

Reaching for Your Own Star

When I was young, high school diplomas were sufficient in gaining a good salary and providing for your family. Times change. Now, a high school diploma is a good start but there is more to being fulfilled and challenged. GASD must first ensure that all students receive the basics in “readin’, writin’ and rithmetic” but it must then continuously challenge students who need to reach for their own star, going beyond the minimal standards. GASD offers a variety of academic, artistic and service forums for excellence.

The high school has 12 Advanced Placement (AP) courses in the fundamentals (including the addition of chemistry next year) and others as well. Successfully completing these courses gives students a competitive edge for college acceptance. Getting a course grade of 3 is a passing score. Most colleges now expect a 4 or 5 (the highest score) before giving college credit. Last year GASD had 202 students take 355 AP exams; 67% received a 3 or above; 18% received a 4; and an additional 18% received 5’s. Financial assistance is available.

The high school offers college classes. 170 students participate in the “College in the High School” programs where HACC courses were offered free this year at the high school. The Tech Prep’s Allied Health, Culinary Arts and Law Enforcement programs can also earn HACC credits. GASD students can attend local colleges. This year 23 students attend college courses either at HACC where financial assistance is available, or Gettysburg College.

Art students at GASD achieved wonderful results. Twenty-three students received 44 awards in the Scholastic Arts Program, with eight earning “silver keys” in regional competition and one student earning “gold keys” for four works of art, now competing at the national level. Sixteen students competed in performing arts competition, with nine in chorus, five in orchestra and 2 band members. Of the 16, nine competed at region level and five at state level. The student’s Interrobang magazine and yearbook both received national recognition. The JROTC Leadership Team and Academic Team are both competing at the national level. The Tech Prep students are also reaching for their stars with 85-95% receiving NOCTI’s advanced scores over the past five years. This year 103 students are testing in 10 programs. Tech Prep students can earn professional certifications. Finally, the high school has about 40 internships with businesses and community services.

The Middle School also has opportunities to reach your star. The Builder’s Club, sponsored by the Kiwanis Club, offers students the opportunity for community service. About 20 students are currently involved and looking for community organizations and businesses to establish partnerships. One example is six students started the “Jeans

For Teens” effort, and are well on their way to collecting 500 pairs of jeans for community needs. Two students participate in the “People to People” Program. Two other students represent the Middle School at a regional 5 month forum to identify and address systemic community issues.

These achievements were accomplished with the excellent foundation provided by the elementary schools. Hats off to the administrators, staff and teachers for recognizing and nurturing the potential of our students.

Simply, if you want to reach for your own star, GASD is the place to be!