



FLORENCE

CITY SCHOOLS

2019-2020
End of Year Report.

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Your System. Our Community. One Florence.

The Vision: Tomorrow...Today!

**The Mission: Empower students to explore,
create, challenge, innovate and lead.**



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**We are your school
system. We are one
Florence.**

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A Message From the Superintendent

From smiling toddlers at W.C. Handy to exploring teenagers interning at NASA, the 2019-2020 school year was another step forward for Falcons striving to fulfill the vision of Tomorrow...Today. While there were some firsts in the 2019-2020 school year, what remained constant was our spirit to serve students today to be what they can envision themselves being in the future.



As you take the time to reflect on the 2019-2020 school year, you will see administrators, faculties, and staffs empowering students to explore their futures, create a solid foundation for academic excellence, win state and national awards by being innovators, and a school board that led us and continues to lead us in an unprecedented time of change.

In March of 2019, we had to look at education in a different light due to COVID-19. Whether it was Feeding the Falcons or pulling together to finish the school year in a different way, we are thankful that our community, the Florence Community, pulled together to serve the students of this historic school system.

Please take a moment to reflect on the 2019-2020 school year's memorable moments for Florence City Schools. We are your school system. Florence is our community. We are one Florence.

Jimmy D. Shaw Jr.

Dr. Jimmy D. Shaw Jr.
Superintendent

Your System.

The Falcon Family

Perseverance became a keyword as the 2019-2020 school year took a drastic turn in March. Here is a look back at what makes Florence City Schools a beacon in the Shoals community. Students, teachers, administrators, and leaders of FCS uphold our motto every day - Your System. Our Community. One Florence. It is what makes us the Falcon Family.

AUGUST, 2019

As students returned to campuses across Florence City Schools on August 8, 2019, they were welcomed with fist-pumps, high-fives, and smiling faces. Weeks of preparation by teachers and administrators for the upcoming school year were being put into action. Little did they know at the time, but this would be one of the most challenging school years ever seen.

When school convened in August, Florence City Schools reopened the doors of the historic W.C. Handy School. The pitter-patter of small feet again filled the hallways of the landmark in west Florence. Twelve First Class Pre-Kindergarten classes for 4-year-olds, as well as a class for 3-year-olds and transitional 5-year-olds, began occupying the Early Childhood Development Center.

W.C. Handy Principal Dr. Michael South said the refurbishment project came together nicely and "Florence can be extremely proud of this school."

Although the school year had just started, the first report card was going out. Niche ranks school districts across the country by their performance in categories such as test scores, surveys, graduation rates, culture, diversity, and activities. Florence City Schools received an "A" and the ranking of 11th in the state of Alabama. A shining example of the culture at Florence City Schools was highlighted with a 1st place ranking and "A+" as the most diverse district in Alabama.

"There's absolutely a place for everyone in Florence City Schools and that's by design, so high marks in that area didn't surprise me," said Florence Superintendent Jimmy Shaw. "We have great diversity in all areas, really — socioeconomically, in backgrounds and interests."

In his third year as superintendent for Florence City Schools, Dr. Jimmy Shaw was named the District 8 Superintendent of the Year. Shaw calls the distinguished honor a "team effort". The acknowledgment is voted on by 12 superintendents in District 8 of the Alabama State Department of Education.

Dr. Lynne Hice, Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum and Instruction, said Dr. Shaw is "devoted" to the students, employees, and community.

"The superintendency for him is not a capstone or a stepping stone, it is a continuation of his life's mission, and is truly a labor of love for him as he leads all of us who believe in his vision," Hice said. "He works tirelessly each and every day to ensure every child has the opportunity to learn, grow, and realize success."

SEPTEMBER, 2019

In September, Harlan Elementary School began a new initiative to build literacy. Using their social media accounts, "Goodnight, Harlan" was birthed. Each week a staff member, community leader, or even the State Superintendent of Education took time to record themselves reading one

of their favorite children's books. The school would then share the video and encourage students and parents in the Harlan Family to participate by watching the story and discussing it.

OCTOBER, 2019

Harlan Elementary School celebrated a major accomplishment. The Alabama State Department of Education released their yearly report. While Florence City Schools maintained their "A" average, Harlan jumped from a "C" to a "B". According to the report card, this served as the single biggest improvement in any school in northwest Alabama.

"We took a very targeted approach, zeroing in on those gaps and began pulling all the resources we could," Harlan Principal Dr. Thomas Casteel said. "We're trying to build a strong culture of learning here and we've done a lot of formative assessment. We're giving double and triple instruction to those kids that need it."

Forest Hills Elementary School had the highest score in Florence City Schools with a 96 average.

The Falcon's lost a beloved family member. Following in his father's footsteps years before, William "Bill" Gullett ran and successfully won two terms to the Florence City Schools Board of Education. A graduate of Bradshaw High School, Gullett was one of the biggest supporters of Florence High School athletics and a founding member of the Florence Education Foundation. He passed away in October after a brief illness. The Education Foundation has created a yearly classroom grant honoring Mr. Gullett and his years of community service.

NOVEMBER, 2019

"As a teacher, we always put the kids first. We want to make sure the kids have an equal opportunity at everything," explained W.C. Handy Preschool Teacher Allyssa Carbine.

With Thanksgiving approaching, teachers at W.C. Handy School took it upon themselves to make sure each child and every family had a Thanksgiving dinner. Numerous companies in the Shoals area stepped up to donate food items for more than 50 boxes which were distributed. Carbine said they just wanted to make sure all families could be taken care of.

Everyone has a story. In an effort for our Freshman Center students to better understand one another, community outreach leaders challenged the campus in November. "A Day of Empathy" is a peer to peer challenge which was held off campus to prepare students for tomorrow...today.

"I want the young people to realize there is someone out there who desires to support you. There are some people out there that know what you are going through on all sides," stated Anthony Brooks, SPAN Coordinator for Lauderdale County. "The concept of empathy empowers them to understand

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others. How do they fill about the way we treat them? How do they fill about the way someone else treats them? How do I feel about the way other people are treating me? So we just want to make sure everyone is on the same page.”

DECEMBER, 2019

Our Community comes through for the holidays. A record-breaking 2,536 gifts were donated to the 2019 Stuff a Bus Toy Drive. Florence City Schools was overwhelmed by the support our community showed. The presents helped those in difficult circumstances. A special thank you goes to 102.7 KISS-FM's Hunter Jackson. He lived on a school bus for more than two weeks to receive all the donated toys. The gifts are distributed to school systems across northwest Alabama in time for them to be given to families in need at Christmas time.

Weeden Elementary School students spent the year building their minds and character through actions. In December, several “Kindness Trees” were

erected in the hallways. Each student took the time to write down another student's name who had done something nice for them either in school or in the community. The kindness bulbs were then placed on the trees for all to see.

“Our kids need this. They need to know in their hearts what love, kindness, friendship, and joy is and how to spread that,” explained Weeden Elementary School teacher Rachel Graves.

Florence High School and Freshman Center engineering students were named the Alabama State Winner in the National STEM Competition sponsored by Samsung. In January, David Bailey's “Engineering and Design” students are among the nation's 100 State Winners who are trying to solve real-world issues using classroom skills in science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM). They focused their efforts on ridding U.S. waterways of the invasive Asian Carp using sound waves, an idea of sophomore Cruz Collin.



“There’s absolutely a place for everyone in Florence City Schools and that’s by design. We have great diversity in all areas, really — socioeconomically, in backgrounds and interests.
- Dr. Jimmy Shaw, Superintendent

The team just missed getting an opportunity to prove their findings on the national level later in the spring.

JANUARY, 2020

Two Florence City Schools teachers were surprised in their classrooms on the morning of January 10, 2020. Forest Hills Elementary teacher Andrea Brewer and Florence High School teacher Virginia Tate were told in person of their selection as “Teacher of the Year” to represent the school system. Both ladies were selected by their peers to represent Florence City Schools at the Alabama Board of Education District 7 level.

Also in January, Superintendent Dr. Jimmy Shaw held the first State of the Schools presentation. Shaw outlined the accomplishments of Florence City Schools as well as what the future might hold. More than 200 parents, city leaders, and school system personnel gathered at the Marriott Shoals Conference Center to watch the inaugural event. Additionally, several hundred more watched the event live on the school systems social media accounts.

FEBRUARY, 2020

Alabama Attorney General Steve Marshall presented Forest Hills Elementary

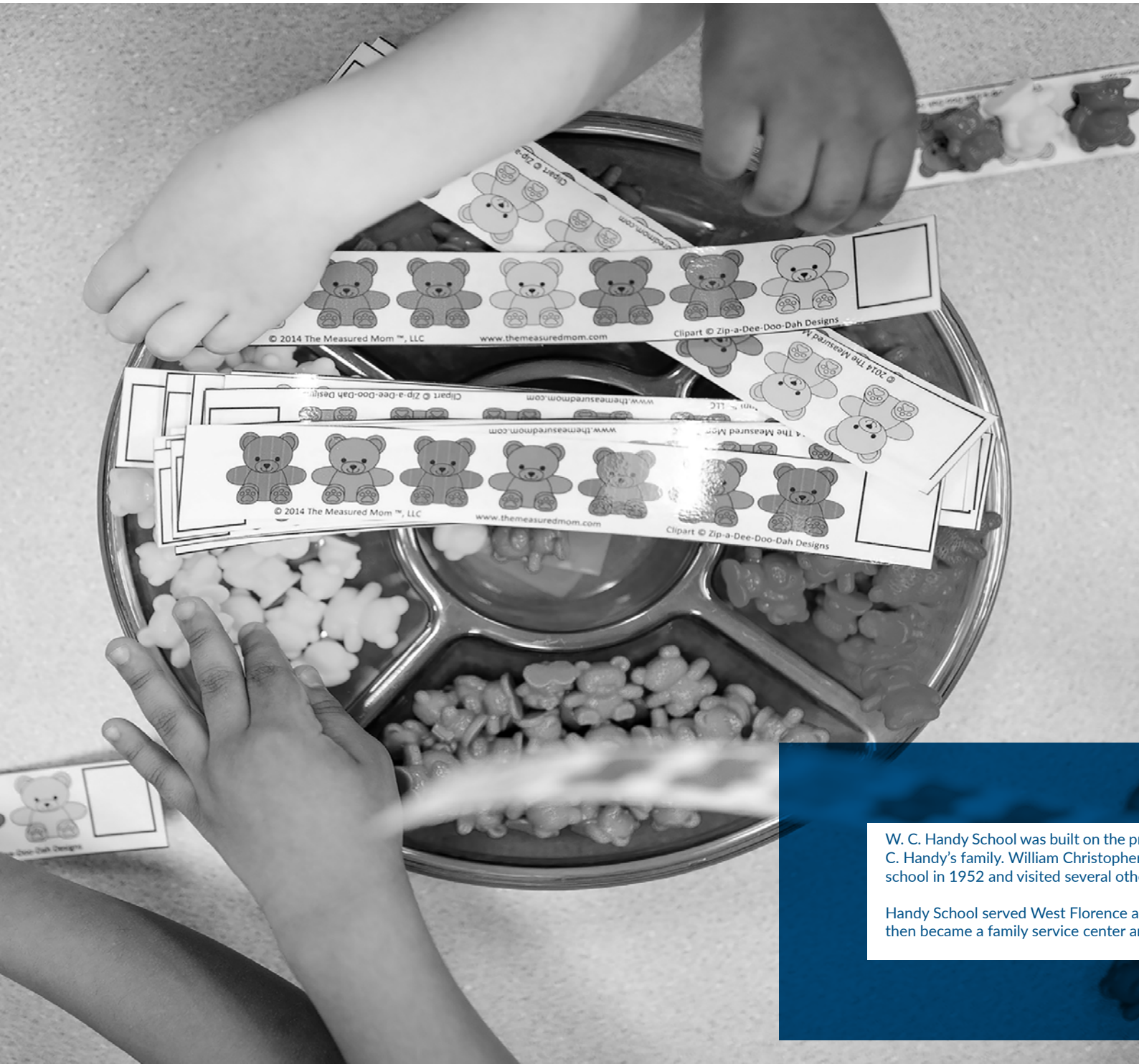
with the District 7 Safe Schools Award for 2019. Marshall noted Forest Hills was being recognized because of their dedication to peer communication and the implementation of safety technology. This is the third time Forest Hills has received this award.

System-wide, students in Florence City Schools are tutoring, mentoring, and helping resolve issues as Peer Helpers. After the initial training of teachers and principals, students were trained to help their fellow students in numerous ways.

MAY, 2020

In May, Florence High School was selected as both a 2019 CLAS Banner School and a 2019 CLAS School of Distinction from State School Board District 7. The awards were announced during a virtual awards ceremony hosted by the Council for Leaders in Alabama Schools.

Florence High School's “Lunch with the Keys” program was nominated by Florence City Schools Superintendent Dr. Jimmy Shaw. Lunch with the Keys takes place in a non-traditional atmosphere, outside of the classroom.



W. C. Handy School was built on the property of William C. Handy's family. William Christopher Handy founded the school in 1952 and visited several other schools in the area.

Handy School served West Florence and the surrounding area. It then became a family service center and is now a community center.

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property that originally belonged to W.C. Handy came to the dedication of the school.

was an elementary school until 1972. It was later converted into a Head Start center for the area.



W.C. Handy School

A pillar of the community reopens to educate the youngest Falcons in the family.

The culture and environment have become a shining example across the state of Alabama. In its first year, the W.C. Handy Early Childhood Development Center has transformed skeptical parents into true believers.

"It has been a process, and we would kind of be worried about him," explained parent Lamonde Turner. "He's eager to come to school, he's getting a proper education he needs. He's progressing well, and we appreciate this program a whole lot."

After a major renovation project to both the interior and exterior, the one-time elementary school named after "The Father of the Blues", reopened as an Alabama First Class Pre-K campus for Florence City Schools in August of 2019. A move which brought all of the school system's Pre-K programs under one roof.

"Florence City Schools is a leader in Pre-K. They have a dedicated Early Childhood Center, it is state of the art with Handy. They have added the classrooms needed to keep up with the demand from parents for Pre-K, and that takes leadership to make that happen," expressed Allison Muhlendorf with the Alabama School Readiness Alliance.

The tuition free Pre-K program utilizes hands-on learning curriculums. School days begin with teacher led activities which include math, science, and reading. But it does not happen in the traditional elementary school learning environment. Teachers use a lot of team building exercises to incorporate instruction, which can be seen as playing to the children.

"We bend to the individual needs of the child," stated teacher Joe Guzman. "If there is something we feel they would benefit more from as opposed to following our lesson plan, we can adjust that. We are very flexible. Working for a school system that takes stock in that, it's a God send."

Principal Dr. Michael South took to the task of creating the program at W.C. Handy. His vision included creating an environment of collaborative teachers who are experts in early childhood

education. He said they get one chance to get the child's education started out on the right foot.

"So, I have to capitalize on that and make sure we love on them and love their parents, and give them the tools that they can be successful. We have one chance, and I want to make the best of

W.C. Handy School

109 Pruitt Street, Florence, AL 35630
(256) 768-3400

www.florencek12.org/wchandy

Facebook: W.C. Handy School

Twitter: W.C. Handy School

that every year," said South.

And parents have taken note. Singing the praises of the teachers, staff, and administrators. W.C. Handy School is a place for every child.

"We have been super pleased with the accommodations they provide here. My son is better prepared academically and socially for kindergarten. I feel like they do a wonderful job meeting his needs and meeting him where he is at," shared parent Kara McLain.

By the summer of 2020, W.C. Handy became one of five sites in Alabama to receive an expansion grant through the Alabama Department of Early Childhood Education. Four tuition-based classrooms are being added to accommodate infants (six-weeks old) to toddlers (up to forty-eight months) on the thriving campus.

"I truly believe this is a loving environment, and it always will be as long as I am here," stated Dr. Michael South.

Launching Falcons into Careers

Florence High School students take advantage of a path which propels them through graduation and life after high school.

Florence High School's Launch program has been recognized nationally as a leader in bridging the gap between students and businesses by providing an extensive internship/apprenticeship program for students to examine career opportunities.

Florence City Schools recognizes we have a very diverse population of students, and we make a pathway for all students to be successful. Thinking "outside of the box" is the normal on our campuses. Our faculty and staff are constantly challenging themselves to find new ways to reach our students where they are. One example of that is the Launch program at Florence High School.

In 2009, Florence High School partnered with the Southwire Company to form one of the first career-readiness programs in northwest Alabama. Since that time, 12 for Life has helped hundreds of FHS students gain valuable work experience and most importantly their high school diploma. In just nine years, 12 for Life has assisted in lifting the graduation rate at FHS by nearly 30 percentage points.

Building on the successes of 12 for Life, Florence High School unveiled the Launch Program in 2018.

"Special things happen when you partner and listen to business, industry, and employment agencies, and I think that is what we have started to do in Florence City Schools on a much higher scale," explained Launch Program Director Dr. Corey Behel. "Each student has potential with-in them, and what we are focused on intensely is moving them towards productive career outcomes."

In Launch, Florence High School partners with high-interest, high-ability students and places them with local and national companies who want to give the students real-world life work experience. This helps the student identify possible careers they wish to pursue through college or trade school after high school graduation.



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**2018**

Banner Program

The Launch Program at Florence High School earned the 2018 CLAS Banner Program of Distinction. It is an award presented by the Council for Leaders in Alabama Education with the purpose of identifying, recognizing, and publicizing schools with outstanding educational programs.

\$20K

Apprenticeship Earnings

Students who participate in apprenticeships through the Launch program earn on average \$20,000 during their junior and senior years at Florence High School.

70+

Business Partners

Launch is recognized as the state of Alabama's largest internship/apprenticeship program among high schools. Students have the opportunity to work in the marketing, engineering, medical, fashion, music, and community services fields.

Florence City Schools

By the numbers for 2019-2020

First School

1820

An established school
district in 1890

ENROLLMENT

4,703

2,624 Pre-K to 6th grades

2,079 7th to 12th grades

Accredited by Southern Association
of Colleges and Schools (Cognia)

SYSTEM BRAND

Your System. Our Community. One Florence.

VISION

Tomorrow...Today!

MISSION

**Empower students to explore, create,
challenge, innovate and lead.**

Academic Schools

W.C. Handy ECDC

Forest Hills Elementary

Harlan Elementary

Kilby Laboratory

Weeden Elementary

Hibbett Intermediate

Florence Middle School

Florence Freshman Center

Florence High School

DISTRICT BUDGET

\$62.5 Million

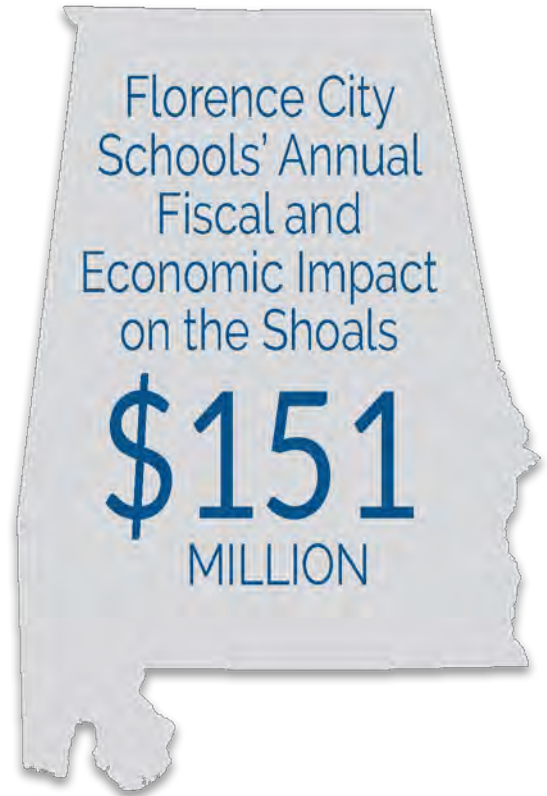
Virtual School Course Offerings **73**

Advanced Placement Courses **21**

Career Tech Course Offerings **92**

Florence Academy of Fine Arts **124**

Mobile Device to Student Ratio **1:1**



Combined Size

1.083

Million Square Ft.

Student-to-faculty Ratio **13:1**

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AHSAA 7A

Varsity Sports

343

Full-time
Teaching Faculty

Graduates in
June, 2020

327

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One Florence.

Students, teachers, and faculty members give back to a city that blesses them.

Florence High School

The Saturday morning in March was chilly as the sun slowly rose in the eastern sky. Plastic garbage bags and work gloves were laid on the back of a city truck waiting to be used. The stage was set for the annual "City-Wide Cleanup" in Florence. Dozens of volunteers hit the pavement across the city picking up trash along the streets. Joining the volunteer corps, more than 100 Florence High School student-athletes.

"It is always good to give back. When you are giving back and able to do something for your community that you are a part of, I think that is always something that they can look back on in their life and say, I was a part of that," explained Florence Athletic Director Byron Graham.

Varsity Track and Field Head Coach Vincent Jackson organized the early morning outing. Having the opportunity to unite the athletes outside of school, practice, and competitions was used as a team-building exercise and community outreach.

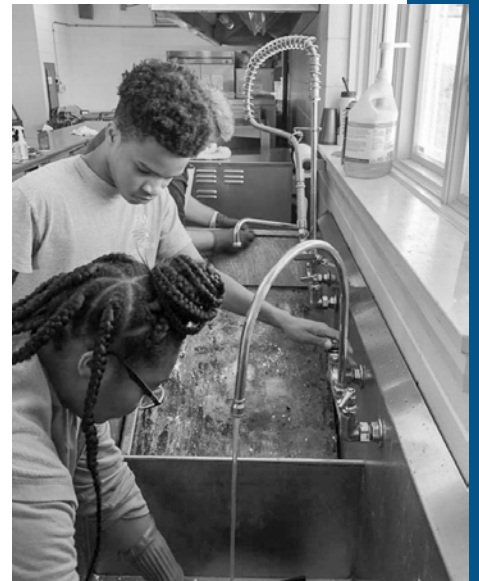
"You want to be able to show that we are all vested, all the way down to our athletes, all the way down to our kids. There are all kinds of things going on though-out this school district, and we always want to give back," said Graham.

And there are many examples of volunteerism and community outreach on each grade level in Florence City Schools. From food and toy drives to raising money for March of Dimes, students are encouraged to get involved.



Florence Freshman Center

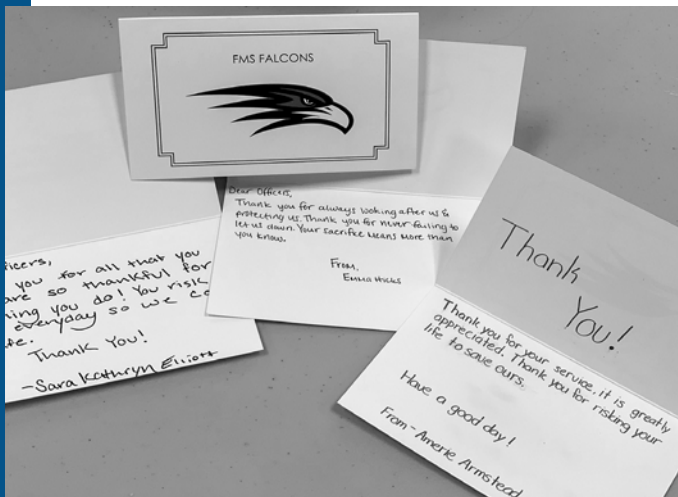
An important aspect of community service is rolling up your sleeves and putting in some hard work. Florence Freshman Center students in the Family, Career and Community Leaders of America organization did just that prior to the COVID-19 Pandemic. One of their planned service projects involved the non-profit agency Room at the Table. Students donated \$400 worth of nonperishable items, and also spent the day cleaning the facility (kitchen, dining room, and organizing their pantry) to get it ready to feed the homeless.



One Florence.

Florence Middle School

For one of their many outreach projects, the Florence Middle School National Junior Honor Society held a First Responders Appreciation Breakfast in mid-October. Members of the Florence Police Department and Florence Fire Rescue enjoyed a great breakfast and hung out with some awesome students. The students were also able to ask questions and learn more about what police and firefighters do every day.



Hibbett Intermediate School

Each November, campuses across the school district compete head to head to benefit the hungry. Students and faculty are encouraged to bring in boxes of macaroni and cheese to donate to the Salvation Army just in time for the holidays.

At Hibbett Intermediate School, more than 800 boxes were collected by the Falcon Family to give food assistance to those in need. The Salvation Army of the Shoals says they filled two pull behind trailers when they picked up the collected items from our nine campuses.



One Florence.

Weeden Elementary School

At Weeden, we strive to develop young leaders in all students. Third and fourth grade students learn how to be citizens with good character through participation in our Student Council. One way we teach students to give back to the community is through service projects. Each fall, Student Council partners with the Salvation Army and hosts a school wide drive to collect boxes of macaroni to be distributed to needy families. Our student council members also serve our school, setting good examples for fellow students, and teach the value of keeping our community clean by helping to keep our campus free of trash. Student Council members also serve our community by hosting events, such as our Veterans Day breakfast on the day of our annual school wide Veterans Day program. Students send out invitations to Veterans in our community and enjoy serving breakfast and learning more about these veterans.



Harlan Elementary School

At Harlan Elementary School, we realize the value our students and staff receive in giving to our community.

In February of 2020, Harlan Elementary students and staff participated in the Great Kindness Challenge. During a week of kind deeds, the Harlan family accepted the challenge to donate items to senior citizens living at Mitchell-Hollingsworth Senior Center. Peer Helpers and sponsors delivered gift bags just before Valentine's Day bringing smiles and joy to everyone who took part.



One Florence.

Forest Hills Elementary School

Each year students at Forest Hills work to raise money to donate to St. Jude's Children's Research Hospital through two events, our Parent/Teacher Volleyball Game and our Walk for St. Jude. During the volleyball game, parents/teachers pay to participate and students bring in donations as well.

To raise awareness and also funds, we also host a Walk for St. Jude each year in which students and teachers walk around our campus to show their support for such a worthy cause. We have had our very own students at Forest Hills receive life-saving treatments from St. Jude's Hospital, so each year we try and show them our support.

In addition to our work with St. Jude's FHES raises funds to support the American Heart Association by collecting donations for the Kid's Heart Challenge and jumping rope during a fun Jump Rope Glow Party! Last year, our students raised \$9,747.79 for the American Heart Association.

Forest Hills supports the Salvation Army in two large community service projects each year. Each fall our Student Council sponsors the Macaroni Drive in which students bring in boxes of macaroni and cheese to donate to our local Salvation Army. Last year, we collected hundreds of boxes and filled an entire trailer full with boxed macaroni! Next, we also have a Can-A-Thon each year which collects hundreds of cans of food for the needy in the Shoals area.



Kilby Laboratory School

As a Laboratory School, students at Kilby are accustomed to future teachers at the University of North Alabama training in their classrooms. But occasionally the roles can be reversed. As part of a community service project, Kilby students planned and hosted an "Educational Technology Workshop" for UNA Education majors to come in and see some of the tools they could potentially use in the classroom as an educator.

The Kilby students created handouts and set up demonstration stations where the visitors could rotate around the room and see various tech tools being used in real-time. It was great to see the professionalism Kilby students displayed while explaining the technology. There were about 40 UNA student visitors that attended the event. Many of the participants said it was one of the best days of learning they had since starting the Education program.



In October, the UNA Collaborative Student Organization, along with Kilby students, hosted a "Trunk-or-Treat" for some local mental and physical health agencies to create inclusive opportunities for individuals with disabilities. It was a fun night where clients and Kilby students enjoyed walking through the Kilby parking lot and playing games out of the trunks of peoples' cars. This was a fun event that allowed the clients to dress up and enjoy Halloween in a safe and controlled environment.

Also, the Kilby Ambassadors served as ushers and greeters for the Shoals Symphony this year. They were also invited to serve as greeters for the Florence City Arbor Day Celebration at the Florence Public Library.

One Florence.

W.C. Handy School

In their first year, W.C. Handy School found several ways to reach the Florence community. One of those involved students, teachers, numerous corporations, and students from the University of North Alabama.

In November, food items were collected by students and teachers to donate to families with food insecurities for Thanksgiving. Shoals companies then donated a turkey or ham to be delivered to the homes of the families along with the collected items.

Just prior to Thanksgiving, W.C. Handy teachers and the UNA sorority Alpha Gamma Delta met to pack meals for 50 families who would be blessed for the holiday.



Florence Board of Education

The Florence City Schools Board of Education is a corporate body comprised of elected members from the six districts across the city of Florence. The Board of Education oversees and manages a public school district's affairs, personnel, and properties. Board members conduct a regular public meeting on the second Tuesday of each month at the FCS Technology and Professional Development Center, 541 Riverview Drive, Florence, Alabama. Each meeting begins at 5:00 P.M.



Laura Hardeman
Board President
District 5



David Howard
Board Vice-President
District 2



Vicky Kirkman
District 1



Bill Griffin
District 3



MaLeah Chaney
District 4



Britton Watson
District 6

Dr. Jimmy Shaw, Jr - Superintendent
Dr. Lynne Hice - Assistant Superintendent
Mrs. Connie Wallace - CSFO/Assistant Superintendent

08

COVID-19

The unexpected pandemic which shutdown a nation and closed schools on March 17, 2020.

The call came in early on a weekend morning. An emergency administrators meeting was being called for Florence City Schools on Sunday afternoon, March 15, 2020. Superintendent Dr. Jimmy Shaw was getting word from the Alabama State Department of Education that schools would be shut-down very soon due to Coronavirus, and FCS needed to act.

Coronavirus (COVID-19) had been on the radar for several weeks already. However, it had been mostly isolated to urban areas across the west coast and some larger cities. By mid-March, COVID-19 was starting to spread across the nation. The virus had already been discussed in leadership meetings within the school system, and it was time to finalize our plans to dismiss schools and switch to a remote learning platform.

With the clock ticking, directors and principals took the FCS Emergency Plans and modified them to address a crisis never before seen within a school system. At the helm, Dr. Shaw led the team in developing options for educating students remotely with classroom and take-home devices already in place. After several hours, the first phase of the plan was ready to be communicated to staff and parents; schools would dismiss indefinitely on March 17th. Over the next several days, dozens of administrators and principals worked tirelessly to give students, parents, and staff a better vision moving forward.

Technology proved to play a major role in educating FCS students for the final nine-weeks of the 2019-2020 school year. By early April, all K-12 students were using laptop computers or iPads to complete classroom assignments. To stay connected to students, teachers took advantage of programs such as ZOOM and Google Meets. During the closure, teachers would hold virtual meetings to instruct and answer any questions students might have asked.

As FCS shifted into remote learning, feeding our students became the next priority. With the help of the USDA, any child age 18 and under was eligible to receive breakfast and lunch at no cost. Employees and non-profit organizations collectively volunteered for Feeding the Falcons. Daily, hundreds of meals were prepared for distribution using the Florence Middle

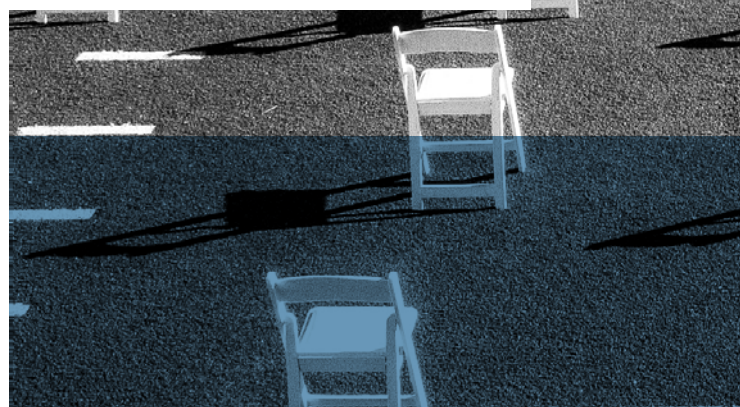
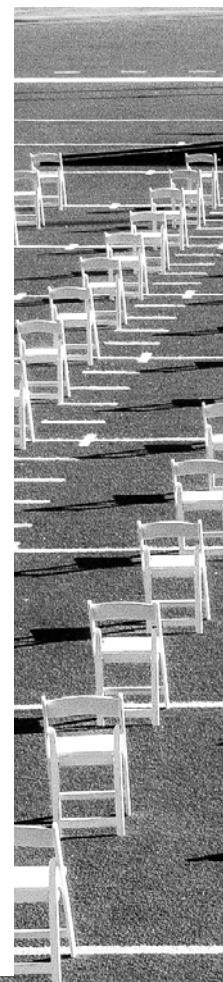
School kitchen and given out to students within the community. Through the efforts of hundreds of volunteers over nine weeks, more than 60,000 meals went to kids in the Florence area.

Perhaps one of the largest groups to be directly impacted by the closing of campuses would be the graduating class at Florence High School. For this particular group of students, many of their milestone events had to be canceled due to mandatory health orders by the State of Alabama. These young men and women would be unable to enjoy prom, Awards Day, or walk across the stage at graduation on time.

To help ease the disconnection for the Class of 2020, Florence High School Principal Dr. Roderick Sheppard and his staff found avenues to recognize the Senior Class. Using technology, a video montage was released on their original graduation date. Seniors took turns announcing themselves on video and then moving their tassels from right to left, which symbolizes they made it. On May 29th, staff members erected signs on the front lawn of FHS. Each yard-sign pictured a graduating senior and congratulated them for their hard work.

In late May, the state of Alabama loosened the restrictions for outdoor gatherings by the general public. This gave Florence City Schools the means to give the Class of 2020 a proper graduation. On the evening of June 12th, more than 325 Florence High School Senior Class members walked across the stage at Braly Stadium to complete their high school careers by receiving their diplomas. Of course, accommodations were made to socially distance each student and the crowd who were there to witness the milestone.

After graduation, there is usually a collective sigh as the school year is punctuated. Usually, administrators and staff members take time to be with their families before jumping into the next school year. As the 2019-2020 school year wrapped up, there was nothing unusual about it. But what it did reaffirm for Florence City Schools, we are a family, we watch out for one another, and when the odds are stacked against us - we rise to new heights.



09



4,212+

The novel Coronavirus proved to be a community-building time for the city of Florence and its surrounding area. When FCS decided to begin our Feeding the Falcons program, numerous community organizations and employees stepped in to lend a hand.

From March 18th to May 21st, dozens of individuals accumulated more than 4,212 volunteer hours. This total takes into account the hours spent both preparing and distributing meals over the 27 days.

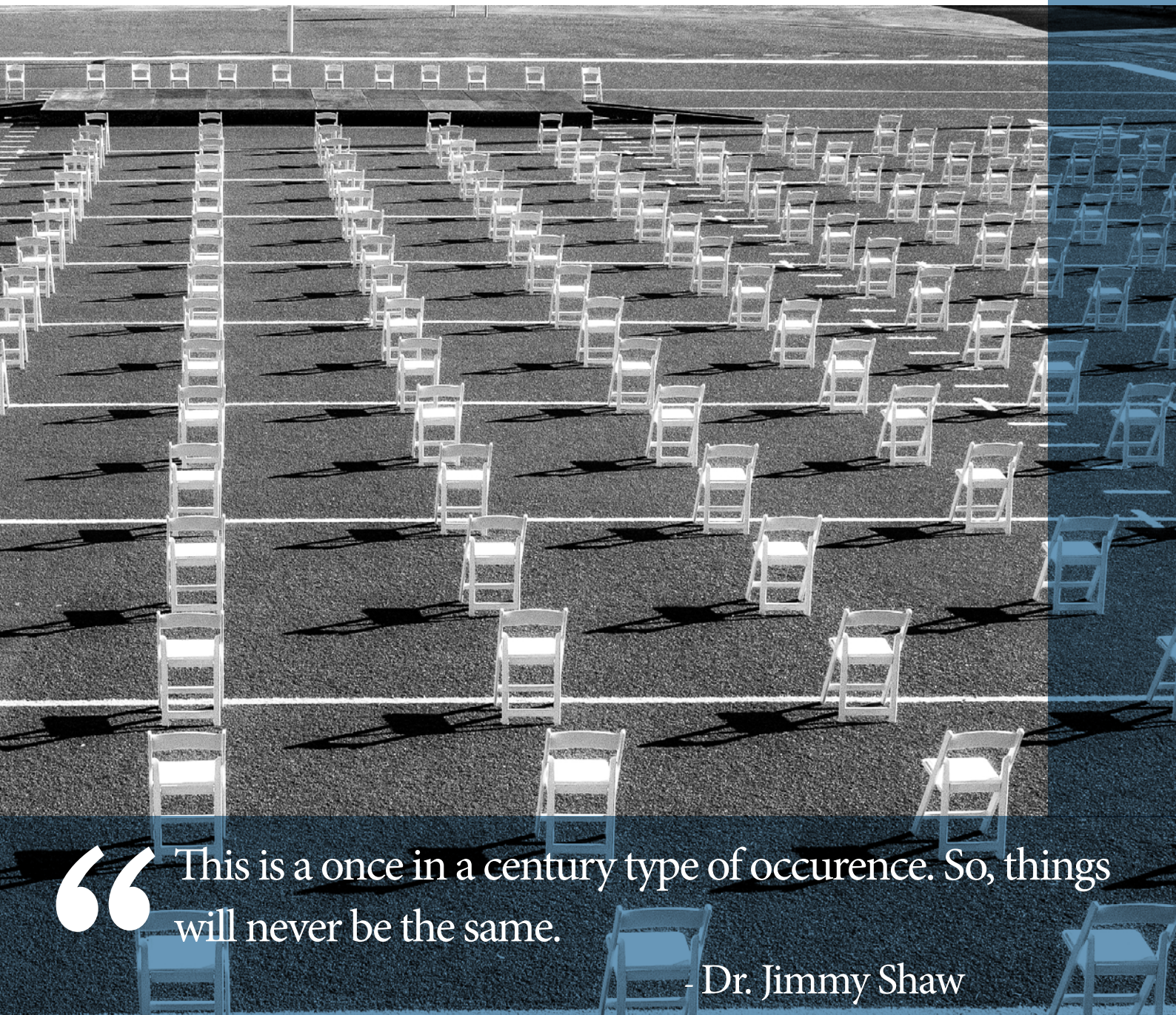
Florence City Schools would like to thank everyone who gave their time to make sure the children in our community were taken care of.



60,952

Before COVID-19, our Child Nutrition Program employees made an average of 4,800 breakfast and lunch meals per day. When school campuses closed on March 17, 2020, their attention turned to feeding children remotely community-wide.

During the 27 days Feeding the Falcons was utilized between March and May, CNP employees and volunteers prepared and distributed 60,952 meals. These meals went to all children age 18 and younger, whether they were Florence City Schools students or not.



“This is a once in a century type of occurrence. So, things will never be the same.

- Dr. Jimmy Shaw

Tomorrow... Today!

10

Empower students to explore,
create, challenge, innovate and lead.

Florence City Schools has a long-standing tradition of being at the forefront of education not only in our region but across the state of Alabama. Our mission is to provide our students with the means to reach their full potential no matter the pathway.



Science

While earning their high school diploma, students who wish to follow a career path into the medical industry may participate in science classes which can elevate them into receiving an Associates Degree from NWSCC in Science or Medical Technology at graduation.



Technology

Technology is an important component of the developmental skills of FCS students. The use of robotics in our curriculum enables students to visualize, model, prototype, solve and report comprehensive design problems. Robotics clubs begin in the 3rd grade.



Engineering

The Engineering program enables students to make an informed career choice through the study and application of mechanical, electrical, and other engineering systems. Students conduct research and design engineering projects to enhance abilities and interest in the field of engineering.

Florence City Schools (FCS) is a proud member of the Alabama Math, Science, and Technology Initiative (AMSTI). Over its history, AMSTI has received both national and international attention for its effectiveness at raising achievement scores and improving student interest in math and science. Fortune 500 CEOs selected AMSTI as one of 35 "programs that work" from across the nation.

AMSTI's motto is Learning by Doing. FCS teachers receive hands-on training in science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM) throughout the year. These lessons are then taken to the classroom. Our students explore STEM first-hand through the curriculum and experiments. The University of North Alabama facilitates AMSTI's mission for Florence City Schools with teacher coaching, resources, and additional classroom support.

AMSTI is just one part of the Florence City Schools plan to make sure our students are ready for the future. FCS enrolled students receive either an iPad or Chromebook to assist them along their education pathway.



Anyone who has never made a
mistake has never tried anything new.
- Albert Einstein



Three Questions with David Bailey, Engineering/Robotics/TSA Instructor at Florence High School

How important is the use of science, technology, engineering, and math in today's classroom?

Bailey: "It is of paramount importance that STEM is being used in classrooms across the curriculum. I taught Geometry prior to transitioning into engineering, robotics, and information technology, and I was always looking for ways to include STEM in my lessons. Technology keeps on advancing, so we have to help our students keep up as best we can."

What role does STEM play in classrooms of the future?

Bailey: "In classrooms now and in the future, STEM plays a crucial role in student learning. By combining the technology aspect with science and math, students get to use what they have learned in tangible applications. When you use what you have learned to solve relevant, realistic problems, you internalize those concepts so much better. There is a broad interpretation of what constitutes STEM activities. STEM does not necessarily have to include a computer or anything electronic."

How does what students do in the classroom through STEM type training impact our community?

Bailey: "Our students are already making an impact on the local industry, as we have a sizable number of our students who are either employed with a local manufacturer or interning through our Launch program. Employers value our students because they know that our students have a great academic foundation. Our district values STEM learning and makes it a priority to offer these learning opportunities at every grade level."



In Memory of William "Bill" Gullett

www.florencek12.org

