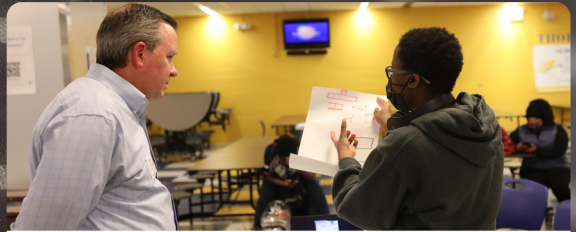


# YOUR SCHOOLS

CURRICULUM EDITION 2023



**INSPIRING OUR STUDENTS**



**CELEBRATING THEIR ACHIEVEMENTS**



**PUTTING OUR CHILDREN FIRST**



THORNTON TOWNSHIP  
**DISTRICT  
205**  
HIGH SCHOOLS

PEACE



CENTER



ARTS ACADEMY



Thornridge



Thornton



Thornwood

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**Nina Graham**  
Board President  
graham.nina@district205.net

District 205 knows that academic achievement is very important to our students' future success. In order to determine how well the District's programs and curricula are meeting their educational needs, it is necessary to measure students' aptitude in key learning areas.

In addition to the grades and feedback that students receive in their classes, students also take standardized tests to evaluate their aptitude in the areas of English, reading, writing, and mathematics. The standardized testing methods that the District uses are the Preliminary Scholastic Aptitude Test (PSAT), PSAT/NMSQT (National Merit Scholarship

Qualifying Test), and Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT). In October 2022, District 205 freshmen took the PSAT and sophomores and juniors took the PSAT/NMSQT. The next SAT testing will be conducted in March 2023.

The District has partnered with a research and analytics consulting firm to help us interpret our standardized test results so that we can better identify areas of achievement and opportunities for improvements. Our most recent testing revealed the following:

OVERALL, THE DISTRICT SAW EXPECTED LEVELS OF GROWTH FROM THE 2021-2022 TO THE 2022-2023 SCHOOL YEAR IN



ENGLISH



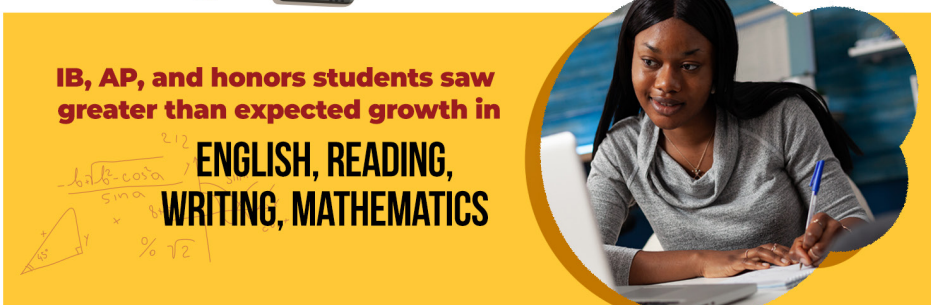
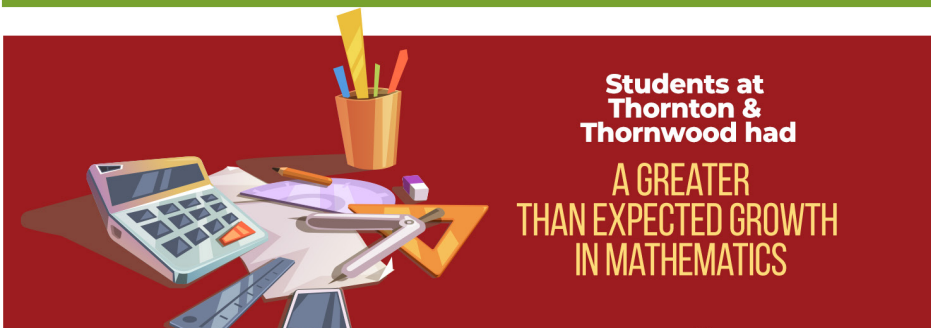
READING



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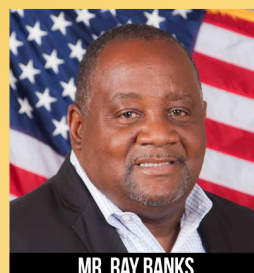
## DISTRICT 205 Board of Education



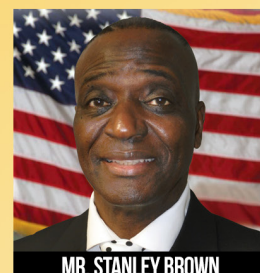
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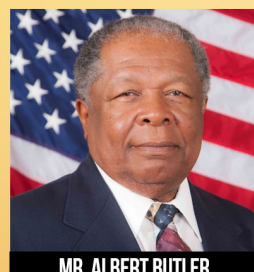
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**Dr. Nathaniel Cunningham, Jr.**  
District 205  
Superintendent

## *Plans for Improvement*

**HERE ARE SOME OTHER THINGS THAT THE DISTRICT IS DOING TO IMPROVE STUDENTS' GRADES AND TEST SCORES:**

**Use subject-specific tools and resources and incorporate test preparation materials in class assignments**

**Continue to invest in AP and IB courses, which provide students a rigorous academic experience.**

**Transition from a traditional teaching framework to a Pre-AP framework to ensure courses are taught at grade level and all students get the content and skills they'll need to succeed.**

In addition to the above steps that the District is taking to help students to improve their test scores and academic achievement, we also strive to motivate them. We make sure they know that the effort they put into doing well in school will help them to become enrolled in a college or vocational program, enlist in military service, or become gainfully employed when they graduate.

## *School Board and Student Board Select Healthy Food Choices*

**By Ernst Lamothe, Jr.**



OrganicLife offers a variety of healthy menu choices at all three schools, including Thornwood (pictured above).

When it comes to school lunches, students often have many opinions. While it is difficult to make everyone happy, the district decided to change vendors this school year. OrganicLife began as a niche healthy school lunch company operating under the goal of changing the way children view school lunches. The company now is one of the largest food service providers in the world and is comprised of four-star chefs and nutrition experts who are passionate advocates for kids. The mission is to make sure that kids move away from eating processed food. When choosing a vendor, the district sought out student input and the results have been excellent both in terms of quality and food choice selections.

“We appreciate the fact that the district had us involved in a meeting where we were able to taste the food beforehand. We knew it was a new company, which had great reviews, but we wanted to check it out ourselves. We have been very happy with the results,” said Eghosa Omosigho, Thornton Township Student Board of Education president. “The students are the ones who are eating the food every day so our opinions should matter.” Omosigho, a Thornwood High School student, said several menu items have been popular. “One of my favorites is the spicy chicken sandwich,” she added. “The food is much better this year. Another favorite is Chicken Alfredo which is a hit.” OrganicLife provides breakfast, lunch, snacks, and dinner for District 205 students and faculty. Daily menus are available on the schools websites at [district205.net](http://district205.net).



## *A New Barbering and Cosmetology Studio at Thornridge*

By Cassandra Griffin, CPCC, DTM



School District 205's mission is for its students to be enrolled in college or a vocational program, enlisted in military service, or gainfully employed after they graduate because we recognize that they have different needs, interests, talents, and paths for their future. Our goal is to help them establish a foundation of knowledge, skills, and experiences that they can build upon to be successful.

One way that we do this is through our career training programs, which provide students with the opportunity to expand their employment and career prospects, enhance their earning potential, and empower them to become self-sufficient. Our new Barbering/Cosmetology Program, which will begin in August 2023, will definitely do all of this.

Sophomores at Thornridge, Thornton, and Thornwood were invited to submit an application to participate in this exciting and educational two-year program. The first cohort of 24 students (**12 for barbering and 12 for cosmetology**) will begin taking classes in their junior year. Due to the tremendous interest in the program, the District is considering other options for providing students some training in the barbering and cosmetology fields.

Participants in the program are required to complete 1,500

clinical hours in order to become certified. To fulfill this requirement, students will have to attend class every day and they will occasionally have to serve in a salon studio after school, on weekends, and/or during the summer between their junior and senior years. Topics that will be covered in the program include: sanitation, hair styles and design, and skin care, interpersonal relations, and career options. According to Ms. Pietraszewski, "The appearance of our spaces will be sleek and modern both inside and out." The name of the space will be "Studio 205," which was selected by the students via a naming competition that garnered over 100 submissions. Studio 205 will be a place where students are able to hone their skills and where the community will be able to receive barber and cosmetology services. Drawings of the space is provided above.

Our new program will compare to any other school of barbering and/or cosmetology except that our students will complete it while they are still enrolled in high school. District 205's vision for the Barbering/Cosmetology Program is for every student to not only graduate high school, but for them to graduate as an Illinois state licensed barber or cosmetologist.

*"By being accepted into this program, I will graduate as a licensed Barber. I am very thankful that the School Board has allowed the Barbering and Cosmetology program to come to District 205. Thank you for investing in us and our future!" Delvon Squalls, Jr., Thornridge*

*"I would like to give a big thank you to District 205 for making this opportunity possible. Because of you, we are able to fulfill our dreams, and for that we are ever so grateful. We can assure you that we will continue to strive and uphold the image of District 205." Juliana Gonzalez, Thornton*

# International Baccalaureate Students Excel

By Cassandra Griffin, CPCC, DTM

When students are engaged, supported, and positively challenged they often achieve more academically. School District 205's administrators, educators, and staff are committed to ensuring that our students have what they need to graduate fully prepared to either enroll in college or a vocational program, enlist in military service, or become gainfully employed.

We offer them a variety of academic programs, career training, and extracurricular activities. Students who are interested in an in-depth, rigorous, and unique academic experience can participate in the District's **International Baccalaureate (IB) program**. This advanced educational opportunity gives students a chance to:

- explore subjects that go beyond the standard high school curriculum,
- utilize the IB program's outstanding resources, and
- earn college credit.

We take great pride in the fact that **we are among only 5,600 schools in 159 countries that have achieved this exclusive IB designation** and that we have successfully maintained this status since 2014.

The curriculum for the IB's Diploma Programme (DP) enables and empowers IB students, ages 16 to 19 years old, to direct their own learning pathway. They do so by choosing their courses from these six areas of study: language and literature, language acquisition, individuals and societies, sciences, mathematics, and the arts.

District 205 students begin the two-year program in their junior year. They are eligible to earn an IB Diploma if they complete



the required number of courses, get satisfactory scores on course exams, participate in Community, Activity, and Service (CAS) projects, conduct research projects, prepare and present extensive essays, and successfully demonstrate that they have mastered the advanced academic skills of analyzing and presenting information, evaluating and constructing arguments, and creative problem solving.

The District's IB coordinators - Mr. Brad Ablin (Thornton), Ms. Jennifer Merwald (Thornwood), and Dr. Jason Curl (Thornridge) - are all committed to working with administration, teachers, staff, and students to ensure that our IB programs are implemented according to the IB's rigorous standards.

We are pleased to help our IB students gain the confidence and skills that will serve them well so that they can serve the world in the future. See IB program highlights below.

- 67 students enrolled
- 12 fully trained teachers
- 7 students earned IB Diplomas
- 31 students earned college credit, which is a 72% achievement rate
- College acceptance at: Northwestern, Harvard, Yale, Stanford, USC, UCLA, New York University, Princeton, Vanderbilt, Purdue, University of Illinois, University of Missouri (Mizzou), Howard, North Carolina A&T, and others
- All students who earned IB Diplomas during the 2021-2022 school year were offered full ride scholarships.
- Thornridge IB students have participated in local political forums, environmental cleanup services, interschool recruitment, and volunteer activities found at the school.



Thornridge

- 70 students enrolled
- 17 fully trained teachers
- 3 students earned IB Diplomas
- 5 students scored high enough to earn 12 college credits which enables them to start college nearing second semester status
- College acceptance at: Northwestern, Harvard, Yale, Stanford, USC, UCLA, New York University, Princeton, Vanderbilt, Purdue, University of Illinois, University of Missouri (Mizzou), Howard, North Carolina A&T, and many more
- Thornton IB students have volunteered at Feed My Starving Children, they worked with the school farm, volunteered with our Haunted Hallway event, and participated in our Black History and Hispanic Heritage programs.



Thornton

- 73 students enrolled
- 15 fully trained teachers
- 3 students earned IB Diplomas
- 24 students earned college credit in one or more courses last year
- College acceptance at: Northwestern, Howard University, University of Illinois, Bradley, Jackson State, Illinois Institute of Technology, UIC, Spelman, Xavier, University of Louisiana, and other prestigious universities - many with full scholarships
- Thornwood IB students participated in Community, Activity and Service (CAS) projects and they have planted trees at Thornwood, served as mentors and teachers to the middle school students, and provided tutoring services to younger students on a variety of subjects.



Thornwood



## *Peace Center Helps Students Get Enrolled, Enlisted, or Employed*

By Ernst Lamothe, Jr.

Thornton Township High School District 205 found a way to pull back students who were on the brink of dropping out. Since its inception in 2016, the PEACE Center has provided diverse learning and social experiences for students. The restorative, non-punitive structure offers students an opportunity to increase their self-esteem, self-awareness and connect them to real-world experiences. The staff's non-traditional approach to teaching, responding, and communicating to students and their parents has worked well.

"Our staff has so much passion for these students," said Tyran Cox-Bey, program administrator at PEACE Center. "Students are hungry for our program and we know we can maximize their potential and give them

hope that they can be successful. We want to help them rewrite the narrative of their story," added Cox-Bey.

The Peace Center is a supplemental, therapeutic behavior modification program. It's designed to meet the social, emotional, behavioral, educational, and vocational needs of students. Individual student behaviors vary from weapon possession, physical aggression or assault to consistent disruptive attitude problems.

Cox-Bey said one of the greatest resources is our Behavior, Anger and Social Skills (BASS) program. BASS is an Alternative to Suspension Program used at the PEACE Center. BASS is a unique approach to discipline that serves as the backbone of the Alternative School Program.

"We teach students the discipline path and how to communicate their thoughts. Often times they get frustrated with situations because they have not learned how to express themselves the right way," said Bey-Cox. "We are trying to coach them on how to deal with conflict and understand how to navigate correctly through life."

**60% – 70%**  
*of their students  
would have dropped  
out or failed to  
graduate without  
Peace Center*

## *Outlook Academy Puts Students on the Right Track*

By Ernst Lamothe, Jr.

Outlook Academy puts seniors on the right track to graduate on time. The program provides at-risk students opportunities to succeed by utilizing a non-traditional educational environment and approach to learning. The mission is to improve students' educational and career options, along with giving social, emotional, and behavioral support. Situated inside South Suburban College (SSC) and away from the traditional high school atmosphere, students are surrounded by an educational environment, community, and culture that inspires and motivates.

In an attempt to address the number of dropouts and non-graduating seniors within the district, the program allows students instructional strategies that will support them through individualized education plans. Outlook provides credit recovery for those students who would struggle to graduate in May or incoming at risk seniors.

Patricia A. Malopsy-Fortier, the program administrator, reminds students that once they successfully complete their graduation requirements, they can establish one of three outcomes: enroll in higher education, enlist in the armed forces, or work their way to employment after high school.

*"Outlook means a lot to me and it helped me in many ways. I was so behind when I arrived during my junior year that I really didn't have a lot of hope. At Outlook, I was given a lot of opportunities to recover my credits. The staff really helped me get through some tough times and continued to support me even when I made some mistakes."*

- Shalon Michelle Binion

*"Outlook gave me a way that I could get caught up and still graduate with my classmates. It gave me a second chance and a group of teachers that pushed me to come to school and do what I needed to so I can graduate."*

- Gregorio Mendez

*"Outlook has given me a chance to learn in a smaller setting with teachers who care and challenge me to do better for myself. There were some ups and downs, but I still have a chance to graduate on time. I am going to do what I have to so I can walk across the stage in May."*

- Nava Maritza

*"I came to Outlook and didn't know what to expect. It was my senior year and I didn't want to leave Thornton. After some time and a lot of conversations, I realized that this was the best place for me to finish up and graduate. It wasn't always easy, but people kept talking to me and kept me focused on what was important."*

- Akeem Davis

## Infant Care Center Helps Teen Parents Get Enrolled, Enlisted, or Employed

By Cassandra Griffin, CPCC, DTM

A big factor that may influence whether a teenage parent is able to continue their education is the availability of safe, convenient, affordable, and reliable child care. More than 30 years ago, District 205 decided to offer a solution to this challenge by opening the Infant Care Center (ICC). The ICC is licensed by the Illinois Department of Children and Family Services and is currently run by Director Candice Coleman and Assistant Director Debra Mitchell. The primary mission of the ICC is to ensure that students who are parents complete their high school education.

Ms. Coleman, who has been with the program for almost four years, stated that participants have to sign a promissory note indicating that they will get good grades, attend their classes regularly, and communicate with the staff at the ICC. Ms. Coleman stresses to the students that the free program is “not a drop off center” and that the goal is for them to graduate.

The ICC is located at 15001 Broadway Ave., in Harvey. District 205 students receive transportation services which makes it easier for them to bring their children to the center before they head off to their classes. The ICC also offers wrap-around services including helping the students to apply for government food assistance via the Link and WIC (Women, Infants, and Children) programs, obtain clothing, and receive hygiene products.

While the students are in class, their children are engaged in learning at the ICC. In addition to the director and assistant director, the ICC employs three early childhood teachers and four teacher assistants. Ms. Coleman emphasized that these professional educators are “not just glorified babysitters” because they are helping to build “the foundation of these babies’ education.”

The ICC teachers utilize The Creative Curriculum®. The goal of this curriculum is to help children become independent,

self-confident, inquisitive and enthusiastic learners and focuses on social/emotional, cognitive, physical and language development.

The children, who range in age from 6 weeks to 4 years old, receive an age appropriate education in everything from potty training, communication and interpersonal skills development, learning how to write and identify colors, letters, numbers, shapes, and much more. The ICC also expands the children’s horizons by taking them and their parents on field trips, including a recent trip to Build-A-Bear (pictured below).

Ms. Coleman said that it is rewarding for the ICC staff “to see how the program has lifted these young ladies and gentlemen up when they may have thought that being a parent would work against them and limit who they would become and what they could achieve.” For more information about the ICC, call 708-225-4036 or 708-225-4118.





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