

# YOUR SCHOOLS

WINTER EDITION



THORNTON TOWNSHIP  
**DISTRICT  
205**  
HIGH SCHOOLS

465 E 170th St. South Holland, IL 60473

PEACE



CENTER



Thornridge



Thornton



Thornwood

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DISTRICT 205

BOARD OF

EDUCATION



**Mrs. Annette Whittington**  
Board Vice-President  
whittington.annette@district205.net



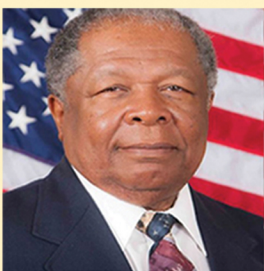
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SUPERINTENDENT

*Dr. Nathaniel  
Cunningham, Jr.*

# Welcome!

As the Thornton Township High School District 205 School Board President, I always appreciate sharing some of the awesome things that have happened within the District.

The School Board, the Student School Board, and the District continue to work together to provide our students with the educational experiences and opportunities that they need and deserve. We collectively work hard to fulfill our District's mission to ensure that our students are prepared to enroll in college or a vocational program, enlist in military service, or become gainfully employed when they graduate.

The energy and enthusiasm that the District's administrators, educators, and staff displayed during our annual Institute Day event, held in August, has carried on throughout this past semester. This spirit, paired with the innovative methods used to educate and engage with our students, will ensure that they get the core lessons and academic content they need to succeed in school and beyond.

One example of this innovative thinking is the development of new cosmetology and barber vocational programs that the District will begin offering in the fall of 2023. We are pleased by the interest that students have already shown. In preparation for the programs' kickoff, some District 205 students were invited to visit Mielle Organics, located in Merrillville, Indiana. This business is an industry leader in organic hair and skin care products. This field trip was not only educational, it was also inspirational because the owners of this thriving business are graduates of Thornton High School! By adding diverse career preparation programs and courses to our curriculum, we are helping our students expand their vision for what they can achieve.

In order for our students to achieve academically and for our administrators, educators, and staff to function effectively, they need to be healthy, safe, and supported. During the height of the COVID-19 pandemic, the District implemented protocols and practices to protect the physical health of our students and staff. We are also aware that our students and staff may benefit from having access to mental health support. Our counselors have and will continue to play a vital role when it comes to addressing any mental health concerns that our students may have.

In addition, we are very fortunate that several District 205 staff members and educators have also received Youth Mental Health First Aid training, which will enable and empower them to identify, understand, and respond to signs of mental health and substance use challenges among adolescents. We further enhanced and expanded these support services by partnering with Midwest Family and Community Resources (MFCR) to offer support to our students, their families, and our District employees. MFCR's mission is "to enable individuals and families to overcome challenges, big and small, past and present, so that they can live healthy, fully enriched lives." We encourage District 205 students, students' family members, and our employees who may be experiencing mental health challenges, to please take advantage of these services by contacting MFCR at 708-745-3040.

It is an unfortunate and scary reality that we all must be vigilant and alert to our surroundings. The Board has approved the District's requests to take prudent steps to reinforce our safety and security protocols and practices. Approximately 75% of District 205 employees have successfully completed the ALICE training program, which better prepares them to respond in the event of an unwelcomed intruder on our campuses. ALICE is an acronym for Alert, Lockdown, Inform, Counter, and Evacuate. In addition to personnel safety training, we support the District's plan to make physical modifications to our properties, which will further help us to provide a safe environment for everyone.

While it is important to focus on some of the obstacles we face, it is also important to highlight our successes.

In October, I, along with Board Secretary Almetta Vasser-Moody, presented medals to the Thornton Township High School Soccer Team for their victory in the Body Armor Soccer Tournament. We also applaud our Civil Air Patrol students who recently completed a drone training program, which gave them exposure to career possibilities as drone pilots. We are delighted when our students are able to excel in their extracurricular activities, as well as academically.

*Nina Graham*

Nina Graham  
School Board President



*Nina Graham*

BOARD PRESIDENT  
graham.nina@district205.net



# Student Board of Education

by Cassandra Griffin, CPCC, DTM

Egosha Omosigbo understands the importance of a student body serving as a crucial bridge between the students and administration. As Thornton Township Student Board of Education President, her mission is to ensure the bridge is sturdy and beneficial.



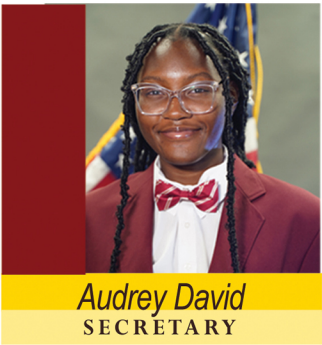
“Student government is essential to the school body because it gives students a chance to be at the big table. An average student typically doesn’t have a chance to voice their concerns to the school leaders. However, the Student Board of Education is where the student government comes in to voice out those concerns,” said Omosigbo, a senior at Thornwood High School.



Eghosa Omosigbo  
PRESIDENT



Addison Perkins  
VICE PRESIDENT



Audrey David  
SECRETARY



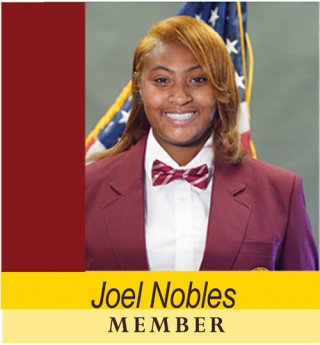
Dhyana Ruker  
MEMBER



Fatima Hernandez  
MEMBER



Jada Lee  
MEMBER



Joel Nobles  
MEMBER



Kamila Sandoval  
MEMBER



Kendel Harris  
MEMBER



Margaret Gonzalez  
MEMBER



Oluwanifemi Ajavi  
MEMBER



Orbaldo Gonzalez  
MEMBER



Vanessa Angulo  
MEMBER



Shania Turnipseed  
MEMBER



Yoselin Farfan  
MEMBER

The Student Board of Education (SBOE) provides invaluable opportunities and experience for students to actively engage in their school, district, and community. Its mission involves creating leadership positions to represent peers, improve district schools, and give back to their community. With humility, humbleness, and hard work, the Student Board of Education also works to help students receive a high quality and well-rounded high school experience.

Since its inception during the 2006-2007 school year, members of the student board have maintained a 100 percent graduation rate. Each member is popularly elected by the students at each school during the spring and serves one-year terms ending in May.

Under the supervision of Dr. Jerry Doss, associate superintendent of District 205, Student Board of Education members participate in high-level policy considerations, engage in strategic planning, and coordinate peer engagement activities.

“Our Student Board of Education would like to provide our students with a platform that will introduce them to the different steps after high school,” said Omosigbo. “This platform will consist of four-year institutions, community colleges, military recruiters, trade schools, and panelists who have succeeded in following these different paths after high school.” The student board will host 3E’s of Success - College & Career Panel, January 28, 2023, from 11 a.m. to 4 p.m. at Thornwood High School.

Student board members have volunteered at various Thornton Township municipality events, community outreach and last year participated in an invaluable restorative justice leadership training. In addition, the board creates quality programs and acts as a sounding board for the superintendent and board of education.



# SUPERINTENDENT'S *Message*

YOUR SCHOOLS

04

It is hard to believe that we are at the midway point of the 2022-2023 academic year. I am pleased to give you a brief overview of some of the accomplishments that we had during this time.

As always, we make every effort to ensure that our students have the resources and educational opportunities they need to successfully enroll in college or a vocational program, enlist in military service, or become gainfully employed when they graduate. District 205's administrators, educators, and staff realize that our students are unique and have diverse interests, so we strive to offer them a wide variety of courses, extracurricular activities, and programs that will keep them interested and engaged throughout their academic career.

As our mission indicates, we are aware that every student may not choose to attend college after graduating from high school. For this reason, we offer vocational training programs to appeal to students who may be interested in truck and diesel technology, culinary arts, weatherization, or electrical industry careers. In addition, we are excited to announce that in the fall of 2023, District 205 students will also be able to participate in our new cosmetology and barber training programs. According to a U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics recent report, overall employment of barbers, hairstylists, and cosmetologists is projected to grow 11 percent from 2021 to 2031 - much faster than the average for all occupations. The students who participate in our vocational programs will have a definite advantage if they want to pursue a career in any of the above fields.



*Dr. Nathaniel*

**CUNNINGHAM, JR.**



We encourage our students to participate in extracurricular activities and special academic programs that can enhance their educational experiences and help them to succeed after they graduate. The District's Civil Air Patrol (CAP) is one of these programs. CAP is a civilian auxiliary to the U.S. Air Force and the mission of its Youth Cadet Program is "to develop youth, educate Americans on the importance of aviation and space, and perform life-saving humanitarian missions." The program allows youth, ages 12 to 18, to progress at their own pace through a 16-step leadership development program including aerospace education, leadership training, physical fitness, and moral leadership. Our CAP program is the Cornelius Robinson Coffey Cadet Squadron, IL-332, which has been based solely at Thornwood High School. However, we recently expanded it to the other District schools. We are proud of the students who participate in CAP and hope that this expansion will foster greater participation.

The success of our International Baccalaureate (IB) program is another source of pride for our District. Ever since we completed the challenging application process in 2014, we have been among a select number of schools across 158 countries to participate in this prestigious and rigorous academic program. On October 26, 2022, our IB students went to Feed My Starving Children in Schaumburg, Illinois. They collectively packed 28,944 meals which will help to feed 79 children for a year! Thanks to our committed IB faculty, our IB students are exposed to a higher level of learning, have access to a variety of outstanding educational resources, and opportunities to contribute positively to the lives of others.

Although we want to celebrate our successes, we are aware that some of our students, their families, and even our own District 205 staff members may occasionally experience difficulties in their lives. This led the District to partner with the Midwest Family and Community Resources organization, which is available to offer mental health support to members of our school community. In addition, several District 205 staff members were trained and certified as Youth Mental Health First Responders, which will also enable them to offer mental health support and resources to students and their families. For more information about these services, please go to [district205.net](https://district205.net).

District 205 is always committed to working with the School Board, the Student School Board, and our community partners and stakeholders to carry out our mission. This year, we have faced many challenges, including dealing with employee vacancies, supply chain disruptions, and bus driver shortages. However, we found the necessary resources and developed workable solutions to address these concerns, and we are well on our way to having a successful academic year.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Nathaniel Cunningham, Jr.".

Dr. Nathaniel Cunningham, Jr.  
Superintendent

Our students have  
the resources and  
educational  
opportunities they  
need to successfully  
enroll in college or a  
vocational program,  
enlist in military  
service, or become  
gainfully employed  
when they graduate.



## District 205 Participates in South Holland Business Association's National Manufacturing Month Activities

by Cassandra Griffin, CPCC, DTM

District 205 has always maintained a positive relationship with our local business communities, and these relationships are beneficial for our students. Examples of these important connections are the ones that the District has with the Village of South Holland and the South Holland Business Association (SHBA).

As a result of our long-lasting relationships, the District was invited to participate in special activities that SHBA held in October in recognition of

National Manufacturing Month. On October 26, 2022, thirty-seven juniors and seniors from Thornwood High School had an opportunity to tour six manufacturing businesses located in South Holland. The students, who are enrolled in woodworking, engineering, or automotive classes, were able to see first-hand the manufacturing process for steel, awnings, metal stamping, and food products, and learn about careers in these industries.

On October 27, 2022, the students attended a networking breakfast hosted by SHBA at the South Holland Community Center. The theme of the event was "Made in South Holland: The Importance of Manufacturing to Our Community." The event, which was also attended by SHBA members and guests, included a panel discussion on this topic. The panel included senior managers from local manufacturing businesses, as well as experts in the fields of education and workforce development, including District 205's Superintendent Dr. Nathaniel Cunningham, Jr.

Dr. Cunningham spoke about the District's mission, which is to ensure that students enroll in college or a vocational program, enlist in military service, or become gainfully employed when they graduate. He noted that District 205's vocational programs and the partnerships the District has with businesses and organizations help our students to obtain career training and experience in a variety of trades. Dr. Cunningham expressed appreciation for entities that are currently partnering with the District and invited other businesses and organizations to consider doing so in the future.

These special events gave our students a unique opportunity to hear from successful business leaders, make connections that may benefit them later, learn how they can continue their vocational training and professional development, and receive information about manufacturing careers. Thornwood Division Leader and Career and Technical Education Instructor Cynthia Morris and Administrative Assistant Tracy Jones helped to coordinate our students' participation at the events. They both hope District 205 students will have more chances to learn about careers in our local communities.



## Civil Air Patrol Drone Program

by Ernst Lamothe

Carol Curtis understands the importance of finding your purpose in life and wants to help others reach their true potential. As the Civil Air Patrol Instructor at Thornwood High School, she leads young men and women into programs that teach true leadership ability.

"Some students may have an idea of what they want to be when they are adults but don't understand what it takes to get to that level. They are in a rush to be adults, and I tell them when you are grown, you have to take the 'G' and 'R' out because it is your responsibility to own your future," said Carol.

The Civil Air Patrol (CAP) 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 of age can join the CAP's Cadet program, where they learn about aviation and the military along with developing leadership and team skills. As a cadet, 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.

"This program opens their eyes to all the different possibilities that are available to them," said Curtis. "It teaches students how to stay focused, have a mindset of bettering themselves, find their true passion, and go for it. We want our students to know there are many doors open to them."

During the summer, 10 to 15 students took part in a one-week pilot program that taught them how to control battery-operated drones. Students participated in obstacle courses controlling the drones and factored in weight and weather conditions while navigating it. "Our next step is putting together a curriculum so that this can be a longer classroom program," said Curtis. "We want it to be open to all students."

Students recently took a trip to Springfield, where they met with various military officials to enhance their learning opportunities. "They were impressed with the behavior of our students and their ability to soak up knowledge," added Curtis. The organization also provided assistance to South Holland veterans. "That is what we are here to do. We serve the community," she said.



# Thornridge IB Students Receive Unique Education

by Ernst Lamothe

**Dr. Justin Moore**  
School Principal



Jason Curl enjoys watching students challenge themselves and views the world with a more global perspective. As the IB coordinator at Thornridge High School, he works with other teachers, counselors and staff to provide thorough education through the International Baccalaureate program.

The International Baccalaureate (IB) is a global program in international education that seeks to develop inquiring, knowledgeable, confident, and caring young people. Students enter the program during their junior year and direct their own learning pathway in hopes of thriving in a global society and making a lasting difference. The program’s purpose includes empowering school-aged students to take ownership in their own learning and help them develop future-ready skills to make a difference and thrive in an ever changing world. The team of IB teachers, counselors and staff work together to provide the most meaningful and thorough education for the students.

“It gets me excited as a teacher to see my students either get full-ride scholarships or enroll at prestigious schools,” said Curl, a Thornridge teacher for the past 11 years. “It’s also incredible seeing students work to understand different cultures and people, and learn to appreciate those unique differences.”

Students at IB World Schools are given a unique education that can lead them to some of the highest ranking universities around the world, become more culturally aware through developing a second language and engage with people in an increasingly global world.

“We are not only a global society, but the world is getting smaller. You never know when you are going to receive a lucrative job offer in another country, so learning a second or third language could be essential,” said Curl. “Also just attempting to learn another language can be valuable. Some students are naturals and can pick it up quickly, but even if you struggle, it stretches you as a student. It makes you stronger to want to run toward a challenge instead of shying away from it.”

## Improvement Goals

SAT scores will increase by 10% in ELA/Math (% of students who meet/exceed).

1

2

Chronically absent students will decrease by 10% from 71% to 61%.

The graduation rate will increase by 10%, from 70% to 80%.

3

4

In SY24 a Cosmetology/Barbering program will be added to our CTE courses.



The Thornridge High School Speech Team competed at Homewood-Flossmoor after a five-year hiatus! Please congratulate senior student, Christyana Walker (pictured center)! She took third place in Oratorical Declamation! The team also competed at The Ike’s Early Bird tournament at Eisenhower High School.

The Thornwood/Thornridge Choir and Thornwood Band Concert was held Tuesday, December 6, 2022, at South Suburban College. Their performance of a song from the movie “Harriet” is available to watch on YouTube.

SCAN QR CODE TO WATCH THE SONG >>>







## Congratulations!

Thornridge students, Zamiyah Martin and Laniyah Champion, were recently inducted into the National Technical Honor Society on November 16, 2022.

## You're Not Finished!

With the first semester of senior year behind us, it is important that students and families know the facts behind the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA).

Completing the FAFSA is a statewide graduation requirement, signed into law by Governor J. B. Pritzker in 2019. The FAFSA is also the gateway to being able to receive various forms of financial aid. Scholarships, grants, work-study, and even federal student loans require the completion of the FAFSA form.

While completing the FAFSA is an exciting first step to college, there is still much to be explored and understood. Here are a few important things you should know about the FAFSA.

### 1: Understanding the Student Aid Report (SAR)

If you submit your FAFSA online, the U.S. Department of Education will process your application within a three- to five-day period. If you submit a paper FAFSA, your application will be processed within a seven- to ten-day period. Once your application has been processed, you will receive your Student Aid Report (SAR), which summarizes the information you provided on your FAFSA. The SAR can be found in the portal used to complete your FAFSA. Once your FAFSA is processed, the information is sent to the colleges that you listed on your FAFSA. The information in your SAR will be used by each college to determine your eligibility for federal and non-federal student aid. The colleges you listed are responsible for creating your award package and giving out your financial aid award.

With this in mind, it is important that you and a professional review your SAR to ensure all of the information provided is complete and accurate. This person could be your college and career counselor, an Illinois Student Assistance Commission (ISAC) member, or a TRIO Talent Search staff member. Not only does meeting with a professional help you to correct mistakes but it also allows that professional to assess your options when it comes to paying for college. Even the smallest mistake, such as a misspelled name, an inaccurate social security number, or a parent putting their information in the place of their student, can cause a lengthy and tedious set of issues. Most importantly, errors like these can prolong the financial aid process and possibly cost you valuable funds.



## Oral Hygiene Program Day



**Thornridge**

**January 17-19**  
9am to 12pm



We are providing students with a dental exam, cleaning, fluoride treatment and sealant

Parents: Complete the Dental Consent Form

Scan for registration:



### 2: Know Your EFC

Your Student Aid Report will also include your Expected Family Contribution (EFC). The EFC determines your eligibility for a Federal Pell Grant, and the college uses the EFC to assess your eligibility for other federal and non-federal student aid. The EFC also acts as a huge indicator in determining how much money you may receive from your schools of choice. Knowing and understanding the EFC ultimately helps families to determine which route a student should take. If a student has a low EFC (i.e., 0000), it could mean the student will be eligible for the maximum amount of financial aid. However, if you are a student with a high EFC (i.e., 5000 or higher), it could mean you need to start looking for alternative plans when paying for college.

**You're Not Finished!**

**Continued on Page 16**





## IB Prepares Thornton Students for a Global Society

By Ernst Lamothe

While Olivia Ayiku has her sights set on attending a California college such as Stanford or an Ivy League school like Brown, the pursuit of something bigger remains supreme over everything else. It's the reason she decided last year to participate in the International Baccalaureate program.

"Although knowledge in itself is important, the application of knowledge to multiple aspects of education is what makes individuals around the world unique," said Olivia, of Dolton, a senior at Thornton Township High School. "I was interested in seeing how this advanced program would challenge me and broaden my views."

The International Baccalaureate (IB) is a global program in international education that seeks to develop inquiring, knowledgeable, confident, and caring young people. Students enter the program during their junior year and direct their own learning pathway in hopes of thriving in a global society and make a lasting difference.

"I decided to participate in the IB program because I wanted to take advantage of the opportunity to be a part of the top 10% of my graduating class," added Olivia, who is learning Spanish as part of the program. Bradley Ablin, a teacher at Thornton for 22 years, leads the IB program at Thornton. The program empowers teachers as the architects of learning excellence, while working alongside engaged colleagues.

"Education and society is becoming more global by the day and this program makes students more marketable," said Ablin. "It's a rigorous program and it takes students who are strong and disciplined. These students are being challenged, and it is a testament to them seeing all the amazing growth in their knowledge and abilities from the beginning of the program to the end."

Jazmin Rodriguez, a senior at Thornton who is applying to University of Chicago, Northwestern University and University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, decided to participate because she wanted to grow academically and take the highest level courses available. She believed the IB program would give her a leg up on not only attending college but thriving in its presence.

"I wanted to be familiar with college style-classes, research papers, and homework overload," said Jazmin, of Dixmoor, who is also taking Spanish language courses. "Even though I'm Mexican, I was not fluent in Spanish before taking this course and that didn't sit right with me. I wanted the opportunity to fully understand and communicate with my family. I wanted the opportunity to talk with them daily and ask about their day without struggling to express my thinking and IB provided that."

Students at IB World Schools are given a unique education that can lead them to some of the highest ranking universities around the world, become more culturally aware through developing a second language and engage with people in an increasingly global world.

"The biggest difference I have seen with the program is that our students are attending prestigious schools such as Stanford, Princeton, Harvard and UCLA, which was not happening to the same level before we started the IB program," said Ablin. "We have some students receiving full rides to these universities."



**Mr. Todd Whitaker**  
School Principal



**On Wednesday, October 26, our TTHS IB students went to Feed My Starving Children in Schaumburg. They had a fantastic experience. Together they packed 28,944 meals to feed 79 children for a year!**





## Improvement Goals

By June 2023, 95% of 9thgrade students will be on-track for graduation as measured by passing course rates (D/F list) and earned credits

**1**

By June 2023, 9ththrough 11thgrade students will increase their performance on PSAT/SAT by at least 10% as measured by College Board reporting of the fall and spring testing results

**2**

By June 2023, 75% of 10ththrough 12thgrade students will be on track as measured by passing course rates (D/F list) and earned credits.

**3**

By the end of the 2022-2023 school year, each grade level will have a 90% attendance average as measured by the Illinois School Report Card.

**4**

In October, PCs for People hosted a Computer Giveaway event, in which eligible families could shop with the organization to receive a free or low-cost computer. The event was held Friday, October 21, 2022, at Thornton Township High School in Harvey. 71 families benefitted from the computer giveaway event.

Free Computer Eligibility:

If you receive SNAP, Medicaid, SSI, Federal Public Housing Assistance, Veterans Pension Benefit Program, or have a household income that is less than 135% of federal poverty guidelines (for example, below \$35,000 per year for a family of 4), you can sign up for a free Windows computer.

Additional information about eligibility for internet service and other computers can be found at [www.pcsforpeople.org/eligibility](http://www.pcsforpeople.org/eligibility).

Email [cookcounty@pcsforpeople.org](mailto:cookcounty@pcsforpeople.org) or call 708-843-8450 for more information.

## Coach Streets A Mighty Force of Nature

Tai Streets is a name known to many in the Chicago south suburban region and the Illinois high school sports circuit.

He has been the boys' basketball coach at Thornton Township High School since 2014. In the 1990s, Streets made a name for himself in the sports industry and was one of the greatest high school athletes in Illinois. He was raised in the south suburbs of Chicago and already made a name for himself in the mid-1990s during his attendance at Rich South. His senior year led him to transfer to Thornton Township High School, where he earned the title of Class AA state runner-up for boys' basketball in 1994-95. He was a high school track state champion in long jump and placed third in the 4 x 400-meter relay. Streets went on to win a NCAA championship in football and became a Rose Bowl winner. After high school, he played wide receiver at Michigan State University and later was drafted into the NFL. He played six seasons in the NFL under the San Francisco 49ers and the Detroit Lions.

Streets possessed another level of athleticism that was a true God-given talent. He knew how to maximize his talents while also staying humble and letting passion drive his game. All his accomplishments and mindset led him to coach a 32-1 season at Thornton in the 2019-2020 basketball season. During that season, the Wildcats won Thanksgiving and Christmas tournament titles and shared a Southland Conference title with Bloom. Most recently, Coach Streets was profiled by WCIU, One-on-One with television broadcaster Kenny McReynolds. Durring the interview, he shared his passion for coaching the Thornton Township High School boys basketball team.

Streets is a mighty force of nature! He is nothing short of an outstanding coach with a love for the game of basketball.



# Oral Hygiene Program Day



**Thornton**  
**January 24-26**  
**9am to 2pm**

We are providing students with a dental exam, cleaning, fluoride treatment and sealant

Parents:  
Complete the  
Dental Consent Form

Scan for  
registration:





**Congratulations to Thornton Township High School Soccer Team!**  
**They are the 2022 Champions of Body Armor Sports Soccer Tournament!**



## Thornwood's IB Program Takes an International Approach to Education

By Ernst Lamothe

Faith Donaldson believes in the importance of being bilingual. She understands how essential it will be as she envisions becoming a cardiothoracic surgeon, which is one of the reasons she decided to enter the International Baccalaureate program.

"I decided to participate in the IB program because I wanted to learn more in-depth about chemistry as well as challenge myself more, academically," said Faith, of Calumet City, a senior at Thornwood. "I am learning Spanish and I selected it because I have a little knowledge of the language and needed a large review and more thorough learning. It is such a well-known language around the world."

The International Baccalaureate (IB) is a global program in international education that seeks to develop inquiring, knowledgeable, confident, and caring young people. Students enter the program during their junior year and direct their own learning pathway in hopes of thriving in a global society and make a lasting difference. The program's purpose includes empowering school-aged students to take ownership in their own learning and help them develop future-ready skills to make a difference and thrive in an ever changing world. The team of IB teachers, counselors, and staff work together to provide the most meaningful and thorough education for the students. The school is developing a new website to showcase the program.

"I enjoy the international approach that I learn in all my classes. The theoretical thinking about all subjects and ideas are quite interesting to me," said Faith, who wants to attend Brown, Hampton, or Georgetown University.

Jennifer Merwald, a 12-year Thornwood High School teacher who has been part of the IB program for the past eight years, sees great benefits in this global initiative. The program has become stronger throughout the years, and the success of the students has helped inspire the next wave of young learners who enter the IB program.

"The students benefit immensely from the academic rigor of the IB program that better prepares them for success in college. This program provides tremendous support, opportunity, and guidance for the students," said Merwald, who teaches IB Spanish. "Being a foreign language teacher and having been someone who has lived in multiple countries, I find it an essential part of life to learn another language. Being able to communicate to someone else in their language shows a level of respect and cultural awareness that can broaden so many horizons."

Students at IB World Schools are given a unique education that can lead them to some of the highest ranking universities around the world, become more culturally aware through developing a second language and engaging with people in an increasingly global world.

"Students who have been part of this program had many doors open for them at universities of elite status as well as a tremendous amount of merit aid awarded to them," said Merwald. "They develop lifelong skills regarding working hard, time management, and believing in themselves. Cultural connections and understanding are how we become better global citizens."



**Mr. Don Holmes**  
School Principal

**Thornwood's IB students engaged in experiential learning and celebrations. The IB History group attended Steppenwolf Theatre to see 1919. IB Psychology students attended the Museum of Illusions exhibit and participated in Feed My Starving Children event. Recently, IB student Raziyah Karim (pictured right with Principal Holmes) was awarded a \$72,000 scholarship from Bradley University.**







## Improvement Goals

- 1 ▶ % Of students who meet or exceed SAT benchmarks will increase by 10% in ELA and Math.
- 2 ▶ % Of students who meet or exceed the Illinois Science Assessment benchmarks will increase by 5%.
- 3 ▶ Severely absent student count will decrease by 20% from 36%-16%.
- 4 ▶ The 4-year Graduation rate will increase by 10% from 84% to 94%.
- 5 ▶ In SY24 the Cosmetology/Barbering program will be added to our CTE course offerings.



### McKinley's Science Field Trip To Thornwood!



On October 27, Thornwood and McKinley collaborated to conduct a science lab for McKinley students. Juniors and Seniors involved in the science department at Thornwood conducted a lab activity for McKinley's 6th, 7th, and 8th grade students.

Thornwood students had the opportunity to take what they learned in the classroom and teach the younger generation science lessons while performing the lab activities. Thornwood's students did an excellent job becoming science instructors as they guided McKinley's students through science lessons. McKinley's students shined bright by grasping complex concepts and drawing excellent conclusions from the given information.

The collaboration between McKinley and Thornwood was powerful since faculty and staff came together to make this happen for their students. District 205 has passionate and dedicated teachers that want to expand our students' knowledge and expose them to STEM activities. The event was a blast for everyone, and we are looking forward to future science labs.

### Students participated in a tree planting program



Thornwood  
February 7-9

9am to 2pm

We are providing students with a dental exam, cleaning, fluoride treatment and sealant

Parents:  
Complete the  
Dental Consent Form

Scan for  
registration:





# Greetings,

In the fall of 2016, the District Board of Education established the Peace Center Program to build resilience for students and families who experience trauma via early childhood experiences, high mobility, or community violence. The program's trauma-sensitive approach meets the needs of students and creates a culture that provides a safe space to learn for students who are at risk of failure, dropping out or incarceration.

The Peace Center works to encourage our students to build the academic and social knowledge, attitudes, and skills necessary to build empathy, manage their emotions, achieve positive goals, and establish and maintain positive relationships.



The 2022/2023 school year has three goals:

- 1

▶ Increase overall attendance
- 2

▶ Decrease negative behaviors
- 3

▶ Improve math and reading scores

Thus far, we are on track to successfully meet our goals. How, you may ask. Semester one has been full of activities and incentives that promote positive behaviors and parent participation. To start, we had an exciting and engaging summer program that provided students and families with cultural and educational field trips throughout the Chicagoland area. Students received enriched academics that included daily mindfulness activities and group talks. During the first and second semesters, students were awarded prizes for their growth in attendance, testing, and behaviors. Parents also received gifts for participating in surveys and parent meetings that focused on their role and understanding of the importance of good student attendance.

We look forward to what the New Year and new semester offer us, and we remain committed to "Showing up and showing out!"

Tyran Cox-Bey, Program Director

THORNTON TOWNSHIP

HIGH SCHOOL DISTRICT 205

COMING SOON!

BARBER & COSMETOLOGY

CERTIFICATION PROGRAM

ENROLLMENT STARTING 2023

Limited Slots Available

Not Available for Freshmen

Available to All District 205 Students

Graduate with Full Certification

If you are a current sophomore and are interested in pursuing this two-year course of intensive study, see your counselor for the program application.

Right now, current sophomores are eligible to apply!

If you have any questions, contact Mr. Brett Fickes, Assistant Superintendent of Curriculum and Instruction, at 708-259-6833.

Contact Us

708-225-4000

district205.net

@ttdistrict205

District 205’s Department of Curriculum and Instruction is excited to announce the new Barber & Cosmetology Certification Program! Students who participate in the program will graduate fully certified and prepared for gainful employment.

Enrollment will start in the 2023-2024 school year for students interested in pursuing the two-year course of intensive study. Only current sophomore students are eligible to apply. Those accepted into the program would begin the two-year program in their junior year. The Barber & Cosmetology Certification Program will operate of out Thornridge High Schools. Transportation from Thornton and Thornwood will be provided for enrolled students.

Limited slots are available to District 205 students. Any students who are interested in pursuing the Barber & Cosmetology Certification Program are encouraged to see their counselor.



Dave Gonzalez, a teacher and soccer coach at Thornton Township High School, was honored for his contributions in the classroom and on the soccer field. In September 2022, the group Buddy Helpers paid a surprised visit to Gonzalez at school on National Care for Kids Day. The group, sponsored by Body Armor, honored Gonzalez for promoting self-care, helping to empower kids, and creating a positive environment in the community. He was touted for his support of kids and their initiatives.

Gonzalez helped to collect clothing for the Women of Domestic Abuse Center and the Hope Chest, he collected books to support the rebuild of a CPS library, and he encouraged his student athletes to make donations to help buy new scooters to surprise 100 kindergarten through second grade students. In recognition of Gonzalez's contributions, Buddy's Helpers presented him with two Chicago Bulls tickets and an experience, and a check to donate to his favorite charity. WGN Channel 9 News reported the presentation live at Thornton Township High School.

Dave Gonzalez is a graduate of District 205. He has served as a teacher at Thornton Township High School since 2005 and as a coach since 2009. Gonzalez is a true champion for kids and his community.



It was a great pleasure hear the inspirational journey of Ovi Vasquez (pictured with students). He is a farm boy from the sugar cane fields of Central America, and a first-generation college graduate. Vasquez is a Univision on-air collaborator, and he has worked for such global corporations as Apple, Salesforce, Uber, General Motors, and Tesla. He is the author of five books. In recent months, Vasquez has shared more than \$500,000 in scholarships for minority students in college via social media @OVinspires. He emerges today as one of the most sought-after bilingual youth leadership keynote speakers of our time. [www.ovinspires.com](http://www.ovinspires.com)

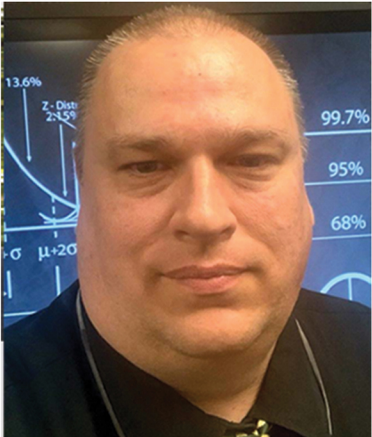


### Outlook Welcomes New Reading Expert

Mr. Davidson has joined Outlook Academy to assist students in improving their reading skills and helping them become more successful in their transition to college, military service, or employment. He has a master's degree in Reading Education and has been a department chairman, staff developer and literacy coach prior to coming to Outlook Academy.

### Welcome Outlook's New Math Teacher

Robert Bailey has 28 years of teaching experience. He holds degrees from: Concordia University Chicago, Governors State University, and Olivet Nazarene University. He has taught at Grant Park, Homewood-Flossmoor, Bremen, and Marian Catholic. He is a coach of soccer, basketball, volleyball, and track and field. Mr. Bailey enjoys watching NFL games, playing board games, and working out puzzles. Mr. Bailey is married with two children.



### College Entrance Testing

ACT

SAT

| Test Date         |  | Registration Deadline |  | Late Registration Deadline |        |
|-------------------|--|-----------------------|--|----------------------------|--------|
| February 11, 2023 |  | January 6, 2023       |  | January 20, 2023           |        |
| April 15, 2023    |  | March 10, 2023        |  | March 24, 2023             |        |
| June 10, 2023     |  | May 5, 2023           |  | May 19, 2023               |        |
| July 15, 2023     |  | June 16, 2023         |  | June 23, 2023              |        |
| Regular           |  | Late                  |  | Deadline for changes       |        |
| Mar 11, 2023      |  | Feb 10, 2023          |  | Web/Phone: Feb 28          | Feb 28 |
| May 6, 2023       |  | Apr 7, 2023           |  | Web/Phone: Apr 25          | Apr 25 |
| June 3, 2023      |  | May 4, 2023           |  | Web/Phone: May 23          | May 23 |

\*District 205 is not an SAT test site.



## Honest Game Helps Students Reach College Athletic Goals

District 205 is making sure student-athletes are on track for their best fit post-secondary opportunities.

Honest Game, the industry leading technology company that helps high schools track and navigate college academic eligibility, works with District 205 to create a data-driven pathway to college for all students, further enhancing the school's current efforts to support its students' post-secondary education planning.

# HONEST GAME®



### Creating More College Pathways for Student-Athletes

“Honest Game has helped District 205 administration meet the needs of student-athletes who seek NCAA requirements prior to entering their collegiate careers, said Brett Fickes, District 205 Assistant Superintendent of Curriculum and Instruction. “Their team works alongside me to allow our administrators to focus on teaching and learning rather than the complex bureaucracy of the NCAA eligibility process. Our shared goal is to guarantee our District 205 students have the opportunity to participate in collegiate sports post-graduation from our district.”

On one occasion, Honest Game assisted a Thornton student-athlete who had already accepted a college athletic offer. Already enrolled at a DI institution with a scholarship and hoping to play, an eligibility issue related to a class completed in high school was flagged. Thornton staff worked with Honest Game to quickly course correct, allowing the former Thornton student to compete and hang on to their scholarship.

### The Honest Game Solution

Honest Game currently assists more than 200,000 users and hundreds of high schools across the nation simplify the academic eligibility process and reveal a clear pathway to post-secondary opportunities. Honest Game has been working with staff and student-athletes at Thornton, Thornridge, and Thornwood high schools within the district since 2020. For more information on Honest Game, or to stay up to date with the company's latest developments, visit [www.honestgame.com](http://www.honestgame.com).

## Focus on Finance

We are proud say that finances in District 205 are stable and balanced. Several years ago, we were on 'Review' status from the State of Illinois. Today, through hard work and dedication, we are on the 'Recognition' level – the highest category assigned by the Illinois State Board of Education. We will continue to be wise stewards of the funds that are entrusted to us. District 205 has maintained a balanced budget for the past several years. We are committed to ensuring that our funds are properly distributed in our district, despite financial disparities.

Thanks to a grant from the State of Illinois, the District 205 Board of Education will have reduced property taxes for residents in the district by over \$20 million dollars. This grant has a direct impact on lowering residents property taxes. We look forward to continuing this grant in the future. We are moving to become a one-to-one district by the end of the 2022-2023 school year. This one-to-one approach will provide every student at District 205 with a personal electronic device that they will use both in school and at home. Research shows that technology based textbooks are an effective tool for learning.

District 205 receives funding from state, federal and local sources. Presently, there is a disparity in the amount of money required to educate our students compared to other schools in Illinois. This means that we must be the best stewards possible of each dollar available to us.

In the Finance and Operations Department, we are committed to providing the resources to our faculty and staff so each student can be prepared for a bright future.

## Let's congratulate these students

On Friday, December 2, 2022, the following students received \$10,000.00 band scholarships for Simmons College of Kentucky, an HBCU.

Amaaod Disu-Smith  
Zebulon Turner  
Sarah Adeyemi  
Liana Andrews-Clady  
Christyana Walker

Olatomiwa Sholeye  
Great Akinsode  
Olivia Booker  
Jade Johnson

Chastidy Amayao  
Carlysha Young  
Aaliyah Hutchins  
Abrielle Givens





### 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  
Dr. Tony Ratliff, Director of College and Careers

#### • School Administration



#### Thornridge High School

Dr. Justin Moore, Principal, [moore.justin@district205.net](mailto:moore.justin@district205.net)  
Mr. William Brown, Assistant Principal, [brown.william@district205.net](mailto:brown.william@district205.net)  
Ms. Carol Friedl, Assistant Principal, [friedl.carol@district205.net](mailto:friedl.carol@district205.net)  
Ms. Rikeita Harris, Assistant Principal, [harris.rikeita@district205.net](mailto:harris.rikeita@district205.net)



#### Thornton Township High School

Mr. Todd Whitaker, Principal, [whitaker.todd@district205.net](mailto:whitaker.todd@district205.net)  
Ms. Marilu Gonzalez, Assistant Principal, [gonzalez.maria@district205.net](mailto:gonzalez.maria@district205.net)  
Dr. Todd C. Hall, Assistant Principal, [hall.todd@district205.net](mailto:hall.todd@district205.net)  
Dr. Mason Newell, Assistant Principal, [newell.mason@district205.net](mailto:newell.mason@district205.net)  
Dr. Roxie Thomas, Principal Emeritus, [thomas.roxie@district205.net](mailto:thomas.roxie@district205.net)



#### Thornwood High School

Mr. Don Holmes, Principal, [holmes.don@district205.net](mailto:holmes.don@district205.net)  
Dr. Camilla Covington, Assistant Principal, [covington.camilla@district205.net](mailto:covington.camilla@district205.net)  
Dr. Nakeisha Knight, Assistant Principal, [knight.nakeisha@district205.net](mailto:knight.nakeisha@district205.net)  
Mr. Thomas Walsh, Assistant Principal, [walsh.thomas@district205.net](mailto:walsh.thomas@district205.net)

#### Outlook Academy

Ms. Patricia Fortier, Program Administrator, [fortier.patricia@district205.net](mailto:fortier.patricia@district205.net)  
Mr. Steven Valant, Assistant Program Administrator, [valant.steven@district205.net](mailto:valant.steven@district205.net)

#### Peace Center

Mr. Tyran Cox-Bey, Program Administrator, [cox-bey.tyran@district205.net](mailto:cox-bey.tyran@district205.net)  
Ms. Ashley Hay, Assistant Program Administrator, [hay.ashley@district205.net](mailto:hay.ashley@district205.net)





## *You're Not Finished!* continues **3:** The FAFSA is Time-Sensitive

The FAFSA is an important form and is not something that you want to wait to complete. While it's easy to focus on prom, graduation, and trunk parties, it is important to note that most funds for college are given to students who apply for the FAFSA early. If you are a student who comes from a low-income family and is planning to attend college, it's imperative that you try to complete this form as early as possible to secure free money, such as the Pell Grant.

## **4:** Different Routes to Fund Your College Dreams

If a family does not receive the funds they need, there are other ways to fund a child's education: Scholarships, Money from the right college or university, Tuition Waivers, Support from family and friends, etc.

Students can find the money they need through scholarships. Scholarships are a great way to bring in extra funds as they can come from many different sources and are awarded for a variety of reasons. Scholarship funds can come through community organizations, corporations, alumni groups, nonprofit organizations, and even the institution a student wants to attend.

Many scholarships require recommendation letters as a way to learn more about the students and gauge their eligibility for the scholarship. Students should also understand the importance of deadlines. Ensure that you are giving yourself adequate time to gather all needed information and turn it in accordingly. Not meeting the deadline for a scholarship takes you out of the running for those funds.

If scholarships are limited, many students will take the two-year route. This route allows students to attend a community college within the area and save thousands of dollars for their first two years of college. Once they have completed their two-year courses, students have the option to transfer into a four-year university.

For more information, take a look at the following sites: [Studentaid.ed.gov](http://Studentaid.ed.gov); [Collegeboard.org](http://Collegeboard.org); [FinAid.org](http://FinAid.org).

Need more help with FAFSA or college planning? Reach out to the experts at the Family Centered Educational Agency by web at [www.familycentered.org](http://www.familycentered.org) or by phone at (708) 210-1771.



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Township  
High School  
District 205!

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REGISTER



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- ✓ FREE SIM Card that provides 24/7 LTE Broadband Internet Service. Does NOT need WIFI access.
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