



YOUR SCHOOLS

The Magazine of Thornton Township High School District 205

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PREPARING ALL DISTRICT 205 STUDENTS TO BE
COMPETITIVE LEADERS IN OUR GLOBAL SOCIETY
THORNRIDGE ► THORNTON ► THORNWOOD



School Board of Education

School Board MEMBERS



Mr. Kenneth Williams

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Mr. Edward Crayton

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Mr. Ray Banks

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Mr. Darren Robinson

Member

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Each generation faces the challenge of preparing the next generation for success. Our students today are faced with challenges and opportunities most of us never imagined when we were their age. They live in a world of global competition, of exponentially expanding knowledge, and of an economy strained by the deepest and longest recession since the Great Depression. They must learn to become lifelong learners, and they must have the tools necessary to compete with others around the world. As adults, we can choose whether to lament the job losses, to fear the changes necessary to thrive in the modern world, to wait on someone to come to our aid, or to stretch ourselves to create opportunities for our students that just a few short years ago seemed impossible.

Today's students have grown up in an age of technology -- of cell phones and Facebook; of instant and frequent digital communication. Schools must be relevant to their world and must be sufficiently challenging to hold their interest. With the proper tools, they cannot only succeed, but thrive in the modern world. Over the past four years, Thornton Township High School District 205 has worked diligently to transform our education program to provide learning opportunities in the "information age." The infrastructure to support digital technology has been put in place. By the end of this year, using grant dollars more classrooms will have Smart Boards, which essentially replace chalkboards with large interactive computer screens complete with Internet access. The District is also moving toward a dual technology environment that includes Apple Mac computers and iPADS. In this new educational environment, computers will be the tools of daily work, just as they are in college and in the vast majority of today's jobs. As the nation moves toward the implementation of Common Core Standards, the Board of Education is working with the superintendent to provide our faculty with professional development and access to outside consultants to ensure the District transitions to the new curriculum model with fidelity. This includes the superintendent's new focus on performance management and contract with Pearson for School Improvement.

Preparing All District 205 Students to be competitive leaders in Our Global Society is our vision. In taking a holistic approach, all stakeholders will be responsible to provide an Innovative and Challenging Instructional Delivery; impart Critical Thinking Skills, and promote Positive Social Behavior in our students to Develop Productive Citizens is our mission. We are a District on the move, working hard to keep pace with a fast changing world. Please review the fall/winter edition of the Your Schools Magazine. The articles are designed to inform the community of the academic and co-curricular programs of the District. For more information or to get involved please consider attending a meeting of the Board of Education. The Board of Education meets on the second Wednesday of each month. Please consult the District 205 website for more information – www.district205.net.



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 the Board of Education the Student Board was officially chartered and a District coordinator was assigned.

Since its inception, over 31 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 Paola Nunez, Vice President Luke Arrington, Secretary China Anderson and Treasurer Sanaa Vhora. The Student Board was elected during the spring ses-

ter of the 2011-2012 school. Students will serve one 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 six standing committees that include:

COMMITTEE	GOALS
Jefferson Awards Committee	Build on success from the previous year to win second national award.
District SAVE Committee	Work with SAVE to establish a viable program in all three high schools.
District Food Service Committee	Work with the Director of Business Operations to improve Food Service.
Graduation Committee	Develop procedures for graduating Student Board Members.
Cultural Events Committee	Develop cultural activities for students and board members.
Curriculum and Instruction Committee	Work with Director of Curriculum and Instruction and Board of Education to make recommendations that improve the quality of academic programs in District 205.

Jefferson Awards Committee

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

Recipient for Outstanding Service by High School. Representatives from Thornton Township High Schools will attend the Jefferson Awards National Ceremonies and 40th Anniversary Celebration in Washington DC this June, where they will have an opportunity to compete for the distinction of National Recipient.

STUDENT Board of Education

Paola Nunez
President
Thornton H.S.

Luke Arrington
Vice President
Thornton H.S.

China Anderson
Secretary
Thornwood H.S.

Sanaa Vhora
Treasurer
Thornton H.S.

Timothy Jones
Member
Thornridge H.S.

Trayshawn Mitchell
Member
Thornton H.S.

Alicia Ngubane
Member
Thornridge H.S.

Ramon Odom
Member
Thornwood H.S.

Glennita Williams
Member
Thornwood H.S.

Jaelin Harris
Student Representation At-Large
Thornton H.S.

Jacob Hunter
Student Representation At-Large
Thornridge H.S.

Timothy Mitchell
Student Representation At-Large
Thornton H.S.

Nolan Robinson
Student Representation At-Large
Thornton H.S.



From the Board President

Mr. Kenneth Williams, *President, Board of Education*

Dear Residents and Community Members,

Serving as the President of the Thornton Township High School District 205 Board of Education is an honorable and humbling experience. This is a charge that I take very seriously and work tirelessly with my colleagues on the Board of Education to represent the interests of the faculty, staff, students and members of the District 205 community. One of the core components of our leadership paradigm is that given the opportunity and support; every child can learn despite personal, cultural or societal obstacles.

In order to create an environment that fosters academic growth, our schools must be safe and nurturing where the expectations are high and the barriers to learning are low. We have made great strides in educating our youth and can count many achievements, but there is much work yet to be done and many goals to be accomplished.

Through strategic planning and direction from the Board of Education, the District is working toward accomplishing the following goals:

1. creating stronger partnerships to increase the activities and opportunities for students, area youth, and community members,
2. building community partnerships with park districts, libraries and establishing intergovernmental agreements with municipalities to create greater opportunities for our youth to eliminate the duplication of activities and decrease the tax burden on area residents,
3. senior citizens have the opportunity to use our facilities, swimming pools, sports fields, and gyms. These facilities are paid for by your tax dollars and should be open to the community, and
4. continue to invest in technology to continue District 205's reputation as one of the premier districts in Illinois, where all of our classrooms have smartboards, students have access to laptops, Ipads and computer technology to enhance their learning. IPads are useful for students for organizational purposes.

Serving on the Board of Education has exposed me to some of the finest teachers and staff in the area. I say that without reservation because I've seen the dedication and passion they show in the classroom and during after school activities and events. I believe that our school board, in collaboration and partnership with teachers, parents, faith-based leaders, community stakeholders, and elected officials at all government levels can make this happen. Have a warm and enjoyable holiday season and a safe and prosperous new year!

Sincerely,

Mr. Kenneth Williams

Mr. Kenneth Williams, President, Board of Education

From the Superintendent

DON'T STOP THINKING ABOUT TOMORROW

Mr. John F. Thomas, *Superintendent*

The new school year is well under way, and I would like to share with you an update about our key goals for the year that will ensure our students are successful in a competitive world. Thornton Township High School District 205 is on its way to being the leader in innovation, and our School Board has adopted our strategic plan – new vision and mission, to provide direction and guidance as we work to ensure our students not only have the foundational core skills, but also the necessary 21st Century skills that are essential in today's workforce. This is a turbulent yet exciting time for education, and our ability to adapt and change is more important than ever.

We gathered input from our staff, parents, administrators, and students, and sought to develop a compelling vision to answer the question "What skills do our students need to be successful in the 21st Century?" Since being named superintendent, we held community forums, and conducted surveys. I am very proud of the process and the final product that was developed, and that we now have a clear focus and direction for our district. Preparing All District 205 Students to be competitive leaders in Our Global Society is our vision statement. In taking a holistic approach, all stakeholders will be responsible to provide an Innovative and Challenging Instructional Delivery; impart Critical Thinking Skills; and promote Positive Social Behavior in our students to Develop Productive Citizens is our mission. Our core values ensure we have a strong foundation; our vision sets high expectations for success, and our mission statement makes it clear exactly what our students need to know to be competitive in today's ever-changing world.

We are now in the process of working very hard to achieve our mission and vision, and I have also included our goals. Now that we know where we are going, these priorities and goals are essential to help us to achieve our vision. Our top four priorities are to develop relevant and rigorous instruction where teaching and learning will result in globally competitive students, develop and empower teachers at all levels, develop school climate and culture which incorporates a transition elementary school to high school and high school to college and build and maintain effective parent and community engagement.

Consistent with our new strategic plan, vision and mission our three comprehensive high schools are developing more fully articulated pathways so that our students have a better idea of possible career choices. In addition, we are working to include a middle school initiative to better transition to high school. Statistics show that to be successful after high school our students must be exposed to rigorous instruction and robust experiences, and we must make sure they are prepared both for the college and the world of work with 21st Century skills.

Please read through our newsletter to see how my administrative team is working to implement the objectives of our strategic plan and serve the faculty, staff, students and community of Thornton Township High School District 205. I am very excited about the direction of our district and am constantly amazed at the high quality of our teachers, support staff, and administrators. Equally important is our community support; specifically, from our parents and guardians of our children. Your continued input, volunteerism, and financial support are critical for our students. The challenge of our times is to move forward towards innovation even during these difficult budget times, and I believe we are doing so in a thoughtful and deliberate manner. With your help, and with the support of our community in general, we can achieve our vision.



THORNTRIDGE High School



James Walton
Principal

Welcome to Falcon County



Students in Classroom

Hello! My name is James M. Walton Jr., proud principal and leader of Thornridge High School, Home of the Falcons! The 2012-2013 school year is well on its way here in Falcon Nation! We had a very exciting beginning to this new year. It is always great and very exciting to see the smiling faces of my returning students and staff, as well as the bright new faces of our incoming freshmen. The start of the school year always possesses the feeling of “newness” and starting fresh. I think

students, faculty and staff began this year with a fresh, new attitude and feeling that something good is about to happen. That feeling is always full of hope and promise.

This year, we have embarked on a three-pronged effort. Our focus this year included: Positive Relationships, Rigorous Curriculum and Data Teams. Positive Relationships include: Staff with Staff, Staff with Parents, Staff with Students and Students with Students. So, at every relational level, I look for



TR Cheerleaders

more positive and successful relationship within our school community. Our Rigorous Curriculum focus includes the following: giving our students the 21st Century Skills they need for our ever changing global society; critical thinking and problem solving skills; expanding their access to accessing and analyzing information; developing their collaborative and leadership skills; helping our students be more effective in their communication for both oral and written; and help them acquire the adaptability and agility that will serve them well in their future. Each and every person in Thornridge High School is an essential in making this effort on behalf of our students. This year, our teachers will meet weekly as course Data Teams to continuously review and analyze student classroom data. And, as a team, they will develop instructional plans and utilize research-based strategies to help every student in that course to continuously improve and become highly achieving learners.

In addition to those foci, we are continually working with our students and the social engagement and decorum. We expect and encourage all of our students to be on time for class. We instill in them the importance of attendance; of being on time. We believe in helping with and increasing our students' self-efficacy; work with parents to reinforce positive behaviors and routines; and reward students who get to class on time.

So, as we work with our students to strive for and to successfully achieve academically and socially, the entire Thornridge administration and staff will be ready to nurture, assist and be there for our fabulous students every step of the way! By speaking with good purpose, being flexible, having integrity, showing ownership of our lives and education, balancing our lives between work and play, realizing that failure leads to success, and making the commitment to ourselves (students and staff alike), our lives and the people we care about. This year we will make it happen...we relish the opportunity to engage our young people in a myriad of positive ways... and we will obtain the excellence, respect and pride through hard work, drive and perseverance. And it's all because of this one simple, but profoundly powerful statement...



THORNTON

Township High School



Tony Ratliff
Principal

Wildcat Students Are The Best!

Dear District 205 Community Members,

Great things are happening at Thornton Township High School! Our staff members are working diligently fulfilling the vision to make Wildcat Country The Epicenter of student development and successful transition into a 21st Century Global Society. Our vision also includes a holistic approach to student development that includes involvement from all of our stakeholders, including but not limited to our parents/guardians, community members, and business leaders.

We began this school year by restructuring our core content areas of Math, English, Science, and Social Studies into Common Course Teams. This restructuring will provide a more intensive focus on student learning, and most important, the structure provides a platform for the teachers of our students to work collaboratively to ensure our students' academic success. These teams meet on a weekly basis and conduct powerful discussions regarding their students' progress through data discussions, sharing of student work, lessons and ideas that gave their classrooms great gains. Thanks to our Math coordinators Lisa Nicks, Bob Dasbach, and Stacey Jones; English coordinators Mary Koleno, Ann Marie Morgan, and Kelly Cunningham; Science coordinators Ferris Williams, Gwen Brooks, and Devin Olson; Social Studies coordinators Don Caserio, Joe Janowiak, and Vanessa Allman. These teacher leaders are laying the foundation for continued and improved academic success for our students.

I am very proud to report that we are continuing to enjoy great success with our students transitioning into post-secondary institutions that are primarily colleges and universities. The following charts detail the great work of our College & Career Counselor, Theresa King, Counselor Staff which consists of Paula Walker, Darryl Reddick, Ramelle Jackson, Annette Steward, Tahira Pervan, Nzinga Troutman, Paul Carr, and Shana Scott-Moody, and the undying support of our teachers.

Our entire Wildcat Staff is doing a great job in getting our students to buy into our culture of continuous learning, and by taking advantage of every opportunity to go to college in preparation for entering into a competitive global society. They are working with our students very diligently on a daily basis pushing them past ex-

cellence into extraordinary, and as you can see, our students have not only accepted the challenge, but exceeded our standards.



Nanoscience

Thornton Township High School remains on the cutting edge of preparing our students for their post-secondary transition, whether they are going on to college, or entering into the workforce. Under the direction of our Small Learning Communities Coordinators, Brian Wright and Calvin Stark, we are currently providing career opportunities such as our Pre-Pharmacy program, Culinary Arts, Media Technician, Engineering, Entrepreneurship, and Northwestern University Medical Program. While this does not complete the list of opportunities we offer, I am pleased to inform you that our coordinators have been working tirelessly to bring Nanoscience and technology into Wildcat Country. What is Nanoscience? It is the new science that is, and will continue to revolutionize our world through much greater forms of technology, and we plan to have it here at Thornton Township High School in the very near future. We have developed multiple partnerships with this initiative, including but not limited to, Notre Dame University, Chicago State University, and South Suburban Community College. Dr. Valerie Goss, a professor at Chicago State University, visited Wildcat Country and spent some time with our students by instructing a "hands on" demonstration on the use and measurement of nanoscience, and it was truly amazing to see our students grasp the concept. They were motivated and asked great probing questions throughout the demonstration. I can hardly wait until it is perma-

	2010	2011	2012
% of Graduates Attending Colleges and Universities	69%	76%	78%
Scholarship \$\$ Awarded	\$808,250	\$2,771,500	\$4,211,086

nently in place!

Our NAVISTAR Diesel Engine program is producing awesome results, as it completed its first 3rd year cycle. This program has yielded a 98% graduation rate, and has provided 15 internships and permanently placed 9 graduates into jobs! The remaining students transitioned into college, technical school, and the military. This program is surrounded with a great staff, led by Earl Powell, Fred McGee, and Elyn Marciano. Through a strong partnership with Navistar representatives, these Wildcat Staff members fully prepared our students for jobs during a time of recession, and continue on a path that will increase efficiency in our students' preparedness, as



Navistar

well as opportunities for them.

Wildcat students continue to represent our school with great pride, as they take our athletics programs to new levels. This fall, our students displayed that Wildcat Pride as our Boys Soccer teams, coached by Dave Gonzalez, both varsity and junior varsity were 1st place finishers in the Southwest Suburban Conference Red Division. Not to stop the Purple Blitz Show, but our football teams, both sophomores and varsity were conference champions in the Red Division as well. Many thanks to Head Coach Bill Mosel, Brian Proudfoot, and our entire football coaching staff. Through the hard work and dedication of Coach Vince McAuliffe, our Boys Cross Country team ended their season as Sectional Qualifiers, while our Girls Cross Country team finished with trophies and 4 invites, and were Sectional Qualifiers as well. Wildcat Golf has been resurrected, thanks to an awesome and inspiring Wildcat Student, Andre Reed. Two years ago, this young man started petitioning the leadership to have golf not only in Wildcat Country, but throughout the district. He went throughout all 3 schools and collected signatures for students interested in playing golf. This year, and without coaching, he was able to participate in a golf tournament, and placed 2nd in Regional Competition! I am very proud of his efforts and shared with him that he should be proud that golf within our district is emerging due to his work, which will make him remembered for quite awhile! Another awesome Wildcat Student is Jalen Banks, a senior on our football team. Jalen played varsity football during his 4 years as a student. As a senior, Jalen is ranked 3rd in his graduating class and with his football talent, has been visited by Stanford, Northwestern, Nebraska, and Michigan, just to name a few. However, he decided to take his gifts and represent Wildcat



1st Place Soccer Team

Pride at Vanderbilt University, who also visited.

We take great pride in establishing and maintaining strong networks in and around our community. Our Student Activities organizations have conducted several programs to ensure that the children in our communities have access to The Best of what they need to further positive development. Because our Restorative Justice program, led by Ferris Williams and Hanifah Ross has produced very positive results in our discipline program, these two Wildcats are now filling requests by feeder schools to train their staff on the concepts of the program. They recently attended a dinner ceremony at Brooks Middle School, where students were being honored for completing the program. Brooks Middle School has pledged a commitment to strengthening their program, and Ferris and Hanifah have vowed to maintain a strong support of their efforts. Our Big Brother/Big Sister and SAVE organizations teamed up and presented the most exciting and decorated Halloween Haunted House I've ever seen! Thanks to Lilcritia Coleman, Susan Hudson, Robert Powell, Ferris Williams, Mynda Tracy, Michell Mangino, and Lee Mitidiero, the children of the community truly enjoyed a very safe and exciting Halloween. The hallways were very well decorated and there was plenty of candy and activities for the children to participate. I know the children enjoyed themselves and already look forward to next year's Halloween! Our Stomping Wildcat Band, under the direction of James Render, has the entire Chicagoland area rocking to their beats wherever he takes our band to perform. Once again, they participated in the Bud Billiken Parade, conducted the Harvey Back To School Parade, as well as two different parades in honor of Veteran's Day. These are but a few occasions where Mr. Render has our students showcasing their talents and representing our school as the great ambassadors that they are.

We maintain the concept that student success at Thornton Township High School is based on: A Rigorous Curriculum, Instructional Excellence and Professional Growth, College and Career Readiness, Respectful Relationships and School Pride, and Parent and Community Outreach. Our Wildcat Administration and Staff enjoy the leadership role we take in ensuring our students receive The Best while they are under our care, and beyond. Therefore, we encourage students, parents/guardians, community members, and business leaders to continue our partnership through participation in activities that promote academic and social success for our students and school community.



Dennis Willis
Principal

Mapping the Journey to Excellence



Science Fair

My name is Dennis Willis and I am the new principal at Thornwood High School. I have worked at Thornwood for the past four years as an assistant principal. It is an honor and privilege to lead such a great group of students towards achieving excellence in academics and building strong character to become productive members of our global society.

Our theme for this year is "Mapping the Journey to Excellence". As the principal of Thornwood High School, it gives me great pride to witness the variety of ways in which many of our students are mapping their own journeys to excellence. With each day that passes, we observe many young adults pursuing the path to excellence in academics, music and theatre, philanthropic endeavors, athletics, community service, career based initiatives, and mentoring programs.

FALL HIGHLIGHTS

Mr. Geir's Auto Service Tech class, has serviced over 90 teacher vehicles of teachers, students and community members. This is an educational activity that also fulfills a need in the community. Thank you Mr. Geir and your students for providing quick and reliable work to get our vehicles back in proper functioning condition.

Mr. Boylan's honors Biology classes are competing in our annual science fair. 60 students will participate in the fair and will be judged by student judges who were top finishers in last years competition. Good luck!

Mr. Boylan's Earth Science class spent time this fall, studying earth science in the local watershed. The goals of the project were to improve the students' understanding of local ecosystems, while im-



Special Olympics Basketball

proving the condition of our local natural areas.

out for the freshman girls' basketball team and is now one of the starting five!



Mary Doornbos

Congratulations to Mr. Eugene Adrian, who was recognized by the University of Chicago as an Outstanding Educator. Special needs teacher, Ms. Liberious secured a grant for her special needs that students resulted in 30 iPads for her MI students.

Congratulations are in order for biology teacher Mary Doornbos who was honored by the Society for Science in the Public. She was given a fellowship to work with minority students in science.

The special programs department has started a Special Olympics basketball team for some of our students. We currently have 12 students participating and have played four games against surrounding high school teams. Special Olympics open many doors for our students in the Special Programs Department. This athletic program instills discipline and teamwork skills in our students. Special Olympics have encouraged engagement, character building, and positive leadership. Since the start of this program, I have seen attitudes change, relationships develop, and social interaction grow between the general education students and the special education students. We even have a student on our team who decided to go

This fall, the boy's cross country team had a very successful season, winning the Hillcrest Invitational, the Tinley Park Invitational, the Rich Central Invitational, the SWSC Conference Championship, and the IHSA Regional Championship. Also, Thornwood qualified three individuals to the State Cross Country Meet: Kenneth Allen, Khalil Lightbourne, and Jesse Unzueta. In Thornwood's history, prior to this year there had only been 3 other individuals from Thornwood to qualify for state!



Glennita Williams

Glennita Williams, a sophomore was acknowledged for her work with the active duty military and her not-for-profit company America's Guardian Angels. Glennita was honored by BET's Black Girls Rock.

School Improvement Model

SIM or the School Improvement Model is a system of school improvement designed to build the school's capacity to create its future. The model is designed to assist schools to:

- **Prepare students to be College and Career Ready—SIM** is focused on helping schools prepare all students for college and careers, taking its lead from the definition of college and career readiness that is articulated in the Common Core State Standards (CCSS) and the standards for college and career readiness established by specific states, including Illinois.
- **Help students achieve the Common Core State Standards—**Consistent with the focus on college and career readiness, SIM is designed to help schools meet the demands of the CCSS. SIM has been crafted from the ground up to support CCSS implementation. It features schoolwide instructional focus on the critical aspects of college and career readiness. In addition, content area concentrations in English Language Arts (ELA) and Mathematics provide scaffolding to help teachers align their instruction to the CCSS assessments. Teachers also work with their own curriculum and instructional alignment that is required for students to perform at high levels on the new assessments.
- **Provide High-Quality Instruction for All Students—**SIM focuses on high-quality instruction for all students by placing a primary emphasis on building the quality of the core instructional program. When the quality of “first” instruction is maximized, fewer students will likely require supplemental support through Tier 2 and Tier 3 interventions as more students learning needs are met within the regular classroom. In this way, Tier 2 and Tier 3 interventions can be reserved for students whose needs cannot be met within the regular classroom and targeted specifically to these students needs.
- **Reach Every Student, Every Subject, Every Day—**Comprehensive and sustainable school improvement requires more than a focus on English Language Arts and Mathematics. SIM is designed to achieve schoolwide, high-quality instruction for all students in our schools.

Actions that District 205 is taking to support the implementation of the school improvement model:

1. Standards Aligned Curriculum, Instruction & Assessment

- o Working with administrators, Area Instructional Leaders (AILs), and coaches to identify strengths and needs in existing plans and practices and to jointly set long- and short-term objectives
- o Will work with Core Course Coordinators to develop regular team meetings based on each team's needs that focus on standards-based instruction, including unpacking standards, creating performance tasks, and designing instruction to match
- o Providing professional development and coaching on implementation of instructional approaches around the standards, including academic language and college and career readiness learner competencies (as defined by Common Core)

2. High Performance Leadership, Management & Organization

- o Working with the school leadership to build on the work of the Building Leadership Teams (BLTs). Each school has scheduled with us one meeting per month focusing on professional learning about best practices in gathering and analyzing data and one meeting per month examining data related to implementation.
- o Working with all leaders (including AILs, coaches, CCCs, among others) to identify strengths and needs, create action plans, and monitor progress
- o Helping the Leadership team/BLT work as a representative body that does the following:
 - Establish and maintain the vision of improvement for the school
 - Drive and manage the implementation process
 - Provide the organization needed to support SIM implementation
 - Monitor the progress and quality of implementation, and redirect the work of school improvement as needed to maintain progress towards improved student achievement
 - Develop and nurture collaboration by using a systems approach to change that actively engages the entire school in shared responsibility and shared learning



3. Data Driven Culture

- o Pearson is working with the schools on building a data-driven culture through the leadership team
- o There are data-driven culture meetings—professional learning about best practices in gathering and analyzing data—with the Leadership Teams scheduled once per month. These include:
 - Building on the team's understanding of the role and value of a data-driven approach to progress monitoring and instructional problem solving
 - Adding to the Leadership Team's current practices in order to increase capacity to oversee, monitor, evaluate, and support school improvement initiatives
 - Improving the Leadership Team's ability to use data from multiple sources to identify and think critically about implementation
 - o There are implementation meetings scheduled once per month to examine strengths and needs in implementation of school improvement efforts, and to create action steps for the following month
 - o We will schedule quarterly Progress Monitoring meetings to examine school improvement efforts over the course of the previous quarter and to lay the course for the upcoming quarter

4. High Achievement & Engagement

- Will help each school develop an Engagement team that focuses on helping improve students' sense of belonging to the school, their connections to teachers and other adults, their friendships with peers, their sense that they are known both as learners and as people, and their belief in their ability to succeed academically.
- The team includes members are the staff who provide student services: the dean(s), counselor(s), social worker(s), psychologist(s), and the community outreach coordinator
- The team will meet monthly to analyze strengths and needs and create action plans.
- Pearson will provide two professional development sessions across the year
- Pearson also has a Graduation Risk Insight tool that aggregates the most relevant and predictive data points from your school's

student information system to identify the students mostly likely to drop out.

5. Sustainability for Continuous Improvement

- o Working with administrators, AILs, and coaches to create true professional learning communities. The focus is on the core course teams. All parties are working together to identify long- and short-term objectives, examine practices, and create regular cycles of action. All of this is occurring in stable settings that everyone can depend upon.
- o Working with the school leadership to build on the work of the BLTs. Each school will have one meeting per month focusing on professional learning about data and one meeting per month examining data related to implementation.
- o Pearson employees work with Core Course Coordinators individually and in groups to help them reflect on the work of their teams and prepare for future meetings.
- o Leadership team meetings will include the voices of the teachers themselves, helping them to own the process of improvement.
- o Pearson employees will continue to work with administrators, AILs, and coaches on supporting and monitoring implementation.
- o The work of the leadership teams, course teams, coaching, and professional development will all be aligned.
- o All of this work combines to create systems that can last well beyond the partnership with Pearson.

6. Parent and Community Engagement

- o Had first meeting with Parent Coordinators
- o Will meet again with them next Tuesday to plan for unveiling of Parent and Community Engagement training for all three high schools and representatives from feeder schools
- o Will conduct five days of training in parent and community engagement. This will include practical techniques, networking, and action planning.



Capital Improvements

The District 205 capital improvement plan is a multi-faceted program designed to upgrade facilities and provide a safe and supportive learning environment that will sustain academic programs for current and future needs. The program has been in operation for last three and half years and encompasses all District schools. This article is designed to give the community and overview of the projects that have been completed thus far. This is one of our many outreach tools in communicating with the community and potential vendors to assist us in improving our District facilities.

By keeping the community informed on improvements and construction projects going on in our schools and providing up to date information to potential and current contractors to attract the most qualified vendors and suppliers, we are working toward providing the best learning environment for our students achieving the mission of Thornton Township High School District 205. Please check the capital improvement section of the District 205 website for more information.



Classroom Renovation



Auditorium



Computer Lab



Thornton's New Windows



Multi-Purpose Room



Cafeterias



Three, Two, One

Welcome to Friday Night Lights



Thornton Township High School District 205 students, staff and fans were aglow under the new stadium lights as they watched the first-ever night football game at Thornwood High School and the resumption of night football games at Thornton Township High School and Thornridge High School. Board of Education President Kenneth Williams and Board Members Toni Williams, Ray Banks, Darren Robinson, former Board Member Bernadette Lawrence,



Superintendent of Schools John Thomas, Thornton Township Supervisor Frank Zuccarelli, Mayor of Harvey Eric J. Kellogg, State of Illinois Representative William Davis, and other elected officials kicked off the festivities at each school with a ceremonial ribbon cutting, followed by the football game. The ribbon cutting ceremonies were held at Thornton Township High School and Thornwood respectively on September 28th and at Thornridge High School on October 12th. The recently completed stadium lighting project was funded by surplus funds remaining from the District's \$52 million capital improvement bond issue.

"The stadium lighting project is a major investment in the community and will be an asset for providing state of the art athletic opportunities for our students and the community" said Board of Education President Kenneth Williams. Board Vice-president,



Ed Crayton, said "The Board of Education is pleased to be able to provide a safe and robust facility for school and community events." Each school in the District will hosted two Friday night football games during the 2012-2013 school year. More games will be planned for the 2013-2014 school year. Friday night lights also brought back generations of alumni to each school to commemorate the historic event. For more information regarding stadium lights and night football games please consult the District 205 website at www.district205.net.



HUMAN RESOURCES

New School Year Brings New Leadership and New Ideas

We have had an incredibly successful start to our new school year. District 205 has a new leadership team in place and with this new leadership; we have a renewed focus on enhancing and expanding our students' academic achievements, as well as our athletics and extra-curricular opportunities. While District 205 has had major challenges, these challenges have opened up major opportunities for our school district to better serve our students and our communities. This is the core purpose of any educational institution, to meet the academic needs of students while connecting our schools and alumni with our surrounding communities. The staff, teachers, and administrators at District 205 are committed to making this a reality. In addition to Superintendent John F. Thomas, our new district leadership team includes Mr. Brett Fickes as Director of Curriculum and Innovative Instruction, Mr. Thomas TJ Porter, Director of Pupil Personnel Services, Ms. Janette Morales, Manager of School Improvement, Ms. Maria Brunson, Director of Technology, Ms. Darcelle Williams, Director of College & Career Pathways, and Mr. Jerry Doss, Director of Communications and External Grants.

This year, the human resource department is emphasizing efforts to address the concerns of the 13 surrounding communities feeding into District 205. One of the major concerns is jobs and economic development. We are in the process (please pardon our online dust) of updating our web site, to better serve our residents and area stakeholders. Currently our website has jobs, both

certified and non-certified for District 205. All open positions can be accessed through the Human Resources page on our website, www.district205.net. Also, please check the District 205 Facebook Page for updates on any new positions. If you are unfamiliar with our site, go to www.district205.net and click on the human resources link. Then click on the view and apply for vacancies link. This site also includes all jobs from vendors doing business with District 205. Anyone interesting in bus driving, food service, janitorial/cleaning, or security can go to our website for job opportunities with these District 205 vendors. Our aim and goal is for our vendors to employ local community residents first, when hiring for their job openings.

Lastly on a different note, as an employee of District 205 and also a parent, it is critical that we are involved in the education of our children. I encourage all parents to get involved in your child's high school experience. One of the simplest ways is Power School, an online dashboard of your child's grades, attendance, assignments, and other information pertaining to your child's academic experience. However a more intimate involvement is attending parent teacher conferences or calling and emailing teachers and coaches. Each school has a parent coordinator with a wealth of information for parents, get to know that person. Attending the monthly school board meetings (dates and locations are on website), participating in the resourceful Parent Academy classes, volunteering at your child's schools functions are just a

few of the many ways to get involved.

Because of the talent of our students, the dedication of our teachers and staff, and the support and resiliency of our communities, we have much to celebrate, yet I believe our greatest celebrations and accomplishments, and our finest years are in front of us. Get involved and let's celebrate together!

COLLEGE AND CAREER PATHWAYS

Darcelle Williams



College and Career Readiness is an essential goal to be accomplished in order to secure a successful future for each and every one of the students of District 205. It is important that plans are goal-oriented, and made early in their education to make the transition from middle school to high school, and high school to college and/or career a smooth one. There are several events, activities and programs, which have been initiated in our district that focus on readiness through College and Career Pathways.

Some students need more guidance while on the path to being academically prepared for college and careers. Freshman students will be participating in college tours early this year to motivate them to achieve academic goals and focus on their grades, which are considered by colleges in the admission process. It is never too early for them to think about college and careers in their future instead of waiting until their junior year.

All District 205 students are exposed to colleges through the many school visits from college representatives throughout the nation. Students are able to ask questions and get additional information one on one with the college reps. College tours are also planned for sophomores, juniors and seniors so that the exposure is reinforced throughout their time in high school. Parents are encouraged to also visit the College and Career Center in each of our schools. There is an abundance of information that can be researched electronically or in actual catalogs in the CC Center. Also, be sure to check out the Counseling De-

partment website in each school for other College and Career planning resources.

This is the last year for our Smaller Learning Communities and House structure. Research and development are underway to prepare our students for post-secondary education through College and Career Pathways. Through College and Career Pathways, students will be more focused on courses in which they are interested. They will be given the opportunity to explore more career options which will better prepare them make choices about college and careers after high school.

In an effort to expand the opportunities for our students, District 205 has been involved in many partnerships with institutions and businesses. Partnerships have been formed with South Suburban College, the Illinois Restaurant Association and Navistar, just to name a few. In addition, this year District 205 has strengthened our partnership with Chicago State University. Through this partnership our students are involved with the Pharmacy Technician program. Additional programs are being developed for our students through this valuable collaboration.

Also, through such partnerships, District 205 will continue to offer students opportunities to receive dual credit in college while taking classes in high school. Courses like Introduction to Engineering, Child Care Lab Experience and Media Production through South Suburban College will allow students to begin at a higher level in classes in the same subject area when they attend college.

Most people think the summer is tak-

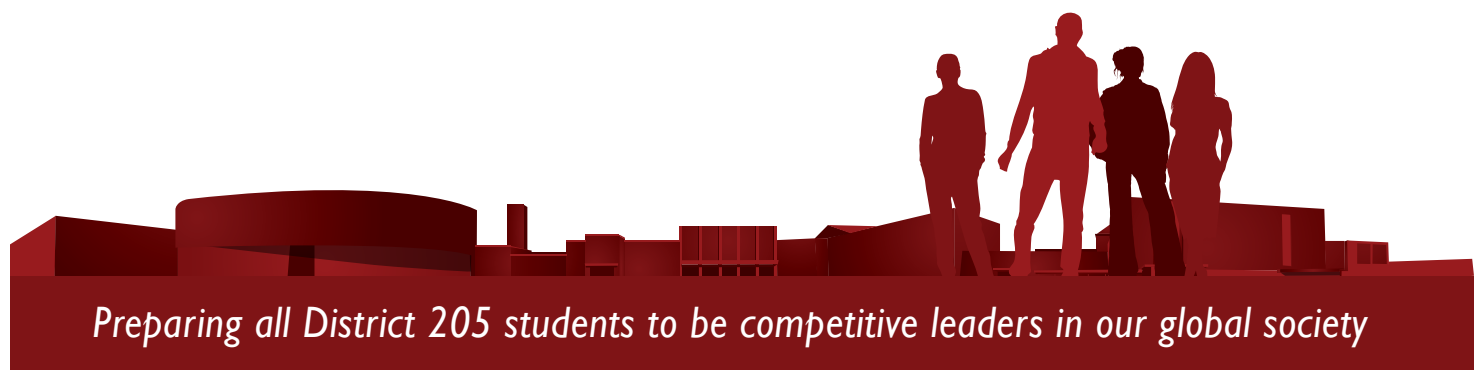
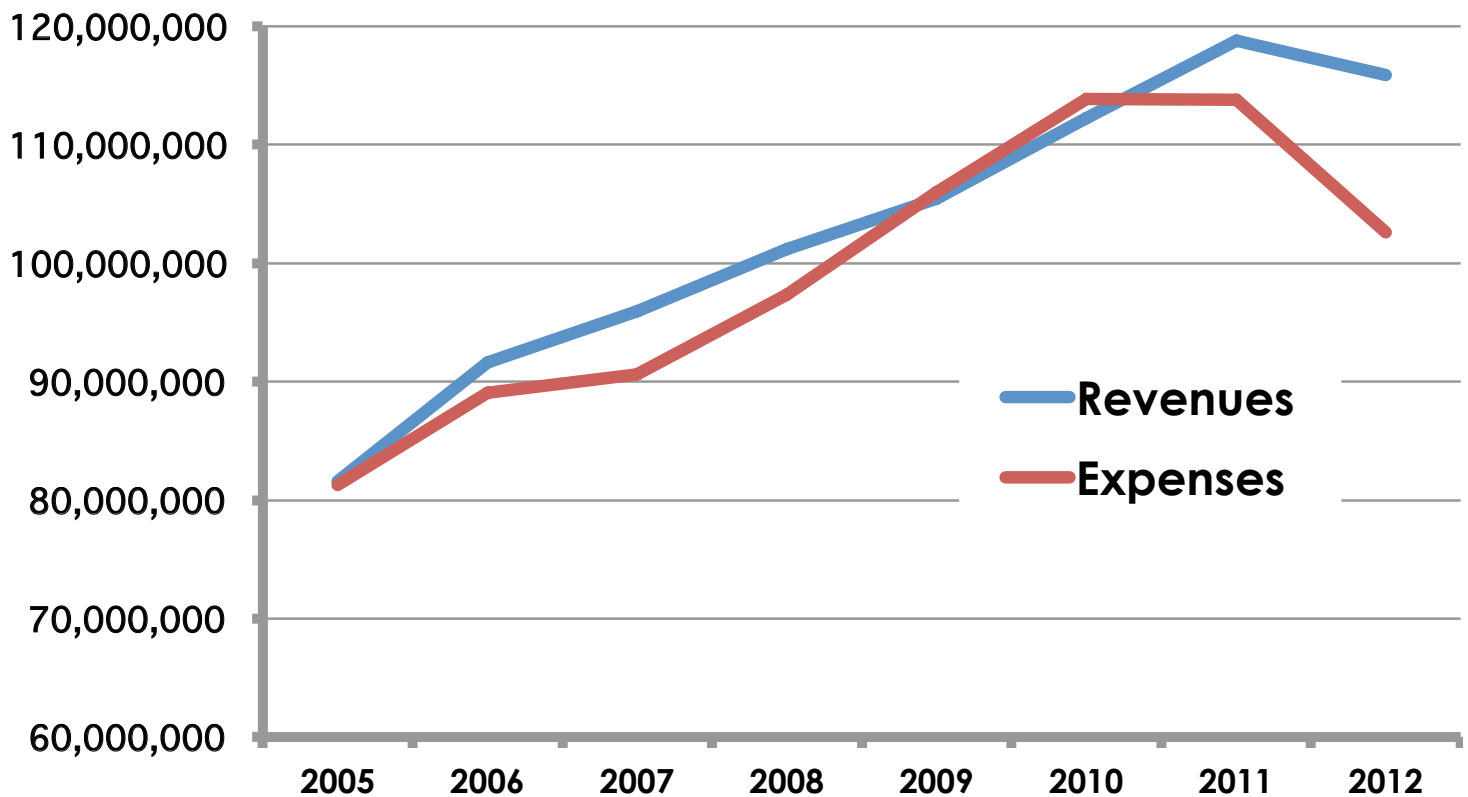
ing time off from school. Nothing is further from the truth in District 205. Summer Camps will be the perfect opportunity for students to continue to plan for college and careers, and have fun doing it. Plans are currently being developed for 7th and 8th graders, and 9th and 10th graders to spend 5 days and 4 nights on the campus of Chicago State University. Supervised lessons and project-based activities with the focus on Science, Math, Engineering and Technology (STEM) and Communication, Media Arts and Theater (CMAT) will engage students while exposing them to college and careers. Look for more information about the camps on the District website in the near future.

District 205 has a complete staff committed to College and Career Readiness for all of the students. Each teacher provides college-based standards instruction in all classes. In addition, administrators, and the College and Career Readiness team which include the Director of College and Career Pathways, Career and Technical Education Area Instructional Leader, Smaller Learning Community Coordinator and Facilitators, Career and Technical Coordinator, College and Career Counselors, and Work Based Coordinators have dedicated ourselves to preparing our students to be competitive in this global society. Together, with our external partnerships and our partnerships with our parents and community, District 205 students will be successful in their future.

Your Schools and Finance

The entire world is in the midst of a level of economic crisis and instability that many of us have never experienced. This crisis has put an increasing financial strain on all school districts in the State of Illinois. A decrease in student enrollment within Thornton Township High School District 205 is putting an added strain on the District's current and future financial condition. The District has done an exemplary job in putting itself in the best possible financial condition in order to be prepared for the great financial challenges that are expected to impact the District over the next several years.

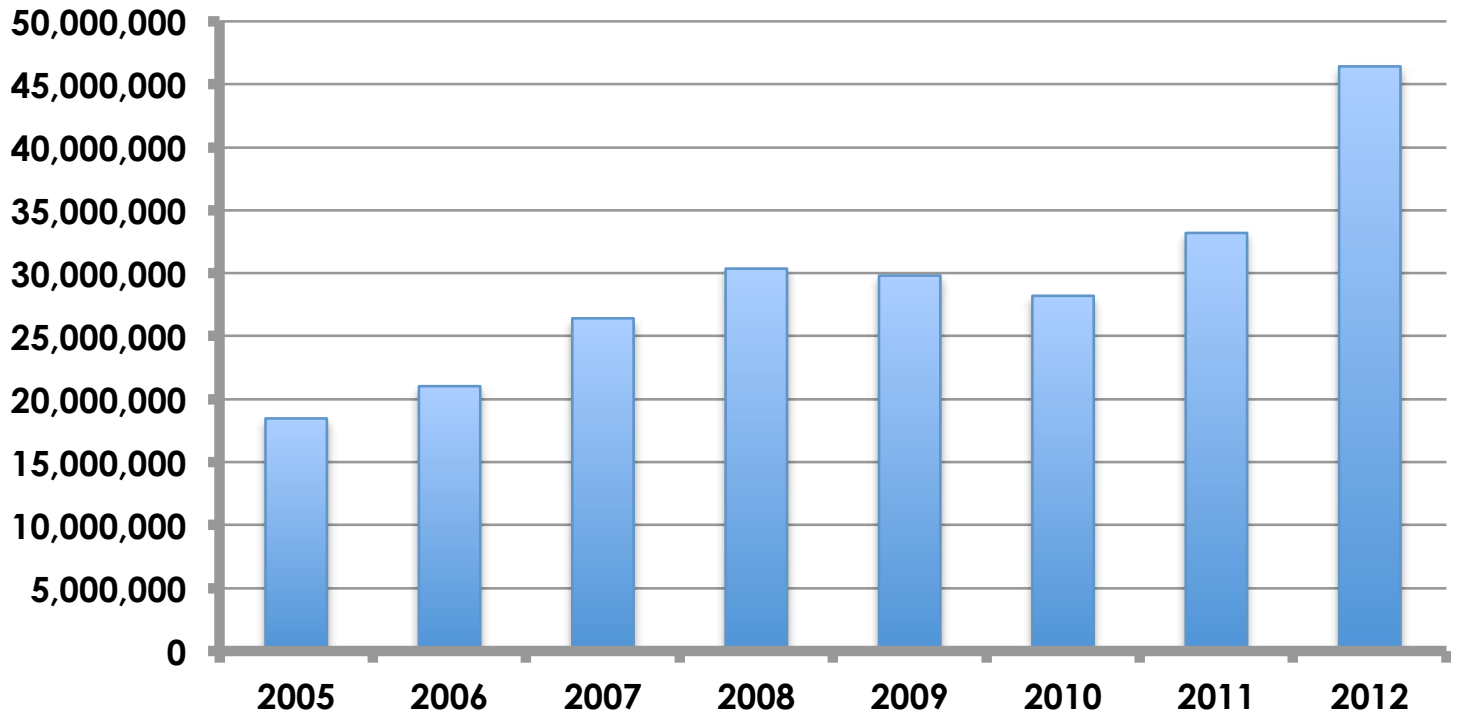
The following graph reflects total revenues and total expenses (excluding major capital projects) of Thornton Township High School District 205 since 2005:



During this time period, the District has been able to increase fund balances (excluding capital project reserve fund) by adopting balanced budgets that have resulted in total revenues received since 2005 exceeding total expenses paid since 2005 in excess of \$28 million.

The following graph reflects total fund balances (excluding capital project reserve fund) since 2005:

Fund Balances



ISSUES FACING THE DISTRICT

Financial Crisis in the State of Illinois

With 33% 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, which has resulted in it having the lowest credit rating of any state in the country. State funding to school districts in Illinois has dropped in each of the past three years and delays in State payments have been in excess of 200 days at times. The District has permanently lost \$4.9 million in GSA revenues due to cuts. Additionally, the State owed the District in excess of \$3.4 million in past due grant revenues on June 30, 2012. The State has indicated that funding to schools will continue to decrease in FY 2014. Actions being discussed include further reductions in GSA and the elimination of the regular transportation grant, which generates approximately \$2.5 million annually to the District.

Possible Shifting of Pension Obligations from the State to the District

In order to strengthen the financial condition of the State of Illinois, there is a strong movement to shift pension obligations to school districts. Experts believe that legislation will be passed as early as January 2013. 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 the District may be in the \$1.5 million - \$2.5 million range.

Significant Decrease in Funding Due to Declining Enrollment

The average daily student attendance in the District has declined by 1,300 students over the past few years. For each student the District loses, it will lose approximately \$6,000 in revenues. In other words, the loss of 1,300 students would ultimately translate into the loss of about \$7.8 million in State revenues annually. It is important to note that the State of Illinois uses a threeyear average of student attendance in order to determine funding levels. As a consequence, much of the decline in revenues will occur of the next few years.

Thornton Township High Schools District 205
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HARVEY, IL

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

FUTURE READY: College, Career & Citizenship DISTRICT ADMINISTRATION

Mr. John Thomas
Superintendent

Mr. Brett Fickes
Director of Curriculum & Instruction

Mr. Thomas Porter
Director of Pupil Personnel Services

Mr. Jerry Doss
*Director of Public Relations
& External Partnerships*

Mrs. Maria Brunson
Director of Information Technology

Mrs. Darcelle Williams
*Director of College
& Career Pathways*

Ms. Janette Morales
Manager of School Performance

SCHOOL ADMINISTRATION

Thornridge High School

Mr. James Walton Jr., Principal
Mr. Brad Beilfuss, Assistant Principal
Mr. Steven Valant, Assistant Principal

Thornton Township High School

Mr. Tony Ratliff, Principal
Mrs. Ebonie Williams, Assistant Principal
Mr. Alfonzo Pearson, Assistant Principal
Ms. Wanda Russell, Assistant Principal

Thornwood High School

Mr. Dennis Willis, Principal
Mrs. Kelly Hock, Assistant Principal
Ms. Elaine Brooks, Assistant Principal
Mr. Thomas Walsh, Assistant Principal

AREA INSTRUCTIONAL LEADERS

Dr. Mike Sanders
English

Mrs. Cindy Morris
Science

Mr. Rob Penman
Math

Mrs. Benita Anderson
Career Technical Education

Mr. Jerry Styrsky
Student Services & Physical Ed

Dr. James Drake
Fine Arts & ELL