

Tracking Progress



Superintendent's Message

Dr. David Daigneault

The temperature is creeping up. Kids are getting antsy for summer break. It must be that time of year again ... testing season is here!

I hear it all the time. Why so much testing?

It's a valid question that deserves to be addressed. I know it's not the most exciting and anticipated activity of the school experience, but we've found a way to make it one of the most useful.

Much of our "testing" is actually monitoring. We're keeping track of our progress educating your children, and you may be surprised at the lengths we'll go to make sure they're reaching their full potential.

Testing is rarely a simple matter of pass or fail. Testing academic standards provides information that we use to improve instruction.

We have terrific diagnostic software that allows us to quiz students on the lessons they've been learning in class. We get instant feedback and data, which we then organize and analyze until we have a student-by-student snapshot of any given class. We share this information with teachers, specialists, and administrators. Then we all meet to determine which concepts need to be emphasized or retaught. We compare lesson plans, share strategies, and develop new activities.

We can isolate every student, locate their weakness, and determine how to improve instruction. If a certain lesson is being missed by half the class, we know we should teach that subject again from a different angle. If only two or three students are missing a concept, we can target them with individualized lessons. It's amazing how much this data tells us about a class and allows us to almost surgically improve the students' comprehension.

It often takes a team effort to brace up the under-performers. We have a network of tutors who can step in to work one-on-one with kids until they master a concept. From AmeriCorps teachers to 21st Century tutors to inclusion teachers who move from classroom to classroom, our district is equipped to fine-tune the learning experience.

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Future Problem Solvers Host State Bowl



Photos by Jamie Kornegay

Based on their performance in the state competition, students in GSD's Future Problem Solving program were invited to Future Problem Solving Program International, a competition to be held this summer at the University of Massachusetts in Amherst. Grenada Elementary 4-5 students traveling to the international competition include (photo left, l to r) Bay Kornegay, Gabe Reyna, Presley Williams, Cali Grace Rupp, Jasmyne Phillips, and Tylae Cox, along with two Grenada Middle School students, (photo right) Jack Leslie (left) and Seth Dorroh.

By Jamie Kornegay
GSD Reporter

A group of elementary and middle school students from Grenada School District have shown a knack for creative problem-solving. Their resourcefulness, along with their ability to apply their skills in competition, have earned some of them a trip to Massachusetts to test their abilities against gifted students from all over the world.

Frankie Fortier, LEAP instructor at GES 4-5, said the school's gifted program adopted the Future Problem Solving curriculum four years ago. The students learn a six-step process to identify problems in a hypothetical scenario and develop meaningful solutions.

"It's a real-world need," Fortier said. "We all deal with problems. And it teaches them a systematic way that they can deal with those problems and truly find a solution, not just mask the problem."

After practicing the six-step problem-solving process, students compete in teams to see who develops the most creative, workable solutions to a set of hypothetical future problems, known as a "future scene." The result is part-writing, part-performance as they research, document, and present their work in the form of a skit and booklet.

Fortier said the students love the competitive element. "It brings out the best in them."

Their booklets are evaluated by judges, and the best teams are invited to compete with other schools throughout the state in the affiliate bowl. This year's state competition was held at Grenada Elementary's Green Top. Seven teams from Grenada were invited to compete.

Among the competitors were teams from Grenada Middle School as well. This year, the GMS LEAP classes adopted Future Problem Solving, along with Project Lead the Way curriculum, for their sixth grade

students.

"They really get into the research on a variety of topics, which is outside what they learn in their regular classes," said Lauren Funderburk, the GMS LEAP instructor. "They really get excited when they come up with neat ideas to help solve these challenges."

Of the seven Mississippi schools that participate in Future Problem Solving, Grenada's teams dominated the junior division.

The middle school saw two teams place at the Affiliate Bowl. In the Presentation of Action Plan category, a team made up of Faith Arbuckle, Darshi Kher, and Abby Presley won first place. Another team consisting of Anna Hankins, Seth Dorroh, Jack Leslie, and Tara Bailey placed second in the junior division for team problem-solving.

See "State"
Continued on page 8

Show Choirs' Winning Season

By Jamie Kornegay
GSD Reporter

The show choirs at Grenada wrapped up a banner competition season this spring with a slate of awards, including multiple grand champion performances.

Grenada High School's Visions show-cased their popular "Killer King" production at four competitions throughout Mississippi and Alabama, earning back-to-back Grand Champion titles at Jackson Prep Show Choir Masters and Jackson Academy Show Choir Invitational.

"It was our best-ever showing, including our first Grand Championship," said director Jenni Winter.

The choir finished second at the Madison Central Deep South Classic. They also earned awards for best show design, best costumes, and best female soloist for senior Presley Caldwell.

The show uses fresh and diverse music, along with dynamic choreography, to tell the story of King Henry VIII. In this version, designed by Visions alumni Matthew Murphy and Claire Sanford, an artful twist delivers the vengeful king to a different fate than history.

While the show earned awards for best visuals, set design, and overall effect, the choir itself took many best vocal prizes throughout the season, including a trophy for best female performer, junior Anna Hurder, at the Auburn (AL) Show Choir Showdown.

Winter credits the choir's strong work ethic for its successful season. "This group worked well together," she said. "They were disciplined and determined, always eager to run the show one more time to get it just right. Their hard work paid off."

Winter also directs the Grenada Middle School show choir, Entertainers, which brought home first-place trophies from Jackson Academy and the West Jones Invitational, as well as a second-place finish at Madison Central.

All the choirs are currently preparing spring shows for the hometown crowd. The middle school choirs — including Entertainers, Starz, and Ovations — will perform their spring show Tuesday, April 16, at 7 p.m.

Visions will present its spring show, which includes "Killer King" as well as several new numbers, on Tuesday, April 23; Friday, April 25; and Saturday, 26.



Photo by David Cummings

Saavon Washington (left) and Savannah Burnett accept the Grand Champion trophy at the Jackson Academy Show Choir Invitational.

AmeriCorps Member of the Month



By Gwen Woodson
AmeriCorps Director

As an AmeriCorps team member at Grenada Elementary School, Rodhelia Wilks is a strong believer that knowledge is power. She has put her all into fulfilling AmeriCorps’ focus on tutoring students in math and reading.

“AmeriCorps has given me the opportunity to use my God-given gift of grasping things quickly to help others excel,” said Wilks. “I was always told, ‘No one can ever take it away once you get it and understand it.’ I have enjoyed mentoring kids and letting them know that I believe in them.”

She added, “AmeriCorps has empowered me to build my resume and network more. I have even expanded skills that are related to my field of study, social work. I am very grateful to be a team leader in my first year of being an AmeriCorps member and am thankful for the opportunity.”

Wilks graduated from Grenada High School, received an associates degree from Holmes Community College, and received a bachelors degree from the University of Mississippi. “It’s an honor to give back to the community where I’ve lived all of my life,” she said. “I have a greater appreciation for the Grenada School District. I see the value of what we are doing for the children of the future.”

Wilks was poised to succeed in her position. She was an active member of the National Honors Society at Grenada High School and Phi Kappa Phi at Ole Miss, where she participated in community service. She also served at Bethel Cathedral of Faith, Grenada County Family and Children Services, and Montgomery County Family and Children Services.

“I have found that AmeriCorps is convenient for a parent with school-age children,” she said. “I have three handsome and respectful sons: Reginald Barton, Deontae Barton, and Carsten Mcaley. I’m happy to be with them at GSD. AmeriCorps is a great program and I am honored to serve.”

As an AmeriCorps member, Wilks served at the Grenada Food Pantry, Downtown Jubilee, 100 Black Men Scholarship Gala, Grenada Lake Visitor Center, MLK Day, Chamber of Commerce Banquet and many other school and community events.

“My advice about volunteering is that volunteering requires patience and kindness,” she said. “Give back with a kind heart and make the best of it. Being professional at all times will make

a difference.”

Rodhelia has many hidden talents that she is just starting to tap. I admire her leadership style, which is to let people be who they are and trust that they will do the right thing. She will be the first member to serve two terms as team leader, and I look forward to revealing more of her hidden talents.

AmeriCorps is administered by the Mississippi Commission for Volunteer Service and the Corporation for National and Community Service. It is part of a White House initiative to foster a culture of citizenship, service, responsibility, and help all Americans answer the call to service.

The Grenada School District AmeriCorps program is now accepting applications for the 2019-2020 program year. 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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GHS Softball



(front, l to r) Presley Rice, Madilyn Green, Lainee McKelroy, Jenna Coker, Bryce Smith, Anna Kuhn, (middle, l to r): Madelyn RileRylee Murphree, Brooke Little, Kate Blankenship, Lauren Dungan, Makenzie Jones, (back, l to r) Coach Leslie Lancaster, Aikema Spencer, Hannah Grace Jacks, Haley Ferguson, Kira Finkley, Leah Kinard, Madelyn Anthony, Coach Collin Ray

GHS Hall of Fame



Alissa Aldridge



Huey Chan



Jenna Coker



Jayla Crawford



Cody Junkin



Anna Khun

By Stephanie Raper
GSD Reporter

Ten Grenada High School seniors have been named as Hall of Fame recipients for the 2018-2019 school year. The GHS Hall of Fame represents the highest honor attainable by a student during their high school career. Based on a points-system, the Hall of Fame recognizes students who have brought recognition to GHS through excellence in leadership, service, scholarship, citizenship, and extra-curricular activities. A committee of faculty members, chosen by the administration, selects members for the distinction from students who have submitted an application listing individual accomplishments accrued during high school. Points are awarded based on grade point average; academic awards; national, state, or district level awards; and awards or honors received at the school level.



Austin Moore



Samantha Rankin



Brianna Shaw



Micah Williams





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GSD Student of the Month

David Cain





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GHS Baseball Team



Photo by Stephanie Raper

(front, l to r) Javarus Bowdry, Hayden Pickle, Bailey Allbritton, Hunter Smith, Chase Logan, Tre Smith, Lane Lemley, (middle, l to r) Abbott Hankins, R. J. Merriman, Dawson Carnathan, Mason Blankenship, Grayson Dale, McCarron Clausel, Jaheim Shack, Houston Snyder, (back, l to r) Jaylan Mathis, Jonathan Davis, Garrett Miller, Ryan Wood, Laine Tribble, Dawson Clark, and Jayson Swinford

GES 4-5 Principals’ Breakfast



Students at Grenada Elementary Green Top were honored for good or improved behavior with an invitation to have breakfast with the principals. Students selected for March include (photo top) (front, l to r) Julez Anne Moore, Taylor Swinford, Janiya Rounds, Kyler Pittman, Dawsyn Grantham, Lexi Mabry,

Carol Tharpe, Savannah Heenan, Kristen Edwards, John Harris, Makayla Watson, Molly Skeen, Jayla Gholston, Peyton Nichols, and Assistant Principal John Daves.



(Photo bottom) (front, l to r) Sunniya Shelton, Maria Oates, Kenise May, Hanna Self, Prentiss Sledge, Garrett Lee, Davion Berry, (back, l to r) Principal Carol Tharpe, Madeleine Stuvee, Peyton Whatley, Mahogany Hean, Brayden Trusty, Sariah Winfrey, Eva Young, Marcus Williams, Sara Daves, and Assistant Principal John Daves

Calendar Sponsored By						
SPAINS SUPERMARKET						
The Best Meats In Town!						
Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
May			1 1. ONLINE REGISTRATION FOR THE 2019-2020 SCHOOL YEAR CONTINUES TO BE OPEN FOR ALL GRADES!!! 2. ALL NEW GSD STUDENTS MUST GO TO SCHOOL TO START REGISTRATION FOR THE 2019-2020 SCHOOL YEAR Band in GHS Auditorium GHS Fast Pitch 3rd Round Playoffs GHS: Algebra I Part 1 Test MAAP Testing 4th & 5th Math Performance Task	2 Band in GHS Auditorium GHS Baseball 3rd Round GHS Fast Pitch 3rd Round Playoffs GHS: Algebra I Part 2 Test GMS: MAAP Math Starz and Entertainers Auditions (After School) GES Prek-3: Spring Book Fair - GES Library 8:00am - 2:30pm GHS: Cheer Practice at Armory 3:30pm - 5:30pm Band: Boosters Meeting to Elect Officers - Band Hall 6:00pm Band: Pops Concert - GHS Auditorium 7:00pm	3 Band: High School Band Awards Dinner-Aud. & Cafe. GHS Baseball 3rd Round GHS: All Make-Up Tests GMS: MAAP Math Starz and Entertainers Auditions (After School) GES Prek-3: Spring Book Fair - GES Library 8:00am - 2:30pm GHS: Track State Meet at Pearl 10:00am	4 GHS Baseball 3rd Round NJROTC Roadside Clean Up Community Service MAPQSL Class - "B" Building, Room 23A 7:30am - 5:00pm
	5 GHS Fast Pitch North State Playoffs	6 GHS Fast Pitch North State Playoffs GHS: Boys Golf State - TBD GES Prek-3: Spring Book Fair - GES Library 8:00am - 2:30pm GHS: AP Government Test 8:00am - 12:00pm GHS: Cheer Practice at Armory 3:30pm - 5:30pm Visions Auditions 3:30pm - 5:00pm GHS Athletic Banquet-GHS Auditorium & Cafe, 6:00pm	7 GHS: Boys Golf State - TBD GHS: US History Test MAAP Testing 4th & 5th Science GES Prek-3: Spring Book Fair - GES Library 8:00am - 2:30pm Visions Auditions 3:30pm - 5:00pm Band: Spring Parent Meeting for Students Grade 8-11 - GHS Auditorium 7:00pm	8 GES Kindergarten-Kindergarten Graduation and Play (8:15 & 9:15am)-GES Prek-3 Cafe GES Prek-3: Spring Book Fair - GES Library 8:00am - 2:30pm GHS: AP Comp (Juniors) Test 8:00am - 12:00pm Visions Auditions 3:30pm - 5:00pm	9 GES Kindergarten-Kindergarten Graduation and Play (8:15 & 9:15am)-GES Prek-3 Cafe GHS Baseball North State GHS Fast Pitch State Playoffs GHS: Biology Test GES Prek-3: Spring Book Fair - GES Library 8:00am - 2:30pm GHS: Cheer Practice at Armory 3:30pm - 5:30pm Visions Auditions 3:30pm	10 GES Kindergarten-Kindergarten Graduation and Play (9:15am only)-GES Prek-3 Cafe GHS Baseball North State GHS Fast Pitch State Playoffs GHS: Make-Up MAAP GES Prek-3: Spring Book Fair - GES Library 8:00am - 2:30pm GHS: APUSH (Juniors) Test 8:00am - 12:00pm GHS: AP Computer Science Test 12:00pm - 3:00pm
	11 GHS Fast Pitch North State Playoffs	12 Mother's Day	13 GHS: Make-Up MAAP GHS: AP Biology Test 8:00am - 12:00pm GHS: Cheer Practice at Armory 3:30pm - 5:30pm	14 GHS Baseball Finals Ovations (6th Grade) Auditions at GES 4-5 GCTC: Awards Breakfast 8:00am GHS: AP Calculus Test 8:00am - 12:00pm GCTC-Mississippi Safety Services Defensive Driving Course 5:30pm - 9:30pm Entertainers Required Parent Meeting 6:00pm School Board Meeting-Central Office 6:00pm	15 *FINAL EXAMS (ALL SENIORS)!!! GHS Baseball Finals GHS: AP Literature (Seniors) 8:00am - 12:00pm	16 *FINAL EXAMS (ALL SENIORS)!!! GHS Baseball Finals GHS: Cheer Practice at Armory 3:30pm - 5:30pm Visions Practice 3:30pm - 6:00pm Visions Required Parent Meeting 6:00pm
	17 GHS: Make-Up MAAP	18 *FINAL EXAMS (ALL SENIORS)!!! GHS Baseball Finals GMS-Athletic Awards Breakfast-GMS Cafe 7:45am GES Prek-3: Stufflee's Birthday-GES Kidzeum 9:00am - 1:00pm	19 *FINAL EXAMS (ALL UNDERGRADUATES)!!! GLAD - Adult Education HSE Graduation - GLAD Auditorium & Cafe 1-GMS Awards Day in GHS Auditorium, 8th grade 8:30am - 10:00am 2-GMS Awards Day in GHS Auditorium, 6th grade 10:15am - 11:15am 3-GMS Awards Day in GHS Auditorium, 7th grade 12:00pm - 1:00pm	20 *FINAL EXAMS (ALL UNDERGRADUATES)!!! NJROTC Graduation Day Community Service (setting up chairs and picking them up) GHS Seniors-Graduation practice-GHS Aud. 1:00pm - 4:00pm GHS: Senior Slide Show - GHS Auditorium 6:00pm GLAD - Adult Education HSE Graduation - GLAD Auditorium & Cafe 6:00pm	21 *FINAL EXAMS (ALL UNDERGRADUATES)!!! GHS Seniors-Graduation practice-GHS Aud. or Stadium 9:00am - 4:00pm GLAD - SPED Training - Finalizing the IEP - GLAD Cafe 3:30pm - 4:30pm	22 *FINAL EXAMS (ALL UNDERGRADUATES)!!! GHS Seniors-Graduation practice-GHS Aud. or Stadium 9:00am - 4:00pm GLAD - SPED Training - Finalizing the IEP - GLAD Cafe 3:30pm - 4:30pm
	23 *FINAL EXAMS (ALL UNDERGRADUATES)!!! 60% Day!!! GHS Seniors-Graduation practice-GHS Aud. or Stadium 9:00am - 4:00pm	24 Professional Development for Teachers!!! NO Students! GHS GRADUATION!!!! GHS Stadium 7:00pm	25 Charisma (Mandy Eaton) Dance Rehearsal-GHS Auditorium HOLIDAY!!! NJROTC Community Service - Memorial Day Parade	26 Charisma (Mandy Eaton) Dance Rehearsal-GHS Auditorium Professional Development for Teachers!!! NO Students! Summer Staff works 7am-5pm GHS: Cheer Practice at Armory 8:00am - 11:30am GHS: Football Cheer Camp Grades 6-7 (GMS Gym) 9:00am - 6:00pm GSD End of the year Faculty Meeting and Retirement Reception-GHS Aud. & Cafe. 10:00am - 12:00pm	27 Charisma (Mandy Eaton) Dance Rehearsal-GHS Auditorium Report Cards Issued Summer Staff works 7am-5pm GHS: Cheer Practice at Armory 8:00am - 11:30am GMS: Football Cheer Camp Grades 6-7 (GMS Gym) 9:00am - 6:00pm	28 Charisma (Mandy Eaton) Dance Rehearsal-GHS Auditorium Summer Staff works 7am-5pm GHS: Cheer Practice at Armory 8:00am - 11:30am GMS: Football Cheer Camp Grades 6-7 (GMS Gym) 9:00am - 6:00pm
26	27 Memorial Day Charisma (Mandy Eaton) Dance Rehearsal-GHS Auditorium HOLIDAY!!! NJROTC Community Service - Memorial Day Parade	28 Charisma (Mandy Eaton) Dance Rehearsal-GHS Auditorium Professional Development for Teachers!!! NO Students! Summer Staff works 7am-5pm GHS: Cheer Practice at Armory 8:00am - 11:30am GHS: Football Cheer Camp Grades 6-7 (GMS Gym) 9:00am - 6:00pm GSD End of the year Faculty Meeting and Retirement Reception-GHS Aud. & Cafe. 10:00am - 12:00pm	29 Charisma (Mandy Eaton) Dance Rehearsal-GHS Auditorium Report Cards Issued Summer Staff works 7am-5pm GHS: Cheer Practice at Armory 8:00am - 11:30am GMS: Football Cheer Camp Grades 6-7 (GMS Gym) 9:00am - 6:00pm	30 Ascension Day Charisma (Mandy Eaton) Dance Rehearsal-GHS Auditorium Summer Staff works 7am-5pm GHS: Cheer Practice at Armory 8:00am - 11:30am GMS: Football Cheer Camp Grades 6-7 (GMS Gym) 9:00am - 6:00pm	31 All GSD offices will be closed. (Only janitors should be in buildings.) Charisma (Mandy Eaton) Dance Recital-GHS Auditorium	

GHS Star Student



Photo by Stephanie Raper

Grenada High School's STAR Student for 2018-2019 (left) Huey Chan with his STAR teacher (right) Sherry Cook.

*By Stephanie Raper
GSD Reporter*

Huey Chan has been named Grenada High School's STAR Student for the 2018 – 2019 school year by the Mississippi Economic Council (MEC) M. B. Swayze Foundation, sponsor of the Student Teacher Achievement Recognition (STAR) program.

Established by the Mississippi Economic Council in 1965, the purpose of the STAR program is to recognize outstanding students and teachers in Missis-

sippi through its Education Celebration. The theme of the Celebration this year is Reach for the Stars.

Chan, who scored a 34 on the ACT, will be honored during the annual Education Celebration on April 11, 2019, at the Jackson Convention Complex in downtown Jackson. The event is sponsored by AT&T, Atmos Energy, BancorpSouth, Barksdale Management, Blue Cross & Blue Shield of Mississippi, Cooperative Energy, Electric Cooperative of Mississippi, Entergy Mississippi, Ergon, Inc., Ingalls Shipbuilding, Mississippi Power

Company, Nissan North America, Inc., Sanderson Farms, Inc., Trustmark National Bank, Walmart, and Yates.

Additional local support for the STAR program is provided by MEC members from communities across the state.

Huey is the son of Wallace Chan and Lixia Peng. He is among the top students in his AP and dual credit classes. He also serves as captain of the Academic team and as a member of Mu Alpha Theta. Some of Huey's extracurricular activities include playing alto saxophone and keyboard in the Grenada High School Band. Other pursuits he enjoys include volunteer work for the National Honor Society and performing in various piano recitals and festivals. Reading and traveling are some of Huey's favorite hobbies, and he has visited numerous places around the world. After graduation, Huey plans to major in Aerospace Engineering.

STAR Students are selected on the basis of academic excellence. Both American College Test scores and scholastic averages are compared to determine the school's STAR Student, explained Vickie Powell of Jackson, Senior Vice President of Foundations. "The STAR program encourages and promotes academic achievement among Mississippi's high school seniors," she said. Each STAR Student is asked to designate a STAR Teacher, the teacher who has made the greatest contribution to the student's scholastic achievement. Chan chose

Mrs. Sherry Cook as his STAR Teacher. Cook, a three time recipient of the STAR Teacher award, teaches Project Lead the Way Biomedical Science, Human Body Systems at GHS and also serves as GSD Science Specialist for grades 5-12. Cook stated, "I am honored to be chosen Star Teacher for the 2018-2019 school year. This is my 28th year in the classroom, and it means so much to know that I still have a positive impact on the lives of students. Knowing that Huey has had so many outstanding teachers to choose from makes this honor even more special. Huey is an outstanding young man who strives for excellence and is intelligent, inquisitive, and loves to learn. Students like Huey make me a better teacher. Thank you, Huey, for bestowing me with this honor. I wish you only the best as you leave GHS and go out into the world."

Over 650 STAR Students and STAR Teachers will receive recognition from MEC's M.B. Swayze Foundation at the Celebration. The top 20 STAR Students – The ALL-STAR Scholars – will receive scholarships and their STAR Teachers will receive awards provided by the Kelly Gene Cook, Sr. Charitable Foundation. The highlight of the Education Celebration will be the naming of the Mississippi ALL-STAR Scholar for 2018-2019 school year, winner of the coveted \$24,000.00 Cook Foundation Scholarship.

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College Prep: Freshman Advisor

Fawn Keen is finishing her first year as an academic counselor at Grenada High School, but she's no newcomer to helping students navigate their way toward college and career.

For the past 18 years, Keen has counseled students in various districts where her husband was assigned as a United Methodist minister. She has earned degrees in counseling, music education, and business administration and is currently pursuing a PhD in counselor education at Mississippi State University.

Her counseling degree requires training in mental health as well as academics. Keen says it's useful to have a background in helping freshmen, who often need extra help transitioning to high school. "It's a big learning curve to go from middle school to high school," she says. "These 14- and 15-year olds are suddenly thrown in with 17- and 18-year-olds, and it's a social adjustment."

Mrs. Keen is patient and caring as she talks freshmen through some of the social obstacles they face at a new school. She uses the same supportive approach when helping them make academic adjustments.

"When a student reaches high school, suddenly it's not just grades they have to think about but credits as well," Keen says. "They have to start planning ahead. It's not just about solving your ninth grade year but setting things in place to graduate in four years."

One academic decision that entering ninth graders will face is the state's new graduation endorsement options.

Students must choose either to take the traditional diploma route, which carries the usual and established requirements for graduation, or they may opt to add value to their diploma by declaring one of three specialized endorsements: academic, career and technical, or distinguished academic.

An academic endorsement requires 26 credits and at least a 2.5 GPA, as well as an ACT score of at least 17 on the English section and 19 on the math. Students must also successfully complete an AP class and exam (earning at least a C) or one dual credit course.

A career and technical endorsement requires students to earn 26 credits, including four from the same program, such as automotive or information technology.

Students must achieve a 2.5 GPA and score at a silver level on ACT WorkKeys. They must also complete at least one dual credit course, work-based learning experience, or earn a national credential.

And finally, a distinguished academic endorsement requires 28 credits with a 3.0 GPA or above, as well as an ACT score of at least 18 on the English section and 22 on the math. Students must also successfully complete an AP class and exam (earning at least a B) or complete one dual credit course.

One advantage of opting for a specialized endorsement, says Keen, is that entering ninth grade students who earn their academic or distinguished academic diploma will be accepted to any of the state's public universities.

Keen explained these new requirements to 8th graders and their parents last spring, as well as helped them set up their 9th grade schedule. She has done the same with next year's batch of freshmen to help ease the transition from middle to high school.

She also works with eighth graders to judge their future career interests and steers them toward a productive path

of study in high school. GSD uses the Career Clusters model, which identifies 16 careers — including agriculture, architecture, education, finance, health, law — to insure students receive a strong foundation in skills they may need for a future career.

For those who are nervous about committing to a career at such a young age, Keen assures them, "It's all written in pencil."

She adds, "A student is not locked into one career. As in life, you can change your plan, explore different careers. This is a living document."

Keen also organizes two college trips for freshmen. Last fall she took a group of 50 to Northwest Community College, and this spring she took another 50 to Mississippi State.

"Now's the time to start thinking big," she says. "High school can be the greatest four years of your school life. But the time flies by. Before you know it, you're in your cap and gown, facing the next phase of your life."



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Pure Imagination Competes at State



Photo by Ryan Melton

Members of Pure Imagination, the robotics team at Grenada Middle School, helped win qualifying rounds that earned them an invitation to First Tech Challenge State Championship. Students include (l. to r.) Quanterio Taylor, Keirin Alberg, Avery McMechan, and Eddy Robinson.

By Jamie Kornegay
GSD Reporter

Pure Imagination, the robotics team at Grenada Middle School, wrapped up an award-winning season with an invitation to compete at the state's First Tech Challenge (FTC). From over 50 teams in the state of Mississippi, the top 24 teams qualified to compete at the University of Mississippi.

This year's GMS robotics team was comprised of 7th and 8th graders. Their mentor, Ryan Melton, teaches three in-

novative Project Lead the Way classes at GMS, including Design and Modeling, Biomedical, and Robotics.

"As a mentor, I guide the team and give them suggestions," Melton said, "but they make all the decisions. It's completely student-led."

The First Tech Challenge is put on by FIRST, a worldwide organization that uses robotics to teach kids life skills as well as science and technology. Melton said FIRST prides itself on helping students learn to think outside the box. "It's about more than competing," he said.

"They also promote an ethic of 'Gracious Professionalism,' which is a way of doing things that stresses not just quality work but being respectful of others."

This year's competition required students to design, build, and program a robot to achieve a specific task. "The competition was based on landing on an alien planet," Melton said. "The team had to deploy their robot from a landing craft, collect gold and silver minerals — which were cubes and spheres — and then take them back to the craft, where they had to reattach and lift the robot off the floor. All of this had to be done in two-and-a-half minutes."

This was the third year in a row that Pure Imagination qualified to compete in the state championship. They first had to prove themselves at two regional tournaments.

At the first qualifying tournament in Pearl, the team won the Connect Award. "This award is given to the team that most connects with their local science, technology, engineering and math community," Melton said. "This award was given after an interview and judging process."

At the Senatobia qualifier, the team had an even better showing. "Their robot, whose name is Charlie, performed much better," Melton said. "It had a very reliable program, a great autonomous, which is when the robot has to operate

by itself, and the team did amazing on their interviews."

The team won several awards at the Senatobia competition, including first runner-up for the Design Award, second runner-up for the Collins Aerospace Innovate Award, first runner-up for the Think Award, and winner of the Inspire Award.

"While all of these awards are great achievements, all teams strive to get the Inspire Award," Melton said.

The Inspire Award is given to a team that performs as a top contender for the other judged awards and is a gracious competitor. "This was our first time to ever win this award, and the students were thrilled," he said.

The team's strong performances, as well as their ability to market and raise funds to support the team, sent them back to the state championship First Tech Challenge at the University of Mississippi on February 22-23.

"The team competed against 24 of the best teams in the state," Melton said. "And even though we didn't take home the championship, the team had a great showing. They and their robot Charlie gave their best performance of the whole season."

Melton said Pure Imagination is already recruiting sixth graders to perform with next year's team.

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GMS Students of the Month



Sixth grade March Students of the Month are (front, l to r) Layla Taylor, Yamileth Nino Moran, Wojie Zhong, Gracea McCrary, Faith Wortham, Matthew Reeves, (back, l to r) Emily Goss, Brelyn Hardwick, Ruby Moore, Deandrae Rimmer, Omarion Green, Gillon Scott, Zion Welch, and Assistant Principal Angela Cooley.



Eighth grade March Students of the Month are (front, l to r) Abbigail Baker, Layla Blaylock, & Ariyah Harris, (back, l to r) Alyiana Burt, Lydie Barefoot, Cameo Noel, and Assistant Principal Angela Cooley.

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“State”

Continued from page 1

The first-place problem-solving team came from Fortier’s class. Members included Drew Klinck, Presley Williams, Gabe Reyna, Elle Lucius, and Tylae Cox. Another GES 4-5 team — including Houston Whittemore, Anna Goldwater, Addy Elliott, and Jayden Hudgins — placed third.

A team made up of fifth-graders Blakely Kirk, Bailey Jackson, Madeline Holliday, Kathryn Cobb, and Emily Finkley placed third for their action plan presentation.

In addition to the strong team showings, several students competed as individuals. Grenada claimed the top three spots in the junior division with Taylor Hayward winning first, Jasmine Phillips winning second, and Taleri Glover winning third.

Also placing in individual competition was Bay Kornegay, who won third place in Scenario Writing. In this category, students wrote their own future scenes.

After Grenada’s fine showing at the state Future Problem Solving competition, nine students were invited to attend the international competition at the University of Massachusetts in Amherst.

Fortier called the international competition “the Olympics of the Mind,” and said the Mississippi affiliate did well last year when they competed in Wisconsin. Two individual competitors from GES 4-5, Bay Kornegay and Miley Jones, placed first and second on teams comprised of future problem solvers from other schools throughout the country.

As Mississippi’s affiliate director, Fortier will be working at the festival along with coaching the Grenada students, who will compete among more than 2,500 students from all over the world. “It’s an opportunity for the children to experience different cultures and to talk to other students and see that we’re all in this together,” she said.

“Tracking”

Continued from page 1

That’s why we start monitoring in pre-kindergarten, to ensure that our students are strong in the fundamentals. If a student misses a key concept in the early years, they could suffer throughout middle and high school because they had a shaky foundation. If we can eliminate fundamental weakness early on, then we can improve student comprehension, grades, confidence, and their potential for higher achievement.

This routine we’ve developed for

tracking progress and improving instruction is reflected in our district’s growing graduation and state accountability scores.

But it’s not just about making the grade. Sure, it looks good for the school district if we all pull higher marks on state tests, but our number one goal remains the same: to help every student reach his or her full potential.

Because what’s good for our students is ultimately good for all of Grenada.



Seventh grade March Students of the Month are (front, l to r) Nadia Reed, Amaiya Noel, Shyesha Jones, (back, l to r): Jeel Patel, Lametria Harbin, Oterius Minor, Jarikas Tanner, and Assistant Principal Angela Cooley.

Special Guest at GES PK-3



(photo left) Branson, Missouri, comedian Eddie Bowman a.k.a. Chester Drawers entertained Grenada Elementary School (PK - 3) with his jokes, stories, books, and songs. The author/entertainer encouraged students to be readers and to stay away from negative influences. Students enjoyed singing along with his stories *Crazy Cat* and *Silly Dog*.

Photo by Martha Liberto

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