



Striving for Excellence



Superintendent's Message

Dr. David Daigneault

We did it again! Grenada School District scored an A on the 2023 state assessments, which puts us among the top-performing school districts in Mississippi.

Was it a surprise? Honestly, no. Since earning our first A last year, we've doubled down on our quest for excellence and have seen even greater buy-in from our staff, students, and the community.

Achieving this status takes everyone in the district working to make it possible. We have over 600 employees, and they all contribute to our success — from the bus driver who greets a child cheerfully every morning, to the custodial worker who tells a child, "You've got this!" to a counselor who helps them realize their dreams. We want to provide a wholesome, caring environment so these kids know we're here to help them and want them to be at school.

Our success depends on students, who have risen to the challenge, and it takes parents to make sure their child is at school so we can teach them. It takes community members who have interest in our students and who offer words of encouragement to let them know their achievements have not gone unnoticed.

It takes a school board like the one we have in Grenada that knows how to work together. It takes board members who share a prosperous vision for our students and who will do whatever is needed to meet our standard of excellence.

It takes an unflappable, forward-thinking administrative team willing to do the hard work, to go the extra mile to help teachers, especially young teachers, find the strategies that work in the classroom.

And it most definitely takes teachers who drive our students to do their best. A great teacher can present the most difficult subject so that it's easy to understand. That's what it means to be a true professional teacher, and that is why Grenada has some of the best teachers in the state.

Education is vastly different now than it was even ten or fifteen years ago. The approaches that we use to develop lessons for our students involve strategic thinking and technological resources. We want to take every student at their current level of understanding and improve the skills they need. If three children in a classroom are missing a concept, we're able to identify and focus on those three without slowing the progress of the entire class. Why keep teaching a child what they already know? We're looking for what they don't understand, and once we find it, we find alternative ways to help them understand.

See "Excellence"
Continued on page 2

Grenada Earns Another 'A'

Grenada High School Scores First-Ever 'A' Grade



By Jamie Kornegay
GSD Reporter

For the second year in a row, Grenada School District earned an A rating for its performance in the 2022-23 school year, according to the Mississippi State Board of Education.

Grenada's Superintendent Dr. David Daigneault credited the district's success to developing a sound strategy for excellence and enlisting the help of everyone — from bus drivers and cafeteria workers, to students and parents, to teachers and administrators — to help achieve the goal.

"We're all in this together, and everyone has their role to play," Daigneault said. "From bus drivers and cafeteria workers, offering words of encouragement to students. To teachers who spend their lives

devoted to helping kids learn and understand our complicated world. To the administrators trying to manage it all and give teachers the assistance they require to address their students' needs."

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.

Grenada School District's overall score in 2023 increased 47 points for a total of 716 to earn the A rating. "And for the first time in our history, Grenada High School earned an A," Daigneault announced. "That's an incredible achievement, and I'm so proud of the staff, the administration, and the academic performance of our students."

Grenada School District's scoring in 2023 places it among the top 20 percent of all districts in the state on the 2023 Mississippi State-wide Accountability System. Grenada Elementary School's scores ranked in the top six percent of all elementary and middle schools scored on the state's 700 point scale.

Certain classes performed remarkably high, ranking among the top schools in the state for proficient and advanced scores. Highest-performing of all was fifth grade science students at GES 4-5, whose combined scores put them second-highest in the state. Eighth grade science and Biology I classes at GHS also posted impressive scores, ranking 21st and 19th respectively in the state.

The elementary schools posted a series of high rank-

ings in math, including fourth highest in the state for third graders, third highest for fourth graders, and ninth highest for fifth graders. At the middle school, the eighth grade math classes ranked number 10 in the state.

In English Language Arts (ELA), the third grade ranked seventh highest in the state, and the fifth grade ranked 12th highest. The fourth, seventh, and eighth grade ELA classes also ranked in the top 30 scores across Mississippi.

Daigneault noted that the upward trend in scores for each of Grenada's schools has continued for multiple years. He attributed the increase to a district-wide learning strategy in which teachers and administrators assess student performance and cater lessons to individual classes and students.

"Every child is different," Daigneault said. "Some children grasp a lesson immediately. For others, it takes a little more time and effort. Our administrators and specialists study the data and help teachers develop a plan to ensure that each student is successful."

See "District"
Continued on page 8

GHS Homecoming Court



(front l to r) Seniors: Nadia Reed, Kelsi Forrest, Haley Jones, Jayla Myers, Kylee Hudgens, Arrion Hancock, Kimaria Reed, Akera Jones, (back l to r) Juniors: Leah Briscoe, Naima Reed, Sophomores: Madison Woodard, Tylecia Lemon, Freshmen: Madison Alexander, Shakira Alexander, Brooklyn Hardwick, Emma Pitcock, Sophomores: Kate Cobb, Alexa Corolla, Juniors: Emmiyjah Forbes, and Shaniyah Miers

AmeriCorps Names New Leaders

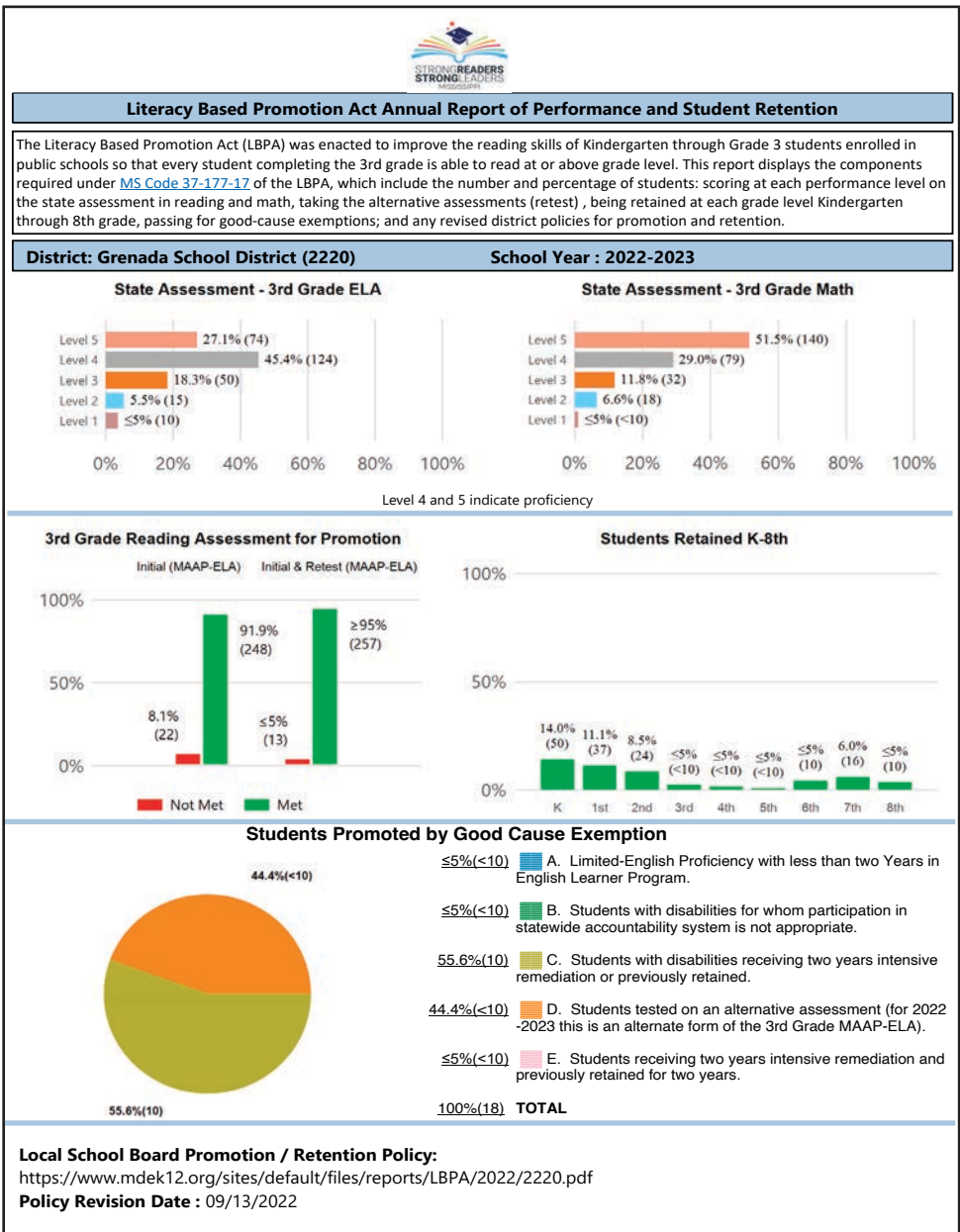


The new AmeriCorps team leaders for the 2023-2024 Grenada School District are (l to r) Stacy Bridges, Yvonna Herron, Shicorea Ross-Kitt, and Markitta Chamblee.

GHS Career Fair



Grenada High School hosted its annual Career Fair on Oct. 11. Representatives from the business community set up tables in the GHS gymnasium, where they met with students to discuss career options after high school. Among the connections made were (l to r) Piper Langham, C-Spire representative Tiffany Watt, Lillie Brown, and Ce-Ce Chambers, also of C-Spire.



“Excellence”

Continued from page 1

This is why it’s so important that kids are at school and why they should give their all to the assessments we administer. It’s all beneficial to our understanding of how they learn, but most importantly, it’s beneficial to their future success. Everything we do is geared toward our students’ understanding. Once they possess the ability and believe they are capable, we believe they can succeed at anything.

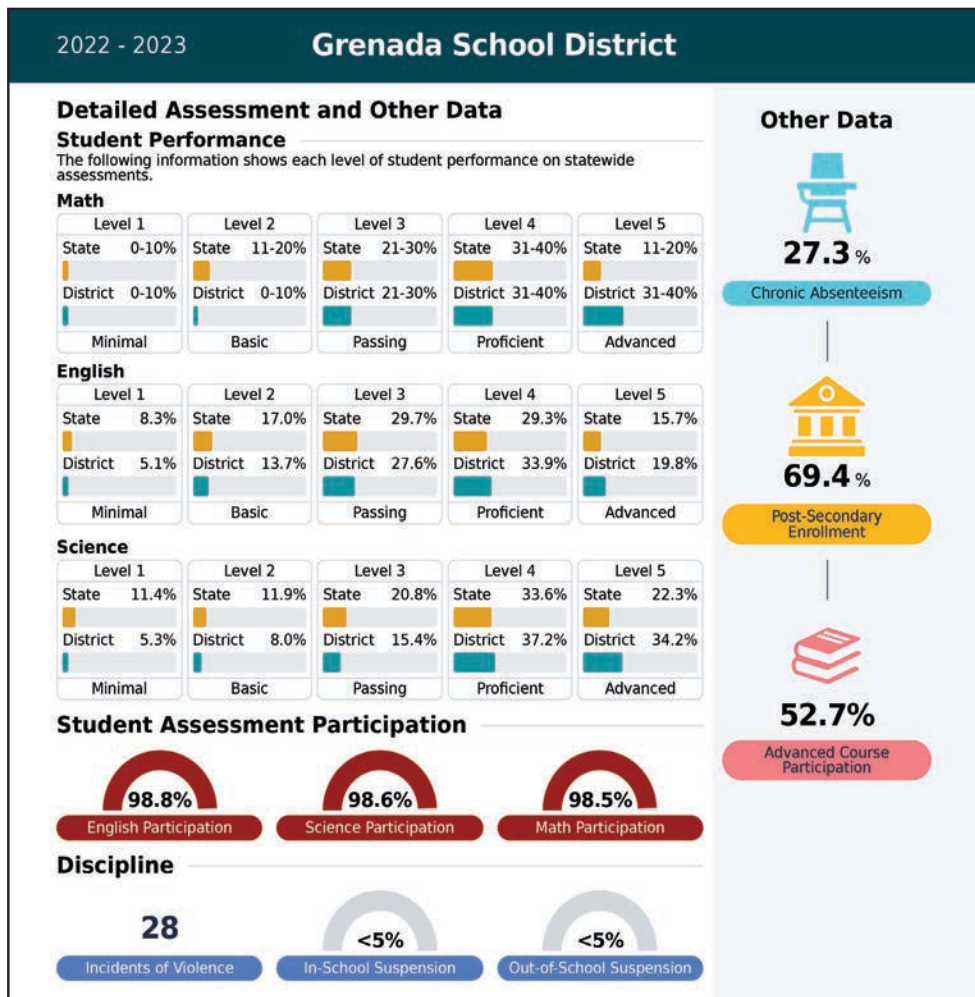
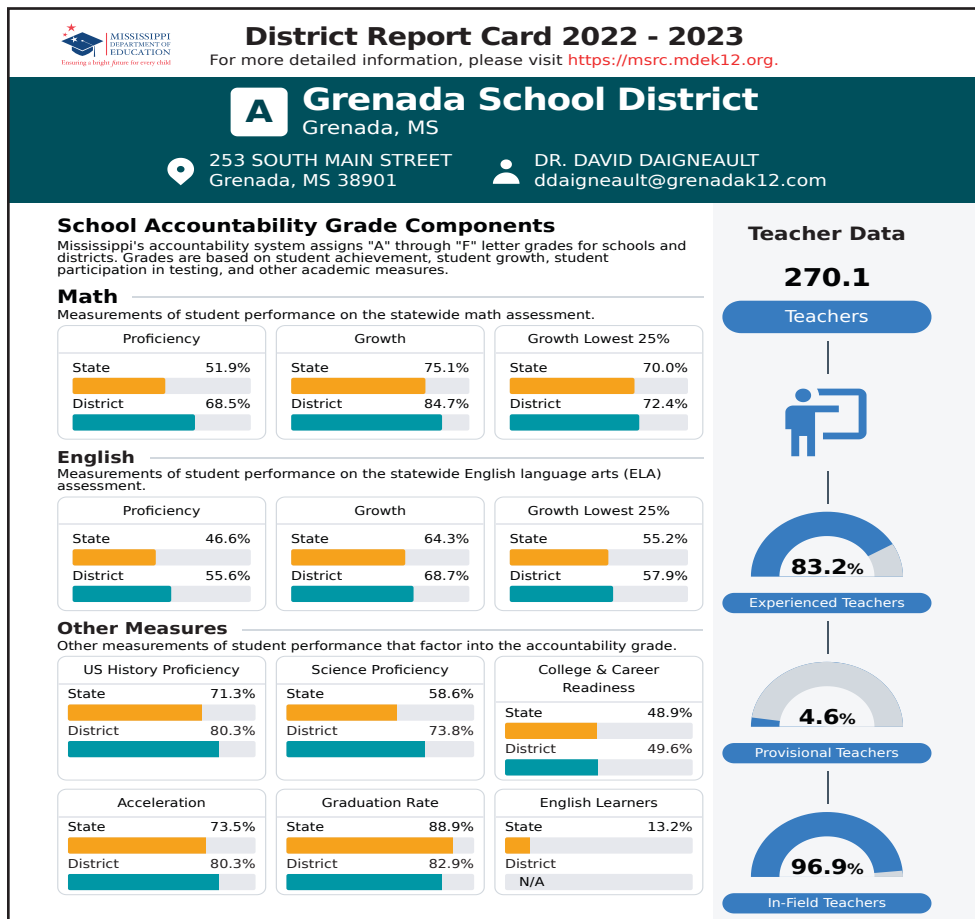
We’re proud of how well all our schools performed this year, but we really saw exceptional progress in two places this year. At the fourth and fifth grade elementary school, all but 25 students scored proficient or advanced in major subjects. And this year, for the first time ever, the high school became the crown jewel for the district by scoring an A. The administrators and teachers have

worked so hard to make this happen at GHS. They care about their students and make a point to preserve their individuality.

Now that we’ve solidified our status as an A district, is the work done? Not even close. In fact, we’re just getting started. We must bring all students up to the level of excellence. We must keep preparing them for college and the workforce. We hope that one day, when they come back to Grenada, whether in one year or twenty years, they can find their teachers and say with confidence, “The reason I’m successful is because you cared about me when I needed it. You did everything in your power to help me.”

That’s the power of education. And that’s why ALL of us at Grenada School District strive for excellence each day.

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ACT Success Grows at GHS



Anna Reid McAnally coaches GHS student Lucas Chaney on ACT test-taking skills. McAnally teaches the English and reading section of an ACT Prep class that helps students improve their scores, earning more scholarship money for college.

*By Jamie Kornegay
GSD Reporter*

Administrators at Grenada High School aren’t just focused on shepherding students to graduation. There is a growing emphasis at GHS for helping kids find a more manageable path to higher education.

One powerful strategy has been ACT preparation. Students pursuing higher education, be it community college or a four-year university, are required to take

the standardized test for admission. What many students and parents don’t realize is that their ACT score could significantly reduce the price tag of college.

GHS Assistant Principal Kelby Surrell and academic counselor Dr. Kathryn Cox work together to provide opportunities for students to improve their score.

“If they can get an extra point here and another point there, it could mean thousands of dollars in additional scholarship money,” said Surrell. “We’re studying and introducing new ways to help them increase their scores as best we can.”

ACT scores have shown marked improvement over the past several years at GHS, and one of the main reasons is believed to be the implementation of the ACT Prep class.

Students who maintain a B in the class — which is graded on participation rather than test grades — review math and reading skills while also practicing test-taking strategies to prepare them for the four-hour exam.

This semester, the class’s end goal is

the December ACT test date. The school pays for the student to take the test, giving them a cost-free opportunity to apply their semester’s worth of study toward improving their scores. Administrators are excited to get the data, which helps determine how well the prep class strategies benefit the students.

The evidence has been promising thus far. Last summer, the school held a five-day ACT Prep Boot Camp for reading and English. “We actually saw considerable growth,” Surrell said. “Several students went up two and three points in English, and one kid went up five points, which is incredible.”

That growth enabled the student to enroll in dual credit courses at the high school, which increases their financial savings by earning college credits while still in high school.

“I love that we are growing this program to make it more beneficial and available to all students,” said Anna Reid McAnally, who teaches the English and reading prep class. “This semester my students have expressed their gratitude for the extra time to practice, to work through difficult passages with their peers, and to learn new test-taking strategies.”

The prep class utilizes ACT’s Jumpstart curriculum, which drills students on subject skills and provides instant feedback on comprehension. Scores on assessments can be translated to reflect how a student will perform taking the

actual test. The data is useful to Surrell and Cox, giving them a picture of what strategies are working and how they might ultimately benefit the entire student body.

The administrators recently started a pilot program to introduce the ACT Jumpstart skills into regular classes at the high school. The handful of enlisted teachers devote a small portion of each day to ACT preparation, which is linked to their standard lessons. Administrators hope to study the data to determine how even that limited exposure could help students who aren’t enrolled in the ACT Prep class. “If it works,” said Surrell, “then the goal is to embed ACT in just about every class here at the high school.”

Another emphasis is implementing ACT WorkKeys testing preparation into classes more geared toward career and technical learning. WorkKeys tests students on different fluencies, from workplace documents to graphic literacy. The focus allows administrators to push a wider variety of students toward success in their post-high school careers.

“It’s an ever-evolving plan,” said Surrell. “We’re always thinking of something different we can implement into the wider mission. And with the speed and sophistication of our data-gathering resources, it doesn’t take long to see what’s working and how to help more students.”

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Pioneer Days Returns to GES Red Top



Photos by Martha Liberto

GES students (l to r) Kalisa Smith, Addalyn Ray, and Saiyah Latham enjoyed sitting in a genuine Old West stagecoach, which was brought by cowboys Jack Martin (left) and Joe Cummings (right) to the Kidzeum's Pioneer Days event.

By Jamie Kornegay
GSD Reporter

Grenada Elementary students in Pre-K through third grade have a better perspective on history after taking a trip through olden times in the Kidzeum's extensive Pioneer Days exhibit. Students made two immersive trips to the 1800s through in-school exhibits as well as the hands-on Pioneer Days outdoor fair in October.

Among the Kidzeum's rotating exhibits, Pioneer Days is perhaps the most popular, said the museum's director, Melanie Williams. "Whenever I'm out in the community, older kids and even folks who've long graduated will stop and tell me how well they remember Pioneer Days."

When students at the Red Top school attended the Kidzeum this semester, they learned how pioneers traveled west in covered wagons and, thanks to hands-on activities, got a genuine feel for the experience. Williams said students pumped water, churned butter, and made candles. They sat in a replica of an old-fashioned classroom and worked math problems on chalk slates.

Older students learned how clothing was made by hand. "Our second and third graders learned to quilt," Williams said. "They really enjoyed sitting down and concentrating on their quilts. It's kind of a lost art form, but the kids were very stimulated."

The culmination of their pioneer unit was Pioneer Days, a two-day event in which classes were able to sign up for different hands-on activities. Students panned for gold and saw how leather artwork was made. They even made their own whirligigs ("the precursor to the modern fidget spinner") and cornstalk dolls and challenged each other to sack races.

"These were added activities that we weren't able to fit into the regular exhibit," Williams said. "We also wanted them to learn from experts, not only in our community but from out of town."

Elementary teachers Tasha Lemley and Lakela Lancaster brought their own horses and showed the kids farrier techniques to care for the animal's hooves. Local artist and preservationist Robin Whitfield showed kids how to make ink from natural materials like black walnuts,

which they used to write with feather quills. Artisan Jack Martin came down from Tennessee to demonstrate the craft of making homemade brooms, the likes of which he created for the Harry Potter films. Jackie Henne-Kerr from the Mississippi Museum of Natural Science let kids pet her baby alligator and snakes. "We even had real cowboys who brought their stagecoach," Williams said. "I think the whole event really gave kids an understanding of what life was like two hundred years ago." All students at the Red Top school toured the Pioneer Fair with still more exhibits, games and activities. Williams said the community turned out to volunteer and sponsor booths, including Farm Bureau and Holmes Community College. She thanked students at the Grenada Career and Technical Center for helping out, along with Bull Bottom Farms for contributing the traditional pumpkin for students to estimate the weight. Students ended the unit on pioneers with a visit to KidzTech, where they built log cabins, learned how to weave, and wrote informational stories in comic book style on iPads to help enhance their classroom lessons. Williams said the next Kidzeum exhibit is the annual Christmas unit, where students discover a world culture and its holiday traditions. This year's country is still a surprise, but families will get to learn all about it at the annual Grandparents Day event, coming November 30 and December 1.

(Photo right) To coincide with the Pioneer Days exhibit, the Kidzeum invited third graders to enter a writing contest. Participants were asked to imagine life as a pioneer child. Students included details about daily responsibilities and ways pioneers might have fun with friends and family based on the information they learned during their Pioneer exhibit visits. Cash prizes ranging from \$20-50 were awarded to the top three essayists. The winners included (l to r) third-place winner Lillian Nixon, second-place winner Zoey Cooper, and first-place winner Harper Harrell.



Kagen Mitchell shows his lucky strike as students learned to pan for gold at the GES Red Top's Pioneer Days event.



Zariah Moore was happy with the corn husk doll she made.



Kahleigh Denton (left) and Harper Harrell learn to make leather jewelry and artwork during the GES Kidzeum's Pioneer Days exhibit.



(Photo left) As part of Pioneer Days, the Kidzeum held their annual Great Pumpkin Estimation Contest, sponsored by Bull Bottom Farms. The Robinsons donate the Great Pumpkin, along with smaller pumpkins, each year for this event. On Friday the 13th, students at the Pioneer Fair viewed the Great Pumpkin and compared it to the smaller pumpkins in order to estimate the weight. Thirteen children correctly identified the weight (101 pounds), and each received a prize for their estimation. All 13 names were placed in a hat to determine the grand-prize winner, which was Lily Jones (above) from Mrs. Joyner's first-grade class. The famous Bull Bottom pumpkin now resides at the Jones' residence.



‘Wizard of Oz’ Revived at Green Top



Students at Grenada Elementary 4-5 staged a musical performance of *The Wizard of Oz* in October. The cast of fourth and fifth graders included (l to r) Campbell Harrell as Dorothy, Kaylen Pratt as Toto, and Waylon Elliott as the Cowardly Lion. Fifth-grade math teacher Lindsey Leggett directed the production with help from music teacher Amy Killebrew.

By Jamie Kornegay
GSD Reporter

After three years in the making, the curtains finally opened on Grenada Elementary 4-5’s production of *The Wizard of Oz: Green Top Goes to the Emerald City* on Oct. 23.

The school musical, directed by fifth grade math teacher Lindsey Leggett and featuring a cast of over 30 students, puts

a uniquely Green Top spin on the classic film and novel by L. Frank Baum.

Before the recent production, the musical was set to be staged in March of 2020 by Green Top music teacher and Pizzazz Show Choir director Amy Killebrew. “During Spring Break we had a dress rehearsal for our performance that would take place the following week,” Killebrew recalled.

The following week, school was canceled due to the COVID-19 out-

break, and classes didn’t resume until the following August. “The children were devastated,” Killebrew said. “They had worked so hard, and in the blink of an eye it was gone.”

Fast forward to this summer, when Leggett’s daughter, Lillian, participated in a Panola Playhouse theatrical production. “It was so much fun that I came back to school and begged Mrs. Killebrew, ‘Please, let’s do this together.’”

Killebrew still had the script and costumes from the canceled production. “I was a little apprehensive at first because it was such a disappointment back then,” Killebrew said. “But I can say now that I’m so excited and glad we were finally able to bring this great production to fruition. These kids have worked so hard and did an amazing job.”

Leggett said Killebrew was a great help to the production, especially on the musical numbers. Over 60 students auditioned by singing and performing lines from the script.

The cast have practiced every Tuesday and Thursday since August. “On the first day, we did read-throughs, and I coached students on how they should deliver their lines with emphasis and expression on certain emotions,” Leggett said. “Some haven’t needed any help at all. Mabry Anderson, who plays the Wicked Witch, was amazing from day one. She was born to play this part!”

The performance featured well-known songs from the film, including “Some-

where Over the Rainbow,” featuring soloist Campbell Harrell, and “If I Only Had a Brain,” featuring the Scarecrow, Tin Man, and Cowardly Lion trio played by Waylon Elliott, Parker Flake, and Jayceon Black.

The Green Top’s *Wizard of Oz* ran for one night only, but Leggett said videos of the performance can be purchased through her (lleggett@grenadak12.com).

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Pink Out Cheer



Photos by Ezzard Beane

Audrey-Claire Yates (left) Kate Cobb (center) and Abbagail Webber (right)



Emily Finkley and Ary Bledsoe



Memrie Cox, Charlee Kate Spencer, Legend Carver, Kayliana Garcia, and Robyn Willis

By Jamie Kornegay
GSD Reporter

The Touchdown Club, Grenada’s football booster organization, hosted the annual Cancer Awareness Night at the Oct. 6 football game. The pregame festivities included a dance performance by the GHS Cheerleaders, along with more than 100 “mini cheerleaders” who learned cheers and dances with the squad during the week leading up to

their performance. The pre-game program recognized different forms of cancer prevalent among the community and honored some of those members who fought and who are currently fighting the disease. Honorees at the ceremony included GES teacher Heather King, the late GES principal Raleigh Wood, recent GHS graduate D’marin Burns, and retired GES 4-5 teacher Debbie Montgomery.

GCTC Students Attend Discovery Day at UMMC



Photo by Meg Newcomb

Health Science students from the Grenada Career and Technical Center attended UMMC Discovery Day at the University of Mississippi Medical Center in Jackson on Sept. 28. Students learned about careers in healthcare as well as the educational programs available to earn degrees in the field. In attendance were (front, l to r) Graces McCrary, Ethan Hobson, instructor Dawn Wells, Emerie Golliday, Jamarion Ammons, Loran Brown, (back, l to r) Madison Staton, Addison Bloodworth, Amery Bloodworth, Ainsley Kelly, Allison Adams, Tykeria Harmon, Alivia Mills, and Terion Moore.



Manning Surrell



Kahleigh Denton

Farm Bureau Secretaries Tour Balloon Quest

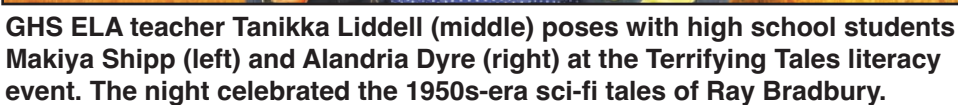


Photo by Tammie Cavanaugh

The Mississippi Farm Bureau Region 3 Membership Secretaries held a meeting in Grenada County on September 26, which culminated with a tour of Balloon Quest. The visitors enjoyed seeing Grenada School District’s escape-room style science museum. Despite Balloon Quest Director Tam-mie Cavanaugh’s suggestion to skip crawling into the balloon ride, the ladies wanted to experience the virtual balloon ride over Grenada Lake exactly like students would. Visitors from Mississippi Farm Bureau included (l to r) Morgan Hathcock of Attala County, JoAnn Harris of Grenada County, Heather Ward of Yazoo County, Savannah King of Sharkey and Issaquena Counties, Cherri Carr of Humphreys County, Brittney Bishop of Holmes County, and Vanessa Pearson of Montgomery County.

GSD Website

www.grenadak12.com



ELA teachers and specialists at Grenada High School invited students out for an evening of “Terrifying Tales” at the second annual Halloween-themed literacy event on Thurs., Oct. 19, 2023.

A block of classrooms at the high school were transformed into immersive environments inspired by the fantastical science-fiction stories of Ray Bradbury.

Pam Briscoe, ELA Specialist for the school district, said students at GHS enjoyed the retro-futuristic work of Brad-

Students and families completed their round of stories by convening for a reception, featuring thematic refreshments including cake pops from the Culinary Arts class at Grenada Career and Technical Center. Kids were invited to pose for photos with their families and teachers in front of a UFO backdrop. Students also took home a bucket of Bradbury-inspired treats, including a set of trading pins designed by North Carolina artist Kaysha Siemens.

KEEP TEACHING KEEP LEARNING

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NOV. 1
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“District”

Continued from page 1

Daigneault extended credit and thanks to the district’s school board. “We are so blessed in Grenada to have a school board that is absolutely committed to the excellence of our school district,” he said. “Our school board, led by board president Marjorie Hughes, truly believes in our vision of ‘education, training, dreams,’ and they want to do everything they can to achieve success for every student in our district.”

Mississippi’s school grading system considers many indicators, including how

well students perform on Mississippi Academic Assessment Program (MAAP) tests for ELA and Mathematics in grades 3-8 and high school, whether students are showing improvement on those tests from year to year, and whether students are graduating within four years. The system also factors in performance on the ACT and advanced high school courses and how well schools are helping English learners and the lowest-achieving students make progress toward proficiency.

Cummings Headed to State

(Photo right)
Matthew Cummings qualified for the 6A Golf State Tournament. Matthew shot a 84 at the district tournament in Olive Branch. The state meet will be held on October 30th and 31st at Diamondhead, Mississippi.



GSD Parent Resource Center

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Charging Forward Award



(Photo left)
Eighth grader Ruby Kornegay (right) was awarded Farm Bureau’s Charging Forward Award, which recognizes a student’s academics, citizenship, and leadership. Farm Bureau agent Matt McCrory presented the award at Grenada Middle School.

Band Earns Second Grand Champion Honors



(Photo left)
Grenada Band members (front, l to r) Maddie Ingram, Anna Ferguson, Jane Wicker, Mary Clayton Logan, Abigail Presley, Sarah Trotter, Charlesa Johnson, (back, l to r) Ekeyvion Noel, Kendricks Caffey, Deandrae Rimmer, Alan Henderson, and Ciara Townes participated in the Pride of Hayden Marching Festival in Hayden, Alabama on Sat., Oct. 21. The band presented their halftime marching show, Medusa, and captured their second Grand Champion honor of the season, along with Overall Color Guard, and Overall Percussion. In the largest class, 5A, Grenada also earned Overall Band, Best Drum Major, Color Guard, and Percussion.

