

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

Appling Middle holds students to high standards of behavior

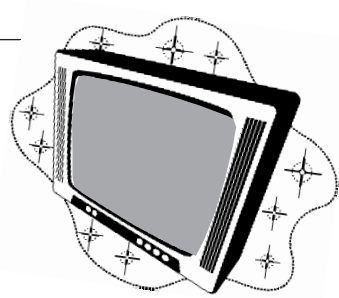
The mission statement at Appling Middle School is "Appling Panthers, Thinkers, Producers, and Contributors...shaping our destiny NOW!" In that vein, the school takes every Friday in the school year to reward their students for outstanding behavior. It's a program called R.O.A.R., which strives to foster Respect, Obedience, Attentiveness, and Responsibility among the students.

Each Friday, the school varies the event, and students attending are those who, during the week, lived up to the school's standards of behavior. They sign ROAR Pledge Cards (to continue the behavior), attach it to balloons, and then let them go into the air. Names were drawn for prizes (like portable CD players).

Special guests from the community are invited to speak with the students, including teachers and firemen. Over the course of the summer, Appling will be undergoing renovations thanks to the recently passed Education Special Local Option Sales Tax.



Appling Middle students release balloons with their ROAR Pledge Cards attached.



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

Group 4 Projects

Central High IB students gain hands-on insight into the biology and physics

In the junior year of Central High School's International Baccalaureate program, students are required to participate in and present their Group 4 projects. Based in their science classes, either physics standard level or even biology higher level, they split into groups and work on a focused project with they will later present to students and faculty.

It's a year-long process of work for these students, and they won't even find out how they scored until the end of their senior year. The projects, after being presented, are sent out around the world to official IB graders to be judged and evaluated.

"The Group 4 Project allows students to appreciate the environmental, social, and ethical implications of science," says IB Biology teacher Tina Brigmond. "It may also allow them to understand the limitations of scientific study. For example, the shortage of appropriate date and/or the lack of resources. The emphasis is on interdisciplinary study rather than the products of such investigations."

As the IB program focuses on verbal and written experience, every project and class has a verbally assessed component, which Kirby says will help them immensely when they get to college. "They have to learn how to explain what they're learning." So their audience wouldn't be limited to just a few teachers and the other students preparing to present, "I opened it up to any students who wanted to watch."

Before a packed Media Center, including several tables of students as well as Principal Dr. Erin Weaver, the IB students began their PowerPoint presentations. One group spent the year studying the Ocmulgee National Monument Wetlands, documenting the water (makeup, pH levels, and chemicals present, including ammonia, chlorine, iron, and cyanide), the history of the trails, the plants and fungus (including scientific names), the different insects they found (American grasshopper, field cricket, nine-spotted ladybug, and tiger mosquito),



and the bacteria and algae found in the river. Using the river as a focal point, they talked about the pollutants found in the water, discussing how much of it seemed to be from agricultural runoff.

"Isn't this fascinating?" Dr. Weaver asks quietly, her eyes never leaving the screen.

After the projects are completed, biology students will be able to (among several other things) outline and explain the factors that affect the distribution of plant species; explain what is meant by the niche concept; explain interactions between species; describe ecological succession; and discuss the difficulties of classifying organisms. The physics project will help the students better understand measurement and uncertainties; work with vectors; describe the behavior of a linear spring and solve related problems; state the macroscopic gas laws relating to pressure, volume, temperature, mole, and molar mass; and solve problems using the ideal gas law equation.

After the field work, students are expected to complete three formal lab write-ups, a log of their time usage, a journal of materials, and the final presentation. Initially, the teachers score them based on IB criteria,

Students in Central High's International Baccalaureate program did an intense study in the Ocmulgee National Monument. Part of the project was to present their findings to their peers and teachers.



and then the students score themselves and each other. "They are extremely honest with what they did and what the others did," says Brigmond. "These may be our future problem-solvers, and after [the recent environmental concerns], we need their determination to see a solution through."

Bibb County Celebrates Youth Art Month

Student Art Work put on Display in State Capitol and Georgia Children's Museum

Each year in March, the Georgia Art Education Association (GAEA) kicks off Youth Art Month (YAM) with a proclamation signing by Governor Sonny Perdue. Art Educators from across the state are invited with four of their students to Atlanta to not only view this event, but see the artwork displayed in the Governor's Office from Georgia artists and the Capitol Art Exhibit in the Secretary of State's Office. Two students from Skyview Elementary had their artwork selected to be displayed for this event.

"It's to make people aware of how art affects students," says GAEA YAM co-chair and Skyview art teacher Brooks Dantzler. "It teaches critical thinking skills...it's a problem solving activity that's involved."

The event has been held since 1961, but Bibb County has never held its own celebration. Instead, it was up to the individual art teachers to participate in their schools. When co-chair of the state event and



Skyview Elementary Principal Gail Gilbert and Art Teacher Brooks Dantzler sign the proclamation during Skyview's Morning News.

Weaver Middle art teacher Ana Duhon first came to Bibb County, she and Dantzler set out to make it a county-wide event. "We're in the middle of the state, and we should be sending out the info," says Dantzler.

After the Governor's signing, Weaver Principal Dr. Pam Carswell and Skyview Principal Gail Gilbert held signings at their school declaring March to be Youth Art Month. A few days later, the teachers celebrated as Superintendent Sharon Patterson signed a proclamation making it official for the entire county. That night, YAM JAM 2006 "The sound of ART," opened at the Georgia Children's Museum featuring artwork from students across the county.

We want your feedback! Please e-mail your comments and suggestions for "The Learning Curve" or information about events in the Bibb County school system to: cfloore@cbi.mgacoxmail.com or call 743-0023

The Brief

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