



YOUR SCHOOLS

JANUARY 2022

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THORNTON TOWNSHIP
DISTRICT
205
HIGH SCHOOLS



District 205 Board of Education



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Superintendent



Dr. Nathaniel Cunningham, Jr.
District 205 Superintendent

BOARD PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE



**Board President
Nina Graham**

Welcome!

The beginning of School District 205's 2021-2022 school year seemed both familiar and different. The typical "back to school" energy and excitement were present as students resumed in-person learning. However, the masks and social distancing requirements were a reminder that things were definitely different than before.

The District 205 Board of Education and District administration worked diligently to develop detailed COVID-19 protocols and procedures that would ensure that our students and staff could safely return to our facilities and programs. Maintaining safety and health continue to be our top priorities. The Board and the District make certain that all recommendations and decisions comply with the guidance and requirements of state, local, and federal health, and regulatory officials.

If the COVID-19 pandemic has taught us anything, it is that we cannot predict what is going to happen next. However, we are hopeful that the recent reduction in the infection rate in our community continues. District 205 offers weekly COVID-19 testing, administered by Shield of Illinois, at each school; and we are pleased that we have been able to avoid any serious outbreaks. We are confident that with the combined efforts of our students, staff, administrators, educators, parents/caregivers, and the Board, we will be able to successfully navigate any challenges that we may face in the future.

Our focus has not been limited to dealing with the consequences and concerns caused by the pandemic. We are also dedicated to ensuring that students receive a robust and nurturing educational experience that will position them to enroll in college or a vocational program, enlist in military services, or become gainfully employed when they graduate. To accomplish this mission, we continue to upgrade the academic curriculum and assessment structure that we use so that we can consistently reach or exceed our goals and those set by the Illinois State Board of Education.

Just like many other organizations and businesses, District 205 has recently experienced an increase in expenses as well as labor and supply shortages. This has impacted the way that we typically do things, but we continue to operate effectively and maintain a stable financial position. We were fortunate to have received financial assistance from both state and federal governments which enabled us to stay up to date with current best practices. Some of the ways that we are using these funds include:

- providing programs for students who experienced a learning loss
- supporting students' social/emotional needs
- upgrading and repairing critical infrastructure
- purchasing equipment and instructional tools
- enhancing the professional development of our educators

These critical efforts will allow us to provide our students with the high-quality academic environment that they deserve.

On October 27, 2021, members of the District 205 Board attended the Illinois Association of School Board (IASB) - Cook County Division dinner meeting. During this event, Board members Almetta Vasser-Moody, Annette Whittington, and I were designated as Master Board Members. It is an honor for me, along with the other District 205 Board Members, to have received this special distinction in recognition of our consistent attendance at IASB division meetings, governing meetings, and legislative leadership programs as well as for serving in positions of leadership within the IASB.

This is a dynamic moment in the District. ***By working collaboratively, building on our strengths, and being innovative, we will succeed in our quest to create a better, stronger District.***

Nina Graham
Board President

2021-2022 STUDENT BOARD



The Student Board of Education (SBOE) provides an invaluable opportunity and experience for students to actively engage in their school, district, and community. SBOE's mission is to use its leadership positions to represent peers, improve district schools, and give back to their community. The mission is achieved by providing quality programs and acting as a sounding board to the Superintendent and Board of Education. Ultimately, the SBOE endeavors to ensure that all students receive high-quality and well-rounded high school experiences.

Since its inception, members of the Student Board have maintained a 100 percent graduation rate. Under the supervision of Dr. Jerry Doss, Associate Superintendent of District 205, SBOE members participate in high-level policy considerations, engage in strategic planning, and coordinate peer engagement activities. The following highlights recent activities in the 2021-2022 school year.

The Southland Juvenile Justice Youth Committee trained SD 205's Student Board of Education members in Restorative Justice practices. Dr. Shaniqua Jones facilitated this training. SBOE members learned about the alternative methods of discipline. As a result, they plan to find more solutions for the truancy issues within District 205. The best way to improve District 205, such as grades, discipline, and mental health, is to start with truancy. The goal is to ensure that each student has an alternate option outside of disciplinary action.

Members of SBOE volunteered at a Back-to-School event hosted by Senator Napoleon Harris. Students helped at the registration tables and passed out backpacks to kindergarten and middle school students. The Executive Board of SD205's Student Board of Education planned the annual Student Board Leadership Retreat. The purpose of this retreat was to work on team building and build personal relationships. Members also trained on parliamentary procedures and the way the SBOE functions.

The Student Board of Education partnered with the Southland Juvenile Justice Council to host the Three E's of Success College and Career Panel on Saturday, December 4, 2021. Students could get their questions answered from panelists who are currently enrolled in college, in the workforce, attending trade school, or looking to pursue entrepreneurship. The event drew in 152 attendees, including both students and parents. In addition, eight colleges participated in the event, allowing students to speak with college representatives at the end of the panel.



2021 COLLEGE AND CAREER PANEL



LEADERSHIP RETREAT FOR SBOE



SUPERINTENDENT'S MESSAGE



Dr. Nathaniel Cunningham, Jr.
District 205 Superintendent

I am pleased to share that School District 205 safely transitioned back to in-person learning during the fall 2021 semester. After spending nearly a year and a half doing remote instruction due to the COVID-19 pandemic, this was a long-awaited and highly anticipated accomplishment.

The decision-making and preparation that were required to bring students and staff safely back to our three high schools and two alternative educational programs was a monumental, but not insurmountable

feat. I commend everyone - students, educators, support staff, administrators, parents/caregivers, stakeholders, and the school board - for doing their part to make this happen. Everyone had to adapt to new ways of doing things and had to be flexible and open to the changes that were implemented.

We made every effort to anticipate our students' needs and we will continue to meet their needs as we move through the school year. Each student received a clear backpack that contained Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) at the beginning of the term. We are also establishing vaccination clinics that will enable students, as well as staff, to receive their vaccination at a District 205 facility.

Although we heightened our focus on the health and safety of our students and staff, we have not stopped pressing toward our vision for the future. Our long-term quest to build an exemplary high-quality organization that produces major gains in student achievement and prepares all students to be productive citizens in a global society is ongoing.

The District remains unwavering in its commitment to offer academic programs that expand and enhance opportunities for our students. We also continuously seek to procure the infrastructure technology that will enable us to ensure that our students can successfully learn from anywhere. An example of this is the program that we recently added which trains students on the skills and knowledge to work in the electrical field. The program is the result of a partnership between the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers (IBEW) and School District 205. Students who successfully complete the course may qualify to participate in the IBEW's Apprenticeship Program. We are also developing a program that will offer training in the field of cosmetology.

As we address our students' health, safety, and academic needs, we are pleased that we are also addressing their social and emotional needs. We are doing this by reinstating some of the fun events that students typically enjoy including homecoming, sports, and other extracurricular activities. The progress that is being made to mitigate the impact and spread of COVID-19 has been promising. Unfortunately, the pandemic is not yet over. District 205 will continue to work as a team to improve the academic experiences that we provide so that all graduating students are either **enrolled** in an institute of higher learning or a vocational program, **enlisted** in the military, or gainfully **employed**.

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

Dr. Nathaniel Cunningham, Jr,
Thornton Township District 205 High Schools

SAFE SCHOOLS INITIATIVE

Thornton Township High School District 205 is committed to ensuring a safe school environment in which faculty can teach and students can learn. During the first semester of the school year, District 205 schools have been inundated with incidents of violence in and around school properties. During these unsettling incidents, school officials immediately implement the Crisis Management Plan to secure students and faculty.

In response to this concerning reality, the district board and administration went to work in developing the **Safe Schools Initiative**, in partnership with local elected officials and other school districts in the region. They conducted substantive meetings with State Representatives Thaddeus Jones (29th District) and Will Davis (30th District), as well as mayors, and currently have a plan underway to conduct Town Hall meetings that will engage the community in addressing this national concern.

The Safe Schools Initiative is designed to mitigate the rash of violence in schools. The district and school officials proclaim in one accord the following:

- We will not tolerate acts of violence and mob-like fighting in our schools.
- We will call the police to our schools (A School Resource officer is assigned to each school – Thornridge, Thornton, and Thornwood).
- We are prepared to file charges against students who engage in acts of violence, such as fighting.
- We will fully cooperate with police and the State's Attorney by providing video footage of acts of violence. We will ensure students face severe consequences for their actions, including suspension, expulsion, and charges.
- We designed an exclusion zone. Our security team and law enforcement agreed and have assisted with establishing the exclusion zone around the school.
- We hired five additional security guards to each school.
- We added two additional guards for the exclusion zone.
- We have connected with a community organization for safe passage.
- We ordered metal detectors for each school. We expect the metal detectors to be installed this semester.

Safety for our students and staff is paramount. The district is committed to further developing the **Safe Schools Initiative** and anticipates creating a regional cooperative effort to mitigate violence in schools.

NEW DISTRICT 205 CERTIFIED REGISTERED NURSE



Viola Johnson
Certified Registered Nurse

The District is pleased to announce that it has recently promoted Viola Johnson, RN, to the position of Certified Registered Nurse. Prior to assuming this position, Ms. Johnson was the nurse at the District's Outlook Academy for four years. However, her tenure with District 205 began before she became an employee. She and her late husband, Marques Johnson, both graduated from Thornton High School. Ms. Johnson began her nursing career at Little Company of Mary Hospital. She is still active and immersed in the nursing profession. In addition to working in her position with District 205, she also holds a position as an emergency room nurse at UChicago Medicine. She has held this position for three years.

Ms. Johnson earned her Bachelor of Science Degree in Nursing from Purdue University. She expanded on her nursing education by also earning an Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE) Professional Educators License (PEL) with School Nurse Endorsement (formerly, known as Type 73 Certification) from Illinois State University. This advanced certification means that Ms. Johnson successfully completed the additional training required by the State of Illinois to demonstrate confidence and competence as a school nurse and leader.

In her school nursing practice, Ms. Johnson is motivated by her mission ***“to provide nursing care that will achieve an optimal level of health and wellness for the students of the District.”*** While advancing her mission, she is guided by her mantra, “What would I do if this was my child?”

Planning, implementation, and evaluation of the District's school health services and complying with federal, state and district policies are a few of Ms. Johnson's main responsibilities. She also oversees the District's nursing staff which provides care at its three high schools, as well as at the Outlook Academy and the Peace Center alternative educational programs. The nursing staff:

- Addresses healthcare needs and concerns of students
- Administers medication
- Assesses injuries
- Maintains health records
- Monitors health plans for students

Enabling the District to proactively and appropriately respond to the additional health concerns and considerations caused by COVID-19 is one of Ms. Johnson's many priorities. The District is accomplishing this by: 1) creating a process that will enable it to provide weekly COVID-19 testing for students and staff; and 2) reporting positive cases and close contacts to the Illinois Department of Public Health.

Ms. Johnson's vision for the future includes providing mobile resources that will enable students to receive immunization and dental care onsite at the schools. She noted that, “These mobile resources were offered in the past and are a tremendous help to the community we serve.”

Ms. Johnson stated that she “absolutely loves being a school nurse” and maintaining positive relationships with students, parents, and educators. She noted that these relationships enable her to accomplish her top priority, which is helping to support the health and safety of District 205's students.

If you would like to contact Ms. Johnson, you can email her at Johnson.Viola@district205.net.

REMINDER FROM NURSE JOHNSON:

Please remain vigilant with safety practices as you meet and mingle with family and friends. Please continue to mask up, wash our hands, and maintain social distance, when possible.

HOLIDAY GINGERBREAD



At Thornridge High School, students participated in FCCLA's holiday gingerbread decorating activities.



**Dr. Justin Moore, Principal,
Thornridge High School**

ADAPTING TO CHANGE

If we have learned anything from dealing with the unpredictability of living through a pandemic, it is to be adaptable. I applaud and appreciate the willingness of Thornridge High School students, educators, staff, and parents/caregivers to adapt to the changes in protocols and safety measures that were put into place this school year. Thanks to our combined efforts, we have successfully returned to in-person learning; and it is great to see the students back on campus.

While we strived to make returning to campus a seamless process, we recognize that some aspects of this transition were not ideal. However, we are doing whatever we can to ensure that our students have a positive and memorable high school experience. Our athletic program is robust, and at least one of our varsity teams competes during every season. We also have a variety of clubs and student activities that appeal to diverse interests. We are happy that after the COVID-19 pandemic made it necessary to suspend these athletic and extracurricular activities, students are now participating in them again.

The ability of our students to socialize with and support each other is tremendously beneficial. This was not easy to accomplish while in the remote learning phase. We were pleased that we could once again allow students to attend the fall pep rally and homecoming dance. The events were held outdoors, allowing more social distancing. Thanks to the creativity of the planning committee, events were just as fun and festive as they have been in the past.

Although most of our students are making progress academically, we recognize that some may be experiencing some challenges to achieve greater success. Our educators, counselors, and support staff are sensitive to our students' socio-emotional needs. We make every effort to provide students struggling in this area with the attention and resources that they need to succeed. Unfortunately, like many schools across the nation, we have noticed increased physical and verbal confrontations on campus. These behaviors are unacceptable and can negatively impact the positive and productive educational environment we strive to provide. We

ask that students and/or their parents/caregivers notify us if a student is experiencing a challenging situation that they cannot resolve. While we recognize that conflicts between students may occasionally occur, our goal is to establish protocols and encourage practices to be addressed in a safe, responsible, and respectful manner.

We are pleased to announce that our students are doing big things on campus and beyond. Our student newspaper received a \$1,500 grant from the Illinois Press Foundation (IPF). IPF Director Jeff Rogers came to Thornridge to present the check and speak with the students. Illinois High School Mini-Grants are available to public and private high schools with existing journalism programs. High school journalism teachers may apply for grants to:

- purchase new hardware and software needed to produce print or online newspapers
- launch/establish a new web reporting version of existing publications
- advance journalism excellence and free expression
- educate students about news literacy and why it matters

During the first semester of school, approximately 25 students participated in an overnight visit to Southern Illinois University – Carbondale. These students toured the campus, met current students, and experienced college life. During the visit, some students received exciting news of their admission to SIU.

We celebrate these moments as they help us to advance student learning, which is OUR TOP PRIORITY. We make advancements through quality instruction, curriculum usage, and assessment systems. I will continue to work with the staff to improve educational outcomes for students. We are a comprehensive high school that offers challenging academic programs for students at every level. Thornridge students can enroll in career and technical education programs on District 205 campuses. We want our students to graduate with their choice of enrollment, enlistment, or employment. At Thornridge, we pride ourselves on having everything in place for students to be successful and graduate with an opportunity to pursue the future they desire.

THE CHESS CLUB



The Thornridge High School Chess Club allows students to engage in a virtual competitive tournament. Playing chess is proven to help students enhance their creativity, power of concentration, develop critical thinking skills, and boost memory and retention. In addition, students who play chess are likely to improve their academic performance.

Virtual games are played weekly on Tuesdays and Thursdays at Thornridge. As a result, students have a chance to advance to the sectionals/ state championship tournament. Participating students of the Thornridge Chess Club include Renard Singleton and Zion Bettis (pictured above, left), Ryan Ifebueme and Ka'Mya Davis (pictured above, right), Mychal Daniels, and Thorton Smith.

SIP & PAINT HOSTED BY THE ADULT TRANSITION PROGRAM



A paint and sip party with sparkling grape juice that students thoroughly enjoyed! Students planned to give away their paintings as gifts or hang them up in their homes!

JOURNALISM GRANT AWARDED

Illinois Farm Bureau (IFB) and the Illinois Press Foundation (IPF) announced grants to 18 high school journalism programs throughout the state. The awards are part of the Illinois High School Media Mini-Grants Program offered by the Illinois Press Foundation and financially sponsored this year by Illinois Farm Bureau. This year IPF Director, Jeff Rogers, presented a \$1,500 check to Thornridge HS and spoke with the student journalists.



Thornridge Journalism sponsors, Lisa Joseph and Erika Zachery, have earned this prestigious grant three times: 2018, 2019, and 2021 for a total of \$4,500.

The mini-grant is to purchase new computer equipment, media storage solutions, and digital cameras. The new equipment is for the students to continue creating the award-winning Bagpipe publication. The IPF and IFB have provided more than \$22,000 in grants to the schools in the fall of 2021 to pay for laptops, cameras, podcasting stations, and more.

DIVERSITY CLUB



TR's new Diversity Club made holiday cards for senior citizens who utilize the resources at the Center on Halsted. Club members visited the Center on December 8, 2021, to distribute holiday cards. The Diversity Club was excited to spread holiday cheer to others and looks forward to visiting the Center next week.



Mr. Todd Whitaker, Principal,
Thornton Township High School

A TEACHER AND A FRIEND

SPANISH TEACHER IS WGN TV NEWS TEACHER OF THE MONTH

THORNTON HIGH SCHOOL • THORNTON HIGH SCHOOL



WGN-TV and Ankin Law presented the November 2021 Teacher of the Month award to Ms. Lisa Baker for educational achievement in the classroom, innovative techniques, and unique contributions made in the community. Ms. Baker is a Spanish teacher at Thornton Township High School in Harvey.

Last month, WGN TV News paid a surprised visit to Thornton Township High School teacher, Lisa Baker. The beloved Spanish teacher was nominated for WGN's Teacher of the Month award by her student, Jayera Griffin. Griffin, a senior at Thornton, said Ms. Baker is more than a teacher. "She is a friend, too."

"Although she is a teacher, she is very relatable, and we as a class feel comfortable sharing things with her. She is open to talking to us and supporting us, not just teaching and going home," said Griffin. Baker is known to her students as their encouraging teacher who greets them at her classroom door with a positive attitude and good energy. Her students feel they can succeed in their educational endeavors because she encourages and expects them to do great things.

A 22-year veteran teacher, Baker empowers her students to academic greatness by introducing innovative, interactive teaching strategies and techniques. She engages her students through open discussions and feedback, empowering them to play an active role in their educational success. Baker also maintains regular communication with the parents of her students. She is intentional in connecting with every parent to ensure they stay abreast of their child's progress or challenges in her class.

Baker supports her students outside the classroom, as well. Griffin, who plays volleyball, said, "One day, I look out and see her in the stands cheering me on. This is after school in the evening when all the other teachers are gone for the day. She does that for everyone in her class. She is special just like that and makes us all feel special."

In addition to the Teacher of the Month plaque, WGN TV News presented Baker with a monetary award and featured the Spanish teacher on their Teacher of the Month news segment.

"District 205 joins WGN TV News in recognizing Ms. Baker as Teacher of the Month," said Superintendent Nathaniel Cunningham, Jr. "For more than two decades, Ms. Baker has endeavored to create and maintain a student-centered classroom experience that encourages academic success and personal achievements of every young lady and young man in her classroom. District 205 joins WGN TV News in recognizing Ms. Baker as Teacher of the Month," continued Dr. Cunningham.

NATIONAL HONOR SOCIETY INDUCTION CEREMONY

Joining the National Honor Society membership were:

JUNIOR CLASS

Olivia Ayiku, Ayisha Imthiyas, Jazmin Rodrigues, Immanuel Boyce, Treazure Jackson, Jennifer Rodriguez Ferrer, Kylee Broomfield-Harris, Karra Matthews, Layla Thompson, Yoselin Farfan, Carmelo McFadden, Gulnaaz Vahora, Izaiah Garner, Da Maur Re Morgan, and Abdulahad Vhora

SENIOR CLASS

Mykel Carey, Sandra Flores, Taylor Person, Trinity Carthan, Tommyia Lacy, Yashemma Randle, Daisy De La Torre, and Ashley McKay.

These amazing students must continue demonstrating pillars of academic achievement, scholarship, service, leadership, and character within their community throughout their membership.



SPEECH TURKEY TOURNAMENT

On Saturday, November 20th, the Thornton Speech Team hosted the 37th Annual Turkey Speech Tournament for schools from all over the state of Illinois. Individual awards included:

- Olivia Ayiku: 1st Place, Poetry Reading/Oratorical Declamation
- Dylan Browley: 1st Place, Prose Reading
- Jaylah Hogg: 2nd Place, Dramatic Interpretation
- Mykel Carey: 3rd Place, Radio Speaking

NEW MANUFACTURING ROOM

Thornton Township High School celebrated the grand opening of a new facility at its school campus – the LaMarr Thomas Manufacturing Room. District 205 officials and many local and state elected officials attended the celebration. Thornton’s culinary arts students catered the event and served guests while other students demonstrated new high-tech manufacturing equipment.





Mr. Don Holmes, Principal,
Thornwood High School

LEGEND OF THE THUNDERBIRD AND CHIEF THUNDER

Not far from Thornwood's campus, an artifact of a Thunderbird was discovered in the ground among other Native American collections, reminding us of the original forefathers who once occupied this area. In honor of this historical artifact and the reverence that would come with that name, Thornwood's team was named "Thunderbirds." In the Native American culture, a name is given in honor of an event or prophetically. Furthermore, the Thunderbird emblem Thornwood chose to use was a replica of the discovered artifact. This artifact was dug up and displayed

in the Village of Thornton for decades. Finally, approximately in 2013, the relic was sent to Southern Illinois.

Originally Thornwood's mascot was "Chief Thunder." Chief Thunder wore an original Native American chief's full dressing. Raymond Wick of the Lakota tribe and former resident of Thornton, IL, donated the formal dressing for Chief Thunder. Each part of the ceremonial dressing was handmade and designed for someone tall. The top of the Chief's spear was the Thunderbird. Raymond taught the Thunderbird war dance to a student selected as "Chief Thunder." Raymond remained committed to this honorary tradition until Chief Thunder was retired. Chief Thunder was retired because Native Americans protested using their culture as team names and mascots. Chief Thunder also had his theme song, "Chief Thunder," that the band played when he performed. At 83 years old, Raymond suddenly passed after having an accident in the earlier part of November 2016. However, the spirit of his passion and the love of the Thunderbirds will always remain.



Patrick Litstowski, 1976



1981 Class Gift: Gifted by the Class of 1981, this original logo is still at the entrance of Thornwood's cafeteria

T-BIRDS WITH A THREE Es PLAN

College & Career Data for Semester I of 2021-2022 School Year



Thornwood HS senior, LaJahne Long, has been selected by the Advocates of Change not-for-profit to receive the Hadiyah Pendleton Legacy Scholarship. This scholarship honors the life of Hadiyah Pendleton, a 15-year-old African American female who was killed while with friends at Harsh Park in Chicago on January 29, 2013. LaJahne has been an outstanding student with a 3.6 g.p.a. and plans to enroll in a four-year college or university. Thornwood students have earned nearly \$1.3 million in college scholarships. Ms. Pendleton is among scholarship recipients for the Class of 2022.

In-Person College Rep Visits: 22
of students in attendance: 116

Virtual College Rep Visits: 11
of students in attendance: 32

College Acceptances Received: 49

U. S. Military Visits (In-person during all lunch periods): 17 total

- Air Force: 3
- Army: 4
- Marines: 4
- National Guard: 5
- Navy: 5
- The ASVAB Exam was administered to 12 T-Birds at TW. H. S. on Tuesday, November 16, 2021.
- One (1) T-Bird has ENLISTED in the MARINES Delayed Entry Program!

TURKEY WINNERS FOR AVID READERS

Congratulations to our avid, voracious readers: Angel Hernandez, Roberta Liapis, Jociaya Edwards. The students are a winner of Thornwood's ABE reader program. They received a turkey, as well as a t-shirt. Thank you to the teachers who support our ABE reader program through points or props. The program is sponsored by a generous donation from the Thornton Academic Enrichment Foundation.



GO MATHLETES!

The Thornwood HS Mathletes team had their second competition held at Bloom High School and scored first place overall at our site and second overall in the conference. Congratulations to the following students for receiving a PERFECT score in their competitions: Deven West, Dallas Miles, Diego Alvarado, Isis Hernandez, Audrey Davis, Jeremy Price, Justin Vaughn, Jocelyn Lara. Also noteworthy are Deven West and Victoria Collins for receiving the highest score out of all the schools on their oral presentation of Rational Expressions. Congratulations to Kelly Bonomo and Kyle Rusco. Coaches of the Thornwood Mathletes.

BUILD A BRIDGE PROGRAM



Students in Mr. Zuzga's Physics class participated in the Build-A-Bridge Project. They learned how bridges are engineered and developed problem-solving strategies and critical thinking skills. In addition, students were taught to apply scientific and engineering ideas to design and evaluate and refine a device that minimizes the force on a macroscopic object.

GIRLS CROSS COUNTRY

On October 23, 2021, the Thornwood HS Girls Cross Country team ran in the Tinley Park Regionals. Their seven-person team finished eighth out of 11 teams beating HF, TF South, and Rich Central. Sophomore Addison Perkins (pictured below) ran 34 seconds faster than her Conference Championship time, earning her entry to the sectional race in Quincy, IL.



FOOTBALL RECORD BREAKERS

Saveon Brown breaks TW interception Record. 569 yards rushing, 4.8 yards per carry, 10 rushing touchdowns, 83 comp with 163 attempts, 50.9% comp, 1099 passing yards, 14 passing touchdowns, 48.5 tackles, 7 interceptions, 3 defensive touchdowns.

Damajay Rheams breaks the touchdown and all-time receiving record. 46 catches, 780 yards, and 12 touchdowns receiving.



Saveon Brown



Damajay Rheams

ENROLL AND EMPLOY AFTER OUTLOOK ACADEMY

Outlook Academy of Thornton Township High School District 205 provides a Community Transition Program for students. The program is designed to support students' passion and purpose in life, while promoting progression from school to post-secondary activities. Program focus areas included education/training, employment, independent living, and community participation. The goal of the Transition Program is to help students become as independent as possible, while also securing competitive integrated employment.

The Community Transition Program endeavors to:

- provide accessible and informative resources for the students & families of District 205
- connect families and students to state, federal, and local resources
- support the completion of the Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) and South Suburban College applications
- assist all students enrolled in Outlook Academy or the Adult Transition Program in attaining:
 - o post-secondary education
 - o vocational training
 - o enduring employment
 - o independent living.

Outlook Academy students who are interested in signing up for any of the programs, should call Mr. Earl King, II or Briana Holmes at 708-925-2260. Students can also check Google Classroom for more program details.

Current programs available to District 205 OA students are as follows:

- CAIC Bridge Program
 - o Manufacturing Based Program with certifications and a completion certificate
 - o Enduring Employment, a 4-week program with a STIPEND for Outlook Academy students
- Forklift Operators Training Program available at South Suburban College.
 - o The class meets once a month and costs are waived for Outlook Academy students.
 - o Students must be 18 or older.
 - o It's a one-day class for 8 hours: 4 hours in the classroom and 4 hours hands-on.
 - o Classes occur on the 1st and 3rd Saturday of each month: 9 am to 5 pm.
 - o Fee of \$175 has been waived for Outlook Academy Students. **FREE**
- The Career and Technical Education Courses are available for sign-up.
- The Drone Operators Program is a wonderful opportunity. The class is integrated into OA's current learning system and students will take the online courses to become certified. Classes are created in a format students can navigate easily and complete. Students can also obtain a Drone Commercial Pilot License and begin making a great salary, along with other real-world opportunities.

BASKETS FILLED WITH HOLIDAY HOPE, JOY, PEACE, AND LOVE



On behalf of District 205, Outlook Academy held the annual Holiday Basket Drive. The yearly initiative brings a spirit of hope, joy, peace, and love to those in need. Monetary donations were collected in November to purchase food and other items for struggling families in communities served by D205. As a result, Thanksgiving baskets were delivered to families during the weeks of November 22 and December 20, 2021.

After-School Clubs

ENGAGE STUDENTS

Outlook Academy's Senior After School Program (SASP) has been very active this school year. Here are a few highlights:

- Cooking Culture hosted Family Fun Days on Sunday, October 11, 2021, and before November 24, 2021. The events were hosted virtually, and it was a joy to engage students in their kitchens and their families. There was plenty of laughter, and serious concentration as students and their families prepared meals.
- The Art Club held its holiday decorating party. Students created original pieces and decorated traditional Christmas items (trees, stockings, etc.).
- Connect and Chill (OA's game club) has registered students for its E-Sports League. Their first tournament was Friday, December 3, 2021.
- All after-school clubs participated in a school-wide event, "Clubapalooza." In addition, on November 5, 2021, OA held a club "fair" in which students were invited to get a taste of what each club offers.
- The student newsletter club and the media club has teamed up to begin our student-run newsletter. The plan is to grow into a "newscast" where students report on the school announcements.
- OA will host a "Parent/Staff Jingle & Mingle" event this holiday season.



OUTLOOK ACADEMY

FINANCIAL LITERACY

The Peace Center has been provided with an amazing opportunity to work with First Generation Investors and Boston College to teach our students and their parents financial literacy. First Generation Investors is a non-profit organization that introduces high school students to the idea of investing and gives them real money to invest and keep as they meet certain requirements. Peace students meet every Saturday morning with college students who act as mentors by teaching them in small group lessons about "vesting."

1ST QUARTER REVIEW

Peace Center Focus: Support students through fun activities and incentives designed to build community, self-awareness, and impact academic and attendance success

The quarter included monthly celebrations: Night at the movies in September and Spirit week in October.

Q1 Outcomes: 10 students made the honor roll and approximately 80% of seniors attending daily



PEACE

YOU'RE *NOT* FINISHED!

KEY STEPS TO PREPARE FOR COLLEGE

As senior year continues to rage on, students and their families need to know the facts behind the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA). Completing the FAFSA is not only a state graduation requirement but 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 this state graduation requirement is to be applauded, it is only the beginning for students who plan to attend college. After completing this important form there is still much to be explored and understood as the information that is provided can determine the educational future of a student.

Here are a few important things you should know about life after FAFSA.

1. AWAIT AND REVIEW THE SAR

If you submitted your FAFSA online, the U.S. Department of Education will process your application within a three to five-day period. If you submitted 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 & career counselor, an Illinois Student Assistance Commission (ISAC) member, or a TRIO Talent Search staff member. Even the smallest of mistakes such as a misspelled name, 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.

2. SEE THE 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 nonfederal student aid. The EFC also acts as a huge indicator in determining how much money you may receive from your schools of choice.

3. ALTERNATE WAYS 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:

1. Scholarships
2. Money from the right college or university
3. Tuition Waivers
4. 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 be 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.

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 students have completed their two-year courses, they have the option to transfer into a four-year university. This is a great alternative as it gives a family time to save for a four-year college. This route allows students time to build up their G.P.A. and establish themselves as serious students.

4. COMMUNICATION IS KEY

Communication is key in the months leading up to a student starting their education at a university or college. No family wants to be told their student cannot attend a school for financial reasons a week before classes start or even worse after a student arrives on campus. As a family, it is imperative that you reach out to a school's financial aid office and ask questions to ensure that you can pay for college.

You may also want to reach out to a professional, such as your college & career counselor or a TRIO Talent Search staff member. These experts can look over your financial aid package and advise you on what steps need to be taken next. They are also well versed in language and policies that you may be unaware of.

For more information, take a look at the following sites:

Studentaid.ed.gov
Collegeboard.org
FinAid.org

Also, reach out to the experts at the Family Centered Educational Agency by web at **www.familycentered.org** or by phone at **(708)-210-1771**.

IMAGINE SIU

Southern Illinois University (SIU) hosted 25 District 205 students at its Imagine SIU program, an overnight college visit at the campus in Carbondale. Students participated in a campus tour, attended informational sessions, met with admissions counselors, interacted with current students, and learned about campus life as a Saluki. Among the 25 students who participated in the overnight visit, 13 were officially accepted at SIU. All 25 students said this was an invaluable experience and were grateful for the opportunity. "I think this was an amazing experience," said one of the student participants. "Additionally, I think that all students should take advantage of this opportunity if they qualify to attend. This college experience is life-altering."



"SIU Imagine helped me understand part of the typical college lifestyle. Living in an on-campus apartment helped me understand the experience of having roommates and no family around. It gave me a sense of independence that I will have when I go away to college. Because of this trip, I am now applying to more colleges because I really want to go to college now."

UNSUNG HEROES!

Did you know that there are unsung heroes in School District 205? This article will highlight and shine a spotlight on the people who are essential to the behind the scenes operation of Thornridge, Thornton, Thornwood, Peace Center, and Outlook Academy.



Mr. Toriano Horton
*Assistant Superintendent
of Business Operations*

MR. TORIANO HORTON

This team is headed by Mr. Toriano Horton – Assistant Superintendent of Business Operations. Mr. Horton supervises the departments such as building maintenance, payroll and accounting, budgets and even bus schedules.

Mr. Horton commented, “A real source of pride in my department is that we are a team – looking out for each other and making sure that our students and teachers have the tools they need to succeed in the classroom every day.”

Another positive point is that District 205 will again receive a Property Tax Relief Grant in the amount of \$3 million dollars from the State of Illinois. This will have a direct impact to reduce property taxes in the community. Distict 205 has also received ranking of ‘Recognition’ from the State of Illinois. This is the highest ranking and demonstrates that we are being good stewards of the resources entrusted to us.

MR. WILLIAM GARRETT

It is important that we have an impeccable image on our school grounds, both inside and out. We work tirelessly to maintain the landscape and cleanliness of our facilities at all times, during all seasons. Recent projects include replacing railings at Thornwood, replacing stage rigging at Thornton Auditorium which host events such as musicals, band concerts, the Jefferson Awards and community meetings. We are usually behind the scenes making sure that our investment is well maintained. It’s much more cost effective to properly maintain our equipment than neglect it and have to replace it more often.

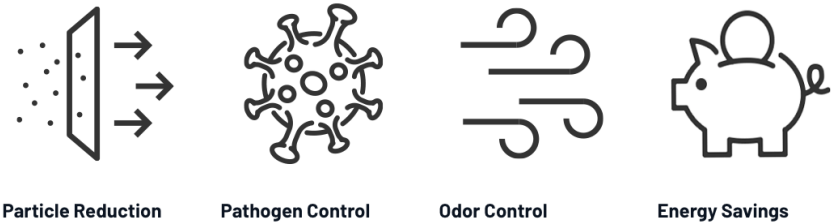
GREGORY CRUMP is the Supervisor of Building and Grounds and shares that everyone in the custodial team has stepped up to keep the schools clean and safe during the Covid pandemic. Classrooms and common areas are regularly sanitized, and the indoor air quality has been enhanced with ionization filtration. This process provides much cleaner air for our students and faculty every day.

VINCENT JONES

is the Director of Technology and Communications Systems and is excited to report that the classroom experience is being revitalized with upgrades. Some of these upgrades include new smart boards from Promethean, and Mobile Mind software.

Vincent states, “Our mission to bridge the gap between technology and curriculum. When this is done correctly the teachers can focus on giving our students the very best education. We all use technology tools to enhance our daily lives. My department reviews the tools available and we choose only the best. These tools make it possible for our students and teachers to reach their highest potential.

Benefits of Needlepoint Bipolar Ionization



So, you see that behind the scenes at District 205 there is a committed team to keep things running smoothly. Stay tuned in future edition of Your Schools for more updates on the unsung heroes of District 205!

YOUR SCHOOLS ARE IN GOOD HANDS!

SCHOOL BOARD PRIORITIZES TECHNOLOGY

In 2017-2018, Thornton Township School District 205 (TTSD205) initiated an audit of the organization’s technology landscape with the help of Cisco and The William Everett Group. It became abundantly clear that the technology infrastructure at school facilities and the district building was unstable and vulnerable. Various needs were uncovered, ranging from the building’s fiberoptic and copper cabling, wired and wireless networks, network and cloud security, data center servers and virtualization, and collaboration. Consequences of not addressing these issues posed several threats and vulnerabilities, such as ineffective anti-virus applications, significant periods of downtime, and obsolete hardware and software. Also, there was a growing need for more security and monitoring due to increased time spent in the expanding digital landscape.

In addition to the 2018 audit, the COVID-19 pandemic revealed a crucial reality – access to online educational resources must become a vital part of teaching and learning. Digital technology is a powerful educational resource, and District 205 must not be left behind. Digital technology is particularly relevant in education. It creates an ecosystem of connectivity across various platforms and user groups (faculty, students, parents,

and staff). With a robust digital ecosystem in place, the educational experience is enhanced for all stakeholders.

TTSD205’s School Board of Education and administration are committed to prioritizing technology. Therefore, they worked with Cisco, CDW, and the internal IT team to set clear goals to modernize the district’s technology infrastructure. Subsequently, the School Board made a bold, yet prudent, decision to invest \$4.7 million in a complete technology upgrade. The district assembled brilliant minds from Cisco, CDW, Key Government Finance, its IT Department to design an aggressive project scope based on the audit findings.

Through the tremendous effort by the Thornton IT team, CDW, and Greatline, the technology landscape includes a best-in-class, industry best practice infrastructure - from the on-premises Data Center to the Cloud, and all levels in between. The new ecosystem is simple, intelligent, seamless, and secure.

Most importantly, this infrastructure provides a firm foundation and best-in-class tools, such as new interactive white boards across all high schools, that enable teachers to teach and students to learn.



THE MARCHING THUNDERBIRDS



The Marching Thunderbirds of Thornwood High School were honored to participate in the 2021 Chicago Thanksgiving Day Parade in downtown Chicago. As the band marched north on State Street, the Chicago crowd was warm and receptive to the sights and sounds of our Thunderbirds Band and Auxiliary students. We look forward to our continued participation in this event.

Also, the Marching Thunderbirds of Thornwood High School participated in the 2021 South Holland Tree Lighting Ceremony on Friday, December 3rd, as well as in the 2021 Blue Island Lights Parade in downtown Blue Island Saturday, December 4th. The students were very excited to perform for these events. It symbolically marks the end of the marching band season for the fall semester.

We look forward to our continued participation in these events.

DISTRICT 205 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.



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