Graduation Rate is Up!

We are excited to announce that the district’s four-year cohort graduation rate has increased from 76.55% for the Class of 2018 to 82.19% for the Class of 2019, beating the state rate. While Georgia’s graduation rate rose slightly from 81.6% in 2018 to 82.0% in 2019, McDuffie County’s students showed an improvement of nearly 6%. This means that McDuffie County’s 2019 graduation rate increase is the second highest among all districts in the CSRA RESA area and a cumulative improvement of 16 points over the last five years.

Moreover, for the first time in the history of the College and Career Ready Performance Index (CCRPI) reporting measures, all sub-groups — black, white, students with disabilities, and economically disadvantaged pupils — exceeded the graduation rate targets set by the Governor’s Office of Student Achievement (GOSA).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>2019 Sub-group Performance</th>
<th>All Students</th>
<th>Black</th>
<th>White</th>
<th>ED</th>
<th>SWD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>GOSA Target</td>
<td>77.33%</td>
<td>79.46%</td>
<td>76.19%</td>
<td>71.89%</td>
<td>53.47%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Graduation Rate</td>
<td>82.19%</td>
<td>82.88%</td>
<td>83.72%</td>
<td>84.51%</td>
<td>55.56%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

We attribute this monumental increase to numerous programs within the district, including: specialized reading and math support classes; ongoing formative assessments to identify areas for re-teaching or acceleration; expanded dual enrollment and Advanced Placement opportunities; growing work-based learning partnerships, including the Jumpstart apprenticeship program, with area industries and local businesses; new CTAE career pathways, including drafting and design, early childhood education, computer science, cybersecurity, and welding; and other ongoing initiatives that target student achievement.

This achievement reflects the hallmark of the “McDuffie on the Move” brand. Through innovative methods, the McDuffie County School System is committed to ensuring that all students entering the district will receive their diplomas during commencement in the Brickyard, with the traditional Thomson High School T proudly displayed on their graduation gowns. As a community, this is an accomplishment in which we all take pride. The McDuffie County School System salutes the students, parents, school employees, and citizens for their continued support of the district’s mission.

Mychele
A Report of Board Action

In September the BOE:

- Approved bids for a new bus, new tennis court lighting at THS, and new classroom multi-media speakers at DES
- Approved fundraiser requests for THS & TMMS
- Accepted a $3 reduction of the FY19 IDEA-Flowthrough grant, and approved receipt of the FY20 Title V-B federal grant allocation in the amount of $77,719
- Approved revisions to policy JB Student Attendance and the supporting Regulation JB-R
- Approved a revision to Regulation IHE-R(1): K-5 Promotion & Retention to reflect changes made as part of the GKIDS 2.0 assessment
- Heard updates from all departments about ongoing initiatives and budgets

Literacy Champions in the Community

This month our literacy champions distributed books, reading tips, and information about obtaining library cards. Thank you to the Thomson Wal-Mart for allowing us a space to share these reading resources with families!

Our Early Language & Literacy Grant — sponsored by The Governor’s Office of Student Achievement — is designed to increase access to literacy resources and parent training to ensure all children in our community have the opportunity to read on grade level by the end of third grade.

THS School Store Provides Business Experience

THS Business and Computer Science teachers received a grant for $10,800 from the Georgia Department of Education last spring. The grant, which supports Entrepreneurship, Enterprise, and Education in rural communities across Georgia, has been implemented in various CTAE courses.

The plan is centered around a program-based enterprise run by students in various business education courses. The beginning phases included Engineering students who measured the store space and created a floor plan of the proposed layout. Additionally, they built a 3D model of the store. Students in the CyberSecurity classes are evaluating the security of the facility and creating a security plan for both the facility and inventory management system.

Business education students have been working hard to develop shirt designs, count inventory, conduct market research, write business plans, and learn about product placement. As the new equipment arrives, they will begin bringing their digital designs to life with embroidery, screen print, color printouts, and much more!

We are also looking forward to working with the Cosmetology classes when they begin studying chemicals, scrubs, lotions, and other personal care items.
McDuffie on the Move

We are on the move this school year! We have been so excited to visit our schools this month! On this page, you can see some of the photos taken of awesome teaching and learning in action. Thank you to each staff member who allowed us to showcase his/her work!

Remember to visit [www.watchusmove.org](http://www.watchusmove.org) to watch and share your videos.

Annually, all public schools and colleges celebrate Constitution and Citizenship Day. Designated by Congress, this date was set aside to teach students about the U.S. Constitution, adopted on September 17, 1787, and their rights and responsibilities as citizens. Teachers prepared lessons that included videos, scavenger hunts, books about the document and signers, writing class constitutions, and creating art.

This month, NES teacher Tan Dukes had her language arts students suit up for “text structure surgery,” a lesson in understanding grammatical structure and developing Thinking Maps.

Students were asked to examine (read) a given text, make a diagnosis (identify the text structure), interpret the data (highlight important details and concepts) and begin operating (complete a thinking map and define the frame). What a day full of learning and fun!

The new THS welding lab is up and running! Ms. Moser’s students watch as she demonstrates welding in the new metals lab.

Students have, so far, been working in the classroom learning proper safety and equipment handling procedures. They are anxious for their turn in the lab!

Did you know that cosmetology is both an art and a science? These classes cover anatomy, physiology, and lots of chemistry!

THS students in Mrs. Rowe’s Cosmetology II classes are currently learning about human skin. They have learned the importance of protecting skin, its many critical functions, and the divisions (or layers) of the skin.

This knowledge is critical in helping students understand how many salon services affect the skin. Students built a “skin model” representing the hypodermis, dermis, and epidermis.
Curriculum & Instruction Updates

October 10 Professional Learning Day Opportunities

Our upcoming professional learning day has a number of opportunities for faculty and staff. Please see the chart below for more information.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Audience</th>
<th>Registration Instructions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>K-2 Informative / Explanatory Writing Workshop</td>
<td>8:30-11:30</td>
<td>CSRA RESA</td>
<td>K-2 ELA Teachers, Instructional Coaches, Admins.</td>
<td>No additional registration needed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3-5 Informative / Explanatory Writing Workshop</td>
<td>12:30-3:30</td>
<td>CSRA RESA</td>
<td>3-5 ELA Teachers, Instructional Coaches, Admins.</td>
<td>No additional registration needed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PRO Reading Reports (required)</td>
<td>9:00-12:00</td>
<td>TMMS</td>
<td>6-12 PRO Reading Teachers</td>
<td>Principal or AP will notify Dr. Cato of participants.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>General Supervision Manual Training (required)</td>
<td>10:00-12:00</td>
<td>SSS</td>
<td>All Special Education Teachers</td>
<td>No additional registration required</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Making the Most of the Interactive Classroom, Day 1</td>
<td>9:00-4:00</td>
<td>SSS</td>
<td>Selected PK Teachers</td>
<td>No additional registration needed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Google Core Training (optional)</td>
<td>8:00-10:00</td>
<td>THS</td>
<td>3rd-5th Grade Teachers</td>
<td>Use this link: Google Core training @ THS, Grades 3-5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Google Core Training (optional)</td>
<td>10:30-12:30</td>
<td>THS</td>
<td>6th-12th Grade Teachers</td>
<td>Use this link: Google Core training @ THS, Grades 6-12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mindset Recertification (optional)</td>
<td>8:00-4:00</td>
<td>SSS</td>
<td>Selected Mindset Certified Staff</td>
<td>Participants already notified</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RESA Technology PLC for Paraprofessionals (optional)</td>
<td>9:00-12:00</td>
<td>CSRA RESA</td>
<td>PK-12 Paraprofessionals</td>
<td>Create account and register in RESA’s Ascentis portal</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Tech Tips for Teachers

*We hope you enjoy this feature, provided by THS Media Specialist Jennifer Newton. We will share tips, tricks, and tools that will be useful to our faculty and staff!*

Tired of flipping back and forth between browser tabs? The Chrome extension Split Tabs makes it possible to work with multiple tabs at the same time! Split Tabs allows you to arrange your browser tabs into desired format and size. You can easily split the screens to display multiple tabs in one tiled view and concentrate on the content.

Once the extension has been installed, you will see the Split Tabs icon on the top right corner of your browser. In one click you can choose the layout you want to apply to your tabs, or easily create your own layout.

Split Tabs Chrome Extension [https://chrome.google.com/webstore/detail/split-tabs/namepagkigmnpoolafajabnljkkoeckb?hl=en](https://chrome.google.com/webstore/detail/split-tabs/namepagkigmnpoolafajabnljkkoeckb?hl=en)
Curriculum & Instruction Updates

Georgia Milestones Updates

New narrative writing checklists are available for grades 3-high school. These will appear as pop-ups for students to view while responding to the narrative prompts on the ELA tests.

Technology-enhanced item types that were field-tested in 2018-2019 are now operational (included in scoring beginning in Winter 2019). The drag and drop feature is used for identifying, classifying, comparing, or organizing information. Response choices may be numbers, words, or phrases that can be moved from one location to another within the item.

The graphing tool allows students to graph lines, label points, and shade areas on the coordinate plane.

The drag and drop feature will be field-tested (excluded for scoring) in English language arts this year. In addition, students will also see drop down input items, which allow for the selection of a word, symbol, or number to complete a sentence, equation, or table, for all content areas.

The scorable equation tool for mathematics, which permits students to input numbers, symbols, equations, or inequalities, will also be field-tested this year. The scoring engine will look for equivalencies in order to expedite the scoring of items.

Samples of the updated resources for the Georgia Milestones can be found on the GaDOE Assessment pages.

AU STEM Endorsement – January 2020

Interested faculty met with Augusta University representatives this month to learn about the opportunity to participate in an on-site STEM Endorsement cohort. Information about the cohort is found here. Interested participants should complete this Google Form by October 11 to assist the district in determining if the cohort is viable.
Curriculum & Instruction Updates

More Curriculum Resources & a New Look for SLDS

Be sure to visit georgiastandards.org for a wealth of resources, including teacher notes, content videos, pacing guides, curriculum maps, instructional segments, tasks, and teaching tips. Your principal or AP will be sharing these resources, which are also available in the Teacher Resource Link within the SLDS, throughout the year.

This year, the Georgia Department of Education has trained district and school leaders on the GaDOE Numeracy Project, designed to help teachers identify specific math domains on which a student may need additional assistance. The Numeracy Project’s resources also include prepared intervention lessons that can be used by educators as part of the RTI process.

As of Labor Day weekend, the SLDS Teacher Dashboard has a new look.

The above screenshot is a sample of how the new customizable dashboard will look when a teacher logs into SLDS. The available tiles (applications) will vary depending upon the district-assigned rights to that teacher (all tiles will not be available to all teachers). On the first time login, teachers will get a message telling them about the new dashboard. In that message, teachers will be told about "Classic SLDS." "Classic SLDS" will refer to the previous version. Teachers will still be able to access the previous version by clicking on the very first tile "Classic SLDS." So until you become familiar with the new tile layout, you can always go to the previous version and find what you are looking for.

Click on PDF resource for more information about the new Teacher Dashboard.

When exploring some of the other areas (such as TKES, GOIEP, TRL, etc.), you can return to the tiles, by clicking the "HOME" tab on the menu bar.
McDUFFIE COUNTY SCHOOL DISTRICT
Where Tradition Meets Innovation
McDuffie County School System
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The McDuffie County School System is committed to academic excellence with a focus on rigor, relevance and relationships.

Here’s What’s Coming Up!

October 1
THS Softball vs. ARC DH, 4 PM

October 2
MES 1st Grade MEEC Field Trip

October 3
MES 1st Grade MEEC Field Trip
THS IDOL Talent Show, 7 PM
THS Softball @ ARC, 5 PM
THS 9th Grade Football vs. Burke Co., 5 PM
THS JV Football vs. Evans, 5:30 PM

October 4
P-card Cutoff for October
MES 1st Grade MEEC Field Trip
THS Football @ Lee County, 7:30 PM

October 5
THS Marching Band Competition
SAT Testing @ THS

October 7
End 1st Nine Weeks
EOC Mid-month Window Opens
Payroll Documents Due

October 8
Begin 2nd Nine Weeks
BOE Planning Session, 9 AM
PBIS Coaches Meeting, 2 PM
DES School Council / PTO Board, 3 PM
MES 1st Grade MEEC Field Trip

October 9
NES Lunch on the Lawn

October 10
Student Holiday
Professional Learning Day (Staff)

Highlighting Achievement

Congratulations to Eddie Lee Ivery, MAC parent involvement coordinator and a 1975 Thomson High alumnus, who has been named as a 2020 Georgia Sports Hall of Fame inductee! Coach Ivery, a first round draft pick for the Green Bay Packers, for whom he played professionally for nine seasons, is also a Brickyard Wall of Fame honoree. A member of the Georgia Tech Athletics Hall of Fame, he was also a collegiate All-American and earned a degree in Industrial Management.

The Youth Leadership McDuffie Leadership 101 class met for their first workshop earlier this month. This group of thirty 10th graders will meet monthly to go through the J.W. Fanning Institute's Young Leaders in Action curriculum.

Announcements

Don’t forget that attendance counts! Make sure your child is on time and present each day... the benefits are tremendous! Take a look at how fast those missed days can accumulate:

![Attendance Chart]

““You can tell whether a man is clever by his answers. You can tell whether a man is wise by his questions.”

Naguib Mahfouz
(1911-2006) Egyptian writer
1988 winner of Nobel Prize for Literature