

Dec 11, 2019

Good Afternoon,

The month of December always goes so fast. There is a lot of Christmas excitement in the air. This year is no different. One of the most exciting events that has occurred this holiday season is the Shop with a Cop event. The principals at the 3-5 schools each selected four students to participate. The students were then escorted from their schools to Walmart to go shopping. Each student was allotted three hundred dollars to buy whatever they wanted for Christmas. The police officers all wore their dress uniforms and went with their designated student up and down the aisles filling baskets with toys and clothes. One student bought a box of diapers because he knew the family needed diapers. Another child needed socks and underwear. Some students needed shoes and a coat. Two brothers decided to pool their money and buy a television—they didn't have one in their house—and an X box. The 3-5 principals were all present. It was a very exciting and worthwhile event. We are truly blessed to have such a great partner in the Tupelo Police Department.

There has been a lot of conversation about a TPSD/ICC Middle College. I have met with Dr. Allen at ICC to discuss the possibility of creating a partnership. He is very open to the conversation. A TPSD Middle College would be a partnership between ICC and TPSD. A TPSDMC (Tupelo Public School District Middle College) would be a dual enrollment program. Our students would be enrolled full time in TPSD while taking college classes on the ICC campus. Our students would take both high school courses and college courses on the ICC campus. We would provide transportation to ICC and back to TPHS for afterschool activities. We would also provide a designated teacher for support. ICC would provide designated space for our students to congregate and work on their course work on the ICC campus. Our students would take both high school courses and college courses while completing their high school graduation requirements.

Students would have the opportunity to build a college transcript that will benefit their future college enrollment in any university or community college. Students may work either towards an Associate Degree or take courses that will lay the foundation for a specific Bachelor's Degree, the choice is theirs.

Tupelo Public School District Middle College would be considered a Tupelo Public School District school of choice. Enrollment would require an application process, college placement exams, and ICC acceptance. Each student's tuition scholarship would be funded through the base student allocation and potentially financially supported by foundation grants and scholarships. TPSDMC students would have to meet the following program requirements for acceptance:

- High school GPA 2.0 or higher

- Completed application with 3 letters of recommendation (2 Teacher and 1 counselor)
- Passing either Accuplacer 170+ or ALEKS 30+ for college placement
- Be a junior or senior in good academic standing and on track to graduate

The application process and funding would be a scholarship program with specific outcomes in mind. As with any scholarship program we would have academic and behavioral expectations that students will be required to meet. We would have timelines and requirements for attendance for both high school and college classes. Failure to meet these requirements would possibly result in students returning to THS. Consideration of the student's graduation status, placement scores, application answers, and high school GPA will be primary factors in determining initial course load. A student's college GPA would be the primary factor in program continuation. I suspect a Middle College would start with approximately 50-75 students. We could build the program in CTE at the ICC Belden campus, at the main ICC campus, or at both campuses concurrently. The advantage for students and parents who participate are evident. Opportunities of this type motivate students to do well in school. Students who choose to participate in a middle college may or may not be planning on participating in advanced placement courses. A middle college would provide tremendous opportunities for the community. There are many students who have completed their Carnegie credits and are just waiting for graduation. A middle college would give these students the opportunity to accelerate their post-secondary education plans. There are also many students who go off to four-year colleges after graduation who are not prepared for the rigor of post-secondary college courses. A middle college experience would give these students the opportunity to gain valuable study skills while still in the protective environment of their homes and while still under the protective and supportive environment of their high school teacher. This is the basic model that is currently in use in Alaska. Any potential plan for Tupelo would be the result of careful consideration between staff at ICC and TPSD. There may be variations in the final plan, but all plans would be presented to the school board of TPSD and the board of ICC before any actions are taken by administration.

Winter benchmark assessments are being completed this week. At the high school level, many students are taking the Mississippi State assessments. Things have been going well. The platform for our benchmark assessment was not necessarily reliable, but the state assessments have been completed without tech malfunction. We have been in the process of reviewing schools. I have been meeting with school staffs at individual schools and talking to teachers and principals about school level needs. When all of my meetings are completed, the school board will be provided with a full report.

This concludes the superintendent report. Thank You.