

The Hawk

Holly Springs, Mississippi

Spring 2025

District Newsletter



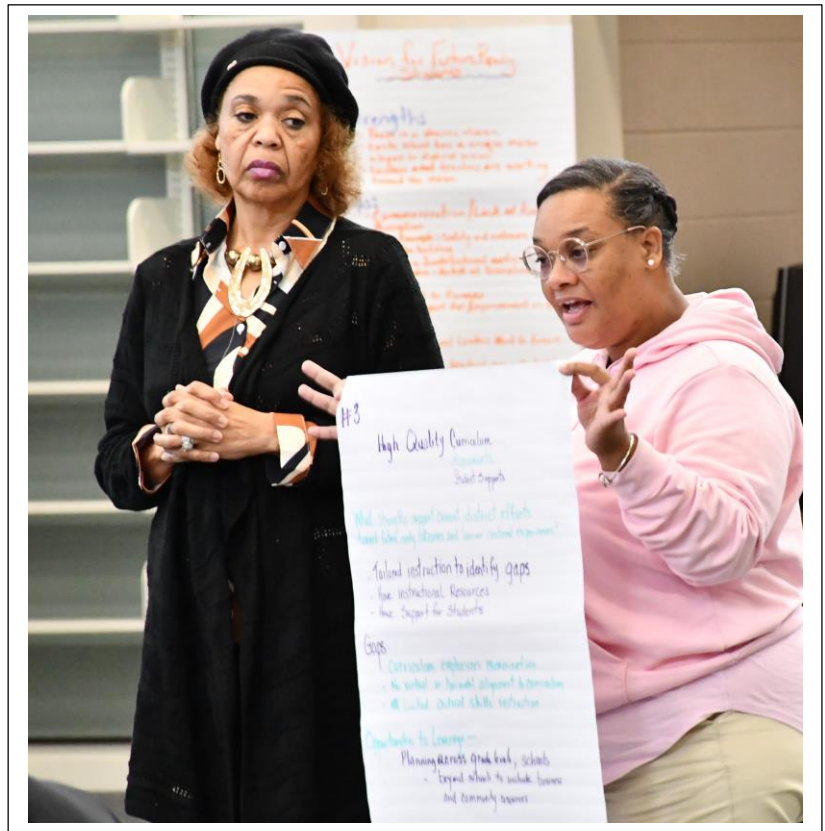
From left are Forrest Bryan, Dr. Irene Walton Turnage, Dr. Susan Rucker, Christy Owens, Justin Hall and Dr. Cederick Ellis.

Developing portrait of a graduate

The Holly Springs School District and its partners are joining efforts to create a future-ready, learner-centered system that will empower students to thrive in an ever-evolving world.

Facilitators from the National Center on Education and the Economy (NCEE), plus community partners from the Marshall County Industrial Development Authority and Accelerate Mississippi, joined district administrators for a one-and-a-half day workshop focused on moving to the next level when it comes to career readiness.

See PORTRAIT Page 3



Workshop participants include, from left, LeTashia White, Tannya Sanders, Cravin Turnage, Karin Autry and Terrica Crawford.

Mission: a prepared graduate



*A message from Dr. Irene
Walton Turnage,
Superintendent of Education*

How do you prepare graduates for an ever-changing world?

You ensure they are ready for whatever path they choose. All our students will have a career; the path they choose will be up to them.

The Holly Springs School District has been embarking on a mission to determine the characteristics all graduates leaving our school system should have to be successful.

As with all major tasks completed by the district, it is not something that school leaders and staff can do alone. It is something that all stakeholders should help decide including students, parents, business, and community.

It is said that we are preparing students for careers that may not exist yet. When we think of careers that now exist that did not exist 10 years ago, we understand why that is true. Technology is in everything we do and creating opportunities and careers that did not exist in the past.

For careers now and in the future, our students will need to be critical thinkers who can solve problems and collaborative thinkers who know how to work with others to get the job done. Additionally, our students will need to be resilient so they understand that even though they will fall at times in their careers, they must rise each time they fall and rise with lessons learned.

What other characteristics will our graduates need? The district will be calling on our stakeholders in the next few months to help us decide. As in the past, using the power of teamwork, we will work together to ensure the district fulfills its mission of educating students who will EXCEL in the global community.

This newsletter is dedicated to highlighting some of the efforts being made to ensure our students graduate career ready.



School Board Recognition Week

Members of the Holly Springs School District Board of Trustees were honored as part of School Board Recognition Week in Mississippi. Superintendent of education Irene Walton Turnage presented framed certificates to the board members for their commendable leadership and service on behalf of the students and community. The certificates were signed by Dr. Turnage and Dr. Denotris Jackson, executive director of the Mississippi School Boards Association. School board members were also presented proclamations signed by Gov. Tate Reeves recognizing school board members for their tireless efforts and dedication. The proclamation emphasizes that local school board members demonstrate unwavering commitment to the belief that every student has the potential to succeed. From left are school board member Lemon Phelps, Dr. Turnage, school board members Kim Mayfield, Charisse Harris and Dr. Gemma Beckley, and Melissa Hunt, board secretary. Not pictured is board member Ejeera Dukes.



COSSBA conference

A group of Holly Springs School District representatives recently attended the Consortium of State School Boards Association (COSSBA) National Conference in Atlanta, Ga. The theme for this year's conference was "Education for All: Bridging Gaps, Breaking Barriers." Representing Holly Springs were (from left) school board president Kim Mayfield, superintendent of education Dr. Irene Walton Turnage, school board secretary Dr. Gemma Beckley and school board vice president Charisse Harris. Session topics included Everybody Get on The Bus! The Mobile Learning Experience; AI 101: What You Need to Know About Artificial Intelligence; The F.A.C.E. of Leadership: Community and Family Engagement; Data Practices That Reach New Heights for Students; Leading with a Culture of Success in Your District; Student Voice Matters: Bringing Student Representation to the Board Table; and much more. In addition to the various training sessions, COSSBA also provides networking opportunities for local school board members to enhance the effectiveness of their work.

Portrait

"This is about our children and their future – their opportunities," said Dr. Irene Walton Turnage, superintendent of education. "Outside partners and their knowledge and support are important in helping us move forward. We all want the same thing, for our children to be ready for careers and build a good future for themselves and their families. The end goal is to develop our portrait of a graduate. We want to continue to do great things as a district."

Facilitators Dr. Susan Rucker and Dr. Cederick Ellis developed a discovery analysis by visiting with some teachers, students, community leaders, and business and industry representatives prior to the workshop.

Rucker said NCEE will be with the Holly Springs School District through the entire process of building a portrait of a graduate and a future-ready, learner-centered system.

"The world has changed for our students," she said. "We have to get on the bandwagon."

Ellis said the partnership will help develop a shared vision of where the district is going.

"The leadership and the core pieces are here," he said. "We just want to co-design with you. We want a coherent system. We are here to be a bridge between the schools and business/industry. We will help in the development of future-ready students. The timing is right for this to happen."

Justin Hall, executive director of the Marshall County Industrial Development Authority, said there are job opportunities in the county right now.

"These are high-demand positions," he said, "that can be filled by high school graduates on the right path."

In addition, a new battery plant with 2,000 jobs is coming to Marshall County. The average annual salary will be \$66,000.

"These are generational opportunities for our high school students – high-paying jobs," Hall said. "A lot of eyes are on us across the state because of our economic opportunities."

Forrest Bryan, with Accelerate MS, said it's all about vision and opportunities. He said it would likely include adding new programs at the Career and Technical Center.

"I'm here to help you prepare our kids for these advanced job opportunities," he said. "They can do these things. We have to prepare them. The community needs to be invested. Together, we can change the narrative of your community."

Christy Owens, project manager with the Marshall County Industrial Development Authority, said the IDA wants to continue the great partnership it has had with the district by helping connect students with industry, which includes setting up tours.

"We want to do our part to propel this forward," she said. "Failure is not an option."

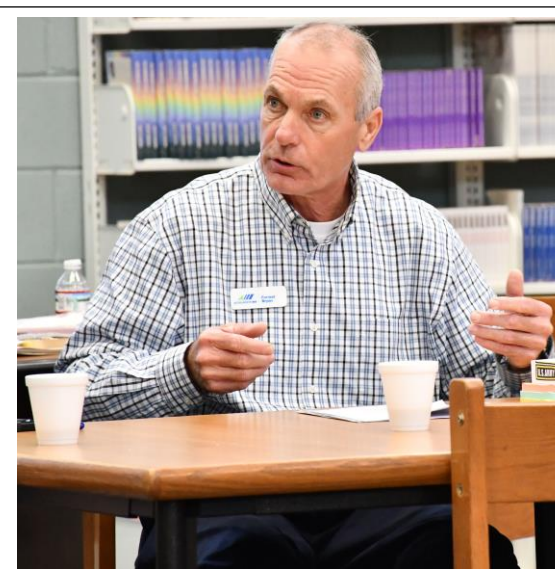
Dr. Turnage said the district is ready to make it happen.

"It's all coming together," she said. "We appreciate our partners who are here to help us. We all want our students to be successful."

Lemon Phelps, president of the Holly Springs School District Board of Trustees, said, "I think this partnership will give everyone a chance to have their say in what a graduate from Holly Springs should look like, not only now but also into the future, and also it will help us in working toward that said 'portrait.'"



Justin Hall



Forrest Bryan



Christy Owens

Jones and Vickery honored through STAR program

Natalya Jones has been named STAR Student for the 2024-2025 school year by the Mississippi Economic Council (MEC) Student Teacher Achievement Recognition (STAR) program, sponsor of the Student Teacher Achievement Recognition (STAR) program.

This year will mark the 60th Anniversary of the STAR program. The diamond jubilee theme is: "The Journey Begins – 1965-2025!" The purpose of the STAR program is to recognize outstanding students and teachers in Mississippi through its Education Celebration.

STAR Students are selected based on academic excellence. Both American College Test scores and scholastic averages are compared to determine the school's STAR Student, explained Vickie Powell of Jackson, senior vice president of foundations with the MEC.

"The STAR program encourages and promotes academic achievement among Mississippi's high school seniors," she said.

Each STAR Student is asked to designate a STAR Teacher, the teacher who has made the greatest contribution to the student's scholastic achievement.

Morgan Vickery, who teaches English at Holly Springs High School, was designated as STAR Teacher.

The Holly Springs High School senior and teacher will be listed with the "Class of 2025" STAR Students and STAR Teachers.



Morgan Vickery and Natalya Jones



Tejinder Thind, math teacher at Holly Springs High School, is the instructor for a dual enrollment class in College Algebra and Trigonometry. Seated, from left, in the group photo, are Jakhya McIntyre, Mr. Thind and Joshua Harris. Standing, from left, are Braya Crane, Itzel Arce, Aeryiel Glover, Malicia Selman, Demarquez Strickland, Kennedy Terry, Natalya Jones, Asia Jackson, Sonya Hosmer and Brithany Garcia. (Right) Mr. Thind works one-on-one with Joshua Harris on some problem solving.

Dual Enrollment: high school students get college credit

Dual Credit/Dual Enrollment Courses are college courses taken in high school for college credit in conjunction with the high school courses.

Students who are juniors or seniors in Holly Springs High School with an ACT sub-score of at least 15 in English or 19 in math, and at least a 3.0 are eligible to apply for and take Dual Credit/Dual Enrollment Courses. Applications must be completed by the student, their parent/guardian and approved by the high school principal and counselor.

Once the student has completed the application process, he or she will be provided a course list in which to choose one or more courses from either or all schools. The cost of the courses is covered by Holly Springs School District. The colleges/universities currently providing the courses are Northwest Mississippi Community College and Mississippi Valley State University. In the fall 2025, Lane College will be joining them.

The students either take courses online through CANVAS with a teacher at Holly Springs High School as a facilitator, or with a teacher at Holly Springs High School who teaches the course. Some of the courses are Dual Credit (DC) Biology I, II, Microeconomics, Macroeconomics, American History, College Algebra, Trigonometry, Chemistry I, II, Physics, English Composition I and II, Music Appreciation and Art Appreciation. Students are required to have a C or higher for their final grade in the Dual Enrollment Courses in order to continue taking other courses.



In front, from left, are Kalisa Tucker (11th), Ameliya Washington (11th), Christen Gray (11th), Taniela Richard (11th), Jurnee Marion (11th), Khassidy McKinney (11th); in back, from left, are Nakia Martin (10th), Ajhari Ingram (10th), Jaidan Hall (11th), Taurus Bryant (10th), Kanyjah McAdams (11th), Ajah Shelton (10th).



Senior members of the National Honor Society are, front row, from left, Kalea Jones, Talyah McAdams, Asia Jackson, Brithany Espino Garcia, Saimira McAuley, Cayenne Burton; and back row, same order, Anesha Vasser, Aziah Wright, Shanyiah Storey, Brianna Guy, Jason Jeffries, Sonya Hosmer, Jakhya McIntyre, Leah Odum, Malicia Selman, Natalya Jones. Not pictured is Joshua Harris.

National Honor Society induction: 'Continue to aim high'

Sixteen Holly Springs High School students were inducted into the National Honor Society during a ceremony in the library Friday morning, Feb. 14.

New inductees into the prestigious group are Taurus Bryant, Cayenne Burton, Brithany Espino Garcia, Christen Gray, Joshua Harris, Jaidan Hall, Ajhari Ingram, Jurnee Marion, Nakia Martin, Talyah McAdams, Kanyjah McAdams, Khassidy McKinney, Taniela Richard, Ajah Shelton, Ameliya Washington and Kalisa Tucker.

Noah Shively, English teacher and National Honor Society advisor at Holly Springs High School, complimented the inductees for their academic excellence and said they "deserve the utmost praise and support in maintaining their success as leaders within their community."

Dr. Jorgell Jones, assistant principal and guest speaker for the occasion, focused her words on the four pillars of the National Honor Society – scholarship, service, leadership and character. "Scholarship is about lifelong learning," she said. "Service is about making an impact wherever you go. Leadership is about influence. Character is the foundation of everything. These four pillars are the keys to navigating the challenges ahead."

Principal Cravin Turnage presented closing remarks. He told inductees, "You are the leaders of tomorrow. Continue to aim high."



From left are Ceyenne Burton, advisor Sadie Campbell and Keturah Payton.

Students excel in competition

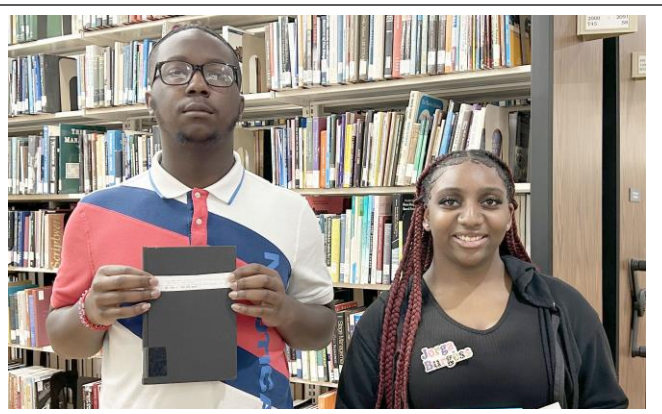
Holly Springs Career and Technical Center's Educators Rising students recently joined hundreds of high school students from across Mississippi to showcase their skills in competitive events at the Educators Rising State Conference.

The event, held at William Carey University in Hattiesburg, provided students with valuable leadership opportunities and practical insights into the field of education.

The conference aimed to highlight the skills students have developed under expert educators, foster collaboration among aspiring teachers, and instill confidence in the next generation of educators.

Among the Holly Springs participants, Ceyenne Burton placed eighth in the "Varsity Children's Literature Pre-K" category, and Keturah Payton secured fifth place in the "Varsity Project Visualize Contest." Providing guidance was their advisor, Sadie Campbell.

These achievements reflect the dedication and hard work of the students and their commitment to becoming future leaders in education.



Students showcase skills at state conference

Some Holly Springs Career and Technical Center students recently joined hundreds of high school students from across Mississippi to showcase their skills in competitive events at the 2025 State Leadership Conference (SLC) at the Jackson Convention Complex.

The students, as members of Health Occupations Students of America (HOSA), gained insights into the field of health science. The conference highlighted the skills students have developed while studying health science. They were able to work as Courtesy Corps to interact with other students and teachers.

Among the Holly Springs participants, Angiya Zinn placed 10th in nutrition, and Raven Rosser eighth in physical therapy.

In the 2024-2025 HOSA Northern District, Khassidy McKinney placed seventh in behavioral health, Ameliya Washington fifth in medical math and Taniya Hunt fifth in veterinary science. Angiya Zinn placed sixth in nutrition and Raven Rosser second in physical therapy.

Other participants, who were unable to attend 2025 SLC but competed in 2024 -2025 Northern District and placed, were Aniyah Jones, third in home health aide, and Celiyah Turnage, 10th in nutrition. Hannah Manning, Jurnee Marion and Kayla Phillips also competed in 2024-2025 Northern District.

Health science instructor at Holly Springs Career and Technical Center is Kimberly Fox.



Pictured, from left, are Khassidy McKinney, Angiya Zinn, Kimberly Fox (health science instructor), Ameliya Washington, Raven Rosser and Taniya Hunt.

Library Experience Day at Ole Miss

Holly Springs High School was represented at Library Experience Day on Monday, March 31, at the University of Mississippi. Pictured at left are seniors Nathan Lester and Jorga Burgess, who attended with librarian Barbara Humphrey. The outreach and recruitment event, developed by the University of Mississippi Libraries, reaches out to high schools throughout the state. Librarians and students discover what the University of Mississippi Libraries have to offer and interact with university and library administrators. Activities in the morning included tours of archives and special collections, the J.D. Williams Library, and STUDIOone and IDEALab.

STUDIOone consists of a simplified video recording studio and a complete video editing suite. IDEALab is a hands-on learning technology lab. The afternoon session included virtual reality (VR) activities and a critical thinking team activity.

Entrepreneur Seminar at Career and Technical Center

Linda K. Jeffries, proud alumnus of Holly Springs High School Class of 1989, continues to partner with the Holly Springs School District and Holly Springs Career and Technical Center (CTC) to prepare students to excel in the global community. Jeffries recently conducted the first part of an Entrepreneur Seminar for business students and shared with them what it takes to own their own business. The theme of the seminar was Integrity in Business. She is the owner of LJ's Hair Flair Salon in Germantown, Tenn., and the owner/founder of K*SMOOTH 0% Professional Smoothing Treatments No Relaxer Needed, a brand that she developed and launched, aiding clients transitioning from relaxers, perms or natural wanting better curl manageability. During the seminar, Jeffries engaged the students in a number of activities related to entrepreneurship including role playing and successfully completing a business plan. During the next visit, students will present their business plans and receive feedback.



At left are Cravin Turnage, principal at Holly Springs High School, Dr. Irene Walton Turnage, Kyrodrick Jeffries, Lacey Smith and Patrick Washington. In photo at right, Tannya Sanders, principal at Holly Springs Junior High School, talks with Dr. Turnage, Smith and Washington.

School district and Man Up team up to recruit teachers

The Holly Springs School District and Man Up Teacher Fellowship are looking to build on their partnership.

Patrick Washington, CEO of Man Up, visited the district recently to update superintendent of education Dr. Irene Walton Turnage and other administrators on the program's progress. Man Up Teacher Fellowship's purpose is to provide a talented pipeline of men of color who can be impactful in any school setting, and who will work relentlessly to ensure the success of all students. Man Up Teacher Fellows will also have an opportunity to earn a Master's of Education degree from one of the partner institutions of higher education at no cost.

Two teachers going through the program are already in Holly Springs School District classrooms, Kevin Shipp at the junior high and Kyrodrick Jeffries at the high school.

Recruiting is underway for next year, and those interested should apply today by going to manupteach.org or calling 833-626-8787 for more information. Qualifications include bachelor's degree, 2.5 GPA, man of color, professionalism, a strong work ethic and a heart for youth.

"This is home for me," said Washington, who resides in Benton County. "Through our partnership, we can continue to get things done. These are the best kids in America, and they want to learn. We are actively recruiting men of color who want a career in education and who want to make a difference in the lives of these young people."

Washington was joined on the visit by Lacey Smith, teacher development coach with Man Up who helps to ensure the participants' success.

Dr. Turnage said she appreciates the partnership with the Man Up Teacher Fellowship, and she, too, wants to see the program grow with exemplary teachers and role models being placed in the Holly Springs School District.



Dress for Success award recipients are joined by program leaders and sponsors and school district representatives.

King: 'Lead with grit and deliver on your potential'



Guest speaker Kyia King

Kyia King, a 2016 graduate of Holly Springs High School, urged members of the Class of 2025 to "bring home the bacon."

She was the guest speaker Thursday, April 10, for the annual Dress for Success Banquet held in the newly-remodeled Holly Springs High School auditorium. She also performed a couple of musical selections for the occasion. The Columbus resident has a bachelor's degree in music education from Mississippi University for Women. She is a singer, songwriter and founder of Music Speaks.

King told a story about how the bacon was being cooked for breakfast with the other foods and wanted to be remembered. It was getting all curled up and burned and wanted to give up. Then the bacon realized the heat is how it becomes stronger.

"The bacon adapted and endured," she said. "It crackled with purpose. We all need purpose in our lives. It's not just about money. It's about making something happen – something valuable for yourself, your family and your community."

King told the seniors that success in life takes sacrifices.

"You were built for this," she said. "Take control of your own story and bring home the bacon. Never give up; never stop trying; never stop pushing. This is about making a life. Lead with grit and deliver on your potential. As Holly Springs High School Hawks, we don't just fly, we soar."

The Dress for Success program at Holly Springs High School is celebrating its eighth year. The director, Rev. Dr. R.J. Wilson, is passing the torch to a successor.

"Reverend Wilson is all about helping this school, the district and this community," said superintendent of education Dr. Irene Walton Turnage. "He's one of our biggest cheerleaders, and we recognize him today. We want to continue this outstanding program, and we will name it the Dr. R.J. Wilson Dress for Success program in his honor."

An emotional Wilson said he loves the Dress for Success program and the students. He told the members of the Class of 2025 to "be the best you can be."

Cravin Turnage, principal of Holly Springs High School, and others provided



Rev. Dr. R.J. Wilson and Dr. Irene Walton Turnage

Dress for Success

words of encouragement, including attorney Roberts Wilson, Rev. Mildred Mitchell, Career and Technical Center director Susie Brown, former Sen. Bill Stone, chief executive officer of North Mississippi Primary Health Care Inc., and Carl Hill, member of the Rotary Family Youth Initiative Board of Directors.

Cravin Turnage urged the seniors to not become discouraged along the path of life because that's when all negativism can flow. He wished them peace, love, happiness and prosperity.

"You are my children, and I love you," he said.

Wilson thanked the many sponsors of the program who help provide things like college and career sessions, shoes, gift cards and commemorative bags to boost the seniors on their journey forward.

The Dress for Success program encourages young men and women to become leaders and examples of what education can do for them, not only for a better life, but also as an example for those young men and women following them. It encourages participants to be ready to face the global community and succeed at the highest level.

Dr. Irene Walton Turnage praised the Class of 2025, "an excellent group of young people."

"You are one of the best groups to ever walk these halls," she said. "You have that true spirit. You're a team. You are super smart, you work, and you go over and beyond. We love you, and you will be missed."

Dr. Turnage, Cravin Turnage, Susie Brown and Rev. Wilson awarded all Dress for Success participants with certificates. Students also received gift bags and inspirational books, and they enjoyed refreshments.



Work Experience Program

Some Holly Springs High School seniors are getting a little taste of the working world. They're participants in the EPIC Work Experience Program offered through Accelerate Mississippi, in partnership with Three Rivers Planning and Development District and the school. From left are Sonya Hosmer, Addam Brown, career coach Tanya Smith, Joshua Harris and Kameron Cooley. Not pictured are participants Brithany Espino Garcia and Jasmine Pegues. Cooley is working with Dr. Edrick McGee, behavioral interventionist with the school district; Brown is the social media manager at WKRA radio station; Hosmer is spending time with Patricia Waldrop, special education teacher at the high school; Harris is interning in the athletic department at the high school; and Garcia and Pegues are both working with the school nurse at the junior high school.



Internship with Bank of Holly Springs

The Holly Springs School District is excited to partner with the Bank of Holly Springs to provide an internship for one of our outstanding students, senior Natalya Jones. She is obtaining valuable work experience while completing her senior year of high school. The district is grateful for the partnership with Bank of Holly Springs and the wonderful experiences it will provide. Pictured are Lexine Smith, vice president, Natalya Jones, and Molly Jenkins, vice president.



Read Across America

Read Across America was a great success at Holly Springs Intermediate School on Friday, March 7. Principal Vikki Marion and Beverly Phillips would like to thank all the readers for taking time to read and helping students realize how enjoyable and fun reading can be. Pictured reading to a class is Wanda McNeil, Zeta Phi Beta Sorority.



Student Janiya Brown participates in an NCEE session.



From left are principal Tannya Sanders, student Kennedy Terry and teacher-parent Samantha Aghimien.

Part II: School district, NCEE look at developing soft skills

A collaborative effort to develop a portrait of a graduate, who will be career ready in an ever-changing world, took substantial steps forward with two days of sessions in late March.

The Holly Springs School District, in partnership with the National Center on Education and the Economy (NCEE) and community partners, is focused on what it will take to prepare this new generation of students for career opportunities. It is a district-wide effort and includes representatives from all schools – primary, intermediate, junior high, high school and career tech. Round one of the workshop was held in February.

The top soft skills to develop, according to a presentation by NCEE representatives Dr. Susan Rucker and Dr. Cederick Ellis, include creative thinking; analytical thinking; digital literacy; curiosity and lifelong learning; resilience, flexibility and agility; systemic thinking; artificial intelligence and big data; motivation and self-awareness; talent management; and service orientation and customer service. Some of the fastest growing jobs today are big data specialists, FinTech (financial technology) engineers, AI and machine learning specialists, software and applications developers, security management specialists, data warehousing specialists and environmental engineers.

The portrait of a graduate is a collective vision articulating the community's hopes and dreams for its students. It is the 'north star' for guiding the plan. Representatives at the meeting included students, parents, community leaders, and school and district leaders.

The collaborative effort has to also be grounded in the context of the community, which includes preparing students for high-paying jobs on the home front in collaboration with the Marshall County Industrial Development Authority. The portrait of a graduate cannot be just a slogan on a wall. It must be a representation of the community and its commitment to its students.

NCEE representatives presented various slides emphasizing the need to create the new future-ready, learner-centered educational system. Today's school model, in general, is over 100 years old, while the world continues to change drastically. It's time to adjust, they said.

Church donation

Members of Mt. Teamer CME Church presented Principal Casshaunda Davis and Holly Springs Primary School with some instructional supplies to help with student learning. Each third grade class at the primary school received a class set of dry erase boards, markers, and erasers to help students engage and actively participate during classes. "Mt. Teamer Church is thankful for the opportunity to partner with schools and districts in our communities and plan to do even more to support them in the future," said Rev. Eric Shields, pastor. Pictured in back are Dr. Irene Walton Turnage, superintendent of education; Casshaunda Davis; Ruby Johnson, church member; and Rev. Eric Shields. Students are Danilo Sandoval, Cordarian Hankins, Camryn Brown, Jestice Elliott, Kingston Jones and Trevor Washington.



Happy Valentine's Day to residents of Christopher's

The Holly Springs High School journalism class, as a community project, wrote heartfelt messages on Valentine's cards for residents of Christopher's Manor. Class representatives delivered the cards to the assisted living facility in Holly Springs on Valentine's Day, Friday, Feb. 14. From left are Aziah Wright; Saimira McAuley; Reletria Pegues, activity director at Christopher's; Brianna Guy; Talyah McAdams; and Brian White, journalism teacher. Other members of the class are Christian Hicks, Jayden Johnson, Denzel Lumpkin, Emmanuel McCary, Kaylyn McKinney, Jazirae Nelson, Jeremiah Sellers, Kaliyah Vaughn and teacher assistant Barry Burleson.



Principal speaks to Rotarians

Casshaunda Davis, principal of Holly Springs Primary School, was the guest speaker for the Holly Springs Rotary Club meeting on January 15. She said the mission at the school is to extend a helping hand to all children and encourage them to do their best every day. She said Holly Springs Primary School educators, administrators and staff want to make a difference in the lives of their students. "We want to give confidence and lay a strong foundation for each student to build upon," she said. "When we see lightbulbs go off as they learn new things, it keeps us motivated." For the school year 2023-24, both Holly Springs Primary School and Holly Springs School District as a whole achieved A-Ratings for the first time in history. "It's a team effort in the entire school district," she said. "We want to meet the needs of all students who enter our doors. We're unified." She said the goal is to be an "A school" for many years to come. "It's a mindset," Davis said, "and we believe we can do it."



Walmart makes donation

Walmart recently donated supplies to Holly Springs High School. Pictured receiving the items from Walmart is Cravin Turnage (left), principal of Holly Springs High School. Representing Walmart are Jeff Borden, store manager, and Rodney Logan, hardline team leader.



Behind the Big House

Several groups of students from the Holly Springs School District enjoyed the Behind the Big House learning experience on Friday, April 4, at Craft Home (1851) and Quarters (1847) in Holly Springs. Local and national experts highlighted the stories of enslaved people who lived and worked in the shadow of the Big House – brickmaking, cooking and doing laundry. The experts shared the ingenuity, resilience and skills of the ancestors to which many in Mississippi have a familial connection. Students also learned how archaeology and genealogy play an essential role in understanding our American history. A quilting demonstration during Behind the Big House featured Dr. Sherna Jones, pre-K and early childhood coordinator/interventionist with the Holly Springs School District, and students Kelsey Robinson and Aunesty Davis from Holly Springs Intermediate School. Dr. Jones teaches the quilting class once a week. Mississippi Roses Chapter of The Links, Incorporated sponsors the class and provides sewing machines, materials and supplies.



High school seniors enjoy community service

The Class of 2025 at Holly Springs High School adopted four classrooms at the Marjean Taylor-Myatt Head Start as part of the high school seniors' community service. Members of the class are excited about delivering Christmas gifts to the children.

Career and Tech Center starts Crochet Club

‘Stress relief, enjoyable’



Regina Campbell, crochet instructor, assists Kayla Phillips, a health science student

LaTonya Burgin, counselor at the Holly Springs Career and Technical Center, saw some social media posts about Regina Campbell's knitting and crocheting classes at the Marshall County Library.

"Ms. Burgin tracked me down, sent me a message, and I responded," Campbell said. "She wanted to know if I would be willing to teach some high school students. I said, sure, no problem."

The two met and started brainstorming. The result is the start of the Crochet Club at the Career and Technical Center.

The first class was held February 5 with 14 students participating.

"Seven of them wanted to take their projects home, so that tells me that those seven want to really learn," Campbell said. "And, of course, there may be others, too. It's all about teaching the kids, and we will see how they take to it before we do anything bigger."

Campbell called herself "a knitter," but said she started crocheting several months ago.

"I learned pretty quickly," she said. "I'm not a master, but I can certainly teach the kids how to get started."

Campbell said crocheting occupies the hands and the mind and can be meditative.

"It gives the kids a sense of purpose and accomplishment, and at the end of a certain project they have something," she said. "It's all-around good, clean fun."

Susie Brown, director of the Career and Technical Center, agreed.

"Students learn a craft, and crocheting can also be therapeutic, providing some stress relief for them along with enjoyment," Brown said.

The class will be held once a week at the Career and Technical Center.



Heart Health Fair

Members of Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Incorporated partnered with the Holly Springs School District for a Get Moving Get Grooving Heart Health Fair. The Heart Health Fair was free to the community and included free health screenings; exciting health classes that included yoga, hip-hop steps, and Zumba routines; and delicious and healthy refreshments. The purpose of the health fair was to encourage community members to learn about heart health, get active, and have a blast!

The Mississippi Roses (MS) Chapter of The Links Incorporated presented The Art of African Drumming Wednesday, March 5, at Holly Springs Primary School. The performance featured Ricky Burkhead, professor of music at the University of Mississippi, and he was accompanied by Effie Burt and Saviour Sallah. The children had a great time clapping and singing along. A group of teachers also took the stage to try out the wide range of instruments, and that performance received a big round of applause from the students. It was indeed a fun and educational event for all. The project is supported in part by funding from the Mississippi Arts Commission, a state agency. Thanks to all who had a part in bringing the program to Holly Springs Primary School.



Holly Springs High School held its Black History Program on Wednesday afternoon, Feb. 26, in the gymnasium. Black History Month is an annual celebration of achievements and a time of recognizing the central role and contributions of black people in U.S. and world history. Program coordinator this year was Tiffany Elzie, Social Studies Department chairperson at Holly Springs High School. Students, administrators and faculty participated in the program, which included music, a skit entitled "A Dance Between Time" and more. Keynote speaker was Dr. Vernon Rayford, a 1999 graduate of Holly Springs High School. Rayford attended Ole Miss and earned Doctor of Pharmacy and Doctor of Medicine degrees from Vanderbilt. He completed residency training in internal medicine and pediatrics at Massachusetts General Hospital and Harvard Medical School. He is board certified in internal medicine, pediatrics and obesity medicine. He works as a faculty member of the Internal Medicine Residency at North Mississippi Medical Center in Tupelo, where he teaches resident physicians while supervising patient care in the residency clinic. "There is nothing out of reach for a graduate of Holly Springs High School," Rayford told the students. "When challenges come, just realize that only you know who you are. You determine what you can do. And you can do anything because you will be a graduate of Holly Springs High School." In the photo at left, Dr. Rayford (left) is welcomed by teacher Brian White.



Holly Springs Intermediate School held its 2025 Black History Program Friday afternoon, Feb. 28, in the gymnasium. Fourth, fifth and sixth graders participated in the program, led by music director Deandra Jones. Songs included "Lift Every Voice," "We Are the World," "Sir Duke" and "Man in the Mirror," plus other musical selections and a dance. Thanks to everyone who contributed their time and talents in making this a fun and creative show.





National Technical Honor Society Induction Ceremony

The Holly Springs Career and Technical Center held its National Technical Honor Society (NTHS) Induction Ceremony on Thursday evening, April 24, in the Holly Springs High School auditorium. Susie Brown, director of the CTC, and staff members conducted the ceremony, along with assistance from some students. Guest speaker was Darrel Thomas, director of the Holly Springs Parks and Recreation Department. CTC instructors recognized honor society inductees from their respective classes. The ceremony also included candle-lighting, the purpose and motto of NTHS, and recitation of the pledge. "As a member of the National Technical Honor Society, I pledge to maintain the highest standard of personal conduct. I will apply myself to continue a record of scholastic achievement, and I will strive for excellence in all aspects of education. I will invest my talents, my skills, and my knowledge in a career of my own choosing, and shall always endeavor to uphold my obligations as a citizen of my community and my country." Inductees are (front row) Aeryiel Glover, Breanna Wiseman, Toniya Seldon, Janiya Brown, Taniya Hunt, Jorja Burgess, Raven Rosser; (second row) Braylon Robinson, Christian Hicks, Jaylen Cassidy, Tyler Mayfield, Addam Brown, Arriyel Williams; (not pictured) Ceyenne Burton, Jaiden Hall, Aryauna Ingram, Keturah Peyton, Kaliyah Vaughn, Joshua Walker, Chakarion Gullede, Anferne Reaves, Davon Johnson, Jasmine Wall, Madison Edwards, Jakhya McIntyre, Kalisa Tucker, Dejah Howell, Future Matthews, Takayla Oliver. In photo at right, Susie Brown (right) assists student Jorja Burgess during the candle-lighting ceremony.



*High School
Graduation
Friday,
May 23
Rust College
7 p.m.*



Honor Roll all three nine weeks at Junior High

Holly Springs Junior High School held its Honors Program in April. Making the Honor Roll all three nine weeks this school year were (from left) Takerra Oliver, Markel Harris, Justin Garcia, Kirsten Aldridge, Kyler Jefferson and Jeremiah Jefferson.



School administrators from Holly Springs and Marshall County, including Eileen Dowsing, assistant superintendent of the Holly Springs School District (far left), join Amplify representatives for a recent brainstorming session.

Amplify launches partnership with schools

Companies continue to pick Marshall County as the location for their next business ventures. And one of those, Amplify Cell Technologies, is working ahead to build a workforce.

Amplify is reaching out to local schools to form a critical partnership.

“We are honored that you are joining us to identify specific needs so we can prepare students for the future workforce,” said Catherine Garrett, senior HR Manager – Learning, Organization, Development and Talent Management.

She and other company representatives met with administrators from the Holly Springs and Marshall County school districts Wednesday, April 16, at Whispering Woods Hotel and Conference Center in Olive Branch. The purpose of the second in a series of meetings was to outline true next steps in the partnership with the two school districts with achievable outcomes, an important ingredient in developing a strategic plan.

Coming to a 500-acre site in the Chickasaw Trail Industrial Park, Amplify Cell Technologies is set to become the nation’s largest commercial battery cell manufacturing company dedicated to heavy and medium-duty vehicles. The state-of-the-art factory is slated to begin production in 2027, driving innovation in zero-emission technology. This is a joint venture between Accelera by Cummins, Daimler Trucks & Buses US Holding LLC, and PACCAR, with EVE Energy as technology partner.

Amplify Cell Technologies aims to create more than 2,000 jobs across a diverse range of fields, including manufacturing, operations, engineering, supply chain, information technology, accounting, human resources, and more. The company is seeking passionate individuals eager to contribute to a groundbreaking mission and play a pivotal role in transforming the commercial vehicle industry toward a sustainable, zero-emission future.

Jacqueline Jones, chief HR officer, said Amplify locating in Marshall County is “a game-changer.”

“We want you to help us build this program, from elementary on up through high school,” she said.

Jones said young people do not have to go out of Marshall County to find quality, high-paying jobs.

“We want to know how we can help our kids to be successful,” she said. “We want to equip our students so they can work in advanced manufacturing. We have to get on the train or get left behind.”

Attendees helped outline a course for the future by dividing into groups and “brainstorming for a better tomorrow.”

Representing the Holly Springs School District at the recent meeting were Dr. Irene Walton Turnage, superintendent of education; Eileen Dowsing, assistant superintendent of education; Susie Brown, director of the Career and Technical Center; and Barry Burleson, communications/public relations coordinator.