



February 2019

A few weeks ago, as I walked through schools and in-and-out of various classrooms, I began to reminisce about my beloved Clemson days, where I took many classes to prepare for my future as an educator. Feelings of excitement mixed with anticipation were prevalent.

I want those same feelings for students attending Thomasville City Schools – EXCITEMENT and ANTICIPATION about their futures.

Our school district is taking significant strides both academically and outside of the regular school day to provide new educational opportunities for students. I would like to share two major initiatives causing EXCITEMENT AND ANTICIPATION right now in Thomasville.

First is “ADD-In” for Learning. “ADD-In” stands for Access to Digital Devices and Internet – “ADD-In” for short. By partnering with T-Mobile and receiving their EmpowerED grant, TCS is **EXCITED** to provide brand new Chromebooks complete with internet access via mifi hotspots to individual students in grades 6-12. The Chromebooks are a vehicle to create transformational digital-age environments for personalized learning both during and after school.

By bridging the digital divide via devices and internet connectivity, students are better prepared to compete academically and technologically with their peers across the state and beyond. Students will use the same device in their classroom as in their homes. In the past, TCS students have been able to thrive in the ‘connected’ world during school hours but many have no internet access after school. “ADD-In” affords opportunities to bridge the “Homework Gap” and empower TCS students to complete research papers, projects and classroom presentations in core academic areas and also in the Arts and Sciences, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM) areas. Students will have up-to-date access to college and career planning tools as well as a plethora of educational apps and websites. “ADD-In” provides personalized learning for all whether students are traditional middle and high school students, English Learners, Exceptional Children, and/or Academically Gifted. “ADD-In” empowers students to have connected access in order to follow their own unique pathways toward success.

What a perfect segue into the second significant item bringing **ANTICIPATION**. **The Academy of Advanced Manufacturing and Design Innovation** will be offered beginning next school year through our Career and Technical Education Department. The pathway will include training in various manufacturing processes and engineering fields while also focusing on essential skills imperative for all high school students’ success beyond graduation. The program aligns

seamlessly with Project Lead the Way, which began at Thomasville Middle School this year in order to further build on the district's Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM) initiatives.

The goal of **The Academy of Advanced Manufacturing and Design Innovation** pathway is to increase opportunities for Thomasville City Schools' students and to place them directly in the pipeline of skilled workers prepared for employment in highly competitive manufacturing and STEM careers. The academy aligns high school courses with post-secondary training programs in the areas of Advanced Manufacturing and Engineering. Students will earn highly desired, industry-recognized credentials and have opportunities to gain work experience through internships and apprenticeships with industry partners. This academy also provides multiple pathways for students to choose an array of courses geared towards hands on learning, critical thinking and problem solving.

Receiving the Golden Leaf Grant allows us take a huge step toward providing TCS students with the means to either two- or four-year college educations while at the same time, providing a springboard to an in-demand, high paying job with little additional training for students who do not wish to attend college. Either choice provides an intentional, focused pathway leading to success for our students.

We are able to offer The academy through support from the Golden Leaf Foundation Grant and successful partnerships forged between Davidson County Community College and hi-tech industry partners such as our Business Advisory Council and the High Performance Manufacturing Association.

Thomasville City Schools is positioned better than ever before to positively affect the entire community.

The goal of providing state of the art opportunities through "ADD-In" and The Academy of Advanced Manufacturing and Design Innovation is that these two offerings will work hand-in-hand toward a common goal of providing top quality opportunities for TCS students. These two innovative offerings are the beginnings of a continual process of securing successful futures for our students, so they feel prepared for their futures and experience EXCITEMENT and ANTICIPATION just as I did earlier in my life.