



THORNTON TOWNSHIP
DISTRICT
205
HIGH SCHOOLS

UPCOMING EVENTS

Family Reading Night
Thurs. April 16th

Graduation
Wed. May 27th

Last Day of School
Fri. June 5th

YOUR SCHOOLS

MAGAZINE

SPRING 2015



Mr. Darren Robinson
Board President



Mrs. Toni Williams
Board Secretary



Mr. Edward Crayton
Board Member



Ms. Judith Gibbs
Board Member



Mr. Ray Banks
Board Member



Mrs. Bernadette Lawrence
Board Member

WE ARE AN IB WORLD DISTRICT!

STORY ON PAGE 6



THORNRIDGE HIGH SCHOOL
DOLTON, IL

THORNTON TOWNSHIP HIGH SCHOOL
HARVEY, IL

THORNTONWOOD HIGH SCHOOL
SOUTH HOLLAND, IL

FROM THE BOARD PRESIDENT



Mr. Darren Robinson
Board President

*Benjamin Franklin wisely said,
“When you are finished changing,
you’re finished.”*

We live in an increasingly sophisticated world that requires an increasingly sophisticated education system in order to achieve success. September 18, 2014 marked the beginning of our second year under the leadership of Interim Superintendent Dr. Stacey D. McJunkins. Dr. McJunkins and her administrative team have observed and assessed our district and, with the leadership of the Board of Education, have been working to implement a comprehensive and robust plan to make education in Thornton Township High School District 205 one that is forward thinking and incorporates quality programs that prepare students for college or a career. As the president of the Board of Education and member over the last 4 years, my colleagues and I have seen our goals and plans for the district come to fruition.

The Thornton Township High School District 205 Board of Education is proud to announce that all three schools are now approved to offer the highly selective and rigorous International Baccalaureate Program (IB). The International Baccalaureate program is a world-recognized, two-year college preparation program for junior and senior students. The IB Diploma Program is considered the gold standard for academic rigor. This globally focused program emphasizes creative problem solving, hands-on projects and inquiry-based learning. There is a large focus on community service and this rigorous, academically acclaimed program builds on the mission of preparing our students for a global society.

We are very excited about the new IB Program in District 205. However, that is not the only successful initiative the Board of Education has supported over the years. We are very excited about the early data on the implementation of the AVID program. The class of 2015 is first graduating class of AVID students and 100% are on track to graduate. There are many other great things going on around the district, in the schools and specifically in the classroom. Our students are achieving awesome accomplishments which you will read about in the pages of this publication.

The Board of Education is infusing our District 205 culture with the overarching goal of continuous improvement, providing a better education every year than the year before. We are monitoring our progress and holding everyone accountable for our students’ success – every student, every day. On behalf of my colleagues, we are very proud to serve the residents of Thornton Township High School District 205 and look forward to many more years of success and preparing our local leaders and citizens of tomorrow.

-President Darren Robinson



STUDENT BOARD OF EDUCATION



Over the last few years the Thornton Township High School District 205 Board of Education took a bold and unprecedented action by approving the creation and development of a Student Board of Education Program. The Student Board of Education Program was initiated during the 2006-2007 school year. At that time, students were selected by the principal via staff recommendation. Over the course of the next two years, and under the leadership of Board President, Mr. Ray Banks, the Student Board's role expanded and structure became more formalized. During the September 2007 meeting of Board of Education the Student Board was officially chartered and a District coordinator was assigned.

Since its inception, over 62 students have served on the Student Board of Education representing all three schools. Students serving on the Student Board have a 100% graduation rate, attend college and are awarded scholarships that on average cover more the 60% of the cost to attend. Members of the Student Board also participate in high level policy and strategic planning decision affecting District 205.

This year the Student Board will be led by Board President Tyler Brumfield, Vice President Dawn Russell, Secretary Ariana Byrd and Treasurer Estafania Ambrosio. The Student Board was elected during the spring semester of 2013-2014. Students will serve on year terms.

Operations and Accomplishments

The Student Board meets once each month on the second Tuesday. However, most work of the Student Board is accomplished via committees. The Board currently has eight standing committees that include:

STUDENT BOARD COMMITTEES

- JEFFERSON AWARDS COMMITTEE
- DISTRICT FOOD SERVICE COMMITTEE
- CULTURAL EVENTS COMMITTEE
- STUDENTS AGAINST VIOLENCE EVERYWHERE (SAVE) COMMITTEE
- GRADUATION COMMITTEE
- CURRICULUM COMMITTEE
- RULES & DISCIPLINE COMMITTEE
- ELECTION COMMITTEE

Jefferson Awards Committee

The District 205 Student Board of Education Jefferson Awards Committee— Thornridge, Thornton and Thornwood from Dolton, Harvey and South Holland, Illinois— respectively was named out of over 80 affiliated high schools, as the 2011-2012 Jefferson Awards Student in Action Chicagoland and Northwest Indiana Regional Recipient for Outstanding Service by High School.



A MESSAGE FROM *The Interim Superintendent*

I am happy to serve as interim superintendent of Thornton Township High School District 205. I am completing my second year in this capacity and excited about the many positive things planned for the district. In District 205, we educate 5000 students in 3 schools. Our mission statement that was developed with input from all stakeholders illustrates the driving force of decision making: All District 205 Students will be Competitive Leaders in Our Global Society.

Choices are plentiful in District 205. Our students can choose from an exciting and challenging array of educational opportunities. We offer a comprehensive array of college and career programs, advanced academic programs, arts education, foreign language instruction and career and technology education. Our innovative academic initiatives include the district-wide Pre-pharmacy program, the International Culinary Arts Program and the Thornton Township Academy of Truck and Diesel Technology Powered by Navistar. We are also proud to announce that all three schools have been approved to offer the highly prestigious and rigorous International Baccalaureate Program. I would like to thank our team of dedicated staff and administrators who worked hard to make this program possible. These programs work in tandem with the District's successful AVID program to fully realize our mission of preparing competitive leaders for a global society.

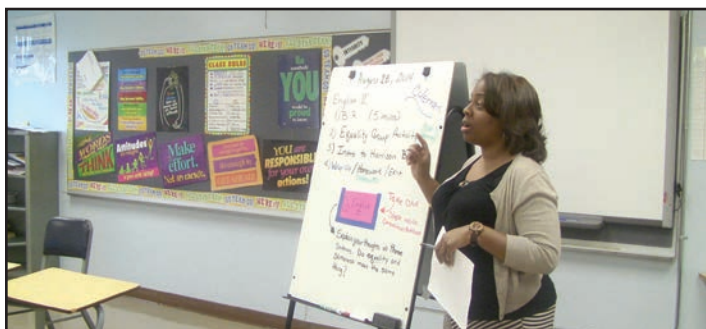
As the chief executive officer and instructional leader, I recognize that there are external pressures that serve to distract us from the work that we are charged with doing on behalf of children. These pressures can be (1) unfunded state and federal mandates which serve as counter-productive to supporting us in meeting the needs of children (2) inequalities in the funding of public education in the state of Illinois and (3) a lack of understanding or deep appreciation for the work that we do on behalf of children – without hesitation. This is encapsulated by a caring and committed administration and faculty that faithfully work hard to provide the best education and services to our community in spite of external challenges.

The District long-standing tradition of excellence dates to the district's earliest beginnings in the late 1800's. Year after year, our graduates leave our schools and go on to attend some of the nation's most prestigious colleges and universities. The District 205's class of 2014 received nearly \$16.9 million in scholarship offers and financial aid.

Our community consistently shows its commitment to nurturing educational excellence. Just walk into any of our schools and you'll see evidence of the vigorous community support that our district enjoys. Thanks to the vision of our Board of Education, our students go to school in first-class, state-of-the-art facilities that rival those of any other district across the nation. We are proud of the success we have had over the last two years and enthusiastic about things to come. Please review the pages of this publication for more specifics about the initiatives I mentioned and more information about our schools and district.



DISTRICT 205'S CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT JOURNEY



Thornton Township High School District 205 has partnered with the Consortium for Educational Change (CEC) to identify District and school transformations that will, over time, positively improve student learning. We refer to this as Thornton 205's continuous improvement journey.

In the fall of 2013, CEC conducted a systems assessment of the three District 205 schools and the District. From those assessment reports came strengths, opportunities for improvement and recommendations for each school and for the District as a whole.



In October/November 2014, leadership teams were formed by CEC in each school (STCs, or School Transformation Teams) and the District (DTC, or District Transformation Team). The function of the STCs is to coordinate the work of teaching and learning within each of the schools. The function of the DTC is to coordinate the work of teaching and learning across the entire District. ***The purpose of the DTC and the STCs is to align all of this work in order to effectively support each other's efforts toward improving student learning.***

CEC's entry point for transformation was to establish a DTC and three STCs comprised of representative Board and staff members: teachers, support staff, school administrators, District administrators, and Board of Education members. Each team meets monthly. As the DTC and STCs become more established, parents, community members and students can be added.



Through February, 2015, the DTC and the STCs have been trained in effective group communication techniques: setting and monitoring group norms, assigning group jobs, role

perspectives training, and collaborative decision-making structures and techniques. Then each group analyzed existing communication structures, data sources and usage – the DTC for



District communications and data usage and each STC for each school's communications and data usage. This work was designed to accomplish necessary habits required of any effective collaborative culture: first, learn to collaboratively research, define and address issues; second, learn to cooperatively approach and complete common group tasks; and third, make decisions as an efficient, collaborative team.



This development of teamwork habits establishes a foundation of cooperation by which to address each group's ultimate goal: to work together to improve learning opportunities for District 205 students. Future training on how to craft measurable goals – SMART goals – and effectively analyze data is being planned for this summer.

Thornton 205 has committed to this approach because it represents what the best school systems do to continuously improve. The District is seeking to establish a culture for learning that is collaborative, evidence-based and accountable.

We welcome this opportunity to share our initial successes and our excitement about a new District 205 future with you. We are proud of what we have accomplished together, even as we know we still have a long way to go. But we have made a good start. We will continue to share our progress with you as we stay committed to pursuing our continuous improvement journey.

If there are any questions please contact Brett Fickes at 708-259-6833.

WHY THE IB IS DIFFERENT



Brett Fickes
Director of Innovative Curriculum
Design and Instruction

In February 2015, each and every school in Thornton Township High School District 205 was authorized as an International Baccalaureate (IB) World School, making our district the only multi-school district to have every high school authorized in the Diploma Programme (DP), which is for 11th and 12th grade students. After a challenging three year application process, which included professional development for the School

Board members, the Superintendent, the Director of Curriculum, various Area Instructional Leaders and other district office personnel, administration at each building, and over thirty teachers, our district is proud to be able to provide such an intellectually stimulating and rigorous program to our students. With approximately 100 students already signed up for courses for the pilot 2015-2016 school year, administration and staff have been preparing courses and schedules in order to provide these students with a high level of support and guidance.

District 205 schools will provide the following IB Diploma Programme courses:

| | |
|--|---|
| Group 1 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Language and Literature HL | Group 2 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ab initio Spanish Spanish B Ab initio French French B |
| Group 3 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> History of the Americas Psychology Information Technology as a Global Society | Group 4 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Biology Environmental Systems and Societies Chemistry Sports, Exercise, and Health Science Physics |
| Group 5 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Math Studies Mathematics | Group 6 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Theater Visual Arts |

Although founded in 1968, the International Baccalaureate Organization (IBO) is seemingly new in the United States. With over 3,900 schools globally, the IBO incorporates approximately 70,000 educators and in excess of one million students.

Why the IB is different

The IB aims to do more than other curricula by developing

inquiring, knowledgeable and caring young people who are motivated to succeed. We hope our students will help to build a better world through intercultural understanding and respect.

The IB is different from other curricula because it:

- encourages students to think critically and challenge what they are told
- is independent of governments and national systems, and therefore able to incorporate best practice from a range of international frameworks and curricula
- encourages students to consider both their local and international environment.

Best practice from a range of curricula

Unlike a national curriculum, IB programmes reflect the best practice of a range of different educational frameworks and curricula. It encourages students to be internationally-minded and to think beyond their immediate environment.

Students think about how they learn best

Through IB programmes, IB students “learn how to learn”, studying our unique theory of knowledge (TOK) course. They are encouraged to try different approaches to learning and to take responsibility for their own educational progress.

Our programmes help IB students:

- ask challenging questions
- think critically
- develop research skills proven to help them in higher education.

IB programmes also encourage students to be active in their communities and to take their learning beyond academic study.

Benefits for schools

The IB offers significant benefits to schools.

When schools become an IB World School, they will gain access to:

- high quality programmes of education, which support development of knowledgeable and inquiring students
- professional development that supports effective educators and collaborative professional learning communities
- a worldwide network of highly respected IB World Schools, working together to share best practice.

High-performing students

Research indicates that DP graduates complete college faster than their peers, feel more prepared for college-level coursework involving research, and are better able to cope with demanding workloads and time-management challenges.



Stimulating professional development

The IB offers extensive professional development for staff at IB World Schools. There are face-to-face and online learning opportunities nearly every day of the year.

Programme support

IB World Schools work within a global community, creating frequent opportunities for shared learning and collaboration with others.

The IB also helps schools with programme planning and optimization. This may include mentoring, coaching, consultation or self-guided learning online.

Benefits for students

Students at IB World Schools are given a unique education. They will:

- be encouraged to think independently and drive their own learning
- take part in programmes of education that can lead them to some of the highest ranking universities around the world
- become more culturally aware, through the development of a second language
- be able to engage with people in an increasingly globalized, rapidly changing world.

IB students often perform better

IB World School students develop strong academic, social and emotional characteristics. They are also likely to perform well academically – often better than students on other programmes. For example, students on the IB DP are likely to enroll at top universities, and students on the Primary Years Programme (PYP) and Middle Years Programme (MYP) outperform other students in a number of areas.

Benefits for teachers

The IB offers many benefits to teachers.

IB teachers are given access to:

- high quality professional development that encourages critical thinking, self-reflection and dedication to lifelong learning and continuous improvement
- innovative and diverse education frameworks, unit planners, teaching resources and evaluation tools
- certification and degree programmes offered by highly respected universities worldwide
- a pedagogy known to produce students who are motivated to continue inquiry and lifelong learning, beyond school study.

Access high quality professional development

The IB sees teachers as essential to the success of the school and as part of a professional learning community. To support them, we offer extensive professional development, including:

- face-to-face workshops, in-school and at regional events
- online workshops
- blended learning.

Earn university-recognized qualifications

The IB partners with prestigious universities and institutions around the world to offer IB certificates in teaching and learning and IB certificates in leadership.

We offer four distinct certificates:

- Certificate in teaching and learning
- Advanced certificate in teaching and learning research
- Certificate in leadership practice
- Advanced certificate in leadership research.

Deliver an engaging learning experience

The IB has four education programmes, each for a different age group. Together, the four programmes provide a critically engaging, intellectually stimulating, personally uplifting and inspiring continuum of education.



The IB teaching style

Education in an IB school:

- centres on learners
- develops effective approaches to teaching and learning
- works within global contexts, helping students understand different languages and cultures
- explores significant content, developing disciplinary and interdisciplinary understanding that meets rigorous international standards.

An IB education aims to transform students and schools as they learn, through dynamic cycles of inquiry, action and reflection. Teachers enable and support students as they develop the approaches to learning they need – for both academic and personal success.

IB programmes aim to help students explore and construct their own personal and cultural identities.

Benefits for universities

Universities and colleges benefit from recruiting and admitting students from IB programmes in a range of ways, with IB programmes developing the knowledge, skills and disposition students need to be successful throughout their university careers.

As a result of their time in the IB, students develop:

- time management skills and a strong sense of self-motivation
- a keen interest in civic engagement
- notable academic ability
- strong research and writing skills
- critical thinking abilities
- an international outlook.

Research suggests, for example, that IB students are more likely than their peers to complete their undergraduate degrees and pursue graduate work; and that they are more likely to be engaged in various aspects of university life.

According to the research, IB students are strong on:

- student leadership activities
- working with university faculty on research projects
- finding opportunities to study in other countries
- tutoring other students
- taking part in voluntary and community service
- completing internships.

In order to maximise the opportunities for IB students at their institutions, many universities and colleges develop recognition policies making it clear how IB students gain places on their courses.

Quality assurance in IB assessment

As an international programme with students all over the world, higher education institutions are always interested in how the IB safeguards the rigour and consistency of the DP, our programme for 16-19-year-olds.

The IB takes several measures to ensure validity and reliability of assessment methods, while measuring a great range of students' skills and abilities – beyond just content knowledge. As a mark of its rigour, it is noteworthy that average scores and pass rates have remained consistent over several years.

Origin of the DP

The DP was established in to provide students with a balanced education, to facilitate geographic and cultural mobility and to promote international understanding.

It was created by teachers at the International School of Geneva, with assistance from several other international schools.

Since then, innovative and committed teachers and

examiners from around the world have played a significant role in the development of the programme.

Developing students in the DP

The DP is an academically challenging and balanced programme of education. It addresses the intellectual, social, emotional and physical well-being of students, and is respected by universities across the globe.

Each of the IB's programmes, including the DP, is committed to the development of students according to the attributes shown in the IB learner profile.

The IB learner profile

The IB learner profile describes a broad range of human capacities and responsibilities that go beyond academic success.

They imply a commitment to help all members of the school community learn to respect themselves, others and the world around them. Each of the IB's programmes is committed to the development of students according to the IB learner profile.

The profile aims to develop learners who are:

- Inquirers
- Knowledgeable
- Thinkers
- Communicators
- Principled
- Open-minded
- Caring
- Risk-takers
- Balanced
- Reflective

DP Curriculum

The curriculum is made up of the DP core and six subject groups. Made up of the three required components, the DP core aims to broaden students' educational experience and challenge them to apply their knowledge and skills.

The three core elements are:

- Theory of Knowledge: This is a required course to obtain an IB Diploma. The course involves students examining what they know, how they know it, and what they will do with their knowledge. Students will link all that they learn in TOK to the other content areas as well as obtain new information on current events and global issues.
- Creativity, Action, Service: CAS is also required to obtain the full diploma. This is not a class, but an extra-curricular requirement that encourages the students to link community service with their other outside interests.
- Extended Essay: Upon completing the IB Diploma Programme, students will have to submit an extended essay on a topic of their choosing. Students will have

been working on this throughout the course of their time in the IB Programme. Outside graders will receive the essay and give points to the student based on their work.

The six subject groups are:

- Studies in language and literature
- Language acquisition
- Individuals and societies
- Sciences
- Mathematics
- The arts.

There are different courses within each subject group.



Choosing subjects in the Diploma Programme

Students choose courses from the following subject groups: studies in language and literature; language acquisition; individuals and societies; sciences; mathematics; and the arts. Students may opt to study an additional sciences, individuals and societies, or languages course, instead of a course in the arts.

Students will take some subjects at higher level (HL) and some at standard level (SL). HL and SL courses differ in scope but are measured according to the same grade descriptors, with students expected to demonstrate a greater body of knowledge, understanding and skills at higher level.

Each student takes at least three (but not more than four) subjects at higher level, and the remaining at standard level. Standard level subjects take up 150 teaching hours. Higher level comprises 240 teaching hours.

If there are any questions please contact Brett Fickes at 708-259-6833.

D205 IB Coordinators:

TR-Leo Conry, Nora McNaughton

TT-Brad Ablin

TW-Andrea Deyoung

AVID: OUR PAST,

AVID, Advancement Via Individual Determination, is a global nonprofit organization dedicated to closing the achievement gap by preparing all students for college and other post-secondary opportunities. Established more than 30 years ago with one teacher in one classroom, AVID today impacts more than 800,000 students in 44 states and 16 other countries/territories.

What AVID Does

Simply, AVID trains educators to use proven practices in order to prepare students for success in high school, college, and a career, especially students traditionally underrepresented in higher education.

How AVID Works

AVID brings research-based strategies and curriculum to educational institutions in elementary, secondary, and higher education. The AVID System annually provides more than 30,000 educators with training and methodologies that develop students' critical thinking, literacy, and math skills across all content areas throughout the entire campus, in what we call Schoolwide AVID.

Schoolwide AVID

AVID encourages each site to spread the incorporation of strategies throughout the entire school. We work diligently with the district and local professional development committees to ensure that AVID strategies are presented and taught as often as possible to as many staff members as possible. This is happening in each District 205 school.

AVID:

- Teaches skills and behaviors for academic success
- Provides intensive support with tutorials and strong student/teacher relationships
- Creates a positive peer group for students
- Develops a sense of hope for personal achievement gained through hard work and determination

As a result, policymakers and educators now consider AVID's mission to be an essential strategy for closing the achievement gap, making college access and success available to all students. Although AVID was brought to District 205 just three short years ago, it has already made a significant impact on our students. Our first senior class will boast a 100% graduation rate, near 100% college acceptance rate, and over \$100,000 in scholarships.

AVID students consistently show improvement in their speaking, writing, critical thinking skills, and organizational skills. Students' reading experiences have become richer and deeper. Students have visited colleges they would not likely have visited on their own and report that the consistency and variety of field trips help make college selection more realistic for them.

Students regularly comment on how AVID fosters their sense of personal pride and gives them hope for their futures. AVID classrooms create a family culture because students stay together in the elective class during their tenure. Brittany Winston, current AVID sophomore, said it this way, "As a person I have grown being in this program. I have become even more individually determined. I can honestly say I keep up with work better, and I produce better grades. Everyone is made out to be the best in AVID, and I'm happy that I have my AVID teacher, tutors, and peers to talk to because I know they will give me the best advice that only AVID can give."

<http://www.avid.org/what-is-avid.ashx>

If there are any questions please contact Brett Fickes at 708-259-6833.

D205 AVID Coordinators:

TR-Anthony Thomas

TT-Andrea January

TW-Tammy King

A TYPICAL WEEK IN THE AVID ELECTIVE

| MONDAY | TUESDAY | WEDNESDAY | THURSDAY | FRIDAY |
|---|--|---|--|--|
| Curriculum (Based on WICOR – Writing, Inquiry, Collaboration, Organization, Reading) | Tutorials (Socratic-style discussion of academic challenges in any class facilitated by college tutors) | Curriculum (Based on WICOR – Writing, Inquiry, Collaboration, Organization, Reading) | Tutorials (Socratic-style discussion of academic challenges in any class facilitated by college tutors) | Motivational activities Team building Guest speakers Field trips Binder evaluation |

PRESENT, & FUTURE



Columbia College

DePaul University

University of Chicago

Roosevelt University

North Central College

University of St. Francis

Marquette University

Chicago State University

Illinois State University

Northwestern University

Northeastern Illinois University

Northern Illinois University

University of Illinois, Chicago

Purdue University, Calumet

Robert Morris University

National University of Health Science

ATT Student Job Shadow Day

Illinois Department of Transportation Career Day

**OUR
TRAVELS**



Businessmen

Attorneys

Engineers

Educators

Politician

Bank Executive

Music Producer

Entrepreneur/Actor

Professional Athletes

Funeral Director

Medical Doctors

Current College Students

University Admissions Directors

Senior Student Panels (graduating, summer graduate, alternative diploma program, expelled from HS)

Alumni Panel (school alum currently in college)

AVID Graduate Panel

THE SPECIAL GUESTS

GIVING

Changes Everything

DONATIONS:

- Toy drive for local church
- College care packages
- Various organizations within community

SERVICE:

- Pet shelter
- Daycare
- Churches

THORNTRIDGE HIGH SCHOOL



TR Seniors receive over \$1 Million in scholarships



James Walton, Principal

FALCONS SOARING TO NEW HEIGHTS

Gates Millennium Scholars John Anderson (2013) and Swayne Roland (2014); 2012 IHSA State Speech Champion Destiny Thompson; multiple Illinois State Scholars (2011-15); IHSA Track and Field State Champion: Phillip Thompson (Triple Jump); 4-year graduation increasing

14% the past 3 years; over \$2.3 million in scholarships for the Class of 2014; 2015 Gates Millennium Scholarship Finalist David Salami; 2015 Chicago Boys and Girls Clubs Youth Of The Year Finalist Glory Randall...and the list goes on and on!

These accomplishments over the past 3 years propel me to say I am proud of my students and the myriad of accomplishments thus far as the principal and instructional leader of Thorntridge High School – Home of the Falcons! We are having an amazing 2014-15 school year! My students have come to Thorntridge this year with a laser-like focus on two things: being the best student s/he can be academically and being the best student s/he can be within our school community and beyond. Our mantra for this school year is “Let’s all remember to be respectful, responsive, and supportive today, because ‘We Are TR’!!!” Students, faculty and staff have embraced this statement wholeheartedly; this statement is alive and very well at Thorntridge High School.

Thorntridge has been celebrating academics throughout



this 1st semester of school. Nearly 400 students achieved honor roll status in the 1st quarter of the year. These students were celebrated for having GPA's ranging from 2.5 to 4.5!!! We celebrated our Distinguished Scholars (4.0 and higher), High Honor Roll (3.5-3.9), Honor Roll (3.0-3.4) and Academic Honorable Mention (2.5-2.9). We are been hearing of members of the graduating Class of 2015 receiving acceptance letters to college...and the scholarship dollars thus far are \$3.4 million and counting!

AVID GRADUATES

This year we will have our first group of students to graduate from the AVID (Advancement Via Individual Determination)



TR Takes 2nd at Chicago Football Classic's Battle of the Bands

system that has been here the last 3 years. These young people, and our AVID faculty, have raised the "bar" academically and helped to bring this system of academic rigor to a school-wide level of engagement. And, in addition to our Honors and Advanced Placement courses that we offer, we are an International Baccalaureate World School, and we will offer the Diploma Programme in the fall of 2015. My faculty and staff have been preparing for this new level of and are prepared daily to bringing rigorous, quality instruction and academic engagement to our students.

FALCON PRIDE

Our climate and culture data have been positive. Our parental involvement has increased. And as I walk around Thornridge this school year, I can FEEL the spirit, the **FALCON PRIDE**, the soul and essence of this school. I STILL see Thornridge as a place that is near and dear to the community. The alumni of this school looking for opportunities to re-engage with their alma mater. But, there is one thing I see in the eyes of every student here. I STILL see vast and limitless potential in every young woman and man I see from day to day. And that STILL excites me, encourages me and propels me to create, shape and craft the components that will continue the instructional excellence in every classroom for every student for one unified purpose: afford every student the opportunity for academic improvement and success at every level of development! I am excited about this school's future for one very simple, but hugely important reason... **WE ARE TR!!!**



THORNTON TOWNSHIP HIGH SCHOOL



Wildcat Marching Band performs in Thanksgiving Day Parade



Tony Ratliff, Principal

WILDCATS ON THE PROWL TO SUCCESS

Those Wildcats are at it again, and they just refuse to stop! That comment has evolved into the common chatter in Wildcat Country, as our awesome Wildcat Staff continue to prepare our students for College & Career Readiness after high school. Our motto of **One Team, One Mission**, is displayed in our collective efforts in keeping Thornton Township

High School in the spotlight as a very successful high school, and the very eye of the south suburbs. While we closed out our 2013 – 2014 school year with over 95% of our graduates being accepted into colleges and other post-secondary institutions, and over \$10,000,000 in scholarships and grants, we're off to another great start for this school year. The great news is that 90% of those graduates were accepted into colleges and universities! In keeping with our high standards of educational excellence for our students, we've hit the ground running with over 1/3 of our entire student body achieving academic honors for the first grading quarter! To add, the graduating class of 2015 has two Quest Bridge College Match Scholarship Finalists, Maria Sierra and Briana Wynn are awaiting their admission to one of the nation's top schools, such as Stanford, Harvard, Yale, or Northwestern. The scholarships will



Take 5 students participate in community service

pay all expenses for these stars. Over 90 seniors have filed and submitted paperwork for post high school plans, with a running total of \$2,000,000 in scholarships offered. Our Wildcat Counselor staff ensures all of our students are exposed to college life from the time they enter their freshmen year, through their senior year. This school year, our sophomores are planning a campus visit to Loyola University and University of Illinois at Chicago in February and March of 2015, with our juniors visiting Northwestern University and Northern Illinois University during that same time period. Our Freshmen have visited South Suburban College to have firsthand experience with some of the programs that are available for students at SSC. Our youth face many challenges nationwide that impede



Thornton's New Generation of Men

their success. You'll be proud to know that Thornton understands, and confronts those challenges with every expectation that we will be successful. Students who exhibit those behaviors that lead to them dropping out of school are assigned to our Take5 program, which is coordinated by Ms. Hanifah Ross, Dean of Students and administrated by Mr. Alfonzo Pearson, assistant principal. Under their guidance and direction, our students develop those tools to be successful in high school and incorporate them into their daily character. They begin to fully participate in activities and enjoy their high school experiences. That high level of motivation leads to their academic success. Last summer, 28 students enrolled into 36 credit recovery summer school courses. Every student was successful, as there were absolutely 0 failures!

SUPPORTING OUR STUDENTS

Our students continue to proudly represent Wildcat Country, carrying on the great tradition of highlighting the **BEST OF THORNTON**. Our Wildcat Soccer team had an outstanding season, proudly representing the district. This year, the team was crowned as the Sectional Champions, while head coach David Gonzalez was named Coach of the Year by the Southtown Star Newspaper. Our Wildcat Marching Band seems to have covered the entire Chicagoland area



Thornton Co-op Soccer Team

this year, by participating in the Bud Billiken Back to School Parade, the City of Harvey Back to School Parade, Columbus Day Parade, Veterans Day Parade, and the recent McDonalds Thanksgiving Day Parade in Chicago. They also dominated the band competition at the Rich Central Battle of the Bands, where they won Best Auxillary (Flag Team and Sophisticats), Best in Show, Best Drum Major, and 2nd place in Drumline.

LEAVING OUR PAWPRINTS

Thornton Township High School continues its historical role in providing strong and effective community support. Our New Generation of Men students along with sponsor, Mr. Robert Powell, worked with the Village of Dixmoor to construct a playground for the young children of Lincoln Elementary School. Our young men were delighted by their own self-efficacy and gained a great sense of self pride, while displaying Wildcat Pride from this experience. Ms. Lilcritia Coleman and members of our Wildcat Staff once again hosted a Haunted House at Thornton, as a safe haven for trick or treating for the children of our community. Both the children and their parents absolutely loved the experience, and left the school looking forward to next year's Haunted House.



THORNWOOD HIGH SCHOOL



Civil Air Patrol



Dennis Willis, Principal

EXCELLENCE BEGINS WITH RESPECT & PRIDE

It is with great honor and privilege that I serve the needs of our community as Principal of Thornwood High School. I am excited about this school year and look forward to accomplishing the goals that we have put in place for 2014-2015. Thornwood High School is committed to maintaining a safe,

supportive, and dynamic learning environment while diligently working to increase our overall academic performance. Our faculty, along with our administrative team, shares this responsibility and commitment supporting of our parents, our community, and our student body.

As Principal, it is my duty and pleasure to announce the ways in which Thornwood High School continues to improve, and to highlight this improvement and lift up our amazing staff and students. Phenomenal things are happening here! Ms. Jasmine Peppers, our African American Studies teacher, has taken the initiative to create a new peer mentoring program

which provides mentoring and character development to our feeder schools, while also collaborating with our National Honor Society to serve the needs our school and community as well. Mr. Danny Gray and Mr. Samuel Agyarko have continued to provide excellent mentoring, character development and community service opportunities for our young men via A Few Good Men. Ms. Joyce Brooks provides an equally successful program, Ladies of Eminence, that meets the needs of our young ladies. Thornwood High School's Civil Air Patrol continues to recruit students to a successful program. Our soccer team has built upon last year's winning streak and, this year, captured the win at Sectionals! Additionally, our basketball and wrestling teams continue to illustrate their excellence in athletics.

MOVING FORWARD

Thornwood High School will continue to build on our achievements, and we will expand opportunities in order to meet the diverse needs of our students. For example, we are continuing to expand our Advancement Via Individual Determination (AVID) Program, which shows tremendous results, and we are revamping our RTI Program in order



A Few Good Men read to KinderCare students during holidays



Thornwood Basketball Stars, Kaliph Fagan and Chelby Frazier

to further meet the needs of our struggling learners. Additionally, our International Baccalaureate Diploma Programme application continues to move forward. Teachers and staff have come together to successfully complete training, host successful site visits with IB evaluators, and create course curricula that have already been approved by International Baccalaureate in Geneva, Switzerland. Thornwood High School eagerly anticipates final approval in the spring of 2015. Our AVID, RTI, and IB programs will definitely bolster student achievement. We have seen great success as a result of these programs. For example, senior Tyler Brumfield was just named a recipient of the Coca Cola Scholarship, and recent graduate Christian Flowers won \$2,000.00 in an entrepreneurial competition! However, the overall academic success of Thornwood's students requires the nurturing support and involvement of parents and our resilient community. I encourage everyone to get involved at Thornwood High School! As a united school community, we become the "village" that provides our students with the necessary skills to excel in their post-secondary experiences. Together, we will give our Thunderbirds wings to soar!



YOUR SCHOOLS & FINANCE

Historical Financial Review

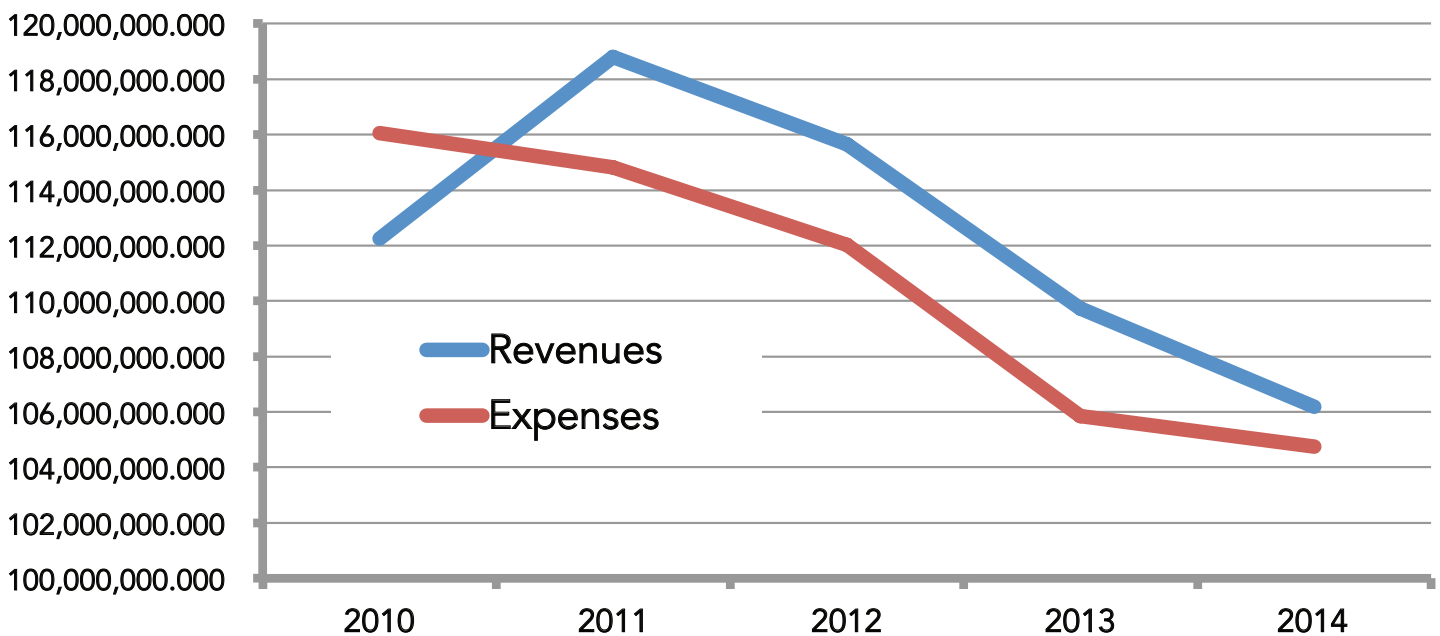
The past several years have been extremely challenging for school districts in Illinois. State funding to K-12 education has decreased dramatically and nominal growth in real estate tax revenues caused by low inflation rates and rising foreclosures have combined to produce the lowest growth rate in school district revenues throughout the State perhaps in our history. Despite the challenges of low revenue growth, rising expectations on student performance, greater needs of students developed outside of the school environment, rising special education needs and rising health care costs have put great pressure on school district budgets. The number of school districts in Illinois that are deficit spending has increased from below 20% in 2010 to above 60% in 2014 (projected based on district budgets).

The challenges impacting Thornton Township High School District 205 are even greater. A heavy reliance on State revenues to fund education has made District #205 more vulnerable to the State's funding crisis. The District currently loses approximately \$3 million a year in revenues from the State because general State-aid funds are prorated at 89%. A dramatic decrease of over 1,400 students in the District has

further impacted State funding. While State revenues have been decreasing, real estate tax collections have been flat with tax collections for the current 2015 fiscal year projected to be below total collections received in fiscal year 2010. In addition to low inflation levels impacting all tax-capped school districts, real estate revenue growth has been lower at District 205 than most areas of the State as the growing number of tax defaults and tax appeals are taking millions of dollars away from potential tax collections annually. Overall, total revenues received by the District have decreased from \$118.8 million in fiscal year 2011 to \$106.2 million in fiscal year 2014. This represents a decrease of \$12.6 million in annual revenues, or 10.6% over the past four years.

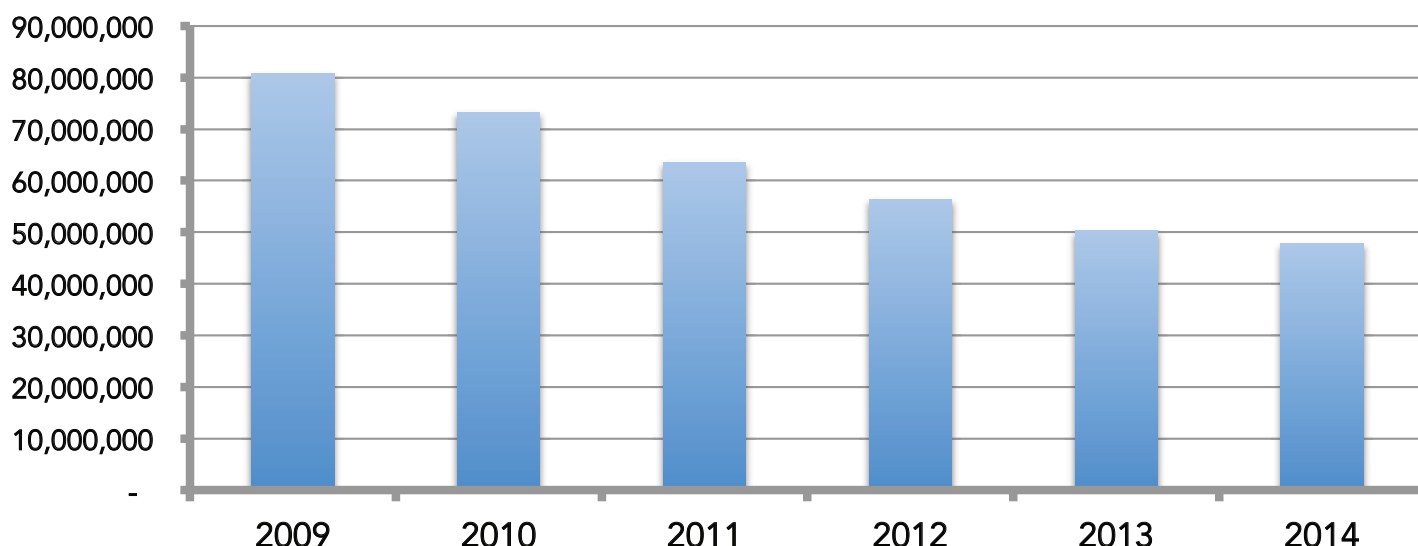
The positive news is that the District recognized and prepared for the great financial challenges it was about to face and significantly reduced its budget in order to offset revenue losses. Between the fiscal year ending 2010 and the fiscal year ending 2014, the District decreased expenses from \$116.1 million to \$104.8 million. In other words, during this five-year period total expenses in the District dropped \$11.3 million, or 9.7%.

The following graph illustrates the pattern of revenue and expense changes in the District between 2010 and 2014, excluding major capital expenses paid for with 2009 bond proceeds:



As can be seen above, the District has been able to maintain annual surpluses (revenues over expenses) despite the great challenges it has faced. These surplus have helped to increase fund balances in the District. The following graph illustrates total fund balances, which have been impacted both by the annual surpluses and by major capital expenses paid by \$51 million 2009 bond issue, which was part of the total fund balance figures on June 30, 2009:

Total Fund Balances



Issues Facing the District State's Financial Crisis

With 32% of the District's total revenues coming from State sources, the District is vulnerable to the economic plight of the State. The State is in the midst of a major financial crisis that has resulted in it having the lowest credit rating of any state in the country and unpaid bills totaling in the billions. As of January 1, 2015, the state income tax rate has dropped from 5.00% to 3.75%. If this rate remains and if no additional sources of revenues are available to replace this rate drop, revenues received by the State would drop by hundreds of millions of dollars and State funding decreases could become more likely. Either way, with the huge backlog of unpaid bills at the State level, it appears that it may be quite some time before State funding levels increase significantly.

Possible Shifting of Pension Obligations from the State to School Districts

In order to strengthen the financial condition of the State of Illinois, there is a strong movement in Springfield to shift pension obligations to the individual school districts. Many experts believe that this type of legislation will be passed during this 2015 legislative cycle. While some believe that this shift will be phased in over several years, it is uncertain what the ultimate financial impact will be to school districts throughout the State. Based on a blend of various estimates, the annual impact to Thornton Township High School District #205 may be in the \$1.5 million to \$2.5 million range. This would have a dramatic impact on the District's longterm financial condition.

Low Inflation Levels

While low inflation levels will help keep the growth in certain expenditure types low, the District is capped in its growth of

real estate tax revenues by the rate of inflation as defined by the consumer price index. For the levy that was approved by the District in December 2014, tax revenue growth will be capped at the 2013 consumer price index of 1.5%. For the December 2015 levy, growth will be capped at the 2014 CPI level of 0.8%. With real estate tax revenues making up approximately 58% of the total revenues, an extended period of low inflation will have a major impact on the District.

Possible Formation of Charter School in District

There have been several attempts by outside organizations to form a charter school in the District. The impact to such action would be financially devastating to the District. Based on the assumption that the size of charter school, if granted, would be in the 500 student range, the District would stand to lose between \$4 million to \$6 million in fund balances every year after the formation of the charter school.

Summary

The District has done an exemplary job of adjusting its budget to withstand the dramatic financial challenges it has faced over the past six year. Unfortunately, new challenges related to difficult economic conditions both statewide and locally and the possible inclusion of a charter school, may provide even greater challenges to the District. The District must continue to closely monitor these threats and make adjustments accordingly in order to survive these next rounds of great challenges. Ultimately, all stakeholders must work together to maintain the financial stability of the school district and, at the same time, improve its quality of the education the District provides so that its students will be able to compete successfully in this increasingly competitive global economy.

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High School District 205
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INTERIM SUPERINTENDENT

MR. JOHN ARRINGTON
DIRECTOR OF COLLEGE AND CAREER
PARTNERSHIPS

MR. SYLVESTER BAKER
DIRECTOR OF SAFETY, SECURITY
& TRANSPORTATION

MR. JERRY DOSS
DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC RELATIONS

MR. BRETT FICKES
DIRECTOR OF INNOVATIVE CURRICULUM
DESIGN AND INSTRUCTION

MR. THOMAS PORTER
DIRECTOR OF PUPIL PERSONNEL SERVICES

MS. JANETTE MORALES
MANAGER OF SCHOOL PERFORMANCE

VISION:

*"Preparing all District 205 students to be
competitive leaders in our global society."*

We Believe:

- High Expectations
- Community Engagement
- College and Career Readiness
- All Stakeholders being Accountable
- Inspiring a Positive Impact in the 21st Century
- Having One Shared Voice

SCHOOL ADMINISTRATION

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MR. JAMES WALTON JR.
PRINCIPAL

MR. BRADLEY BEILFUSS
ASSISTANT PRINCIPAL
MR. STEVEN VALANT
ASSISTANT PRINCIPAL

THORNTON TOWNSHIP H.S.
MR. TONY RATLIFF
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MR. ALFONZO PEARSON
ASSISTANT PRINCIPAL
MS. WANDA RUSSELL
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MRS. EBONIE WILLIAMS
ASSISTANT PRINCIPAL

THORNWOOD H.S.
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ASSISTANT PRINCIPAL
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CAREER TECHNICAL EDUCATION
MR. JAMES DRAKE,
FINE ARTS
MR. BRETT FICKES,
SOCIAL STUDIES

MRS. CYNTHIA MORRIS,
SCIENCE
MR. ROB PENMAN,
MATH
DR. MIKE SANDERS,
ENGLISH

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PHYSICAL EDUCATION
& STUDENT SERVICES