



### **TPSD, ICC Partner To Form Middle College**

**TUPELO, Miss.** — In a historic move to provide additional educational opportunities for students, a joint agreement was codified between the Tupelo Public School District and Itawamba Community College on Tuesday to create an innovative Middle College.

The first of its kind in North Mississippi, this program will allow qualified Tupelo High School students to graduate with both a high school diploma and an associate's degree from ICC.

Launching in August, an initial pilot cohort of THS juniors will attend classes at the ICC Tupelo campus for the majority of the school day while also taking class at THS. Both entities spent the spring aligning their respective school's calendars and planning a course of study options.

"This is a great opportunity for our students to get ahead and graduate high school with two years of college under their belts," said TPSD Superintendent Dr. Rob Picou, who also implemented a similar program while in Alaska. "The Middle College isn't designed for every student, but for those who qualify, it's the perfect model to graduate high school and enter college as a junior. From the parents I've spoken with, they are very excited, especially from a financial standpoint."

"You're always looking at various educational models, and I'm confident this will be a tremendous opportunity for our students."

To participate, a student must be a high school junior with a minimum of 14 core Carnegie unit credits, including completion of Algebra II, and in good academic standing with a minimum 3.0 GPA. They must score at least a 17 ACT sub score in ELA and a 19 ACT sub score in math.

Two courses of study will be offered, Associate of Arts (60 hours) and Associate of Applied Science (60+ hours) with tracks in Business and Marketing Management, Computer Programming, Early Childhood Development, Hospitality Management, Law Enforcement, Paralegal and Public Health technologies. THS students will be in classes with other college students Monday through Thursday on the ICC campus. On Fridays, they will take advantage of support services at ICC.

"With the ever-increasing demand to meet students in an effort to offer opportunities to receive postsecondary education, Itawamba Community College is excited to partner in the Middle College program offered by the Tupelo Public School District," ICC President Dr. Jay Allen said. "For many years, ICC has offered alternate delivery modes of dual classes to Tupelo

students, and it seems that the Middle College is a natural progression in exposing these students to collegiate-level learning while providing exceptional educational offerings.”

To help with the transition from THS to ICC, the school district has hired an additional counselor, Tyler Philley, to oversee the day-to-day student support services. He will ensure students remain on track, follow the rules outlined in the handbook and assist with any academic needs that might arise. He has also received his commercial driver’s license to assist those who need transportation.

“The Middle College is a great opportunity for students to acclimate themselves to college life with the support of other high school peers while working toward a degree that will give them more opportunities for a meaningful career,” Philley said. “This will allow our students to move forward with their education in whatever path they may choose to be well prepared for their future.”

For more information about the Middle College, contact Philley at [jtphilley@tupeloschools.com](mailto:jtphilley@tupeloschools.com) or 662-841-8970.

**-www.tupeloschools.com-**