

YOUR SCHOOLS

WINTER EDITION



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Commendable Schools!
Fiscally Responsible!



THORNTON TOWNSHIP
DISTRICT
205
HIGH SCHOOLS

PEACE



CENTER



Thornridge



Thornton



Thornwood

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**Dr. Nathaniel
Cunningham, Jr.**

SUPERINTENDENT

Dear Friends,

I am delighted to greet you on behalf of the Thornton Township High School District 205 Board of Education (BOE).

We kicked off the 2023–2024 school year with enthusiasm and energy, and it has continued to build throughout this term. We set goals for our students to achieve academically and develop personally, and we are making great strides toward these goals. I am pleased to share that, once again, **all of the schools in District 205 received commendable recognition from the Illinois State Board of Education.** This favorable rating is based on our graduation rates, student absenteeism levels, and academic growth. I applaud our students for their hard work and our educators and staff for keeping our students engaged and advancing in the learning process.

I am also happy to report that District 205 continues to be fiscally sound and financially responsible. An example is the \$28 million in tax relief we have provided Thornton Township taxpayers over the past six years by applying for and receiving grants from the Illinois State Board of Education's Property Tax Relief Grant program.

To carry out our mission of ensuring that all District 205 students are either enrolled, enlisted, or employed when they graduate, we offer opportunities that will interest and educate them. Here are some examples of how we are doing this:

- In August 2023, the A.C. Green Show featured a group of District 205 students for their experiences in the Jumpstart Airplane Private Pilot program.
- In October 2023, District 205 seniors had an opportunity to explore career avenues as well as obtain information about colleges, universities, vocational programs, military service, and more at the District's 3E Expo held at Tinley Park Convention Center.
- This school year, District 205 made a \$4.8 million investment in our new cosmetology program, Studio 205, which will train students to pursue a career in the lucrative and dynamic hair care and beauty industry.

Continuing education is not just crucial for our students; it is equally essential for our school officials. With this in mind, the District 205 BOE, leadership team, and administrative staff members attended the Illinois Association of Schools conference on November 16-19, 2023. This event was an opportunity to learn new ideas and best practices and continue developing personally and professionally.

The District 205 BOE is committed to ensuring our students get the educational experience and opportunities they need and deserve.

Nina Graham
School Board President

YOUR SCHOOLS

02



“
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”

Superintendent's Message

YOUR SCHOOLS

03

Welcome to the District 205 newsletter! Thank you for taking the time to learn about Thornton Township High School District 205 and how we serve and educate our students.

Our focus is always on ensuring that our students are either enrolled in college or a vocational training program, enlisted in military services, or gainfully employed when they graduate.

We strive to create a climate and culture where our students feel valued, welcomed, and safe. To assist with this, we now have Discipline Administrators in every school who are responsible for maintaining discipline and orderliness within the schools and helping foster positive connections between teachers and students. Their presence has significantly improved student behavior and engagement.

It is crucial for students to be motivated and prepared to attend their classes on time and on a consistent basis. We regularly stress to students that "being in the building makes you better" and let them know they need to be present to succeed in high school and life. Thanks to the combined efforts of our students, their parents, and the district, we have seen a marked improvement in attendance.

We realize that being in high school is challenging for students with circumstances in their personal lives that impede their academic ability. We try to address this by taking a holistic approach with our students by having counselors and social workers available to assist with identifying resources and services that may help them.

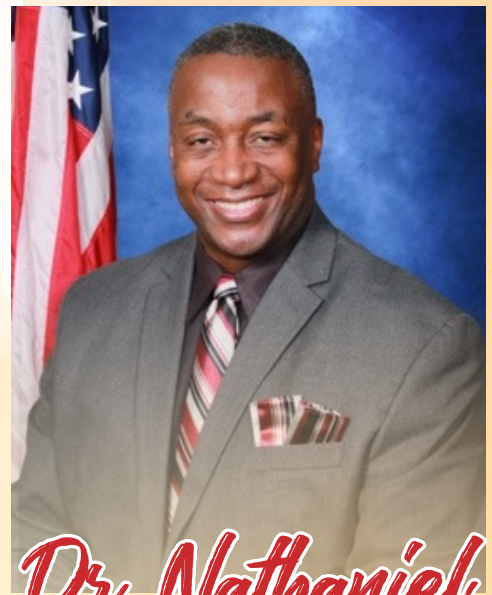
I am excited to share that for the fifth year in a row, all District 205 schools have once again received a **commendable rating from the Illinois State Board of Education**. Thank you to everyone who helped make this possible; let's keep up the GREAT work!

Several essential factors impact how the district operates. We recently signed our second five-year contract with our faculty association, which will continue enabling the District 205 team to work together in service of our students. The condition of our schools is another factor we must consider and address. I am pleased to announce the district recently received substantial funding explicitly designated for infrastructure improvement projects. This will significantly assist our ongoing efforts to ensure a safe and conducive environment for all students and staff.

District 205 is proud that we have had some significant accomplishments worth celebrating, and we will continue to identify ways to improve that will benefit our students in the future.



Dr. Nathaniel Cunningham, Jr.
Superintendent



*Dr. Nathaniel
Cunningham, Jr.*

SUPERINTENDENT

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Student Board of Education Engage in Intense and Inspiring Retreat



Margaret Gonzalez, President
Student Board of Education

When Margaret Gonzalez (pictured left) participated in the Thornton Township High School District 205 Student Board of Education retreat last year, she found it both eye-opening and exciting. This year, she described it as intense and invigorating.

“The retreat was interesting because I had this new role as president and had to lead. It helped me work on my skills as a communicator, where you not only learn about others but also learn about yourself and your limits,” said Gonzalez, a senior at Thornton High School.

Every year, student board members attend a summer leadership retreat to learn more about their new positions and how to properly run a board. The valuable five-day retreat took place from July 25-29, 2023 and prepared them for their respective committees. It focuses on the upcoming academic year and planning schedule, and mirrors the adult Board of Education district retreat.

The 18-student board comprises six students each from Thornton, Thornridge, and Thornwood high schools. Its purpose is to give students real-world exposure to board-level policymaking. Students from each school are elected at large by their peers and represent more than 5,000 students district-wide. With a vision statement aimed at humility, humbleness, and hard work, the board seeks to ensure that all students receive a high-quality and well-rounded high school experience.

“The retreat was especially intense at times when we were put into groups and had to think of an idea that would improve the school in a Shark Tank-like atmosphere. You have people in the group who may be more outspoken than others as you battle to get your ideas across,” said Gonzalez. “But what you learn is that instead of arguing, it’s best to work together: bounce ideas off each other and utilize everyone’s strengths. That way, you truly have better conversations with better ideas.”

When Rafael Camacho was working on guiding the

students through various aspects of the retreats, he flashed back to when he was in their maroon jackets not too long ago. As a former student board member from 2017-2019, he understands the importance of mentoring the next generation. Early counseling and guidance propelled him through high school and adulthood, planting the seed of community.

“So much was given to me when I was on the board that when I had the opportunity to serve in a mentoring capacity, it was an honor. I want to set the same foundation and go above and beyond in helping them gain real-world experience,” said Camacho, District 205 human resources assistant. “They need to understand the challenges they will face.”

Community service continues to be the bedrock of the board, whether it involves participating in annual events like Hands Across Harvey, which fosters a sense of community and resilience in the face of violence and adversity, volunteering at a food pantry, or working at various municipality events.



The retreat also featured leaders from across the state who spoke directly to students about their careers, ranging from police officers and judges to politicians and motivational speakers.

“We wanted to select people who understand their important role in the community and provide students with abundant knowledge and tips on navigating life,” said Camacho. “We have this saying in our district: ‘Everything is a teachable moment.’ We are bound to make mistakes in life, but what we do after those moments will determine our professional and personal outcomes.”

SBOE Members Serve Their Community

Volunteering at a Food Pantry in Harvey



The members of School District 205's Student Board of Education (SBOE) are not only committed to serving their fellow students, but they also serve in the local community. On December 2, 2023, SBOE members Oluwanifemi Ajayi (Thornwood), Harmony Davis (Thornridge), Dorothy Omokowajo (Thornridge), Melody Randall (Thornwood), Valeria Rodriguez (Thornton), and district sponsor Barbra Green Kenan demonstrated this commitment by volunteering at Restoration Ministries Food Pantry in Harvey. They sorted, bagged, and distributed a variety of items including dairy, produce, bread, and baked goods which helped the pantry provide food to more than 260 families.



Navigating the Court System

Empowering Young Adults through Restorative Justice and Financial Literacy

Melody Randall hears stories about the issues that younger adults face when navigating the court system. She understands that one bad mistake could set someone down a dangerous path, affecting their lives. It's one of the main reasons she views taking the Restorative Justice monthly classes offered to student board members as essential for learning to handle challenging times.

"We receive in-depth information about what happens in the court system when a person gets arrested and wants help to correct their lives," said Randall, Thornwood High School senior. "We wouldn't want anyone to find themselves in a troubling situation, but it's still important to know what to do if it happens."

Restorative justice is a way of responding to crime, wrongdoing, injustice, or conflict. It focuses on repairing the damage caused by wrongful actions and restoring the well-being of everyone involved. Restorative justice has five long-standing principles: Relationship, Respect, Responsibility, Repair, and Reintegration. The district program seeks to examine the harmful impact of a crime and then determine what can be done to repair that harm while holding accountable those who caused it.

"What I find useful about these classes is that they provide suggestions and problem-solving techniques on how to deal with difficult situations," said Zaire Banton, senior at Thornwood High School. "There is no cookie-cutter answer for every problem or every student, so it's always good to learn different ways to address real issues that affect many of us and our families. It's one thing to complain about life and say there is nothing more we can do. It's another thing entirely to work together and take a wide view on how we can discuss and figure out problems."

In addition, students will soon begin taking financial literacy classes, which involve budgeting, building credit history, improving credit scores, saving money, borrowing responsibly, repaying debt, and investing wisely.

"We cannot take financial literacy for granted," said Randall. "There are many things that students our age don't understand about handling money, especially since many of us are starting our first jobs. How we think about and spend money now can affect how we handle it in the future."



Thornridge

Strong AVID Student Community In and Out of the Classroom

Last spring, AVID students attended Camp Manitouqua, where they participated in a day of leadership and team-building exercises. This experience pushed students to step out of their comfort zones. As a college readiness program, students must develop skills not only in academia but also in real-world situations they may encounter.



The hard work exhibited by our AVID students was celebrated at the AVID Awards Banquet. More than 160 students, family members, and staff attended to show their support for our students' exceptional achievements. Each class presented AVID awards, including categories like Best Binder, Most Positive AVIDtude, Most Goal Driven, and many more. Additionally, we awarded our \$500 AVID Scholarship to selected seniors during the banquet. We proudly presented the highly coveted AVID Senior Awards to Daishonay Watkins and Zekiah Henderson, who are now studying at the University of Illinois and Jackson State University, respectively.

On September 8, 2023, AVID students, staff, and families gathered in the Thornridge courtyard for the annual AVID BBQ night. During this event, our community came together over a delicious BBQ while discussing this year's planned events and allowing students to write down their goals for the year.



Every year, AVID students embark on tours of two new colleges so that by the end of their time in the AVID program, they will have visited eight different schools. This year's destinations were Illinois State University in September and the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign in October. Students engaged with admission counselors during campus tours and even had lunch with Thornridge alums attending these universities. These college trips provide memorable experiences that assist our students in preparing for their future endeavors.

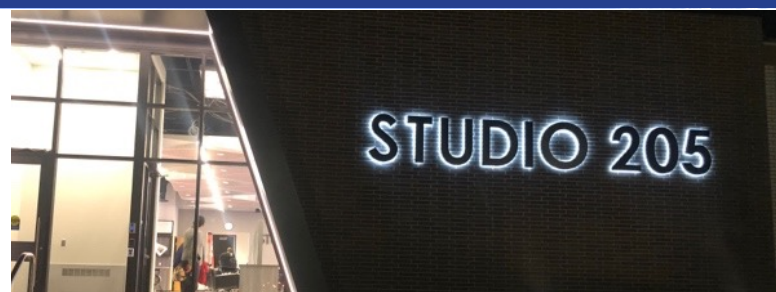
Thornridge takes pride in offering various opportunities for its AVID students to learn new things, participate in meaningful connections, and grow academically and personally. Our community stands united in supporting these students during the school year.

Thornridge STUDIO 205

Thornton Township High School District 205 recently opened Studio 205, a brand-new cosmetology and barbering program. This certification program is designed to cater to students who are passionate about the beauty industry and wish to pursue a career after high school.

Studio 205 is one of the newest additions to District 205's Career & Technical Education programs, providing students with hands-on training and real-world experience. With state-of-the-art facilities and experienced instructors, this program offers aspiring cosmetologists and barbers an excellent opportunity.

By offering this program at Thornridge High School, District 205 aims to provide its students with valuable career options right out of high school. Graduates from Studio 205 will be equipped with the necessary skills and certifications to excel in the beauty industry.

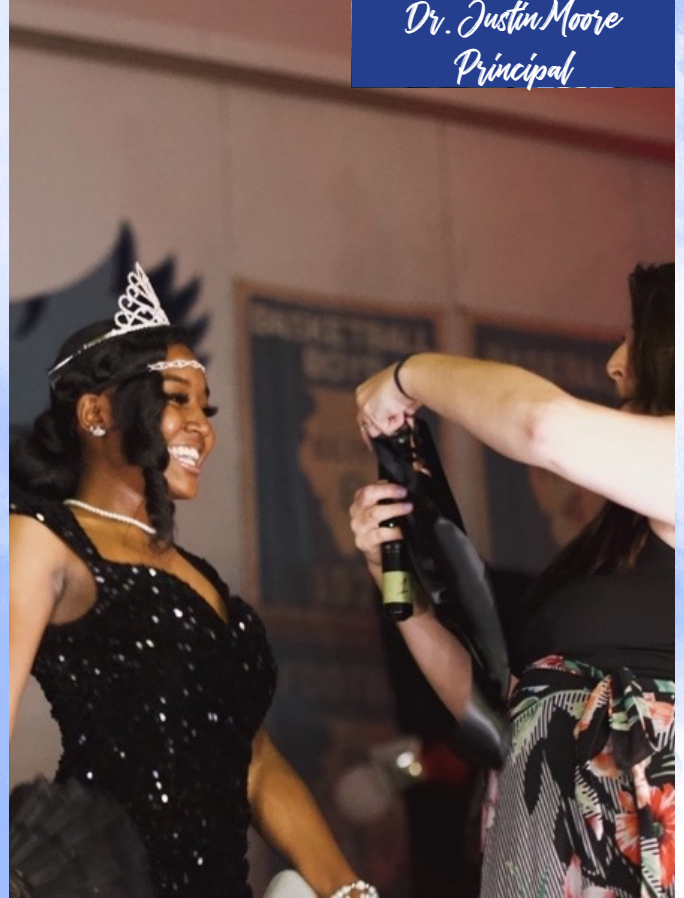


Thornridge Homecoming

All eyes were on our high school students as they looked their best at the 2023 Thornridge High School Homecoming Dance. Thank you to all the students and staff who made the dance a huge success!



Dr. Justin Moore
Principal



Thornridge IB Program at a Glance

Students enrolled in the International Baccalaureate (IB) program have a 40 percent higher chance of attending college and a 50 percent higher chance of attending a selective college. Additionally, these students exhibit a greater retention rate in four-year colleges during their first two years. The faculty of Thornridge's IB program recognizes the significance of these statistics and strives to instill a sense of responsibility for excellence in their students.

Some noteworthy achievements and objectives from Thornridge's IB students include:

- Out of the 32 graduates from the class of 2022-2023, 12 students successfully obtained full IB diplomas.
- Among the 79 IB students from the class of 2023-2024, it is expected that 18 students will earn full IB diplomas.
- Graduates from the class of 2022-2023 who received IB diplomas have chosen to further their education at prestigious universities such as Spelman College,

Morehouse College, St. Louis University, University of Illinois at Chicago, Western Michigan University, etc.

- We are intensifying our recruitment efforts towards sophomores.
- We are committed to continuously investing in updated training programs for our faculty and staff members.





AP Capstone Diploma Program

Thornton is one of the 80 schools in Illinois that offers the Advanced Placement Capstone Diploma Program. Students go through a selective application process to be admitted into this program. Unlike traditional advanced placement courses, this program focuses on developing transferable

skills such as research, analysis, evidence-based arguments, collaboration, writing, and presentation rather than specific subject content. At Thornton, the AP Capstone Diploma program consists of two courses: AP Seminar (year 1) and AP Research (year 2).

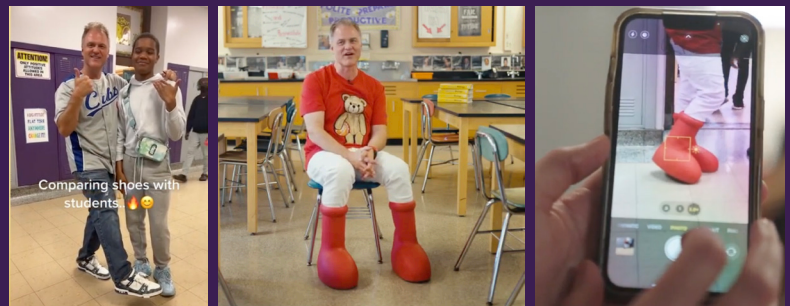
Upon completing this two-year program, students will receive one of two recognized awards that colleges and universities across the United States acknowledge. The average for Thornton's program in its first year is approximately 2.95, which aligns with the Illinois average of 3.06. Participating in AP Capstone distinguishes students on their college applications by adding a distinction to their transcripts.

Sneakerfest

District 205 and Thornton Township High School appreciate Mr. Curtis Martin's exceptional facilitation of our 2023 Sneakerfest on August 20th. Sneakerfest played a significant role in our "My Influence Matters" campaign, allowing students to engage with shoe entrepreneurs and designers while showcasing their most coveted sneakers.

Martin, a science teacher at Thornton, has found a creative way to connect with his students and improve their grades and attendance. Martin started wearing cool and elaborate shoes to engage his students. The idea took off when the students became fascinated by his footwear. To further incorporate the shoes into classroom activities, Martin introduced a game where students could wear his extravagant shoes as a reward for answering questions correctly. His

unique approach has significantly impacted the school community, with increased attendance and improved grades. Inspired by their teacher's creativity, some students convinced Martin to start a TikTok account showcasing his shoe collection and educational videos. You can find Mr. Martin's videos on TikTok @martincoolkicks. Mr. Martin's shoe videos can be found on his TikTok account @martincoolkicks.



Thornton's IB Program Making History

At Thornton, the faculty of the IB program takes these statistics seriously and actively encourages their students to strive for excellence. Here are some notable achievements from Thornton's IB students:

- In the program's first seven years, Thornton awarded an impressive total of 38 IB diplomas, surpassing all other schools in the area.
- The school administered 190 IB exams, marking it as having conducted the highest number in program history.
- A remarkable 66% of all IB students from the class of 2022-2023 earned college credit.
- Seventeen teachers at Thornton received comprehensive training in their respective content areas. They integrated effective IB strategies into both the IB and non-IB courses they taught.
- Notably, graduates from Thornton's class of 2022-2023 have been accepted into esteemed institutions such as Northwestern University, Harvard University, Yale University, Princeton University, and Vanderbilt University.

These accomplishments highlight not only the success of Thornton's IB students but also underscore how seriously faculty and students value academic excellence within this prestigious program.



Ivan Walker and Malachi Davis participated in the Midwest Regional Youth Entrepreneurship Challenge hosted by the Network for Teaching Entrepreneurship. The Thornton students advanced to the finals in New York City with Nokki, an idea for an alternative sweetener that does not spike blood sugar, held in October 2023.

Thornton's AVID Student Moving Onward and Upward

The AVID '23 graduates have successfully prepared for their future endeavors and have been awarded numerous scholarships to support their college journey. When asked to share their experiences and offer advice to younger AVID classes, here are the responses from AVID '23: Barbara Cachu, a distinguished scholar attending the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, received the Ingalls, Ray Price, and Ron Edmonds scholarships. She believes "the best way to create the future is to predict it." and Technology Institute (JSTI) - June 15- 29, 2023.

Maurice Van, Jr., who graduated with honors and is now studying at Illinois State University with the Redbird Scholarship, says: "Growth and comfort cannot coexist."



*Mr. Todd Whitaker
Principal*

Malachi Arzu, attending Saint Xavier University on a full-ride track & field scholarship, confidently asserts that "the top percentage of people may not always follow instructions."

AVID '24, '25, and '26 are closely following in the footsteps of last year's graduating class. Four students ended last school year on the honor roll, eight achieved high honor roll status, and six were named distinguished scholars.

The current AVID students have already begun exploring options for their future. AVID 9 visited the University of Chicago in October, while AVID 10-12 visited Loyola University Chicago. As we approach the end of this year's program activities, there will be various events where AVID students can establish connections within the AVID community and beyond.

Summer STEM Program

Margaret Gonzalez and Michelle Villalobos were selected among 32 students nationally to participate in the Joint Science and Technology Institute (JSTI) - June 15- 29, 2023.

Thornton High School Homecoming

Check out these epic moments from the 2023 Thornton High School Homecoming activities. Our pep rally set our football team up for a well-deserved win. The Homecoming Dance was the icing on the cake for a week filled with great memories.





AVID Nurtures Bright Minds and Explores Future Pathways

AVID students understand the importance of this time in their high school journey. They engage in various activities, such as projects, college visits, extracurriculars, and more. TW AVID motivates students to pursue their goals passionately and encourages them to find unconventional and unique approaches. We take pride in nurturing these bright young minds who excel despite their heavy workloads.

One major challenge high school students face is deciding what to study for higher education. Some still need time to decide, while others have known their majors since their first or second year. The students who find themselves in between try to discover the subject they will dedicate two to four years to studying. TW AVID students utilize AI technology to evaluate their interests and hobbies to understand how these strengths can be translated into prospective careers.

Our AVID students possess a firm grasp of technology and know how to leverage it effectively. In their search for the perfect fit in a college, our students use social media platforms to connect with different colleges and universities. They recognize the importance of early networking and establishing connections that could prove valuable later on. This year, AVID students will visit Chicago State University, Northern Illinois University, and Illinois State University, where they can showcase their brilliance while preparing for future endeavors.

CAP Impact on Youth Leadership and Preparedness



Pictured above: CAP students were featured on the AC Green radio show.

Every year, as Carol Curtis embarks on the Civil Air Patrol program, she appreciates seeing the continued growth of young men and women morph from sometimes nervous first-time participants to emerging leaders. The Civil Air Patrol is a congressionally chartered, federally supported non-profit corporation that serves as the official civilian auxiliary of the United States Air Force. CAP is a volunteer organization with an aviation-minded membership that includes people from all backgrounds, lifestyles, and occupations. Youth from 12 to 18 years old can join the CAP's Cadet program, where they learn about aviation and the military and develop leadership and team skills. As cadets, they participate in year-round programs where they learn to fly, lead, hike, camp, get in shape, and push their limits. The program transforms youth into dynamic citizens through a curriculum that focuses on four elements: leadership, aerospace, fitness, and character.

Students said the program taught them everything from engineering skills and basic military techniques to job training and building confidence. The program is designed to help students become more disciplined and organized and guide them in future endeavors. "What I love about this program is that they learn a great amount about themselves and leadership skills," said Curtis, Civil Air Patrol lead instructor. "The students were engaged in simulation drills and saw first-hand training. You can really see how students gravitate toward this program."

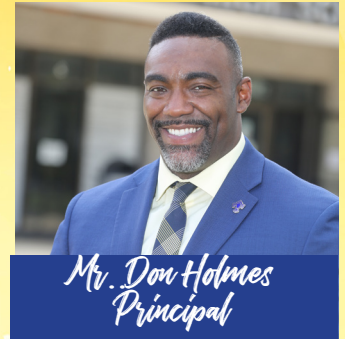
Being a CAP Cadet does not obligate students to enter the military. Most squadrons meet weekly for approximately two hours and offer special activities on the weekends and during the summer. They also learn crucial emergency management protocols. "Students receive training in natural disaster scenarios - anything from helping out in terrorist attacks to natural weather phenomena," said Curtis, Civil Air Patrol instructor. "They learn to mobilize, care for the injured, and assess the situation. It's always essential to fully understand how to be levelheaded in a crisis and learn how to help in the midst of chaos. These are important skills that can be used in overall life."

Thornwood's IB Empowers Students

Students enrolled in the International Baccalaureate (IB) program have a 40 percent higher likelihood of attending college and a 50 percent higher likelihood of attending a selective college. These students also demonstrate a higher retention rate, persisting in a four-year college for the first two years. The faculty of Thornwood's IB program considers these statistics seriously and instills a strong sense of responsibility to excel in their students. Here are some notable achievements and goals from Thornwood's IB students:

- Seventy percent of Thornwood's full diploma IB students have earned college credit in at least one course.
- Currently, 15 teachers are fully trained in their respective IB content areas.
- Amaya Walker has achieved the distinguished IB Diploma and will continue her studies at Vanderbilt University.

Also, the 2022-2023 graduates from Thornwood's IB program attend prestigious universities such as Georgetown University, Emory University, Loyola University, Alabama State University, etc.



*Mr. Don Holmes
Principal*

Recent Scholarship Awardees: (NAARA) Beautiful Nickerson; Deven West; Eniolaoluwa Bamgboye; Jociaya Edwards; Kaleb Randle; Laurence Nnabuo; Olakunmi Kolawole; Princess Ruiz; Victoria Collins; Whitley Fair; (NHRA) Isis Hernandez; Luis Solorio; and Samuel Villalobos.

* NAARA - National African American Recognition Award

** NHRA - National Hispanic Recognition Award



A Winning Team

This cross-country season went by quickly for Patricia Brucki for several reasons. First, her girl's team consistently fared well throughout the season. This year, the team combined to run 2,000 summer miles before the season started, seven girls completed half marathon distances at an event, and 96 personal records were set or broken. Saniyah Perkins is a three-time regional team member, and Addison Perkins is a three-time champion. However, time has also gone fast because this year was Brucki's last season coaching, as she retired in December.

"It's so difficult talking about this without tearing up because this is such a special group of women I have had the pleasure to coach," said Brucki. "They are so dedicated and have a diverse number of skills. They put in all the effort before the season and always strive to improve."

Brucki believes there are many essential lessons when you are part of a team sport. She has seen upperclass students mentor the first- and second-year students directly and indirectly. "Even though they are individually running, you see them pushing and supporting each other at practice. They learn to work together and cope when they are not always at their best. They learn how to handle success and challenging times outside of school."

Moreover, the team formed strong bonds that made Brucki even prouder than their winning times or the 740 service



hours they accumulated collectively throughout their high school careers. Many members also hold leadership positions in extracurricular activities such as the Student Board of Education, National Honor Society, Hispanic Club, Mathletes, IB program, etc. Thirty-five members boast GPAs of 3.5 or higher. "I always believe it is important to be well-rounded. While they are tremendous athletes, they offer even more away from the sport," said Brucki. "I am just blessed that I was around these powerful women and can't wait to see how they grow in the future."

Brucki shared season successes for the team:

- First competition: Fresh/soph team took 2nd place.
- Varsity team beat Hillcrest and Crete-Monee.
- Addison Perkins was awarded first place for the invitational.
- Brucki and the team were recognized and presented medals by the School Board of education.



Outlook Academy

Outlook Academy Helps Students Move Toward Their Future

The word “outlook” describes a belief about the future. The District 205 Outlook Academy is an embodiment of this belief. The program provides students who need extra academic support and assistance to meet graduation requirements with the tools and resources they need, helping them develop a positive belief in themselves and their future.

Classes are held at South Suburban College (SSC), which offers students a smaller learning environment than what is available at their home schools. This allows them to receive more tailored and focused attention, enabling them to benefit from being in a collegiate atmosphere.

The Outlook Academy staff seeks to keep students and their parents well-informed. In September 2023, they held a Back-to-School Open House that gave parents a chance to better understand what Outlook Academy has to offer their children, including the following:

- Participating in SSC's certification programs and taking college courses.
- Attending The Chicago Urban League's week-long career readiness program, which trains seniors on how to create a resume, conduct an interview, seek employment opportunities, and network for career connections.
- Attending District 205's 3E [Enrolled/Enlisted/Employed] Expo that was held at the Tinley Park Convention Center. This expo gave seniors and their parents an opportunity to meet representatives from various businesses, colleges, trade schools, and the military.
- Receiving assistance with completing the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) and preparing for the SAT. The State of Illinois and District 205 require students to submit a FAFSA form and take the SAT in order to graduate.

Mrs. Patricia Malopsy-Fortier, Outlook Academy Program Administrator attributes the success of the program “to its ability in producing graduates who turn their lives around.”

Special Olympics

Several Thornton Township School District 205 students (pictured right) participated in the Special Olympics Summer Games, one of 13 state sports competitions. It is the championship-level competition for athletics, bocce, Unified bocce, powerlifting, soccer, swimming, artistic gymnastics, and rhythmic gymnastics. The three-day event was held June 9-11, 2023, in Bloomington-Normal and included more than 3,000 athletes, 1,000 coaches, and approximately 43 Unified partners. Additional activities include the opening ceremony, featuring the Illinois Law Enforcement Torch Run Final Leg and various Healthy Athlete initiatives.



District 205 athletics placed in following events:

- Charles Bitty – 100m run – 3rd place
- Kayla – SBT – 5th place
- Janiya Gaddy – SBT – 1st place
- MiYannah Holloway – 100m run – 1st place
- Tiana Malone – 50m run 5th place
- Anton Rowland – RLJ – 50m run – 1st place
- Demari Whitney placed third and won the bronze medal in the Bocce Tournament.

Illinois State University has been the primary host venue since 1977. As the event has grown, additional venues include Kingsley Junior High School and Normal Community High School.

Special Education Services

Thornton Township High School District 205 has three high schools that offer a full spectrum of Special Education Services. These support services allow special needs students to achieve their goals of graduating from high school. Together with their counselor and caseload teacher, each student is assisted with investigating higher education opportunities and training programs that teach job skills for future employment and prepare each student with skills to transition into adult living. Students have a variety of disability classifications, such as emotional disability, cognitive disability, children with deafness or children with blindness, and other health impairments.

The district's vision is for students to be placed in the least restrictive classroom environment. Our mission is for all students to be enrolled in an institute of higher learning or a vocational program, enlisted in the military, or gainfully employed upon graduating from high school.



Peace Center

Transforming Lives and Achieving Remarkable Results

Tyran Cox-Bey doesn't take the PEACE Center's success for granted. He sees its impact on students' lives. He is elated to announce the consistently favorable outcomes occurring in the first quarter of the academic year.

"We are thrilled to report that our school improvement goals are on track to being met, resulting in a significant decrease in major incidents, soaring student attendance, and achievement of first-quarter testing goals," said Cox-Bey, program administrator at PEACE Center.

Since its inception in 2016, the PEACE Center has provided students with diverse learning and social experiences. The restorative, non-punitive structure increases students' self-esteem and self-awareness and connects them to real-world experiences. The staff's non-traditional approach to teaching, responding, and communicating with students and their parents has worked well.

"At the onset of the school year, teachers played a pivotal role in shaping positive classroom behaviors. Clear communication of expectations laid the foundation for a conducive learning environment. The staff consistently enforced rules fostering a positive atmosphere that treated all students fairly," said Cox-Bey.

The Peace Center's groundbreaking education style of incorporating Restorative Justice enables teachers and staff to engage students who have been cast aside and redirect them onto a path of restoration and success. From day one, students are welcomed and celebrated when they walk through the school door.

"A key contributor to these achievements is our steadfast commitment to restorative practices coupled with strategies our dedicated staff diligently focused on throughout summer training days," he added.

Understanding the importance of forging positive connections with students, all staff underwent summer training. This comprehensive training enabled teachers and paraprofessionals to grasp each student's interests, backgrounds, and learning styles. Research consistently highlights how student-teacher connections positively impact behavior.

The Peace Center is a supplemental therapeutic behavior modification program designed to meet students' social-emotional, behavioral, educational, and vocational needs. Individual student behaviors vary from weapon possession, physical aggression, or assault to consistent disruptive attitude problems. The Peace Center posted an 86 percent graduation rate in the 2022-2023 school year, with most students improving at least one grade level in mathematics. Nearly half of the students improved their reading levels by 1 to 1.5 and had an 80 percent school attendance record.

Congratulations to the exceptional PEACE students who have earned a coveted place on the Honor and High Honor rolls!

High Honor Roll

Miana D Giles Amarra M Lewis
Kateece Palmer Isaiah Thompson
Gavon Wise

Honor Roll

Anthony Collins Javae Handcox
Khamiyah Hopkins Faith Ciara Hoyle
Jeremy Lacy Dan Jaray Owens
Nasir Samuels Laila Taylor

Outcomes from 2022-23

1. 86% graduation rate.
2. Most students improved by at least one grade level in mathematics.
3. Nearly half of students improved by 1 – 1.5 reading level.
4. 80% overall attendance.



Roseland Ceasefire

Empowering Communities, Reducing Gun Violence, and Mentoring Youth for a Brighter Future

Initiated in 2006, the Roseland Ceasefire Project is a groundbreaking program under the Chicago Violence Prevention Project umbrella. The organization has been instrumental in striving for positive transformations throughout the area through partnerships with the Chicago Police Department, the University of Illinois, the State of Illinois, Cook County, Roseland Community Hospital, dedicated local pastors, and various community organizations. Roseland Ceasefire aims to reduce and prevent gun violence and mentor youth for employment

readiness. Additionally, they offer after-school programs to help keep young people out of trouble by providing developmental activities such as conflict resolution and tutoring. “They are there in the morning and afternoon, adding a great layer of campus security and helping our students in collaborative ways. They are an asset to our assistant principals and staff,” said Brett Fickes, Assistant Superintendent of Curriculum & Instruction for Thornton Township High School District 205.

Hands Across Harvey

Uniting Communities and Inspiring Resilience Despite the Rain



The October rain could not dampen the spirit of the city of Harvey and Thornton Township High School District 205 as they once again joined forces to host the much-anticipated Hands Across Harvey (HAH) event. It brought together all three high schools and various suburban community partners for a four-hour event. HAH featured music, motivational speeches, and many people at the Lord of Mercy Church on 15746 Union Avenue.

The vibrant and engaging affair commenced with a heartfelt welcome from Margaret Gonzalez, Thornton Township Student Board of Education president. She was followed by an interfaith invocation, a ceremony dedicated to Hands Across Harvey, and an exciting Battle of the Bands competition. “It was such an amazing project because not only were we banding together three high schools and combining it with people from various communities, but it was just a chance to recognize all the ways we connect instead of all the ways we are different,” said Gonzalez.

While designed to be an enjoyable experience for all attendees, the primary objective remained clear: demonstrating unity among school districts and fostering a sense of community in the face of violence, adversity, and local rivalries. “Despite the rain, so many people attended HAH, which shows you how important an event like this is for the community,” said Zaire Banton, senior at Thornwood and a delegate for the Thornton Township Student Board, who helped plan the event.



MISSION STATEMENT:

Thornton Township High School District 205 endeavors to develop productive citizens who are enrolled, enlisted, or employed at the completion of high school.

• District Administration

Dr. Nathaniel Cunningham, Jr. Superintendent of Schools
Dr. Jerry B. Doss, Associate Superintendent
Mr. Toriano Horton, Assistant Superintendent of Business Operations
Mr. Brett Fickes, Assistant Superintendent of Curriculum & Instruction
Mr. Thomas Porter, Executive Director of Special Services

Ms. Rosaura Duran, Director of Human Resources
Mr. Vincent Jones, Director of Technology and Communications Systems
Mr. Robert Penman, Director of Research, Assessment & Quality Analysis
Mr. Tony Ratliff, Director of College and Careers

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