



The Future of Grenada



Superintendent's Message
Dr. David Daigneault

Early last month, as our new school year was getting underway, Dr. John Mundy drove up from Jackson County Schools on the Mississippi Gulf Coast, towing a long colorful trailer dubbed the FabLab.

The FabLab is a traveling STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Mathematics) classroom that stops in towns, communities, and schools throughout the state, showing students and locals the tools and methods used in modern fabrication.

Mundy showcased some of his best high-tech equipment, including a computer numerical control (CNC) router, a vinyl cutter, a laser engraver, a 3D printer and a host of computers and software for design, programming, and machine communications. Think of the FabLab as a mobile version of our high-level Project Lead the Way classrooms, where students at Grenada regularly get the opportunity to use these advanced, professional design and fabrication tools.

We invited Mundy and the FabLab to Grenada to share this concept with our administrators and local industry partners. We assembled a collection of bright local minds and representatives from numerous businesses to pose a challenging question — what if we marshaled our resources in Grenada County and created a similar program, in which not only students but adult members of the community could use these state-of-the-art tools and learn the skills that are needed in today's workforce?

Too often, in towns like Grenada all across the state and nation, you see the evidence of factories closing and economies drying up. Jobseekers are having an increasingly tough time gaining and maintaining skills that help them compete for high-paying, skill-based jobs.

Our community is fortunate to have several strong industries in town with more on the way. The announcement that Milwaukee Tool was building a major operation right here in Grenada has prompted people in Grenada to think about how we can grow our community effectively and efficiently to attract and retain good businesses.

Among our priorities at Grenada School District is providing access to these skills and technologies for our students. It's a mutual benefit — we're teaching young people the skills to help them thrive in the workforce, and we're training tomorrow's employees in the skills that industry tells us are needed.

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Attendance Critical to School Funding and Academic Success



Seniors at Grenada High School showed up for the first day of class, August 4, in a line of vehicles that stretched for miles before posing in front of the school as the Class of 2024.

By Jamie Kornegay
GSD Reporter

Administrators at Grenada School District are emphasizing the critical importance of student attendance during the pivotal months of October and November. Attendance isn't just about staying on top of studies, said Superintendent Dr. David Daigneault. It affects funding for the next school year, a fact that often goes unnoticed by the public.

Daigneault revealed that the Mississippi Department of Education (MDE) monitors school attendance during the upcoming two months, and the district's future success is inextricably linked to the number of students present in the classroom. He pointed to a striking example.

"Last year, we were on schedule to meet our goal of 96.5% attendance when the flu outbreak hit Grenada," Daigneault said. "It lasted for about two or three weeks, and a large number of students were affected, which dramatically reduced our attendance. In the end, that outbreak cost us in excess of a million dollars."

Even a slight reduction in attendance by just one percent can significantly impact the funding available for teacher salaries and educational programs. "We have to account for the staff and resources to teach 100 percent of the student body everyday," Daigneault said. "If the students are not attending school, then funding is lost."

To promote attendance,

schools within the district have employed various creative strategies to discourage students from staying home during the critical two month evaluation period. Even the elementary schools, which maintain the highest attendance percentages in the district, stress the importance of being in class.

"If they're not here, they're missing skills," said Principal Cole Surrell at the Red Top. "We don't stop our lesson plans, so every day they're not here, it's that many days they'll have to make up."

Generally if there's an attendance issue in the lower grades, Surrell said, it's a matter that is taken up with parents. "Sometimes, especially with first-time parents of kindergarten students, they

just need to be reminded that this isn't daycare. Too many absences, and a child can quickly get behind in a subject, which could have ripple effects throughout the year."

Up the hill at Grenada Elementary 4-5, Assistant Principal Kasey Lott said they've offered rewards in the past, including fun dress days with silly themes. They've even allowed students with perfect attendance a chance to win time in "the money machine," a cramped plastic booth in which a high-powered fan blows cash in a fast-moving frenzy.

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Student Broadcasters at Green Top



Photo by Mary Claire Jacks

Members of the TGT News team at Grenada Elementary 4-5 kicked off their second year of broadcasting the school's morning news and announcements. A rotating cast of students participate in the lively morning program, which teaches students the technical aspects of livestreaming and broadcasting while delivering school news in a fun, engaging style. Student reporters include (l to r) Waylon Elliot, Arionna Miller, Brooks Ray, and Aubrey Cole Surrell.



“Future”

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We want to help produce good employees for these jobs, not only people who are willing to work but people who have the intelligence and skills to thrive. Developing such a workforce attracts more businesses here, which stimulates the economy. A thriving community stands a much better chance of retaining its brightest young minds and providing a place where everyone has the opportunity to raise families and earn better wages.

If there’s one thing we’ve learned in the business of educating kids, it’s this — teach someone how to think, and they can solve any problem you put in front of them.

With that in mind, we’re currently developing a plan — and the FabLab is just the starting point — to provide students and adult learners in the community an opportunity to train for jobs in these developing industries. Among all of our recent innovations, surely this is our most ambitious project yet. We’re currently organizing alliances with very motivated partners and identifying resources that will support the program’s success.

You may be asking, why is this the school district’s responsibility?

First, it’s the responsibility of everyone to engage and preserve our community. Developing local industries doesn’t guarantee a thriving community, but it gives

us a valuable opportunity to succeed and grow if everyone does their part.

Grenada School District is willing to lead the charge because we have a proven track record of success in enhancing educational opportunities in Grenada.

In 12 years, we tightened the reins and brought the district from a C grade to an A. Over the past 18 years, we increased the graduation rate a whopping 40%. We’ve built a Pre-K program that has grown by leaps and bounds and continues to lead among other programs in the state. Our success in Project Lead the Way STEM classes continues to earn praise and recognition, and we remain one of just a few Districts of Innovation in the state of Mississippi. We’ve built strong relationships with local business and higher learning institutions, which has led to state-of-the-art classrooms and a Middle College program.

We want the community and our industry partners to know that we can provide what’s needed to keep Grenada strong. We must do this to build the manpower to meet the jobs that are coming. If we want our community to survive and prosper, we must adapt. It requires effort and investment, but it also requires brainpower.

And that’s exactly what we’ve been building right here in Grenada.

Health Department’s WIC and Quitline Work Together to Support Mothers

According to The American Academy of Pediatrics, breastfeeding is the best source of nutrition for your baby for the first six months and can be continued for as long as both mother and baby desire it. This is true, even for mothers who smoke cigarettes or use e-cigarette products.

The Mississippi State Department of Health (MSDH) offers these tips to smoking mothers:

- do not smoke near the infant
- smoke outside
- have smoke-free rules for the car and home
- change clothes and wash your hands after smoking and before handling the infant

Breastfed babies receive nutrients that only their mothers can provide, and breastfeeding mothers lower their risk of developing diseases like cancer and heart disease. Mothers and babies shouldn’t miss out on these benefits. The Office of Tobacco Control (OTC) at MSDH offers a specialized program called Baby and Me Tobacco Free. The Baby and Me Tobacco Free program and OTC work together to inspire and empower pregnant women and their families to overcome nicotine addiction through personalized counseling and incentives.

“Quitting smoking provides new health and protection to you and your baby, no matter when you quit,” said Sue Mashburne, Director of the Mississippi Tobacco-Free Coalition of Grenada, Yalobusha,

and Calhoun Counties. “These benefits are more important now than ever.” For help with quitting visit www.quitlinems.com, or call the Mississippi Tobacco Quitline at 1-800-QUIT-NOW.

The WIC program encourages all mothers to choose breastfeeding for good nutrition from the beginning. Eligible WIC clients can now get breastfeeding support 24 hours a day for FREE with the Pacify app. Pacify connects WIC participants with live lactation consultants who are available 24/7 via video, offering breastfeeding support and answering feeding-related questions.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) say breastfed infants are at lower risk for developing diabetes and are less likely to die from Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS). The Mississippi State Department of Health reports that SIDS is the third leading cause of infant mortality in the state. A contributing factor to SIDS deaths is secondhand smoke. Breastfeeding and quitting smoking are best for the health of both mother and child. For information about the dangers of cigarettes visit www.healthmys.com/tobacco. For information about WIC and how to apply visit www.healthmys.com/WIC.

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AmeriCorps Graduation Ceremony



Congratulations on completing a year of service, and best wishes for your next adventure! (front, left to right) Amber Buford, Stacy Bridges, Mia Bridges, Yvonna Herron, Ebony Perry, (middle, left to right) Euniqa Rounds, Amber Forrest, Willie Forrest, Lorella Monger, Dannielle Crouch, Jessica Hudson, Shicorea Ross-Kitt, Doris Brown, Joy Everett, Chandra Burl, (Back, left to right) Aasha Brister, McKenzie McCalop, Alicia Luellen, Special guest: Adrian Austin, State Commissioner from Volunteer Mississippi, Freddie Watt, and Edis Brooker

GHS Golf Season Switches to Fall



Photos by Michael Sanford

Members of the GHS Golf team for 2023-24 include (front row girls, l to r) Abigail Crouch, Leah Briscoe, Summer Boatman, (back row boys, l to r) Cooper Howell, Aidan Carollo, Matt Cummings, Hayes Horan, Bay Kornegay, Brayden Campbell, Evan Williamson, (not pictured) Demi Burney, Olivia Herring, and Jack Leslie.

By Jamie Kornegay
GSD Reporter

The Grenada High School Golf team more than tripled its roster over the summer while preparing for a tournament season that was bumped up by eight months.

Coach Nathan Newell took over the program last spring. It was a bit of a rough start with several of the team's matches being rained out and only four boys, barely enough to make a team. One girl, Abigail Crouch, came on late in the season, and Newell enlisted her help to recruit more girls to play.

Jump ahead to this year, and there

are now eight boys and five girls on the roster. The team has already played half its season as the Mississippi High School Activities Association moved the school golf season up to August through October.

Newell said the new golf season may have contributed to the boost in team membership. "We're getting more golfers

who might otherwise be playing other spring activities like baseball, softball and tennis," he said.

The only negative Newell has seen is the August temperatures, which extended into the high 90s and low 100s for a couple of weeks early in the season. "I felt bad for them during the first match," he said. "They had to walk and carry their clubs over nine holes. It was miserable."

Regardless of the weather, Newell said, golf is a year-round sport. "I tell our players, you can't just pick up the golf clubs during the season. You've really got to make sure you're playing year-round. Putting, chipping, driving — all those things are tied in together and really affect your score in the end."

Newell holds seasonal practices after school at Dogwoods Golf Course in Grenada Lake's Hugh White State Park. Since most of the team members are beginners, he spends a lot of time on fundamentals. The players spend most of their time hitting range balls, working through all the clubs, before ending with 20 minutes of putting practice.

"In my opinion, putting is where you save your strokes in the end," Newell said. "It's not about how you drive, it's how you arrive."

See "Golf"
Continued on page 4

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“Attendance”

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By and large, said Lott, the Green Top doesn't have an egregious attendance problem, which she credits to their policy of checking up on absent students. "It starts with registration," she said. "We'll call during the summer to make sure the parents have registered their kids, and then once school starts, we have office staff who call to check up on students who are absent."

Lott said teachers also check up on missing students, which has established an expectation that if students aren't in class every day possible, they'll be getting a phone call.

At Grenada Middle School, Principal Marshall Whittemore said they make a competition out of perfect attendance, offering students the opportunity to win substantial prizes such as AirPods, a PlayStation 5, and even the latest iPhone. Teachers with perfect attendance roles are also invited to participate in these prize drawings, which increases the incentive to keep their classrooms full.

"It rewards our kids who strive to be here and perform well," Whittemore said. "If

“Golf”

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The team's schedule this fall consists of 12 matches at various courses, from the home site, Dogwoods, to the University of Mississippi course and Mallard Pointe in Sardis. Teams from other schools bring their top players, and winning teams are determined by individual scores.

The 6A district tournament will be held the second week of October. "Qualifying for state this year will be tough," Newell admitted. "There used to be a cutoff score, and everyone above that score was eligible for the state tournament. Now, the top two golfers in each division make it to state."

Newell said there is tough competition in the 6A division. "Our guys and girls aren't complaining. They're getting after it and having a good time."

Newell, an avid golfer for years, said it's a fun, laidback sport, and even seasoned players must deal with inconsistencies in their game. He tries to emphasize the fun aspects to his players while training them to be competitive. "I challenge my players but let them know they don't have to go out and shoot even part every time," he said. "All I ask is that they try and get better each time they step out on the course."

they know they can win a new iPhone, they may ask Mama to reschedule their dentist appointment so they can be in class during those months."

By high school, students are old enough to stay home alone. Attendance records begin to show a precipitous decline. Still, GHS Principal Emily Tindall said she never saw a dramatic attendance problem before the COVID-19 pandemic, which continues to present a pervasive attendance issue in schools across the nation.

In the intervening years, Tindall has tried many strategies. Last year, the school promoted attendance with a variety of strategies, including Donut Tuesdays. Homeroom classes with zero absences for the week were treated to donuts the following Tuesday. Other rewards

included grade-level attendance competitions and free break time for randomly selected students who met attendance goals.

Last year, GHS celebrated the importance of being at school every day with an Attendance Rally at the end of November. Students spent a generous portion of the day in the gym, engaged in various recreational activities as well as the money machine, prizes, and a DJ playing popular music.

"The prizes, rewards, and rallies recognize and celebrate students who prioritize being at school every day," said Tindall.

Tindall acknowledged that addressing chronic absenteeism requires a different approach. She has recently met with parents of students with substantial absences, emphasizing that attendance directly affects

grades, academic progress, and timely graduation. "My message is simple," she said. "While October and November are high attendance months, we need and want our students here every day all year long. It is difficult for students to be successful in their classes if they are not at school."

GSD calls on parents to help ensure high attendance dur-

ing the months of October and November. This will help the district fulfill its unwavering commitment to ensuring that students are in the classroom, where they have the best chance to succeed academically, and contribute to essential funding for educational resources and programs.



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A JOURNEY OF SCIENTIFIC DISCOVERY

GHS Band Fields Mythic Halftime Show

By Jamie Kornegay
GSD Reporter

The Grenada High School Marching Band, renowned for its captivating halftime performances, is gearing up to present its latest field show, "Medusa." This ambitious show offers a fresh take on the age-old Greek myth, providing audiences a unique perspective on the iconic character.

Throughout the early weeks of football season, the band has been unveiling segments of their 2023 production, but soon, fans will be treated to the full spectacle.

For years, the band's co-directors, Kim Presley and Chris Sumrall, have contemplated the idea of a show rooted in Greek mythology. According to Presley, the band's knack for storytelling prompted them to approach the Medusa myth from a novel perspective.

Medusa, originally a priestess of the goddess Athena, was transformed into a grotesque figure with snakes for hair and a petrifying gaze that would turn those who looked into her eyes to stone. Traditionally depicted as a fearsome villainess, Medusa's story is often overshadowed by her eventual slaying at the hands of Perseus.

However, the Grenada Band sought to humanize her character and delve into her emotional journey. "It wasn't about [Perseus] trying to hunt her down," Sumrall explained. "We wanted to show how she felt as the priestess, how she changed, and how she saw herself for the first time."

The "Medusa" show is composed of four movements, each designed to transport the audience through the captivating narrative. The music, predominantly original compositions with a Greek influence, introduces students to traditional Greek tonalities and rhythms to broaden their musical fluency.

The directors gave much kudos to the program's co-writers. Dr. Matt Hightower, a professor from Florida State University, served as the music writer for the show, while Josh Powell from Tennessee contributed percussion arrangements. The program coordination was handled by Scott Cotter from Pennsylvania.

The show's musical program features a haunting ballad, drawing inspiration from Evanescence's "My Immortal."

Sumrall said, "The ballad fits so well because you can feel the anguish of not knowing what happened to you and if you're always going to be like this. How would you deal with it? It's an interesting story. Most people never think of it from her perspective. They just think of it as the woman with snakes in her hair."

Unlike many of their previous shows with uplifting endings, "Medusa" confronts the inevitability of the lead character's demise. "In the end, unlike a lot of our shows where we try to put a positive spin with a big and happy ending, there's no way to end this situation on a positive note," Presley said. "Medusa will meet her demise. You'll see the effect that has on the horn players."

To enhance the visual experience, the Grenada Band has incorporated dramatic elements, props, and lavish costumes into the production. The centerpiece is a temple-like stage, complete with stairs and columns, setting the scene for the mythological tale. The color guard will be adorned with serpent headdresses, adding an extra layer of authenticity to the performance. Presley said the grandiose finale promises a breathtaking moment that will provide "a good 'wow' moment for the audience."

The band has been learning and rehearsing the new show since late July, facing many weeks of brutal temperatures in the high 90s. Despite the challenges of practicing in excessive heat, the band has shown remarkable resilience and creativity.

"Heat has made us creative in our rehearsal planning," Presley said. "We had a successful band camp to give [students] a good springboard for the season. Thinking about things differently, as a staff, we've done a good job pivoting, and the students have done an amazing job with their flexibility. Every rehearsal, we've made strides forward."

The band's dedication and innovative approach have traditionally earned them a string of superior ratings and best-in-show honors across the southeast. They look forward to presenting "Medusa" in its entirety to the home crowd before taking their show on the road in October for a string of marching band competitions. The band's competition season begins at home as they host the state Region II marching evaluations on Oct. 7 at Charger Stadium.

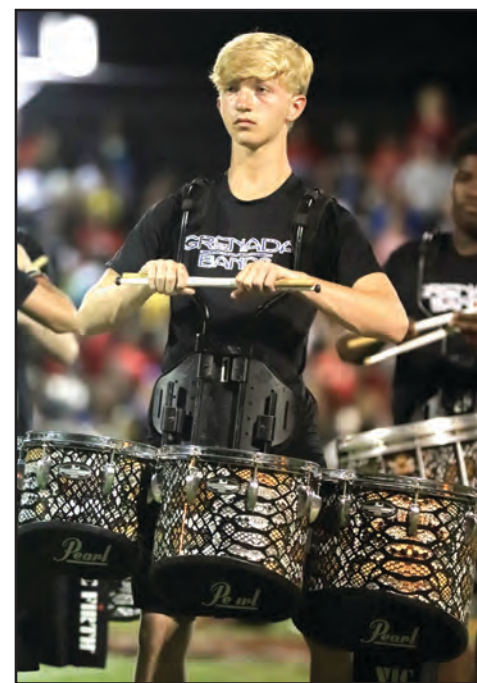


Photos by Ezzard Beane

Grenada Band co-drum major Abby Presley (front) leads fellow band members (back, l to r) Laquaylon Steward, Brandon Thornton, Bryce Stegall, Savannah Heenan, and Hayden Bridges as they premiere a portion of their new competition show, "Medusa."



Ciara Townes



Luke Viner

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Grenada NJROTC Keeps Growing After 30 Years



Photos by Chief Foreman

NJROTC cadets rehearsing the presentation of colors include (l to r) Kelsi Forest, Lauren Harges, Kayla Hughes, Chris Turner, and Skylar Edwards.

By Newtroin Foreman
NJROTC Chief

This year, Grenada High School's Navy Junior Reserve Officer Training Corps (NJROTC) celebrates 30 years. The GHS NJROTC continues to grow, and we're always looking for new students to enhance our program.

The NJROTC unit of Grenada earned over 4,000 hours of community participation last year. The unit received the Unit Achieve Award for the fourth time in its history and finished 12 out of 60 schools in Area 8. We were also granted the Distinguished Unit honor for the 2023 school year, the second highest award a unit can earn.

In addition to presenting the colors at home football games and other school-sponsored events, our cadets participate in a variety of activities and disciplines

all year around. Just this summer, at Camp Shelby in Hattiesburg, our 8th and 9th grade cadets participated in a development training camp while our 10th through 12th grade cadets took part in the Leadership Academy.

In June, ten members of our unit traveled to Pensacola, Fla., where they took part in the National Flight Academy training. They experienced six days of study and simulated training to introduce them to the concepts and skills of becoming a Naval pilot.

Since the beginning of school, we've already presented the colors at AutoZone Park during a Memphis Redbirds baseball game, and we've participated in a roadside clean-up campaign around Grenada. We'll soon be visiting the campuses of Ole Miss and Mississippi State, as well as Camp McCain.

Cadets can participate in teams that compete against other Navy units in their NJROTC Area 8 and throughout Mississippi. There are up to 30 teams a cadet can join, and many are currently preparing for upcoming competitions. Some of the activities offered include various drill and fitness teams as well as science offerings such as aerial and water drones, robotics, and Cyber Patriots.

Our unit, jointly sponsored by the Navy and the Grenada School District, is open to all students in grades 8-12 who meet the physical standards of the program. NJROTC is an education program, so cadets are under no obligation to join any branch of service when they graduate from high school. However, being an NJROTC member while in high school will give cadets many life lessons and valuable opportunities. If a cadet chooses, he or she can enter military service as either E-2 or E-3, depending on the branch of service, which can mean significant educational savings. Along with our program's military and educational preparation, NJROTC teaches self-discipline, self-confidence, and leadership skills to help students successfully meet life's challenges.

There are 91 cadets currently enrolled in the program, but our goal for the year is to have over 150 cadets. Our cadets had a great year, one of the best since the unit began back in 1993, but that does not mean the cadets will rest on their laurels. They have already started to prepare for this year, but we need more cadets, more sponsors, and more parents to make this happen. If you're looking for an organization that is active and offers many different opportunities to participate, then take a look at what we have going on. Come join our team, "Team Work, Makes the Dream Work."

New Personnel...



Another big addition to the NJROTC program at GHS is new instructor Shaunell Hyatt. The Senior Chief Navy Counselor is a native of Bridgeport, Ala. Hyatt joined the U.S. Navy at 18. His first assignment was aboard the USS Enterprise (CVN 65) in Norfolk, Va., where he completed his first Mediterranean 7-month deployment. He was then stationed aboard the USS Bataan (LHD 5) in Norfolk, Va., where he completed two more deployments including another mission to the Mediterranean and Operation Caribbean Lion. It was also while aboard the USS Bataan that he was sent to New Orleans, La., to participate in the clean-up efforts following Hurricane Katrina.

In 2006 he and his family moved to Nashville, Tenn., where he served as a Navy Recruiter. While in Nashville, he was able to make a huge impact on the local community by returning the opportunities that were afforded to him through the Navy. From that point forward, he decided to become a Career Navy Recruiter.

Hyatt's academic achievements include an associate's degree in General Studies, bachelor's degree in Multi-disciplinary Studies, and an Executive Leadership certification from the Senior Leadership Academy, Naval War College.

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Meet the Chargers Event



Photos by Meg Newcomb

Teacher Academy student Damareia Pittman paints the face of Samuel Burkett as part of the festivities at Meet the Chargers, an event to ring in the 2023 football season on Aug. 17.

*By Tammie Cavanaugh
Football Booster*

Meet the Chargers (MTC) on August 17 was a great show of support for Grenada School District's 7th through 12th grade football players and cheerleaders. Over a thousand Charger fans came out to support the student athletes before the start of their 2023 season.

Fans enjoyed cuisine from local food truck vendors and the concession stand. Kids enjoyed the inflatables provided by Jolly Jumpers as well as face painting by Mrs. Down's Teacher Academy students.

The program recognized each member of the football team and cheer squads from middle to high school. Fans met the new GHS head coach, Michael Fair, along with his coaching staff and students who help support football and cheer teams.

All proceeds from the MTC event go to support the 7-12th grade football players and needs of the program throughout the season, including meals and/or snacks for players before and after games.

The football booster club thanks attendees for their support and hopes to see everyone throughout the season cheering on our teams.

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Taylor Swinford and Zoe Beane

(photo right)
Rylee Rials,
Tristin Wilson,
and
Emily Finkley



Ekeyvion Noel



Charlie Fair



(l to r) Tristan Dubard, Frank Sanders, Rowdy Statten, Tyler Ward, and Nathaniel Lawson



Anna Claire Poynor and Vivian King



(l to r) Chris Turner, Bryce Stegall, Brandon Thornton, Natavious Seldon, Noah Oswald, Hayden Bridges, and Will Dale

Photos by E. Beane and Yearbook Staff

