



FLORENCE CITY SCHOOLS



END OF YEAR REPORT
2021-2022

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 Central Office located at 541 Riverview Drive, Florence, Alabama. Each meeting begins at 5:00 P.M.



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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.



Dr. Jimmy Shaw

A Message

From the Superintendent

Greeting Falcons,

The 2021-2022 school year was another step out of the shadows of COVID-19 and into a new year. We celebrated our first Early College graduates, stuffed a bus, and served our community. What remained constant was our spirit to serve.

As we take reflect on the 2021-2022 school year, you will see administrators, faculties, and staff 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 May 2022, we beamed with Falcon Pride as we had 10 graduates walk across the stage as graduates of both Northwest Shoals Community College and Florence High School. This was the culmination of four years of hard work, dedication, and perseverance. Whether it was stuffing a bus to spread holiday cheer or offering vaccines through a partnership with North Alabama Medical Center, the Florence Community, pulled together to serve the students of this historic school system.

As you explore the following pages, take time to reflect and celebrate the school year that was 2021-2022. Florence City Schools, we are your school system. Florence is our community. We are one Florence.

Dr. Jimmy D. Shaw Jr.
Superintendent

Your System.

The Falcon Family

AUGUST, 2021

August 16: The 2021-22 school year begins still facing challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic. In a called Florence City Board of Education meeting on Monday, August 16, 2021, members approved a recommendation by FCS Superintendent Dr. Jimmy Shaw to require masks for individuals in Pre-K through 12th grade effective August 19, 2021.

August 27: W.C. Handy School is overjoyed to host Dr. Barbara Cooper, Director of the Alabama Department of Early Childhood Education. With W.C. Handy being a state-wide leader, she wanted to see all the great things going on personally.

SEPTEMBER, 2021

September 8: Publix surprises FCS with an \$8,460 check from public donations at their Florence store. FCS is beyond humbled by everyone's generosity. The donation went directly towards taking care of the Falcon Family.

September 13: Superintendent Dr. Jimmy Shaw is named Superintendent of the Year for District 8 which makes him a finalist for the State Superintendent of the Year Award presented by School Superintendents of Alabama and Schneider Electric.

September 22: The 2022 Niche District Report Card is released, listing Florence City Schools in the top four percent of school districts in the country.

OCTOBER, 2021

October 8: FCS salutes community heroes at the last home football game at Braly Stadium. Healthcare workers, EMTs, police, fire fighters, and frontline workers receive free admission as gratitude for their hard work during the COVID-19 pandemic.

October 8: During the Presentation of the Colors at the last home game, Cadet Lt. Col. Hayden White presents the U.S. Honor Flag, the same flag used in fallen Sheffield Police Sgt. Nick Risner's funeral earlier in the day. This flag flew at Ground Zero and has since been used in thousands of funerals to honor fallen heroes, including late U.S. presidents.

NOVEMBER, 2021

November 16: W.C. Handy School Principal Dr. Michael South is selected as Alabama's National Association of Elementary School Principals (NAESP) District 1 nominee for the National Distinguished Principal award.

November 16: The Florence Middle School National Jr. Honor Society honors local first responders by serving and volunteering at a special breakfast. Math teacher and NJHS sponsor Evon Farris says the event gives students the opportunity to meet the area's first responders and show their gratitude. Farris says donations from parents and area businesses make the breakfast possible.

November 18: The Florence Education Foundation awards classroom grants to teachers across the district as part of the Anderson Classroom Excellence Awards.

DECEMBER, 2021

December 3: The Alabama Association of Secondary School Principals names Florence Middle School's Ashley Bowling Secondary Assistant Principal of the Year.

December 11: For the eighth year, My 101.5's Hunter Jackson lives on board a Florence City school bus for the Stuff the Bus Toy Drive. For the first time, two buses are used to collect donations, helping Jackson surpass his highest goal of 5,000 gifts and toys for children and teens across The Shoals.

JANUARY, 2022

January 10: Forest Hills Elementary's Julie Wilson and Florence Middle's Matthew Bonds are named the Elementary and Secondary Teachers of the Year for Florence City Schools, respectively.

January 25: The LAUNCH Program hosts its annual Career Development & Transition Program Dinner. Special guest speaker, Nick Moore, Director of the Governor's Office of Education & Workforce Transformation, speaks on how LAUNCH students are setting the example for their peers as well as younger generations of students.

FEBRUARY, 2022

February 2: It's a special homecoming for a newly hired member of the Falcon Family. The extensive search for a new varsity head football coach sees more than four dozen applicants, but Athletic Director Byron Graham says he knows that Florence native Kenny Morson is the best person for the job.

February 21: Florence City Schools launches the district's first mobile app for Apple and Android devices. Members of the Falcon Family now have a one-stop-shop connecting them to Florence City Schools news and resources right at their fingertips.

MARCH, 2022

March 27: The Shoals community's efforts receive statewide recognition at the Alabama Broadcasters Association ABBY Awards. The Florence City Schools communications department and local media coverage of the Stuff the Bus toy drive earns My 101.5 (WMXV-FM) the Judges Award of Merit.

APRIL, 2022

April 6: Kilby Laboratory School hosts the International Association of Laboratory Schools Spring Conference. The three-day event allows laboratory schools from across the world to join together to network, share research findings, and collaborate for the improvement of learning for all students..

April 11: FCS Federal Programs Director Casey Reed receives national recognition at a conference in Washington, D.C. The National Association of Federal Education Program Administrators recognized him for his leadership and dedicated service to the Alabama AFEPA.

MAY, 2022

May 20: The first class of students to enter the Florence City Schools Early College Program receive their associate degrees from Northwest-Shoals Community College, weeks before earning their high school diplomas.

The Falcon Feeder

One Year Later



THE FIRST CUSTOM BUILT CONCESSION TRUCK IN ALABAMA SCHOOLS

It's been more than a year since Florence City Schools unveiled The Falcon Feeder in Winter 2021. The custom-built concession truck proved to be a dream purchase of the FCS Child Nutrition Program.

As the COVID-19 pandemic set in during March of 2020, Florence City Schools and volunteers stepped up in the Shoals community. Over the course of two months, more than 60,000 meals were served to children in northwest Alabama through the Feeding the Falcons initiative. FCS Child Nutrition Program Coordinator Tara Talmage raised concerns. She was afraid that many children were likely going hungry due to a lack of personal transportation. It was at that moment Talmage began to explore avenues to reach more students and families in need.

After receiving a \$100,000-grant through the No Kid Hungry organization, The Falcon Feeder gave FCS the opportunity to meet the families where they were to deliver meals. No Kid Hungry is a national campaign run by Share Our Strength, a nonprofit working to solve problems of hunger and poverty in the United States and around the world.

"I think last year was probably just a good learning and growing experience for us because we were kind of just making it up as we went along," Talmage said. "Last year, we really didn't have any sort of blueprint or guideline to follow. We treaded waters and figured out what worked."

Talmage said for Summer 2022, the CNP was able to consolidate the delivery points and routes into the areas they saw the highest impact and participation the previous year.

"Food insecurity has always been an issue, specifically in summer for children," Talmage said. "This helps alleviate some of the food insecurity for kids who might not have access to regular meals when they're not in school. This is one avenue to kind of help combat those issues, especially since they got worse during COVID."

In addition to being the main vehicle for the summer feeding program, The Falcon Feeder is now a recognizable feature for Florence City Schools, often making appearances at special events and community gatherings from pep rallies to field days. It is now an integral part of district culture that is sure to make an impact for years to come.

Launching Falcons

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 customary 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 notably, 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 larger scale,” Launch Program Director Dr. Corey Behel explained. “Each student has potential within 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. These internships help students identify possible careers they wish to pursue through college or trade school after high school graduation.

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.

90+

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.



Nick Moore, Director of Governor Kay Ivey's Office of Education & Workforce Transformation speaks at the 2022 Launch Program Career Development & Transition Program Dinner.

Florence City Schools

2021-2022 By the Numbers

First School

1820

**An established school
district in 1890**

ENROLLMENT

5,011

2,789 *B-3 to 6th grade*

2,222 *7th to 12th grade*

Accredited by Southern Association
of Colleges and Schools (Cognia)

SYSTEM BRAND

Your System. Our Community. One

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

\$63.7 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

Florence City
Schools' Annual
Fiscal and
Economic Impact
on the Shoals

\$151
MILLION



One Florence.

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

Florence High School

After the COVID-19 pandemic prevented in-person gatherings, live performances returned to the Florence High School Performing Arts Center in 2021 with the production of Disney's Aladdin Jr. The Florence Academy of Fine Arts hosted the show, which utilized many theatrical elements including a dual rigging system that allowed the young actors to defy gravity.



Another annual event put on hold by the COVID-19 pandemic, the Florence High School Key Club Christmas Project, Heroes and Helpers. Under the sponsorship of teacher, Lauren Winters, Key Club members team up with the district school resource officers to help provide Christmas for elementary school students.

Florence Freshman Center

Florence Freshman Center students presented “Flight Plans” to faculty and family members as a final result of weeks of research and thought regarding what they plan to do after high school. Counselor Caroline Jones said she was impressed as she listened to students share their plans for the future. This and many other programs throughout the district are examples of how Florence City Schools strives for students to experience tomorrow...today.



One Florence.

Florence Middle School

Florence Middle School Assistant Principal Ashley Bowling soared to new heights when she received word that she had been named the Alabama Secondary Assistant Principal of the Year. Bowling didn't know what to expect when she walked into a full gymnasium of students, teachers, and representatives from the Council for Leaders in Alabama Schools. "I am shocked, and I am very humbled, and I am very blessed, and I can only do what I do because I have such a great team here at Florence," Bowling said. "She's an incredible person, she's an incredible mother, and she takes care of, not only her own child, but also 700 children here at Florence Middle School," Principal Kevin Wieseman said. "We're very blessed, not only for her integrity, but also the character which she exhibits every day, and also the support she not only gives kids but also adults," Wieseman added.



Hibbett Intermediate School

Florence City Schools is always appreciative when parents can get involved. It creates a sense of community that lets them know they are just as much a part of the Falcon Family as the children they entrust with our staff each day. Muffins with Moms and Donuts with Dads helps strengthen that bond at Hibbett Intermediate School. On one day for moms and another for dads, the parents come and spend time with their children in the library while enjoying refreshments. This happens in conjunction with the fall book fair, also located in the Hibbett library.



One Florence.

Weeden Elementary School

For the first time since 2019, Geek Glam returns to Weeden Elementary School. Weeden STEM Teacher Julianna Mann said the program started when Weeden was interested in becoming certified as a STEM school.

“We needed something to show representation of underrepresented groups in STEM, so we focused on our girls,” Mann said. “Geek Glam was a day just for our young ladies to have some access to people that worked in STEM careers.” Mann added the program has brought in coding engineers from out of state, an aerospace engineer, a meteorologist, and even a chocolatier to explain the science of chocolate.

The glam side involves the UNA Phi Mu chapter. Mann said the women of Phi Mu give students makeover experiences where they can have their nails painted and hair styled. Additionally, Mann said a Clinique representative now visits to show the students facial care and other self-care techniques.



Harlan Elementary School

A partnership between Harlan Elementary School and the University of North Alabama received recognition from multiple organizations in 2022. The initiative is called Lion Buddies which is a mentorship program where UNA students provide support for Harlan students in the areas of mentoring, small-group instruction, and shared learning opportunities between the Harlan and UNA students.

The Council for Leaders in Alabama Schools recognized Harlan as a CLAS School of Distinction for the program, while Character.org recognized Lion Buddies as a Promising Practice for 2022. "When I was younger, I didn't have a program this cool," UNA Quarterback Jaylen Gipson said. As a Lion Buddy mentor, Gipson said he tries to speak encouraging words to the Harlan students each time he has an opportunity to visit.



One Florence.

Forest Hills Elementary School

In May 2022, Forest Hills Elementary School hosted its inaugural STEAM Night, focusing on science, technology, engineering, art, and math activities. The schoolwide event was the culmination of hard work from the Forest Hill staff and student and teacher volunteers from Florence Middle School and Florence High School. Throughout campus, students and their families could see art projects on display, a performance from the show choir, and booths in the gym that focused on different areas of technology, from television production to the aerodynamics of paper airplanes.



Kilby Laboratory School

2022 was an exciting year for the Kilby Laboratory School on the campus of the University of North Alabama. Not only did Kilby celebrate 150 years of existence, it also hosted the International Association of Laboratory Schools Spring Conference. Principal Dr. Eric Kirkman describes the conference as a meeting of laboratory schools from all over the world to learn new practices and techniques; it also allows Kilby staff to showcase all the great things happening there. "It will also give our teachers and our students an opportunity to hear and see some things that maybe other schools are doing across the world," Kirkman said. Kilby is the only state-funded laboratory school in Alabama. Being on the campus of UNA, the oldest four-year institution in the state, makes Kilby one of the oldest schools in the state as well.



One Florence.

W.C. Handy School

Thanks to a grant through the Alabama Department of Early Childhood Education, W.C. Handy Early Childhood Development Center began offering classes for children ages six weeks and up. The competitive program provides experiences designed to stimulate the growth of critical developmental skills in a loving, caring environment. The program received licensing through DHR in November 2020, allowing them to serve up to 50 children. Even though this was not required, it showed the faculty and staff's commitment to providing a quality early learning program. Since the program can only serve a limited number of students, the classes quickly filled. It became apparent that our community needed additional early learning programs.



Partnerships were established with community and business partners to offer children additional activities and learning opportunities. Handy Farm Day provided such an opportunity as the children were able to experience hands-on activities involving agriculture education. Children were able to pet different livestock, mount horses, and learn about gardening. As Principal Dr. Michael South explained, "Everything is play-based learning because that's how children express themselves and they learn in these early years."

Career & Technical Education

The Career and Technical Education programs at Florence City Schools strive to provide all students a variety of rigorous, relevant, and high-quality educational pathways. No matter the post-graduation plans of a student, FCS CTE strives to provide students with the necessary technical and soft skills training. By giving students these opportunities, they can earn industry-recognized certifications and credentials before their graduation. More than 1500 Florence students in grades 7-12 participated in at least one career and technical education program this past school year. FCS CTE programs persevered during the 2021-2022 school year, when it seemed as though the world was finally returning to a sense of normalcy following a year of quarantines and isolation.



One Florence.

Falcon Athletics

2022 served as a special homecoming for a newly-hired member of the Falcon Family. The extensive search for a new varsity head football coach saw more than four dozen applicants, but Athletic Director Byron Graham said he knew that Florence native Kenny Morson was the best person for the job.

“Kenny Morson is a dynamic leader whose experience, character, integrity, and lifelong connection to his hometown of Florence impressed us from the very start of this process,” Graham said. “After many years of success as an offensive coordinator at Decatur High School, Kenny proved to be a quality head coach by leading his Fayetteville, Tennessee team to a Tennessee State Championship in his second season. He is an outstanding teacher and great communicator with a strong vision for player development in all three phases of our team.”

A Coffee High School graduate, Morson said it had been his dream to coach in the same system he attended. He added that coaching at Florence would be the final stop on his career journey.



Florence Academy of Fine Arts

The Florence Academy of Fine Arts has emerged as the leader of fine arts in the state of Alabama. FAFA staff members work diligently to develop each young person within their specialized program. Under the motto of "Not bound by tradition but freed by imagination," FAFA students are encouraged to live their dreams.

In the spirit of giving back and using their talent as a form of expression, the FAFA Dance Company strove to make a difference. In December 2021, FAFA Dance Director Matthew Kiel presented a \$1000 check to Bradshaw High alumna Meesha Emmett, who serves as the Chair of the Board of Directors for the Alabama chapter of the American Foundation for Suicide Prevention. The funds were raised through a dance service project and will help the foundation continue its mission to save lives and bring hope to those affected by suicide.



Tomorrow...Today!

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



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 Associate 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 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 total potential no matter the pathway.

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 and 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.

The Days of Yesteryear.



Patton School, 1891-1960

This collection of pictures help illustrate how Florence City Schools has grown into a premier school distinct in our community, region, state, and nation. The milestones behind us fuel our forward-thinking for tomorrow.



The Maud Lindsay Free Kindergarten, early 1900's



Coffee High School Band, early 1920's



Burrell Normal School, Class of 1933



Bradshaw High School, 1966



florencek12.org

