



# CONNECTION

*A newsletter for the Thomas Academy family*  
*Keeping connection through communication*

November 2018 Edition

## *Thomas Academy receives academic growth award*

Thomas Academy received a North Carolina Academic Growth Award for the 2017-2018 academic year from the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction.

“Academic growth represents an impressive amount of hard work by students and educators,” State Superintendent of Public Instruction Mark Johnson wrote in a letter of congratulations to the school. “Again this year, I’m presenting awards for achieving and exceeding expected academic growth.”

According to the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction website, “Student growth is the amount of academic progress that students make over the course of a grade or class. Students enter grades and courses at different places; some have struggled while some have excelled. Regardless of how they enter a grade or course, students can make progress over the course of the school year.”

“Our student population is



*Some of our Thomas Academy staff, from left, Travis Fassnacht, Timothy Curtis, Whitney Bronson, Tara Haynes, Betty Hux, Jonathan Crawley, Patty Lyerly, DeLayne Sons, Brian Heim, Whitney Boykin, Leo Wilson and Dr. Geraldine Bradshaw.*

different from other schools in the area as the majority of our students come to us significantly below grade level,” said Dr. Tom Simmons, vice president for education. “Making expected growth by the state standards is a huge accomplishment for our students.”

It is an accomplishment set up by the educational plans put in place for each student according to Dr. Geraldine Bradshaw, director at Thomas Academy.

“Thomas Academy is a school

of opportunity,” said Bradshaw. “As director, I look at each student individually and assist in putting a plan in place to assist all needs. Every transcript, every report card, is looked at personally by me. My school counselor’s background has come in handy with assisting the student and parent in planning their future. With the data provided through all these programs, our staff is able to differentiate instruction to best serve each

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### *Dates to Remember*

Nov. 18 - 9 & 10:30 a.m. Glee Club  
Performance at The Bridge  
Presbyterian Church, Leland  
Nov. 21 - 23 - Thanksgiving Holiday, No  
School for Students or Staff

### **Basketball Schedule**

Nov. 16 5 p.m.	@Alpha Academy
Nov. 19 6 p.m.	@ East Columbus
Nov. 26 TBA	@Southeastern HomeSchool
Nov. 29 6 p.m.	West Columbus
Nov. 30 4:30 p.m.	@Falcon Christian Academy

*\*Schedule subject to change. Keep up with the teams on our Facebook page for updates.*

## From the Director's Desk

### *The countdown is on!*

Even as we celebrate the incredible accomplishments of our students and staff in meeting expected growth last year, we are preparing for the first round of End-of-Course testing for the current year. Our high school students will be testing Dec. 12 - 18, taking both the EOCs and end of semester tests.

I ask that you help our students begin preparing for the testing now. Encourage your student to be present and respectful in the classroom so that he or she can learn the material from the teacher. Ask your student about what he or she is learning every day and work to get beyond the general "stuff" answer. Log into Powerschool to see if there are any areas that your student is struggling and work with him or her to create a game plan for success.

Please remember, I practice an open door policy for students, staff, and parents. If at any time you have a question or concern, please call me. I can be reached on my cell phone at **910-874-1456** or by email at **geraldine.bradshaw@thomasacademync.org**. The best time for a focused conversation is after 6 p.m. as I will be able to give you my full attention. During school hours my focus is on the children.

Thank you to all involved in giving me the opportunity to grow our children.

Yours in service,

*Geraldine Bradshaw*



*The Thomas Academy educational experience is a partnership between the teachers, students, and parents/guardians.*

*Parental/guardian involvement means participation of parents in regular, two-way, and meaningful communication regarding student academic learning and school activities.*

### *How can you get involved?*

- Sign up for the Remind app
- Volunteer to help at the school
- Attend parent/guardian meetings
- Serve on the Parent Advisory Committee
- Talk with your child about his or her classroom experiences
- Log into Powerschool to check your child's grades
- Reach out to teachers directly with any questions or concerns
- Attend awards ceremonies or events

# THOMAS

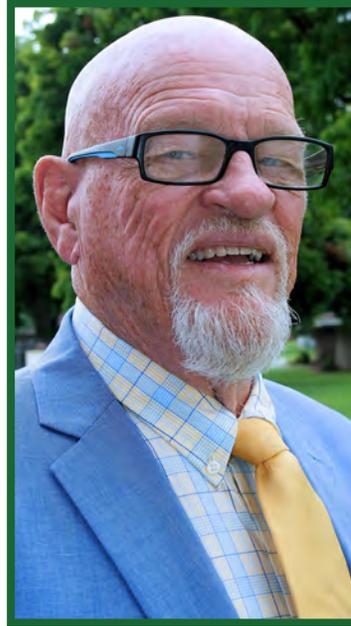
## Academy



Helping students find Connection, Compassion & Character

**Connection** is the newsletter for Thomas Academy designed to uphold the commitment to connection through communication. It is distributed once a month during the academic year to provide continuing updates on the happenings of the school. To remain connected between issues, visit the website at [www.thomasacademync.org](http://www.thomasacademync.org) and become a fan on Facebook: [www.facebook.com/ThomasAcademyNC/](https://www.facebook.com/ThomasAcademyNC/)

## Doc's Corner



Dr. Tom Simmons  
Vice President for  
Education

*"We strive every day to make an impact on the lives of our students. We want to find those students who have given up on education who we can help guide to the highest levels of accomplishment."*



### Key Club at Safe Night

Our Key Club ran a booth at the Lake Waccamaw Safe Night held on Oct. 31 at the Boys and Girls Homes Farm and Benton/BTS Arena and Exhibition Center. The booth included a ring toss game and our students distributed candy to the hundreds of children who came through the event.

#### • Growth

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individual student."

Maintaining a focus on success in this day and age requires the continuous use of data for evaluation. One of the tools used by the school to measure achievement is the Education Value-Added Assessment System, or EVAAS, scores provided by the state. EVAAS is a statistical analysis of student assessment data, such as the EOG and EOC assessments, over time. It provides districts and their schools with growth data to consider, in addition to achievement data. This lens of measuring student learning provides educators with information to help ensure they are meeting the academic needs of individual students.

"Using the EVAAS model, we have shown an increase in our test scores in both the middle school

and high school," Bradshaw said. "Overall test scores for the middle school increased by 15 points collectively. Our high school overall test scores increased by 8 points, showing growth in all but one academic area. Because we have this information, we have been addressing that issue through early intervention this year and expect to see continued growth in the coming year."

It is the teachers in the classrooms who are responsible for making sure the students are receiving the kind of instruction they need to continue to achieve.

"All of our teachers are either certified or lateral entry in the area they teach," said Simmons. "Our goal is to provide our students with a top quality education from qualified teachers who truly care about their success. Our teachers are dedicated educators who want to ensure that every student moves

beyond their expectations."

Bradshaw agrees, "Our teachers truly deserve the credit for helping our students succeed. The statement I have heard over and over from the staff is that it is about focusing on student success," said Bradshaw. "If it means that the teachers are expanding their hours to provide the needed interventions to bring these children to the next level, that is what they are going to do."

These interventions are no surprise for a school that prides itself on a policy that does not allow the students to fail.

"Our no fail, no expel policy is something that truly sets us apart," said Simmons. "Many of our students come to us having been given up on by other educational systems. We work with them to make sure they know that we truly care about their education and their success as an individual."

## *Students of the Month*

The Students of the Month are selected by the faculty. In addition to their performance in the classroom, they are chosen through the demonstration of their commitment to the Thomas Academy motto of Connection, Compassion, & Character.

The November students of the month are:

*Conner Hege*  
*Middle School Student*

*Annaelise Kennedy*  
*High School Student*



## *Staff of the Month*

*DeLayne Sons*  
*Middle School*  
*Science Coordinator*



DeLayne Sons does everything she can to provide each student what he or she needs to have a good day in the classroom. Her personal attention and investment in each child helps with confidence and achievement in all areas of the school experience.

## *Volunteering with Habitat for Humanity*



A group of 24 students traveled to Whiteville Nov. 8 & 9 to work on a Habitat for Humanity Home. The students worked on sweeping, cleaning walls, and painting. They also had the opportunity to meet and work with the woman who will move into the home when it is ready.

