Our very own Superintendent, Dr. Brenda Coley, was selected to serve as an Alabama delegate to tour the Ministry of Education in Seoul, Korea from October 28, 2019 through November 2, 2019. The educational tour was initiated by Alabama State Superintendent, Dr. Eric Mackey, who serves as the liaison for the Alabama Korea Education and Economic Partnership known as AKEEP. Along with the State Superintendent of Alabama, delegates included six superintendents, four senators, one Alabama House of Representative, and two educational professionals in Higher Education representing Troy University and Alabama State University from Montgomery, Alabama.

The primary focus of the tour was to develop an international relationship with the Korean Ministry of Education. According to State Superintendent, Dr. Eric Mackey, Alabama has more than ninety Korean businesses such as Kia and Hyundai and many Korean families are residing here in the state of Alabama. Therefore, it is imperative that Alabama educators become more aware of the Korean culture and language in order to better educate the growing Korean population. Secondly, while Alabama is facing a tremendous teacher shortage, Korea has a surplus of educators. Korea is one of the leading countries in STEM/STEAM education. They currently have a 97% literacy rate as education is top priority for their students. Many Koreans describe educators as one of the most noble careers in Korea.

During the tour, delegates were able to visit a number of elementary and secondary schools, elite universities, and sites of cultural significance. The greatest benefit of the trip to Korea was the signing of a Memorandum of Agreement between Alabama K-2 & Higher Education with the Korean Ministry of Education. The agreement will enable certified educators in Korea to pursue a dual Master’s Degree in Korea and Alabama. Participants will be allowed to complete one year of study in Korea and one year of study in Alabama, obtaining a dual certification. The goal of the dual certification is to increase the pool of candidates in Alabama for teacher recruitment. We are very proud of our Superintendent, Dr. Brenda Coley, and the fact that she was able to represent Alabama on such a prestigious platform.

The Russell County School District is proud to continue the strong partnerships with local, regional, and state colleges across our state. Through dual enrollment courses, students are able to earn college credit while enrolled at Russell County High. During these courses, students complete all assignments that would normally be completed as part of the college course and are given credit on a college transcript. Our engaging and rigorous courses help students prepare for post-secondary education by giving them a representation of what college requires while simultaneously giving each student a head start on his/her college degree. Dual enrollment is one indicator that contributes to our system’s and high school’s annual report card score issued by the Alabama State Department of Education.

A review of data since 2017 shows that we have seen a consistent increase of students enrolled in our dual enrollment courses through Wallace Community, UAB, and CVCC. Starting with very low enrollment (7 students) prior to 2017, the amount of students enrolled in our dual enrollment courses has increased to 53 students during the 2018-2019 school year and to 90 students during the 2018-2019 school year (not counting summer enrollment of 40 students). Currently, we are expecting to reach even higher numbers due to already being at 72 students enrolled in dual enrollment this fall.

Our school system is very fortunate to have CVCC offer dual enrollment scholarships to our students pairing an academic course with a career tech course. CVCC also allows students who do not wish to take an academic course to strictly take career tech courses under the scholarship for free with certain academic requirements. This is a great opportunity for our students, as students during the 2017-2018 school year and in previous years had to pay for their courses out of pocket. UAB dual enrollment courses are also offered for students in the GEAR UP program (current seniors) as long as they meet certain academic requirements such as a GPA of 3.0 or higher.

We give credit to our college partners, career coaches, counselors, and faculty for helping improve the opportunities for the students in Russell County.

“While we are living in the present, we must celebrate life everyday, knowing that we are becoming history with every work, every action, every deed”. Mattie Stepanek
It is our pleasure to introduce you to the newest member of the RCSD Central Office Team, Mrs. Tamara Bowser-Brock. She has assumed the duties of the Human Resource Liaison and is the Executive Assistant to Superintendent, Dr. Brenda Coley.

Mrs. Brock comes to the District from the State of Georgia with a combined 21 years of experience in Human Resources, Training, Leadership and Staff Development.

She is the wife of Randall Brock, the mother of one son, Jaylon and two daughters, Braxtyn and Nyeisha.

Mrs. Brock says that she is excited about getting to know each one of you personally and working along the professional lines of Excellence that the Russell County School District and the Warrior family are known for!

Russell County Students ROCK!! Each year students from three local school districts compete in the Farm-City Contest. This year’s theme was, “Keep Alabama Growing.” The contest includes three categories to include posters, essays and videos, which are broken into grade-band divisions. Our students dominated the poster category by claiming four (4) of the six (6) prizes in two grade-bands. Please congratulate the following winners and their teachers:

**K-3rd Grade Winners**
- Kennan Smith, 2nd Place from LES (Ms. Boyte)
- Giovanni Yonts, 3rd Place from LES (Ms. Bussey)

**4th-6th Grade Winners**
- Jaelin Charfauros, 1st Place from OES (Ms. Anderson)
- Sean Mull, 2nd Place from RCMS (Ms. Kirkland)

Winning students and their teachers receive a cash prize, recognition at the Farm-City breakfast and compete at the state level. This is an excellent learning experience for our students and we thank The Russell County Extension Office for sponsoring this fun event.

Russell County Schools hosted the first district-wide Elementary Math Competition for 4th & 5th grade mathletes on Thursday, November 7, 2019, at Russell County High School. The commons area was overflowing with students, parents, teachers, principals, and the Superintendent. It was an exciting showcase of our students’ math skills! Math Teams from Dixie, Ladonia, Mt. Olive Intermediate, and Oliver gathered at the high school to engage in a friendly math competition to vie for the honor of being the district’s top “Mathletes”. After seven rounds of math questions and the completion of individual math tests, the trophies were distributed as follows.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>4th Grade</th>
<th>5th Grade</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1st - Ladonia</td>
<td>1st - Ladonia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2nd - Mt. Olive</td>
<td>2nd - Mt. Olive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3rd - Oliver</td>
<td>3rd - Oliver</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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All 3rd- 5th grade students were assigned a grade level science standard and allowed to design, engineer, and build a project which represented their learning. The top 36 projects were exhibited at the district science fair on November 21, 2019. It was amazing! Students had designed a solar car and a hand-powered generator, measured the energy in potatoes and lemons, explored the power of magnets, created magnetic slime, and conducted a marble drop experiment, among other great experiments. Parents, students, teachers, principals, board members, and the Superintendent enjoyed science trivia questions and a video of our scientists in action before participating in the Science Project Expo. The judges had difficult decisions to make, but they came to a consensus with the awarding of 1st, 2nd, and 3rd place for each grade level. Visit the district’s website to see the names of the winners (www.myrcsd.org).
MORE SAFETY UPGRADES

We are happy to announce that new security upgrades will start during Christmas break at MOPS/MOIS. The new security system will consist of door locks and cameras being installed throughout each school as well as camera coverage on the outside of the building. The projected cost of this project will be $219,000. When these security upgrades are completed, they will mirror those which are already in operation at RCMS. We are very excited to be taking the next step towards having better security in place throughout the district.

OLIVER ELEMENTARY LEADS SCHOOL ATTENDANCE

To increase student attendance, the Russell County School District has implemented several initiatives to assist in deterring chronic absenteeism. The school district as a whole has made tremendous strides, as evidenced through the State Accountability Report Card, and each school has accepted the challenges to obtain even more gains for the 2019-2020 school year.

To emphasize the positive achievements in our system, schools receive recognition every nine weeks for 1) the highest attendance rate and 2) the highest attendance rate gained when compared to the previous school year. Oliver Elementary School received the awards for both "The Highest Attendance Rate" and "The Highest Attendance Rate Gain" for the first nine weeks grading period. Kudos to Ms. Nancy Edwards and her team for making attendance a top priority! Dr. Lorenzo Pharrams, Director of At-Risk and Attendance, and Mrs. Florence Bellamy, Director of the Helping Families Initiative, awarded trophies to the principal during the school's faculty meeting.

PHENIX CITY EXCHANGE STUDENTS FOR THE QUARTERS

RCHS Seniors, Stephan Smith (September) and Carlos Sampedro (November) were selected as the Phenix City Exchange Club Student of the Quarter. Both students received scholarships and will return to the Phenix City Exchange Club in May 2020 to have the opportunity to be named the Exchange Club Student of the Year. Stephan and Carlos competed against students from Central, Smiths Station, and Glenwood Academy.

Stephan got an opportunity to share his personal story and it moved so many while also bringing awareness to others. Since he was selected, he has had opportunities to speak and share his story and help make a positive impact in the lives of others. Carlos shared his story of the adversity and the challenges he faced and how he has overcome these to be the person he is today.

His journey has shaped him as the person he is today and he plans on helping others who have faced similar experiences. We are so proud of these Warriors and we know they will achieve great things and make positive differences in the lives of others!

WARRIOR INSPIRATIONAL ACADEMY RIBBON CUTTING CEREMONY

On Wednesday, November 13, 2019, the Russell County School District held a ribbon cutting ceremony for its new "Warrior Inspirational Academy." This Academy serves a conglomerate of students whose needs extend beyond the traditional school setting. To provide quality support for our at-risk students, additional programs and space were warranted. These programs include but are not limited to: academic, social-emotional learning, character development, and mental health.

We are excited about the new location and new infrastructure of our Warrior Inspirational Academy. The Russell County School District strives to ensure that all students receive a quality education in an environment conducive to student growth. The new Academy is a testament to the School District's commitment to providing quality instruction for all students.
From the Superintendent’s Desk:

Dr. Brenda Coley

The Gift of Time

We are on the move in Russell County School District and undoubtedly, great things are happening all around the county. Our students are making progress inside and beyond the classroom. As a supportive Russell County Alumni, an administrator, teacher, support staff, parent, student, or community member, it is time to get involved in Russell County Schools. Time is such an important gift and can have such an amazing impact on the success of any organization.

You have so much to offer and we welcome your active participation. Taking time to visit a classroom, talk to an employee, listen to a parent concern, or just simply giving a child a hug or word of encouragement can be the most precious gift and investment in our school system. I challenge everyone to take advantage of time and enjoy every minute of this warrior adventure. Too often, we are too busy trying to strive for better, gain more and achieve greater success. But sometimes you will never know the value of a moment until it becomes a memory. As we pause for the mid-school year, let us embrace the present and remember to celebrate EVERY milestone.

I am excited about the great things happening right now in Russell County and want to highlight a few of our accomplishments. I ask that you join me in celebration of our administration, teachers, support staff, and students. Let us take a glimpse inside the great school district of Russell County - School Resource Officers at every school; Improved Report Card Score (83/B); Improved Graduation Rate (88%); Technology Department supports more than 6000 network devices; Advance Placement Courses; Expanded Pre-K Program; New Warrior Inspirational Academy; New Baseball/Softball Complex underway; Helping Families Initiative Program, and Improved Academic Extracurricular Activities.

It is a good time to be a Warrior. We must let the celebration continue throughout the year. Moreover, I encourage each of you to share your time by visiting our schools, attend some of the many extracurricular activities throughout the week, and on the weekends. I am assured that you will be amazed by the talents exuded by students of Russell County. You can also follow us on Facebook or simply visit our website. Many of our success stories are shared every other Wednesday on WRBL at 5:00 p.m. We have a plethora of ways to tell the great news about student learning in Russell County. As we approach the holiday season of giving, remember to give the gift of time.

“While we are living in the present, we must celebrate life everyday, knowing that we are becoming history with every work, every action, every deed”.

Mattie Stepanek

Russell County School District Board Members

Thank You for all that you do to support the students of the Russell County School District

Pictured from left to right, beginning with bottom row: President, Eugenia Upshaw, District 5; Ruthie Carpenter, District 7; Dillie Elliott, District 2; Superintendent, Dr. Brenda Coley; Vice-President, John Keith Mitchell, District 2; Kenneth Barnes, District 4; Joseph Williams, District 6; and Tommy Pugh, District 3

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