

CAMPUS HIGHLIGHTS

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College readiness more than a catch phrase at CHS

Even though most Commerce High School students have grown up with a four-year university in their own city, many of them have no exposure to the realities and expectations of college. Some express apprehension about applying for admission to any university even though Texas A&M University-Commerce is right across the street, so to speak.

Staff members at Texas A&M University-Commerce and Commerce ISD are working to change that perception by exposing high school students to college experiences such as expanded dual-credit offerings, campus visits and presentations explaining admissions procedures and applying for financial aid.

According to CISD Superintendent Blake Cooper a concerted effort has been made this year to strengthen the public school/university partnership and make enrolling in TAMU-C a viable option for an increased number of juniors and seniors.

During monthly meetings with Wendy Gruver, director, Student Assessment, College Readiness and Retention, and Dr. Ricky Dobbs, dean, University College, TAMU-C, and, CISD administrators including Adam Rupert, CHS principal, Rose Gardner, assistant CHS principal, and Julia Robinson, CISD director of curriculum, discussed multiple

options to ease apprehension for students and build working relationships with staff at both entities.

The first initiative addressed increasing dual-credit course offerings to juniors and seniors. While dual credit courses allow high school students to acquire college credit, they also allow them to earn credit at a significant cost savings. A dual credit course costs high school students about \$150 plus books.

Increased dual credit offerings for the next school year will allow a junior to acquire about 27 semester hours before graduating high school—12 for juniors and 15 for seniors.

When Commerce High School students reported back to school after the holidays, Gruver had planned several activities to help them increase their collegiate understanding before their college semester started. Panels of current university students spoke to the high school dual credit students about how college life differed from their high school lives. Increased responsibility, time management, self discipline and finances were topics the university students felt were important for the high school students to understand.

In special presentations by Gruver and Dobbs, high school students were exposed to the language and



Former CHS students Daniel Starks and Luis Parra explained increased responsibilities and freedom to current high school students.

vocabulary of higher education so that GPA, SHC and other specific terms would be familiar. She explained that they would be assigned a success coach to help them during their freshman year.

Gruver also arranged TAMU-C tours for the high school students including dining in the cafeteria and visiting the library to make the campus seem more accessible.

As the focus continues in college and career readiness, Cooper says barriers must be removed such as class rank and weighted grades to encourage students to take classes needed for their future careers.



GPA, SHC... Wendy Gruver explains higher ed vocabulary to dual-credit students.



Lady tigers are tied with Edgewood for third place in district.

CHS basketball teams defeat Winnsboro powerhouse

CHS basketball teams have momentum as they continue district play. Both teams defeated tough Winnsboro teams January 15.

Lady Tigers Coach LeMone Ards said her team is 5-3 in district play, tied for third place with Edgewood. However, CHS had a huge win over Edgewood 65-62 in overtime.

“We have a tough road ahead, but we hope our determination and strong will to ‘never quit’ prevails,” Ards said.

Tiger Coach Kirby Jackson says the boys season is going really well with the kids playing hard and together. Total record is 9-12 with tough losses to state ranked teams. The boys lost to number 6 ranked Princeton in double overtime and lost to number 18 ranked Farmersville by 3.

The boys district record is 3-3. The team beat the previously unbeaten Winnsboro Raiders 77-58, their biggest win of the season.

Coaches encourage fans to come out to support the teams as they begin the second half of district play Tuesday, January 22 at home against Quitman.



CHS Boys Basketball Coach Kirby Jackson, new to the district this year, says his team is playing hard and together.

MARK YOUR CALENDARS! UPCOMING EVENTS

- Feb. 18. . . . Student holiday
- Board of Trustees meeting, 7 p.m.
- Mar. 11-15 . Spring break
- Mar. 21. . . . Board of Trustees meeting, 7 p.m.



Texas A&M University-Commerce Lions basketball players visited CES January 8 to read to our little Tigers. The players emphasized the importance of reading and doing well in school. The children helped Coach Sam Walker celebrate becoming the winningest TAMU-C coach ever with over 200 wins.



Out with the old...

CISD maintenance workers Erskin Melton and Carl Lamm work with Technology Director Al Shipp to ready the CMS computer lab for new computers. Labs at CHS and CMS received an update while computers were exchanged on other campuses to maximize their use and access.



Calling all prom dresses

Communities In Schools at CHS is gathering prom dresses to make sure every junior and senior girl has a dress to wear to the prom. Nancy Laws, CIS case worker, is asking for donors to bring dresses to CHS for the May event.



CISD employees and their spouses received free Peripheral Artery Disease screening from professionals at Hunt Regional Medical Center during the January 18 workday. Approximately 40 people took advantage of the free screening.



CISD students gathered their nickels, dimes and dollars to benefit the family of the young Caddo Mills boy who was struck and killed by a car before the holidays. Principals Deanna Hays (left) and Jeanne Lay (right) presented his mother Heather Ivy and sister, Haley, a check for over \$1,350.