

The Learning Curve

This page was written and designed by Education First in cooperation with the Bibb County Board of Education, the Peyton Anderson Foundation, and The Telegraph.



Your weekly guide to students, schools, teachers and triumphs in Bibb County's Public Schools

Getting To Know

Dr. Cindy Gibson
Principal
Renaissance Academy
Performance Learning Center
&
Bibb Teen Parent Center



Job Description: Lead and support students and teachers in innovative academic programs to earn high school diplomas and bridge to post-secondary options

Hometown: Memphis, Tennessee

Schools attended: Tift College, Forsyth, GA; Memphis State University, Memphis, TN; Mercer University, Macon, GA; Georgia State University, Atlanta, GA; Nova Southeastern University, Ft. Lauderdale, FL

Degrees: B.A. Music Education and Applied Performance; MEd Reading Specialist; EdS English Education and Educational Leadership; EdD Educational Leadership

Professional Affiliations: Delta Kappa Gamma, Georgia Association of Educators, Georgia Association of Alternative Education, Georgia State University Alumni Association, Mentors Project of Bibb County

Years in education: 29

Years in Bibb County Public Schools: 16

Years in current position: 7

Favorite Teacher growing up and why: Miss Alice Rogers was my senior AP English teacher. She taught me to love Beowulf and Julius Caesar equally, but for different reasons. Mr. Tom Swayzee, Messick High School, Memphis, TN, was the finest band director in the world. He believed in his students and taught us to believe in ourselves.

Personal educational philosophy: Schools exist for the benefit of students. If I am your teacher, my plan is to accept you the way you are and lead you to achieve what you thought you could not.

Professional Goals: At this time I am focused on "Every Bibb County student will earn a high school diploma." When I retire from Bibb County Public Schools, I am going to teach American Literature at the college level and conduct educational research. I also want to work in the children's literacy effort.

Why education? I enjoyed the school environment and had excellent teachers in Memphis City Schools. I thought I was going to be a band director, but I went to a college that did not offer that major. I then chose music education with a concentration in choral music.

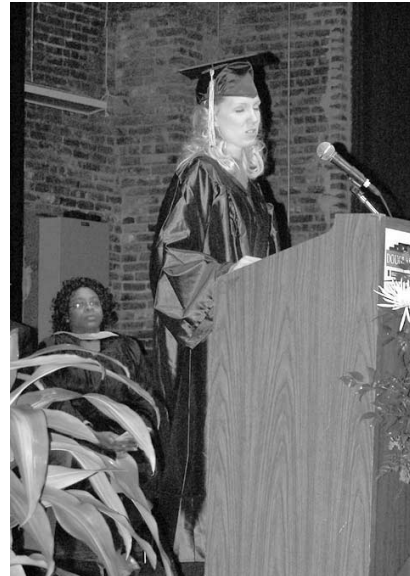
Favorite story from the classroom: I referred a young man for discipline for being disruptive in my English class. The football coach was disappointed in his player's disrespect toward a teacher and indicated so by assigning the young man to "jump boxes" after school for discipline. That afternoon, as I jogged laps and lifted weights by choice, I witnessed the student's respectful attention to his grueling punishment. That's when I learned to consider the level of the offense v. the severity of the consequences.

Bibb County Public Schools' Winter Graduation

"Every one of us has grown from your typical rebellious teen to mature young adults," Renaissance Academy Performance Learning Center Valedictorian Katie Drawhorn told a packed house at the Douglass Theater as she opened Bibb County Public Schools' Winter Graduation. She related her story of how education lost its importance to her and she dropped out of high school. When her life changed completely, she realized what it could mean to her, and she started trying to do everything she could to get back into school.

"I was determined, and luckily I found the Renaissance Academy. They gladly accepted me with open arms. I believe I am speaking for the entire graduating class when I say, 'thank you Renaissance Academy' for giving us that last chance to proudly prove to family, friends, and importantly ourselves that with the proper inspiration and determination, we too can conquer anything our hearts desire."

Speaking not only to Renaissance graduates - each high school graduated student this night - she made a case which was felt by every student, friend, and family member in the audience. The Winter Graduation holds a special place for many students in this county as it represents an education which was earned despite hardships. Whether they didn't pass that one class, took a full time job and dropped out to support their family, started a family of their own, or didn't complete one of the many final tests required to earn a diploma, these are the students who weren't quite ready for graduation with the rest of their class.



Renaissance Academy Valedictorian Katie Dawson opens this year's Bibb County Public Schools' Winter Graduation.

They're the students who realized it would take a little more work for them to earn their diploma, the students who took their education into their own hands and said: this is something I want, and this is something I'm going to have. "We are so very proud of you," School Board President Susan Middleton said.

"Each of you has shown you have what it takes to succeed. You have taken a challenge and turned it into an opportunity," featured speaker Julie Pennybacker, Executive Director of Education First, told them. "It is clear to me you possess that one important ingredient people look for when they are

selecting students to enroll in a higher education program and when they are selecting people to employ: you have determination.

With almost every seat filled, people lining each of the walls, and a packed balcony, each student was called across the stage to be handed their diploma by Superintendent Sharon Patterson and a member of the School Board.

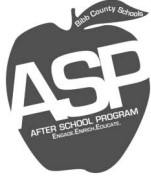
"This joint graduation ceremony is testament to the district's mission to serve all students in Bibb County - every student in every classroom in every school," Renaissance Principal Dr. Cindy Gibson told them.

According to Dr. Gibson, this has been the most people to ever attend this yearly event, and she couldn't be happier. Along with graduating students, this is the inaugural graduation of the Renaissance Academy since it became the Performance Learning Center. Through a partnership between the school system and Communities in Schools of Georgia, the faculty now has the tools at their disposal to help even more students find their way to crossing the graduation stage.

"We are hopeful of your success. We know that your determination to take a challenge and make it an opportunity will help make for us a new community," Pennybacker added. "One in which we can all live in peace and prosperity."

"On behalf of all of us graduating tonight, thank you to all of the parents who stuck with us, gave us a push when we needed it, and never gave up when we wanted to," said Drawhorn.

Communities-in-Schools events for February



For more information on any of these events, please contact the ASP office at (478) 765-8660.

P.A.S.S. Workshop @ Hamilton
Feb 15, 4:00 - 6:00 p.m.
Feb 22, 4:00 - 6:00 p.m.

P.A.S.S. Workshop @ McEvoy
Feb 14,
10:00 a.m. - 12:30 p.m.

P.A.S.S. Workshop @ Morgan
Feb 15, 4:00 - 6:00 p.m.

P.A.S.S. Workshop @ Union
Feb 16, 4:00 - 6:00 p.m.

P.A.S.S. Workshop @ Vineville (Cherokee Heights UMC)
Feb 21, 4:00 - 6:00 p.m.
Feb 28, 4:00 - 6:00 p.m.

P.A.S.S. Workshop @ Jones
Feb 27, 4:00 - 6:00 p.m.

Family Fun Night Rice: Feb 22,
4:00 - 6:00 p.m.
Williams: Feb 23,
4:00 - 6:00 p.m.

New Officers



Susan Middleton
President



Lynn Farmer
Vice President



Tom Hudson
Secretary



Tommy Barnes
Treasurer