



More than a Grade



Superintendent's Message
Dr. David Daigneault

I will never forget the great sense of pride and accomplishment that swept through the district office after the scores were tallied and the State Board of Education acknowledged the final standings — Grenada School District had received its first A grade in the state accountability system!

Though our administrative team has worked tirelessly to achieve this distinction, there is no way this could have been accomplished by any one person or department.

It starts with a dream and a vision that requires staff and employees district-wide — all 669 of us — to remain student-focused, which they do year in and year out. From bus drivers and cafeteria workers, custodial workers and security officers, all of whom try to make students feel good about themselves each day, to the great support of our board of trustees, who have worked behind the scenes with the heavy lifting. From the parents, who have heard the call and helped drive their kids to excellence, to the teachers and principals, who worked hard and believed in this mission to achieve great success.

And to the students, who are as integral to this success as anyone, I say, Thank you! You focused your efforts and put in the work to make this happen. I hope you understand the value of what you have achieved and what it means for our community.

An “A District” distinction is a great light that shines on the entire community. It says that Grenada cares about its young people and that its citizens are joined in an effort to help them succeed.

When industries are surveying communities to move into or set up new operations, the school district plays a huge role in helping them find an ideal site. Schools matter because this is where their workers will be educating their children. They matter because this is where their future workforce is being trained.

Part of our mission in this district is to train college- and career-ready students. Grenada High School was recently recognized nationally as one of 46 high schools in the state that has gone above and beyond to prepare its students for the future. (See story on page 3.) A child who comes through this school district stands a better chance at success in college and career based on the instruction they receive from our teachers and administrators.

Like community and industry, a school functions best on the strength of its people. If we can do a good job of training and educating them, then they can grow up and become a part of our community. They can look forward to raising families here and enjoying a quality life in Grenada.

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Continued on page 7

Grenada Earns an ‘A’



Photo by Jamie Kornegay

By Jamie Kornegay
GSD Reporter

Grenada School District earned its first-ever A rating for its performance in the 2021-22 school year, as approved by the Mississippi State Board of Education on Thursday, September 29.

Superintendent Dr. David Daigneault announced the news to the district at a special live-streamed event on Tuesday, September 27. The gathering in the circle outside Grenada Elementary 4-5 was attended by staff and students from grades 3-5 and featured entertainment by Pizzazz Show Choir, the Grenada Band drumline, and the GHS cheerleaders.

Daigneault arrived on a fire truck and greeted the crowd, “We are fired up this morning with some exciting news!”

He added, “Each of our schools has worked tirelessly through the past years, and your work has paid off.”

Daigneault’s announcement of the district’s A score brought cheers from the crowd. He invited those in attendance to release helium-filled balloons, reminding them, “As you release your balloons today, remember that the sky is always the limit. We will always continue to strive for excellence.”

Mississippi’s schools and districts are graded on an A-F scale. The grades are part of the state’s accountability system,

which helps teachers, school leaders, parents and communities know how well local schools and districts are serving students.

When grades were last awarded for the 2018-19 school year, Grenada School District earned a B following a steady annual climb in scores. The district’s improved grade this year is largely due to the progress students made during the 2021-22 school year after achievement declined across the country in the first year of the pandemic.

See “Earns”
Continued on page 2

High Hopes Lunch



Photo by Michael Sanford

Grenada School District recently hosted a lunch break reception to honor community members of their Partners in Education program, High Hopes. Representatives from participating local businesses joined district staff in the Grenada Career and Technical Center’s culinary arts classroom kitchen. Among those in attendance were Tanner Jackson of Guaranty Bank, Jessica Fly of Fly Timber, GHS Principal Emily Tindall, Barry Worrell of Emmanuel Baptist Church, and GSD Superintendent Dr. David Daigneault.

Grenada Earns an ‘A’

“Earns”

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“We are so excited for the students who have attained this rare distinction and for the teachers who have put in the necessary hours to study every child and teach them to the highest standard possible,” said Daigneault. “Our administrative team has worked tirelessly to produce great results, along with our specialists, and our board of trustees has been incredibly supportive in setting a standard of success. We are appreciative of the parents in this district who have helped us to achieve this dream, and a very special thanks to the community, which has shown a strong desire for our school district to achieve excellence at all levels.”

In several criteria, Grenada ranked among the top-scoring districts in Mississippi with the number of students scoring proficient and advanced. In math, the third grade ranked fifth in the state, followed by the eighth grade in eighth place, the fourth grade in 12th place, and the sixth grade in 20th place. English Language Arts (ELA) classes in third grade ranked 16th in the state, while 4th grade ranked 11th.



Photos by Taylor Buchanan

Students enjoyed the festivities surrounding the announcement that Grenada has been named an “A” district by the Mississippi State Board of Education.

(photo above)
Markiya McNeal and Carsyn Chandler

(photo top left)
Lyllah Williams, Averi Hood, and Meadow Williams

(photo right)
(back, l to r) GES PreK-3 Principal Cole Surrell and Kasen Surrell, (front, l to r) Jonah Clark, Gabe Day, and Waylon Elliott

(photo bottom left)
Sadie Williams and Chip the Charger (Breanna Elliott)



Student reporter (left) Aubrey Cole Surrell gets last minute advice from teacher (right) Devon Tipton.



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GCTC Class Visits State Hospital Museum

The Grenada Career & Technical Center Health Science classes toured the Mississippi State Hospital at Whitfield on September 7, 2022. Student Services Coordinator Meg Newcomb organized the trip, in which students toured the museum and campus. They learned the hospital’s history as well as methods to treat mental health disorders. Students who attended include (front row, l to r) Jamecia Bibbs, Keirin Alberg, Zoniquah Brown, Savannah Mallet, Layla Snyder, (middle row, l to r) Corbin Mims, Moriah Calhoun, Lexi O’rear, Chloe Williams, Jayla Myers, Kemya Rounds, Kayden Walters, Makayla Horton, (back row, l to r) Hannah Pallozola, Nadia Purnell, Markiya McNeal, Ava Hunt, Markita Kinsey, Garriel Cunningham, Qwesi-nique Nason, and Jessica Moore.



Photo by Meg Newcomb

GHS Recognized for College Success



The Mississippi Department of Education listed Grenada High School among 45 other high schools throughout the state to receive the prestigious 2022 College Success Award from GreatSchools.org, the nation’s leading nonprofit providing school information to parents and families.

Now in its fifth year, the annual recognition honors public high schools that excel at preparing students to enroll and succeed in college, as determined by available data in each state.

GHS was selected among more than 440 public high schools as one of the best at preparing students for college. “I’m thrilled that everyone’s efforts are paying off,” said Principal Emily Tindall.

“The students, teachers, parents, staff, community members, and administrators have all had a hand in achieving this recognition.”

Mississippi’s recipients are among 1,742 winners from 25 states that have demonstrated successful track records of graduating students who enroll in two- or four-year colleges, are ready for college-level coursework, and persist on to their second year. Despite the many challenges brought forth by the COVID-19 pandemic, these schools have continued to uphold many best practices to support their students’ college preparation and success.

Tindall said the GHS administration has made college- and career-readiness

a focus since she became principal in 2019. “For starters, we’ve really tried to make students more aware of how the ACT helps prepare them for college,” she said.

Tindall tasked Assistant Principal Kelby Surrell with spearheading the ACT program, which includes an ACT prep class and free workshops for students.

“We’ve also instituted giving the ACT test to all sophomores,” Tindall said. “We were finding that by the time kids took state tests as juniors, only one-third of the class had ever taken the ACT.”

Tindall said preparation is beneficial to most students, who often find the three-hour ACT a grueling endurance test. To aid students, a new program called Jumpstart to further prepare students has been embedded into math, English and science courses at the high school.

Early and frequent attempts at the ACT have proven to increase student scores, helping students to reach the target scores for enrollment in dual credit classes.

A strong focus on ACT awareness and preparation has resulted in an enrollment increase in GHS’s college-level courses. Tindall said 9th Grade Principal Ezzard Beane supervises the dual credit program as well as the new Middle College initiative that earns high school students college credit with local Holmes Community College.

“Taking college-level classes within our block schedule provides students with an authentic experience as if they

were actually in college,” Tindall said.

GHS students and parents have attended FAFSA workshops to help them through the rigorous process of applying for financial aid, and a new career counselor will soon be meeting individually with students. “We’re striving to target even more students for individualized conversations about their future and how we can help them reach their goals,” Tindall said.

The College Success Award is possible because Mississippi is leading the nation in both collecting and transparently sharing information on how students perform after high school, which is valuable information for families, educators, and policymakers.

“We applaud Mississippi for prioritizing a high-quality public education that puts students on the path to bright futures,” said Jon Deane, CEO of GreatSchools. “It’s inspiring to see how entire school communities — students, teachers, and families — can work together in pursuit of a common goal: success for all. Congratulations to these 45 schools for receiving the College Success Award as proof of their hard work and dedication.”

Community members can join in celebrating Mississippi’s winning schools on social media using #CollegeSuccessAward. To learn more about the College Success Award and view the complete list of winners, visit bit.ly/3QQORim.

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Pure Imagination Team Visits Nissan

By Jamie Kornegay
GSD Reporter

Members of the Grenada School District's Robotics team traveled to Canton, Mississippi, on Saturday, October 15, for Nissan Family Fun Day.

The team of middle and high school students from Grenada, along with the Jackson team Spark-O-Matic, were invited to participate in the annual employee appreciation day for workers at the Nissan plant and their families.

Outside the plant were carnival rides and arts and crafts, while inside, kids could explore a STEM area featuring robots, virtual reality, and infrared technology. Approximately 750 employees and family members participated in the event.

Six of the ten members of Pure Imagination were on hand to demonstrate the team's robots, Goose and George, and the challeng-

ing obstacle course they are programmed to run. Nissan employees and their kids were invited to operate the robots.

"This is the first year they've had a functioning robot this early in the semester," said team coach, Ryan Melton. "It ran for eight hours straight. No problems, no glitches. It gives us high hopes for this year."

The team has spent the first semester designing and building its competition robot, which it will take to meets in Arkansas, Bogue Chitto, and Biloxi this season. Placing high in each tournament helps advance them to state and national tournaments.

The Robotics program hosts two meets in Grenada. Middle and high school teams from around the region will compete at the first meet on January 7, and Grenada will compete with its new Lego League 5th grade robotics team on January 21.

(photo right)
Members of Grenada's Robotics team Pure Imagination — (l to r) Hanna Self, Brayden Campbell, Misty Logan, Jozy Foster, Layla Escobedo, and Laken Snyder — showed off their competition robots at Nissan Family Fun Day in Canton, Mississippi.



NJROTC Opens Jubilee



(left to right) Takeria Gholston, Starkeysha Wheeler, Lauren Harges, Avery McMechan, and Taliyah Hawkins presented the colors at the recent Grenada Downtown Jubilee.

GCTC Fall Advisory Meeting



The Grenada Career & Tech Center held their annual Fall Advisory Committee Meeting on Friday, October 21. Advisory Committee Members were invited to meet with their local class advisor, discuss ways they could help bridge the gap from community to classroom, and share a meal prepared by the culinary arts students. (center) Committee member Richard Ross spoke with (left) GCTC counselor Mark Davis and culinary arts student Shep Bridges (right) who assisted in preparing the lunch.

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Battle of the Belt at GMS



The 7th grade class of Mrs. Malone and Ms. Self at Grenada Middle School captured the championship belt as a reward in the AR Battle of the Belt. The schoolwide reading initiative rewards students for contributing the most toward the goal of reading 15,000 books by the end of the year. The proud winners include (front, l to r) Aiden Pounds, Elijah Robinson, Zakobie Howard, Savannah Ewing, Catherine Neeley, (back, l to r) Karson Bennett, Demetri Kennedy, Octavius Seldon, Johnathan Tillmon, Julius Brown, Christian Gray, Ms. Self, and Mrs. Malone.

By Jamie Kornegay
GSD Reporter

This year reading has become a competitive sport at Grenada Middle School. GMS administrators recently challenged students to read 15,000 books by the end of the year. Students who contribute the

most toward this goal will enjoy a host of rewards, including possession of a coveted wrestling belt for the class of the week, as well as attendance at a wrestling match that pits faculty members against each other.

GMS Librarian Nathalie Tramel has jumped wholeheartedly into the

reading their selected book, students take an online quiz to determine their comprehension and are awarded points based on their success.

The AR Battle of the Belt contest rewards one class each in grades 6-8. A new set of winners are determined each week by various reading criteria: most

schoolwide reading initiative, making the school library a hub for Accelerated Reader (AR) books and testing. “We’re offering prizes to encourage kids to get involved,” she said. “We want to make reading not just about a grade but something to participate in that’s worthwhile.”

The national Accelerated Reader program encourages independent reading among students and provides resources for teachers to keep track of their progress. Students may choose a book from a vast library of eligible titles — more than 150,000 books, both fiction and non-fiction — organized by grade and reading level. After

books read, most points earned, best balance between fiction and nonfiction, or best class average.

Winning classes receive a championship belt, which is displayed above the door outside the classroom. In addition to the belt, the winning classes receive a free dress day.

By the contest’s tenth week, GMS students had read a combined 3,179 books, well on their way to the goal of 15,000. “Surprisingly, my first thought was that the 8th grade would be the most resistant, since they’re the oldest, most too-cool-for-school group,” Tramel said. “But they’ve really jumped on board. They’ve been doing fantastic.”

In the tenth week totals, the 8th grade had read more than 1,100 books. The 6th grade was 60 books shy of the lead with the 7th grade just 40 books behind them in third place. When each grade level meets its individual goal of 5,000 books (their contribution to the schoolwide goal), they will be eligible to attend a sumo wrestling tournament featuring principals and coaches.

Students are encouraged to be “Champion Readers” by earning points not only for their grade but for themselves as well. Teachers offer classroom incentives for the most points, and students may strive for grand prizes. Ambitious readers who accumulate 75 points will receive their own poster on the wall of fame outside the cafeteria.

“See Battle”
Continued on page 8

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GHS Homecoming



Photos by Torrance Studios

(back, l to r) GHS Principal Emily Tindall, 2021 Homecoming Queen, Miss Autumn Davis, uncle of the 2022 Homecoming Queen Mr. Bryan Williams, 2022 Homecoming Queen Miss Niterryka Teaira Burns, GSD Superintendent Dr. David Daigneault, (front, l to r) Children of the Court Miss Arliegh Janell Townes, and Master Jack Foster



Senior Maid & Queen
Miss Niterryka Burns (right)
escorted by her uncle
Mr. Bryan Williams (left)



Senior Maid
Miss Da'jnea Antoine (right)
escorted by her uncle
Mr. Chancey Smith (left)



Senior Maid
Kiersten Zinn (right)
escorted by her father
Mr. Bobby Zinn (left)



Senior Maid
Kayla Robinson (right)
escorted by her father
Mr. Brandon Peeler (left)



Freshman Maid
Miss Peyton Herrod (right)
escorted by her father
Mr. Andre' Herrod (left)



Freshman Maid
Miss Ty'Lecia Lemon
(right) escorted by her
grand-father Mr. Paul Clark



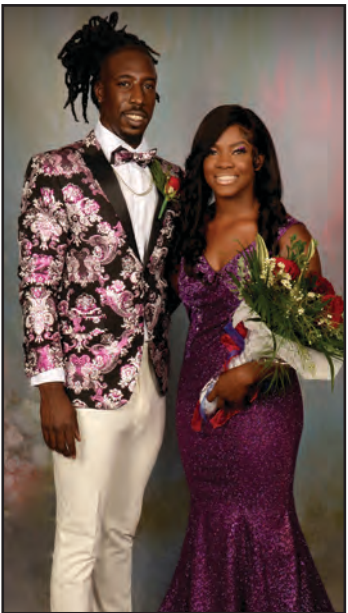
Sophomore Maid
Miss Naima Reed (right)
escorted by her father
Pastor Johnnie Reed (left)



Sophomore Maid
Trinity Davis (right)
escorted by her father
Mr. Eddie Davis



Junior Maid
Jayla Myers (right)
escorted by her brother
Mr. Javier Booker (left)



Junior Maid
Kimaria Reed (right)
escorted by her friend
Mr. Edrick House (left)



(Photo left)
Children of the Court
Miss Arliegh Townes,
(right) daughter of Antron
and Arlissa Townes,
escorted by Master Jack
Foster (left), son of Chip
and Brooke Foster

State Superintendent Visits Green Top



Photo by Michael Sanford

Grenada Elementary School 4-5 Principal Carol Tharpe (left) offers a gift basket to Mississippi’s Interim State Superintendent of Education Dr. Kim S. Benton (right) during her visit to the school in September. Dr. Benton was impressed by the varied academic offerings and the spirit of joy and cooperation at the Green Top.

*By Jamie Kornegay
GSD Reporter*

Dr. Kim S. Benton, Mississippi’s Interim State Superintendent of Education, visited Grenada Elementary School 4-5 on September 19.

GES 4-5 Principal Carol Tharpe said she invited Dr. Benton when the two met in June at the Mississippi Association of Elementary School Administrators/Mississippi Association of Secondary School Principals (MAESA/MASSP) summer conference held in Biloxi. Tharpe attended the conference to

accept her award, National Principal of the Year for Mississippi, from the National Association of Elementary School Principals.

“Dr. Benton and I had a wonderful visit,” Tharpe said. “I told her, ‘I’d love for you to see our school.’ And when I got back to my office from Biloxi, I had an email from her.”

The visit was scheduled, and Dr. Benton arrived with several members of her staff.

The group from Jackson was welcomed by the Green Top’s show choir, Pizzazz, which performed two songs in the school’s foyer under the director of Amy Killebrew.

The state superintendent was then shown the Discovery Lab, where students participate in experiments and hands-on lessons to enrich their classroom standards. Discovery Lab Director Devon Tipton welcomed the group from Jackson into his lively interactive lesson on the food chains.

The tour moved next to the gymnasium, where students were engaged in Drumfit, a physical education program that promotes rhythm and dance.

The delegation visited several fourth- and fifth-grade ELA, math, and science classrooms. In Haley Stewart’s English class, Dr. Benton joined the literary discussion and read a selection from the young adult novel *Wonder*.

The tour wrapped up in the school library, where Benton sat down to be interviewed by student reporters Corbin McKay, Genesis Turner, and Aubrey Cole Surrell from the school’s TGT morning news program.

“When you walk in the door, you can immediately feel the joy,” Benton said of her visit. “Having the privilege to walk in classrooms, [I noticed] children staying engaged. You can tell that there are high expectations for learning.”

Benton added, “One of the young ladies said, ‘We learn how to be good people here.’ You could see it in action. The relationships between the teachers, the assistants, of course led by your principal here — what a blessing for this whole community to have a school like this. It’s truly a treasure.”

The state superintendent and her staff had scheduled an hour-long visit but stayed for two hours.

Tharpe said she invited Benton and her staff to come back to the holiday literacy event scheduled in December. “She was very interested,” said Tharpe, “She asked us to send footage and wanted to feature it at the state board meeting.”

Benton said the exemplary programs she saw at Grenada Elementary 4-5 could benefit other schools under her jurisdiction. “I wish I could bottle up the joy and the enthusiasm for learning and sprinkle that across classrooms in the state, as well as the quality of instruction” the state superintendent said. “It was clear ... that there were high expectations for students, and they were rising to those standards and expectations.”

“More”

Continued from page 1

While it’s important to take this moment and recognize our achievement, we understand that the work is not over. We have reached our high standard, and now we must maintain it. We must work together to bring up those who have not made the needed gains. Continued growth is critical to retaining our A grade and excelling into the highest ranks of Mississippi schools. Now we turn our attention to students who are struggling to learn. Our success will be truly earned when everyone has strived for excellence and risen to the occasion.

In the end, an A rating for the district is not just about a grade. It’s about a sense of pride in our school and community. We must continue to teach our kids to be their best selves and to nurture the good that’s been made in Grenada.

A rising tide lifts all ships. And a community that is lifting itself up, striving to become better and smarter, is a community that understands this can only be achieved by everyone working together.



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“Battle”

Continued from page 5

One hundred and fifty points earns a “bling necklace,” a prize conceived by Principal Marshall Whittemore. “I’ve had many students ask to buy it,” Tramel said, “I tell them it cannot be bought, it can only be earned.”

The pinnacle of 300 points will earn students a royal blue satin bomber jacket with their name and the Charger logo emblazoned on the lapel.

Pam Briscoe, GHS ELA instructional specialist, has helped spearhead the reading initiative at GMS. “When students devote only 20 minutes a day to independent reading, research suggests they will be exposed to 1.8 million words in one year,” she said. “That’s less time than one episode of your favorite Netflix series. Just imagine the improvement in comprehension, fluency, and vocabulary acquisition if a student devoted that much time a day to reading!”

Tramel added that some students need to be convinced that this reading goal is attainable. “We try to encourage them on the classroom level and the schoolwide level,” Tramel said. “They’ve got to have support to make sure that they can achieve that goal. I tell them, ‘You have all year to meet the goal, you just have to keep plugging away.’”

“Reading has shown to be a great reducer of stress and anxiety,” said Briscoe. “We have 1,440 minutes in a day. Twenty minutes is only 1.39 percent of our day. That’s a small fraction of time to devote to an activity that has a lasting impact on your life.”

2022 Alumni Baseball Game



Photo by Michael Sanford

Grenada Chargers Baseball hosted its fifth alumni gathering on Saturday, October 22. Head Coach Jake Yarborough called on former players, managers, and coaches to participate. Former Coach John Craven (left) served as head baseball coach in the mid 1990s and was instrumental in building the program. Coach Craven threw out the first pitch to one of his former players, Trace Bevell (right). The day included a homerun derby and an alumni game.

The Annual Great Pumpkin Contest Winner



Photo by Martha Liberto

The Kidzeum recently held its annual Great Pumpkin Contest, sponsored by the Kidzeum and Bull Bottom Farms. Students were offered a chance to guess the weight of a giant pumpkin, donated by Bull Bottom Farms. Sims Conley, a third grader, won the pumpkin by correctly guessing its weight — 80 pounds.

GHS Band Wins Grand Champion at Recent Competition



(photo left)

The Grenada High School Marching Band competed at the Toyota Gulf Coast Marching Band Championship on Saturday, October 22. They competed with more than 20 of the top bands from Louisiana and Texas and captured overall Grand Champion for their halftime show, “If I Only Had a Heart.” The band earned superior ratings in every caption, including Music, Visual, General Effect, Percussion, Colorguard, and Band. They won every caption in their class, including Ensemble Music, Visual, General Effect, Percussion and Colorguard. Across all classes, the band earned the highest scoring in Overall Ensemble Music, Visual, General Effect and Colorguard. Representatives of the band who accepted the awards included (front, l to r) Emma Brasher, Alyssa Evans, Abby Presley, Mary Clayton Logan, Jane Wicker, Karlee Pollan, Josie Fraiser, Danica Caulder, (back, l to r) DeAndre Rimmer, Brendan Keys, Reid Viner, Blair Johnson, and Alyssa Winters.

