



SCHOOL NEWS

HAPPENINGS FROM OUR CLAY COUNTY SCHOOLS

FEBRUARY 2024



CTE program earns praise at House meeting

School district's Kelly Mosley testifies in Washington, D.C.

By Don Coble
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CLAY COUNTY – Representatives from both sides of the aisle were impressed to hear how Clay County District Schools' Career and Technical Education programs are making a critical impact on the future workforce during their recent "Preparing Students for Success in the Skills-Based Economy" hearing by the U.S. House's Early Childhood, Elementary and Secondary Education Subcommittee.



Kelly Mosley

Kelly Mosley, Community and Business Partnership Supervisor for the CTE program, was invited to Washington, D.C., to tell how students in Clay County have numerous career options that may not



require a college degree.

"There's always been a lot of support, I believe, for technical education," she said. "I think part of the problem is that they changed the name from vocational to Career and Technical Education many years ago.

I don't think the name change has helped people realize that we still offer a lot of training in other programming in our school. I think that's part of the issue. There was a time when it was foolish for everybody to go to a four-year university. I've seen that in the last several years where



Aaron Bean

students are exploring a lot of different post-secondary options."

Subcommittee Chairman Aaron Bean, who represents Clay County on the Hill, said his interest in skills-based education started with his father.

"My dad, his first job out of college was to be a shop teacher," Bean said. "His first day of class, he found he's got 45 students, but (with) no money, no budget, no materials, no tools, no nothing. And he's got to teach the students."

Bean's father asked the school's administration for help. They told him to make do.

"This issue is personal to me. Let me tell you what my dad did," Bean said. "He brought his own toolkit to school and told each kid to find something that's broken at your house, bring it in, and we will fix it as a class.

"That has such a lasting impact on so many people, and it prepared the people that do my plumbing and the people that fix my car. My dad taught them automotive shop as a trade. We've consistently undervalued the value of this type of education."

Mosley said CTE is open to students from seventh to 12th grades at all seven junior and senior highs, as well as Clay Virtual and the Bannerman Learning Center. Mosley said more than 11,000 of the district's nearly 39,000 students are now enrolled in one of 14 career path programs.

Categories include aerospace, agriculture, automotive, business, and computer science/IT/cybersecurity, construction (including carpentry, drafting, electrical, HVAC and welding), criminal justice, culi-

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ACE MENTOR PROGRAM

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Middleburg, Orange Park highs to share a portion of \$33,000

Program becomes Brasfield & Gorrie fundraising beneficiary

By Jack Randall
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JACKSONVILLE – In an unwavering commitment to nurturing future leaders and empowering local youth, Brasfield & Gorrie’s Jacksonville office proudly announced ACE Mentor Program of Northeast Florida as its primary fundraising beneficiary for the years 2024-2026.

The collaborative endeavor was inaugurated during Impact Week, which was a fundraising initiative held by Brasfield & Gorrie that resulted in \$33,000 of donations raised for and pledged to the ACE Mentor Program. Concurrently, national teams across all Brasfield & Gorrie locations engaged in volunteer activities, donated essential supplies and left an enduring mark on their communities.

The general contractor’s Jacksonville office also hosts the Annual Cowford Invitational golf tournament, and the ACE Mentor Program will be the beneficiary.

Middleburg and Orange Park highs are among the 12 schools in Northeast Florida in the program.

Erik Sharpe, Division Manager at



ACE MENTOR PROGRAM

Now in its 18th year, the ACE Mentor Program of Northeast Florida is a nonprofit organization dedicated to guiding high school students in exploring architecture, construction and engineering careers through after-school mentoring and scholarships. Open to high school students with a curiosity and drive to learn about design and construction careers, the program provides valuable opportunities for continued advancement in the industry.

Brasfield & Gorrie, expressed the symbiotic nature of the collaboration.

“Driven by a passion for mentorship and the built environment, the partnership

SEE ACE



PHOTOS SUBMITTED BY BRASFIELD & GORRIE

Baptist Health’s and ACE Advisory Council member Kimberly Hansen joins Affiliate Director Nicole Eubanks and Meadows & Ohly and Board Chairman Chad Boone to announce that \$33,000 was donated to 12 schools in Northeast Florida, including Middleburg and Orange Park highs.

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DAVID BROSKIE
SUPERINTENDENT OF SCHOOLS
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DISTRICT Highlights

- ★ Graduation rate is 95% for the District’s seven traditional high schools.
- ★ School Resource Officer at every school and increased security measures to keep students and staff safe.
- ★ Named 2022 Academically High Performing School District by the Florida Department of Education.
- ★ CCDS offers 34+ Career and Technical Education programs.
- ★ Ranked 5th Best School District in Florida by Niche in 2023.
- ★ Expanded School Choice options including Montessori and Pre-AICE programs.
- ★ All students have digital access through Chromebooks and Wi-Fi at every school.
- ★ All high schools have accelerated programs.
- ★ Opened 43rd school, Spring Park Elementary in August 2023.
- ★ Fleming Island Elementary recognized as a 2022-2023 Purple Star of Distinction school for supporting our military families.

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Clay Today Creative Arts Contest

My name is Ella Hernandez, I'm a tenth grade student at Ridgeview High School. The first poem that I wrote is intended to help express the feelings people have when in love. Many songs or stories show all of the bright, happy side of love, so I wrote this poem to show the darker side of love. We've all felt these pains of heartbreak before, but I don't think enough people actually express those feelings and emotions. The second poem I wrote is meant to express the difficulties of moving on and the pain that comes with it.

Love's Warning

Mysterious pain
 Difficult to maintain
 Terrible trickery
 Full of misery
 Like Pandora's box
 Where hope is hidden by locks All that comes out is horrid Forming all that is morbid Hideous hound
 Chasing you down
 A desert heat
 That does nothing but beat Never a rainbow Colorless and shallow
 Full of lies
 Where hope dies
 Heed this warning
 Before love leaves you mourning

Never Ending Sin

You're too charming
 It's rather alarming
 I keep returning
 Ignoring all that's concerning
 Like a wave beating a beach
 Toxic like bleach
 The pain is always there
 Yet we make the perfect pair
 I fail at escaping
 Shouldn't take this much debating Never ending loop
 Feeling so duped
 Addicting drug
 Stealing my heart like a thug
 Driving me insane
 You cause me pain
 Stuck on repeat
 Without you I'm incomplete

I get lured in
 How does this happen again?
 You stab me
 Take what makes me free
 I ignore your attack
 And just keep coming back
 What you do is unforgivable
 But you're so irresistible
 Moving on way overdue
 Yet I still need you
 I need to move on
 Less pros than con
 I need to learn how
 Should've learned by now
 I just keep running back
 In fear of losing you if I slack
 I trust you even when I know I shouldn't I promised I wouldn't
 Yet here I am
 Looking at you thinking "damn"
 You'll just hurt me again
 My never ending sin

Listen

i'm screaming underwater feeling unheard
 a songless bird
 waiting to be cured
 but there's no one anywhere near no one to hear
 i need someone here
 to help find a cure
 i'm talking to a wall
 put on hold for a call
 feeling so small
 not heard at all
 they all overlook
 no one reading my book
 they all neglect
 no one creating memories to collect they all ignore
 it hurts down to the core
 they all disregard
 it makes life so hard
 i just need one person
 to care and listen



Over Stretch

Bella Spencer, age 16
 Orange Park High School.

The title of my drawing is "Over Stretch". It represents feeling of stress. Stress can take a toll on people, and I wanted to show the feeling of stress visually.



Brasfield & Gorrie Division Manager Erik Sharpe, Affiliate Director Nicole Eubanks and ACE alumnus Mercelin Etienne take a break during Impact Week festivities.

ACE

between our two organizations is a natural connection to further bridge programs that promote local youth access to careers in the construction industry," he said. "We are not only financially supporting ACE; we are supporting new relationships with future leaders, future business partners, future subcontractors, and future employees, all while supporting the local community."

Now in its 18th year, the ACE Mentor Program of Northeast Florida is a nonprofit organization dedicated to guiding high school students in exploring architecture, construction and engineering careers

through after-school mentoring and scholarships. Open to high school students with a curiosity and drive to learn about design and construction careers, the program provides valuable opportunities for continued advancement in the industry.

Nicole Eubanks, Affiliate Director of ACE Mentor Program of Northeast Florida, emphasized the significance of the partnership amid the construction industry's labor shortage.

"As the demand for ACE Mentor Program of Northeast Florida intensifies, we are thrilled to be chosen as Brasfield & Gorrie's fundraising beneficiary," she said. "This presents an extraordinary opportunity for ACE to fortify and expand our program to benefit the youth of Northeast Florida."



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culinary, digital media (including TV production, commercial photography, digital design and 3-D animation), early childhood education, engineering, fire fighting, health science and hospitality/tourism.

"I commend you for the work you're doing thinking outside the box and looking for solutions for our students and our businesses to fill," said Rep. Mary E. Miller (R-Illinois). "You know the needs that they have."

House members were impressed with many of the district's programs, like:

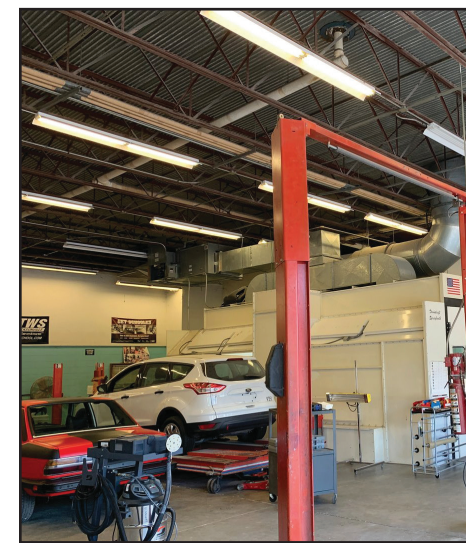
- Clay, Fleming Island and Orange Park highs have Vys-tar Credit Union branches to gain business skills and the opportunity to apply for an internship;
- Commercial kitchens where students are exposed to different foods, techniques and cultures at Clay, Keystone Heights, Middleburg, Ridgeview and Orange Park;
- Garber Automall has ASE-certified mechanics who teach real-world maintenance and repairs at Clay, Middleburg and Orange Park;
- Ridgeview, Clay, Keystone Heights, Fleming Island, Middleburg, Oakleaf and Orange Park students can study medical sciences to prepare students with training



Rep. Mary E. Miller



Students at Orange Park High's Career and Technical Education program get skills training in Emergency Medical Responders and other Health Science-related fields, while students can learn automotive skills from Garber Automall at Middleburg High.



for a future in healthcare;

- Entrepreneurship courses that help students realistically evaluate their potential as a business owner, starting a business or becoming a valuable employee are available at Fleming Island, Keystone Heights, Middleburg, Oakleaf, Ridgeview and Orange Park;
- Fleming Island, Ridgeview, Oakleaf and Middleburg have television production courses where students develop film, edit and produce projects;
- Keystone Heights and Middleburg have an agrotechnology program that emphasizes veterinary or animal science, forestry, natural resources or landscape design;
- Students can start the process to earn their national industry certifications at Middleburg and Oakleaf;

• And, Oakleaf students can get fundamental knowledge and technical and practical experiences in the aerospace industry.

"It runs the gamut," Mosley said. "We also have an exploratory program in junior high schools where kids take a semester-long class to expose them to different opportunities at the high school.

"Students are exploring a lot of different post-secondary options. You hear people say, 'Oh, well, college isn't for everyone.' Well, the conversation needs to be some kind of post-secondary training is for everyone, like if you do an apprenticeship program, some kind of career certificate or additional industry certification.

"Now, does everybody need a four-year degree from a university? Absolutely not."

Other panelists with Mosley included Danny Corwin, the Executive Director of Harbor Freight for Schools, Richard Kincaid, the Senior Executive Director of College and Career Pathways for the Maryland State Department of Education and Brandon Mabile, the Strategic Development Manager for Performance Contractors.

"Here's the truth: two-thirds of Americans do not possess a bachelor's degree," Bean said. "One out of three students who start college never finish. Employers, they're already changing. Right now, employees are moving as we speak. They're removing degree requirements for job applicants and moving towards skills first."

For more information on Clay County's CTE programs, visit myoneclay.net/departments/career-and-technical-ed.

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