

Preparation Pays Off



Superintendent's Message
Dr. David Daigneault

Like most everything else in education, the pandemic of 2020 had a negative impact on the number of high school students taking the ACT nationally. Given the widespread health concerns, we also saw fewer GHS students signing up to take the test last year.

One thing the pandemic has not adversely affected is our student performance on the standardized college admission test. Membership in GHS' two prestigious ACT clubs, the 25-Plus and 30-Plus, remains strong. Last year 29 GHS students earned between 25-29. Six earned a 30 or above, our highest membership yet. (The peak ACT score is a 36.)

The efforts by the GHS administration to raise student ACT scores is proving successful. Weekend workshops and a daily ACT prep class are two of the most effective ways the school has found to help students boost their scores. The administrators believe the more training a student puts in, the better performance he or she will deliver when they sit down to take the test.

Something GHS administrators try and hammer home to kids is the financial benefit of scoring high on the ACT. A score of 20 will earn full tuition at Holmes Community College. Score a 22 and get full tuition, room and board, plus a stipend at Alcorn State University and Mississippi Valley State University. A 30 will get you \$4,500 a year at Ole Miss and Mississippi State or full tuition at Delta State University. The higher a student scores, the more options they have and the more money they earn.

GHS Assistant Principal Kelby Surrell organizes much of the ACT training at the high school. He says one of the most beneficial resources they've offered was a series of weekend workshops that students were able to attend online. Carva King, a renowned ACT tutor from the Gulf Coast, led the workshops.

King, also known as "the Literacy Lady," administered practice quizzes and shared test-taking strategies that proved useful. She even offered to help students with follow-up tutoring up to the date of their test. Surrell said the students who benefited the most from the workshops kept in touch with King and continued to work under her guidance. King pushed several GHS students to move three and four points above their already-high scores, launching them into the elite 30-plus grouping.

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GES 21st Century Classes Debut



Photo by Jamie Kornegay



Photo by Melanie Williams



Photo by Melanie Williams

Students in Pre-K through fifth grade are enjoying after-school skills and tutoring classes as part of the extended 21st Century Community Learning Center grant at GSD. (Photo left) At the Green Top, Devonn Tipton (left) shows Kira Williams notes and rhythms in his after-school vocal/instrumental music skill class. At the Red Top, -- (photo middle) and -- (photo right) participate in Melanie Williams' STEAM class, using rainbows as inspiration for building bridges out of Legos.

By Jamie Kornegay
GSD Reporter

Students and teachers at the Grenada Elementary Red and Green Top schools have started new after-school skills and tutoring classes. The extended school days are made possible by a grant from the Nita M. Lowey 21st Century Community Learning Center.

The new 21st Century classes, which have been popular for many years at the middle and high schools, opened to Pre-K through fifth grade in March. Classes are divided into skills and tutoring options, and students may attend after school until 5:30 on Mondays, Tuesdays and Thursdays.

GES Pre-K-3 assistant principal Dawn Terry runs the Red Top's program. "I like that we're offering so many options," she said. "And these aren't your usual academic classes."

Terry said over 250 students signed up to participate in tutoring sessions as well as skills classes, which range from a kinesthetics physical activity class, to a science group, to a music class.

Two book clubs are available for different reading levels. First-grade readers started with smaller books, while the third graders began reading *Charlotte's Web*.

In Melanie Williams' STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Art, Mathematics) class, students recently made fans and paper airplanes to learn about airplane design. Later, they did an art project, making candy rainbows, which led to a lesson on building bridges.

"We don't want students to stay after school and then just sit in their desks, doing more of the same," Terry said. "We want to make sure we're doing

things outside the norm of a regular school day, including different types of hands-on activities or arts and crafts, all related to the subject area."

Teachers make time for snack breaks and encourage students to get up and move around. The small class sizes, no more than 10 students per class, allow instructors a different experience from the routine school day as well.

"With the smaller class size, teachers feel like they can build relationships with new students and sharpen their focus on academic areas," Terry said.

Up the hill at the Green Top, GES 4-5 assistant principal John Daves runs the 21st CCLC program. He said the teachers are used to staying later with different groups, but the staff is particularly interested in the new program.

"We even have teachers

requesting to substitute just to get involved," Daves said. "It gives them the opportunity to go beyond standard objectives and teach whatever they want in their given subject."

Daves said roughly 85 students in 4th and 5th grade show up three days a week to participate in tutoring and skills classes.

In Taylor Buchanan's "Discovery" science class, students do something different from the life-science experiments she usually teaches in the Discovery Lab. After school, the lessons become more about the science of computing as she uses iPads and computers to teach coding. As the semester progresses, Buchanan said, the class will be making objects on a 3-D printer and learning to program robots.

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GHS Band's World-Class Soloist

(photo right) Grenada Band's senior trombonist Lilli Bailey earned distinction in a world-wide solo and ensemble competition through Winter Guard International (WGI). Bailey secured one of two highly coveted solo trombone slots in the virtual competition. GHS head band director Joe Presley said it was the first time one of his students had been selected as a finalist at WGI World. Bailey will go on to compete in the finals on April 17. The annual WGI World competition is a prestigious event that brings together the best high school band musicians and color guard performers in the country. The competition's virtual events are cataloged on the website Flomarching, and Bailey's entry earned additional distinction as one of the top-ten most-viewed performances at this year's semifinals.



AmeriCorps Featured Member

By Gwen Woodson
AmeriCorps Director

“I absolutely enjoy tutoring,” says Crystal Hendricks, a third-year, full-time AmeriCorps member. Her focus is tutoring Grenada Middle School students in math and reading.

“I joined AmeriCorps because I realized in college that I had a calling in my life and a passion to help young people,” Crystal says. “This program has inspired me to walk in my purpose and become a teacher or maybe even a school counselor.”

Hendricks graduated with honors from Grenada High in 2015. In high school, she volunteered at a local nursing home, where she became close to the residents and learned much from them. In 2018, Hendricks graduated with highest honors from Holmes Community College with an associate degree in early child development.

“Since joining AmeriCorps, I have learned the importance of helping the community,” she says. “Also, I am now aware of what I want out of life and have become more open to people. You can say that I have found the true Crystal Hendricks.”

Crystal now serves as a team leader. I moved her from the elementary school to the middle school because I saw the compassion she had for her students and how she was willing to do whatever it took to help them. She jumped into her leadership role running. I feel like she was waiting for someone to just give her a chance. We are blessed to have her.

“Tutoring at the middle school is different from tutoring at the lower elementary,” Crystal says. “To be honest, I was very nervous about going to a different school. I knew it might take time to get used to older students, and sometimes you have to work a little harder getting the students to trust you. I’ve realized that trust is key to helping the older



students.”

In her spare time, she enjoys her fiancé, her pets, and absolutely loves everything about art, drawing, and painting. She has always enjoyed art since she was a little girl and now she has created a business making customized door hangers, wreaths, porch signs, earrings, etc. The business is called Simply Krafty. “It is something I do on a small scale right now, but someday I would like to take it to the next level,” she says.

Crystal will use her education award to go back to school. “I know my purpose is to help people and I believe teaching is my way of helping.”

Her advice for anyone wanting to join the program is: “It might be very challenging at times and you might feel like giving up other times, but you can do this. Never give up, and keep pushing forward. It is all worth it in the end.”

Crystal adds, “Helping students is one of the most rewarding things to me. I believe it takes a lot of patience and a huge heart to help these students.”

For more information about the Grenada School District AmeriCorps program, contact program director Gwen Woodson at gwoodson@grenadak12.com. For more information about AmeriCorps, visit www.americorps.gov

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ACT 25-Plus



In our last issue of The Communicator, we featured students who scored high on the ACT test, earning them membership into two clubs at GHS. Two additional members in the 25-Plus club are sophomore Brendan Keys (left) and junior Will Nesbitt. These students scored 25-29 on their ACT. Read more about the importance of student achievement on the ACT in this issue's Superintendent's Message, page 1.

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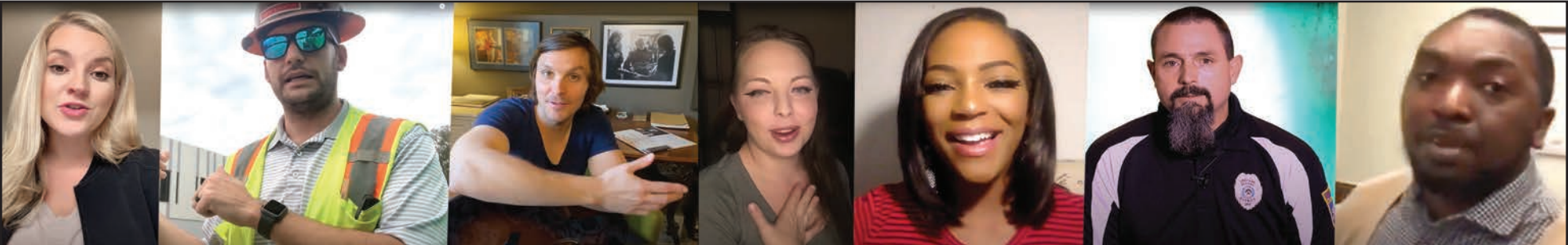
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Virtual Careers and Counseling at GMS



Counselors at Grenada Middle School adapted the traditional career fair to an online, pandemic-safe Virtual Career Exploration. More than 30 professionals volunteered their time to submit videos to let GMS students know more about their careers. Participants included (l to r) Olivia Goode, an occupational therapist; Davis Byrd, a field engineer for a construction firm in Florida; Charlie Worsham, a singer-songwriter in Nashville; Courtney Gates, a script supervisor on movie sets; Krispin Watson, a real estate agent in Alabama; Benji Britt, security director for Grenada School District; and Jason, Anderson, a quality control manager at Modine Manufacturing.

By *Jamie Kornegay*
GSD Reporter

When it came time to plan their annual career fair, the counselors at Grenada Middle School found a way to introduce students to working professionals while following pandemic guidelines and limiting visitors to the building.

GMS counselors Laura Byrd and Ashley Harrell assembled more than 30 professionals across many disciplines. The volunteers, mostly from Grenada but all over the Southeast as well, recorded video presentations that described the day-to-day duties of their job and explained the training and qualifications needed to work in their particular field.

The professional testimonies have been compiled and presented to GMS students as the school’s first-ever Virtual Career Exploration.

Byrd said that, traditionally, the middle school career fair was held in the gym. Only eighth graders were allowed to attend, and students met with professionals in person. Due to this year’s social-distancing guidelines, administrators have explored creative alternatives for student assemblies.

The virtual format of this year’s fair opens the event to students in all three grades and widens the field of working participants to former Grenada alumni who live in other places. Among the former students who sent in videos were Davis Byrd, a field engineer in Tampa; Krispin Watson, a real estate agent in Birmingham; and Charlie Worsham, the well-known singer/songwriter who records in Nashville.

The career videos were generally three or four minutes in length. After viewing them over several days in career tech classes, students answered a survey to document their impressions of the different careers.

The input helps counselors form a student’s Individual Career and Academic Plan, or ICAP. This formalized path of study is completed by all eighth graders. It helps streamlines a student’s goals and prepares them for life after high school.

For many students, eighth grade is too early to commit to a career, but the career fair nudges them to begin thinking about post-high school plans. “If they’re not sure where their interest lies,” said Harrell, “maybe they will after seeing these videos.”

Byrd said that forming an ICAP allows students to set goals for themselves, whether it be a route to college or straight to the workforce after high school. “This type of planning may even influence which classes a student will take in high school.”

GMS counselors interact with students weekly through Counselor’s Corner on the Canvas platform. Lessons include material on social emotional learning as well as college and career preparation.

Students learn about various job options by studying Career Clusters, which include 16 categories in disciplines such as health, information technology, and manufacturing. Within each cluster are various jobs that all share a common feature. Students who have a general interest in a certain cluster can learn more about specific jobs within

these disciplines.

Starting the conversation about these big decisions is important at a young age, said Harrell. “This way, a student doesn’t find him or herself one day holding a diploma, wondering what’s next,” she said. “Each year they’re being guided and prepared for life after high school.”

By meeting the challenges of these trying times, Byrd said new resources

like Counselor’s Corner and the Virtual Career Exploration have opened communication between students and administrators.

“It’s not all about career planning,” Byrd said. “It’s also easier to communicate if a student is having trouble in the classroom or personally. It’s just another avenue to reach kids.”

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GHS Varsity Softball




Photo by Stephanie Raper

(front, l to r) Head Coach Leslie Lancaster, Assistant Coach Collin Ray, (back, l to r) Ashlynn Crosby, Greenlee Mosconi, Kaylee Whitt, Kylee Hudgens, Leah Lemley, Chloe Gillis, Makena Kendall, Kira Finkley, Leah Kinard, Sydney Allbritton, Madelyn Anthony, Olivia Fulgham, Rylee Murphree, Lauren Dunagan, Lora Ryals, Kate Blankenship, Alexa Milhollen, and Layla Spires



Mattox Van Namen (left) was presented his Principal's Award by assistant teacher Rachel Tyler (right).



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Innovation, Education, and Partnership



(Photo left)

In the fall of 2019, Grenada School District opened its doors to leaders in business and industry, as well as educators from other districts in Mississippi, to see how GSD was implementing Project Lead the Way's STEM-based curriculum. Students in the program at GES 4-5, which was named a PLTW School of Distinction, demonstrated the hands-on, problem-based work they do in the Discovery Lab while school administrators and business leaders observed. Pictured here are last year's fifth grade students (front, l to r.) Tanner Fowler, Jordan Shoemaker, and Carson Renfro with (back, l to r) Wendy Clemons, Executive Director of the Office of Secondary Education and Professional Development at the Mississippi Department of Education; GSD Superintendent David Daigneault; Green Top Principal Carol Tharpe; and Chris Hinton with Entergy's office of Business and Economic Development.

Photo by Sherry Worsham

By Carol Tharpe
4-5 Elementary Principal

Grenada School District's commitment to innovation began decades ago with the creation of an interactive museum, the Kidzeum, and a hands-on science exploration center, the Discovery Lab, in the elementary schools. Building on these outstanding programs, the district recently added a Pre-K Learning Blocks program, implemented Project Lead The Way in every school, and earned the coveted District of Innovation status.

When my school, Grenada Elementary 4-5, piloted PLTW Launch, I was impressed with the student-centered, engaging learning experiences. I encouraged the expansion of the program to the school's Discovery Lab in 2017-18. Discovery Lab Director Taylor Buchanan became a PLTW Launch Lead Teacher and soon every student at GUES experienced lessons that inspired them in STEM.

In 2019-20, expansion of the program was made possible by a grant from Entergy that helped us obtain materials for more hands-on learning activities.

However, GUES and Entergy didn't stop there.

GUES hosted a multi-district PLTW Launch Transformational Training event sponsored by Entergy. At this event, 24 teachers from Desoto County School District, Hinds County School District, Vicksburg-Warren County School District, and Grenada School District became PLTW Launch Classroom Teachers. This training event highlights the shared commitment of GUES and Entergy to prepare students for success in life and work and to lend a helping hand to educators across the state.

Preparing teachers to transform their classrooms really paid off! After completing the training, teachers went back to their home districts and schools to create dynamic learning experiences for students. This collaborative undertaking had far reaching benefits as South Park Elementary in the Vicksburg-Warren School District and Gary Road Elementary in the Hinds County School District also earned the PLTW Launch Distinguished School award.

“Innovation”

Continued on Page 6

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AMANDA PROVINCE

GRENADA MIDDLE SCHOOL

“Innovation”

Continued from Page 5

“When teachers are given the training, tools, and opportunities to open the minds of eager, young explorers in new ways, exciting things happen,” Entergy MS President and CEO Haley Fisackerly said. “We’re proud of the well-deserved recognition given to Grenada Elementary and applaud the accomplishments of their students and teachers. We are proud to invest in their futures.”

We are grateful to Entergy for their continued support of quality education and are excited to partner with them to increase the skill set of our teachers by training them to teach PLTW, which has helped them feel more confident and creative with hands-on activities and lessons.

“The Project Lead The Way training that Entergy provided has greatly influenced my ability to creatively implement hands-on learning opportunities in the Discovery Lab,” Buchanan said. “These experiences not only educate, but also inspire, excite, and advance students’ learning to levels I never thought possible. The Project Lead The Way curriculum is a fun and engaging way to aid the

progression of knowledge for students at all levels. The modules they provide promote comprehension and retention of difficult scientific concepts. I am so thankful that Entergy chose to support our district and provide the means necessary to train our teachers on the implementation of the Project Lead The Way learning materials.”

The program has contributed to our students’ academic success and our school’s overall academic success, which has increased our testing outcomes.

PLTW is part of Grenada School District and Entergy’s plan to create and sustain thriving communities by preparing students with the knowledge and skills they’ll need to succeed in any career path they choose. The biggest winners are the students that gain transportable knowledge and skills in real-world learning experiences.

Carol Tharpe is the principal at Grenada Elementary School 4-5. This article originally appeared on Project Lead the Way’s blog at PLTW.org

“Preparation”

Continued from Page 1

Earlier this year, GHS was randomly chosen among districts across the country to experience Jumpstart, an ACT test prep curriculum. Developed by teachers with a long track record in ACT success, the program was folded into junior English classes over two weeks this winter. Due to this extra effort and preparation, we anticipate higher scores after the entire junior class took the ACT on the Tuesday after Spring Break.

GHS administrators are also encouraging sophomores to take the ACT this year. The test will be offered for the class to take at the end of March. A score of 17 qualifies students for English comp, a dual-credit class available to juniors and seniors. This type of advanced class earns high school credit as well as college hours that can be transferred to most colleges and universities.

Of course, teachers and counselors encourage students to take the ACT multiple times. Like anything, practice yields better results. And parents should be aware that there are several advantages to help your child take the test as often as they need.

Families who qualify for free and reduced lunches have double the opportunities to take the test for free. Juniors and seniors who qualify may get four waivers and access to additional online preparation materials as well. Sign up early to get as much practice time in as possible before taking the test.

Also, if a student took the ACT this past December, or is planning to take it in April or June, they may now order copies of their tests and answers for \$22. This is a great way to go over questions missed and help improve their score the next time. Test copies must be ordered within six months of the test date. To order, visit the testing website. (www.act.org)

Using the ACT resources available to GHS students has proven to show gains in ACT scores. Those gains not only reflect academic improvement for the student and school alike, they also reflect higher financial aid and greater choice when it comes time to apply to college.

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2021 GHS Beauty Review



Photo by Torrance Studios

Twenty-seven contestants vied for the title of Grenada High School Most Beautiful on February 13. Five alternates, one Miss Congeniality, and one Most Beautiful were chosen at the pageant. Winners were (l to r) Meredith Meriwether, Miss Congeniality; Jesse Muilwyk, 3rd Alternate; Layney Goss, 1st Alternate; Jayden Phillips, Most Beautiful; Kate Blankenship, 2nd Alternate; Haylee Jones, 4th Alternate; and Hallie Kerr, 5th Alternate.

(Photo right)
The Grenada High School Handsomes are nominated by the Senior class at GHS and voted on by the entire student body. The winners were announced at the annual GHS beauty review on February 13. The GHS 2020-2021 Handsomes are (left to right) Trent Hubbard, James Boatman, Joe Cobbs, GHS Most Handsome; Bratton Willoughby, and Jonathan Davis.



Photo by Torrance Studios

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By **Jamie Kornegay**
GSD Reporter

Grenada School District’s Campus Police Department has established a new phone number and email for anonymous tips.

Security director Benji Britt said the new reporting system gives students,

hotline, which is 866-GSD-TIPS, or 866-473-8477.

Tips can also be emailed to gsdtip@grenadak12.com

“We can’t be everywhere all the time,” Britt said. “But we do have people everywhere who can help. Eyewitness tips are essential for the safety of everybody at Grenada School District.”

faculty and staff a means of anonymously reporting things like weapons, illegal substances and bullying in the schools.

“In crisis management training, one of the top recommendations is to have an anonymous way to gather information,” Britt said. “Oftentimes people see things but don’t take action. There’s nobody that keeps us safe better than ourselves.”

Britt said the department will investigate all tips, validate the accusations, and then take appropriate action. “In the course of investigation, the identity of the person reporting will never be disclosed,” he said.

The department is putting up posters and handing out leaflets to spread the word about the

Stir-Frying in the Classroom at GCTC



Photos by Meg Newcomb

Students in Lisa Holland’s Culinary Arts class at Grenada Career and Technical Center learn different cuisines and cooking techniques. (Left photo) Katie Fisk (left) and Tristan Moore (right) make pepper steak while Brooklyn Rosenthal (right photo) prepares teriyaki chicken. “The students have been working hard on learning skills in the classroom before coming into the kitchen to put those skills to work,” said Holland. The GCTC’s state-of-the-art classroom kitchen is designed to restaurant standards with professional appliances and work stations.

“GES” Continued from Page 1

In Devonn Tipton’s music class, students are learning notes and rhythms on wooden xylophones, and in Lindsey Leggett’s Math Club, students take turns being the teacher. Correct answers earn students a chance to shoot wadded up paper balls into a garbage can in a game of “trashketball,” vying for cookies instead of points.

Pam Briscoe leads the Cliffhangers book club, where students are reading *Hatchet* by Gary Paulsen. She said the students have responded well to deeper discussions about the book than they’re able to have in a normal reading class.

Even the tutoring classes are more fun than a serious study session. Lisa Jordan used a camping theme to help her students hone their math skills. They budgeted for a camping trip and used geometric shapes to create a map of their campsite. The students were preparing to make s’mores for snack time.

“We’re trying to make it as fun as possible using real-world information and situations,” Jordan said.

The 21st CCLC classes run through May 7. Applications for the summer session, which will be held June 2-29, are available at the individual schools.

GHS Baseball



Photo by Stephanie Raper

(front, l to r) Dylan Black, Dawson Carnathan, Jayson Swinford, Garrett Miller, Lane Lemley, Ryan Wood, Elijah Bridges, Jaylan Mathis, Jude Westmoreland, (middle, l to r) Tyler Clark, Jekerious Williams, McCarron Clausell, R.J. Merriman, Jahiem Shack, Landon Waters, Hayden Hobbs, Houston Snyder, Tre Smith, Drudarious Barnes, (back, l to r) Bo Cox, Jacob Yarborough, Reid Cannon, Amari Conley, Thomas Ware, Ryan Logan, Ethan Klinck, Parks Wilbourn, Thomas Kuhn

