saw many mounted and stuffed animals such as bison, turtles, and different kinds of fish. The students also toured the Odum Library. The students think VSU rocks! Pictured at left are Kennedy Jester, Jimmy Dawson, Gracie Brooks, and Jaiden Ringheisen learning about a pterodactyl fossil from Dr. Chatelain. At right, Kinsley Humphries, Jay'Wain Gurley, and Jaiden Ringheisen are in awe of how big this fossil is!