

The Learning Curve

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

Weaver Middle School raises money for Relay for Life

Organize Walk and basketball game to get students involved.



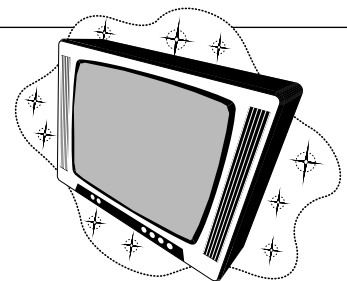
Weaver Middle students walked around the track for 24 minutes.

"Don't slow me down," says Anna Busch of Weaver Middle School. She is keeping up a fast walk around the school's track along with more than 500 students. The school has been raising money for Relay for Life during the school year through events like a student vs. staff basketball game and a mock Walk.

"We're just doing a lot of fundraising," says Title I Home School Coordinator Leola Murphy as she hands a juice to one student just finishing the walk. Admission was three dollars for the basketball game and one dollar to participate in the walk. Candy and snacks were being sold each day after school. Out of this all, the school was able to raise more than \$5,000.

"We're trying to give the students an idea of what a Walk is like," says Bush. Before the walk, students were told about cancer research and what the Relay for Life is about. They then walked around the track for 24 minutes; Busch kept track of how far she walked, and then multiplied that number by the number of students to find the total miles walked. "This is our best Relay for Life yet!"

Students also had the opportunity to compete in individual contests like putt-putt, bucket toss, and hula-hooping. Each grade also had games of kick ball going on.



For up-to-date information and events concerning Bibb County Public Schools, tune in to Cox Cable Channel 17!

Bibb County Public Schools band, chorus, and strings students earn seats in top state ensembles

Spend weekend rehearsing and performing with guest conductors and state's top performers

"I got the information off of the Web site and immediately started practicing," says Central High junior Kelly Jolly of her audition for the 11th/12th grade division of the Georgia All-State Orchestra.

"I knew what I had to [in the audition], and I did it," says Rutland High sophomore Emily Suber, who was accepted as a soprano into the 9th/10th grade division of the All-State Chorus.

Each year, middle and high school band, strings, and chorus students compete in local, region, and state auditions for placement in honor ensembles. "It was a great opportunity to work with other musicians, play some harder music, and put on a good performance," says Rutland High freshman Benjamin Bennett, who made the cuts for the 9th/10th grade division of All-State Band.

"They get together with the top [musicians] in the state, work with a great clinician, and [perform] pieces they wouldn't get to normally," says Miller Middle chorus teacher Joy Dumas.

This year, Bibb County Public Schools was represented at the state level by seven students: Bennett, Jolly, Suber, Southwest High junior Kentrel Hunt, Southwest High senior Arlethia Johnson, Miller Middle 7th grader Leah Parris, and Westside High sophomore Jotarus Rozier.

"[The students] are getting so much better, improving their musicianship," says Westside chorus teacher Betty Moon.

Southwest chorus director Jimmy Mills agrees pointing out that "[Johnson] is considered one of the top singers in the state." She has made a perfect score on her second audition the past three years. Next year, he will be taking 20 students to the audition, hoping at least 10 will make the cuts.

To participate in an ensemble, a student must pass several levels of audition, including some combination of prepared piece of music, sight-reading, scales, ear training (for chorus), and, for some, a shot interview. "It was pretty stressful," says Parris. "When

I first saw the music, I thought I wouldn't do it because [the selections] were so hard." However, going into her audition, she says she "didn't really think about it, but afterwards thought I did pretty well." On her second audition for placement, she received a perfect score.

Hunt, who also made the cut last year, said the audition proved a bit more challenging. Not only were "several pieces in different languages," but the sight reading gave him a little trouble because "the intervals weren't what I was used to."

Band, chorus, and strings groups are separate from each other, each hosting their own All-State weekend. They are divided up into 7th/8th grade, 9th/10th grade, and 11th/12th grade ensembles. They will spend several days rehearsing music selected by a guest conductor for a performance at the end of the weekend.

"The practice time is so crucial," says Johnson, saying they will spend hours going over one section, making sure it is perfect. "The music the director chose for us

was on a more mature level!"

By only having a few days to get the music ready, Jolly agrees how important the rehearsals are. "If you don't pay attention, you'll fall behind!"

"It's a good atmosphere because you're with people who sing at the same level," says Hunt. Being around the top-class musicians becomes a great learning experience as well, says Suber. "I was near some people who really knew what they were doing, and they helped me a lot!"

After the nervousness of the auditions, the joy at having found out they made it, and the hard work of constant rehearsing, all of them came away from the performances pleased.

"The performance was unbelievable," says Suber. "My mom cried on a few of the songs."

"We were awesome," says Johnson. "For this to be my last year, we ended with a bang."



(above) the 9th/10th grade All-State Band performed at the Lucas Theater in Savannah.



(left) The Middle School All-State chorus performed with six other ensembles at the Civic Center in Savannah.