

## *Trussville City Schools- See what our teachers are saying!*

### **Donna Brumlow- Paine Primary, 2<sup>nd</sup> grade teacher**

"I am extremely proud to say that I am a part of the Trussville City School system. I thought I knew what professional development was but Trussville takes it to a whole new level. We are being prepared to educate children in the 21st century, not only in the area of technology, but with tools to allow each child to reach their full potential. I feel valued and appreciated. We are listened to as we are encouraged to listen to others. We are also encouraged to collaborate with other educators because we each bring talents and experiences with us that benefit all students. My teaching partner and I have collaborated with middle and high school teachers and students to reinforce standards and take what is learned to a new level. I know that every child in this system is valued and that every person employed within this system is valued. I am very excited about the future of Trussville City Schools and honored to be part of it. Being a part of a school system that encourages educators to learn from each other and to take that knowledge back to the classroom for our students is invaluable. We are encouraged to take our students to a new level of learning that makes learning come alive."

### **Darrell Stovall – Hewitt-Trussville Middle School, 8th grade teacher**

"At the middle school this year our teacher leaders and administrators put a priority on providing time for collaboration, so my English lessons are becoming more integrated with the other curricular areas. I think our entire team of students have learned more this year than in the past because we teachers are working better together. I'm also excited about the future because I know we (teachers and students) still have so much to learn. I love having the expectation that I am to be a life-long learner and a professional. With Trussville City School, I'm getting the necessary support, resources, and training to be just that."

### **Lisa Moore- Paine Intermediate, 3<sup>rd</sup> grade teacher**

"I teach science through an integrated approach. I combine reading, writing and science to allow for a more in-depth study of the unit. This combination allows me more allotted time for the unit. We will read about a specific topic, follow the scientific process throughout our investigation, incorporating reading into the research aspect and writing into recording our observations, findings, and conclusion. We utilize technology throughout the process by researching on the internet and displaying pertinent information using a LCD projector throughout the process. As part of our research on scientific topics we will frequently watch United Streaming and other videos (on the computer using the projector to display)."

### **Rachel Brockman- Paine Primary, Media Specialist**

"The professional development I have received at Trussville City Schools has brought a renewed joy to my teaching. Learning to teach in a way which makes my students WANT to participate -how exciting and rewarding is that for them and for me? As a result, I look forward to my work with them each day, and will continue to strive to improve the design of my students' work so that it is engaging for both of us!"

## *Trussville City Schools- See what our teachers are saying!*

### **Jennifer Cardwell – Hewitt-Trussville High School, 9<sup>th</sup> Honors English/11<sup>th</sup> AP English/12<sup>th</sup> Dual Enrollment Honors English**

“I have never been so educated about my own profession. Since forming our own system, I have felt a desire to improve my practices and become more knowledgeable about not only my subject-matter, but best practices in education, as well. I believe my students are reaping the benefits of my enthusiasm and are learning at higher levels than ever before. I attribute my quest for more knowledge to our system’s beliefs, which most educators are grateful for, since we know it is ultimately improving the educational experiences of our students. “

### **Jamie O’Brien- Paine Primary, 2<sup>nd</sup> grade teacher**

“It is a privilege to work for a school system that allows you to think and teach outside the box. This year, I have been allowed the opportunity to collaborate with teachers at HTMS and HTHS. My students have been able to design informative PowerPoint presentations about animals with the assistance of middle school students. Erin McGuyer’s newspaper students were allowed to share their knowledge of PowerPoint with second grade students. My students did the research and designed the slides for PowerPoint, and the middle school students assisted with the actual creation of the PowerPoint presentation. Both my class and Erin McGuyer’s Newspaper students transformed the animal knowledge into technology, which kept my students on track with their study of animals. I am excited about taking my class to the Cahaba River behind the high school. I have collaborated with Brandon Renfro for this trip. We are going to observe soils and examples of erosion around the river. Brandon Renfro’s Environmental Science class is going to accompany us. They have been studying erosion and soils as a small part of their science unit and they are going to share their knowledge with our class at the Cahaba. We are also planning to catch insects in the Cahaba and study them on site. I am looking forward to the continued growth of my students and myself as an educator, who is valued and respected, as a professional with Trussville City Schools.”

### **Ashley McCombs, Paine Intermediate, 5<sup>th</sup> grade teacher**

“Looping with my students has truly been an enlightening experience in the area of technology. Last year, we navigated through appropriate search engines for facts and such, but this year the students have taken technology a step further with the creation of Power Point presentations (with/without narration), brochures, MANY Word documents for published writing, etc. They are now beginning to explore sites, such as United Streaming and PBS, for video clips related to our topics of study. We utilize the LCD projector for showing these to the class. The students even set up the equipment properly. I wish I had been able to properly do that when I began teaching! We purchased a projector that hooks into the TV monitor and is used like a traditional projector, yet it has a moveable neck and can be adjusted to view books being read aloud, or even see student work being published through the TV. Currently, we are manipulating a student interactive ‘Comic Creator’ as a starting point for our narrative writing unit. We are moving and on our way to using many forms of 21<sup>st</sup> century technology! In the future, we plan to create a blog where students can respond to one another, including parents, about the causes and effects of the American Revolution.

## *Trussville City Schools- See what our teachers are saying!*

### **Ann Bettis- Paine Intermediate, 5<sup>th</sup> grade teacher**

“Technology has truly illuminated science for my students. Technology serves as a springboard for active participation, harvesting enthusiastic learners. Students now have deeper interpretations of information with new tools for scientific discovery.”

### **Michelle Miskelley- Paine Primary, 1<sup>st</sup> grade teacher**

“The emphasis on designing lessons that are challenging and demanding has revitalized my classroom. As I have implemented new and innovative strategies I have seen my students become more responsible for their learning. Their enthusiasm has spurred me to purposefully create a rich classroom environment that nurtures creative thinking and problem solving by providing sensible, practical, and meaningful learning activities.”

### **Connie Hambey- Hewitt-Trussville Middle School, 7<sup>th</sup> grade Science teacher**

“Instead of teaching students about scientists, we are CREATING scientists!”

### **Gloria Stuckey-Paine Intermediate, 5<sup>th</sup> grade teacher**

“I have taught for twenty-three years. I am so revitalized by the emphasis on examining student work as a guideline for improving instructional technique. The various professional learning experiences I have been involved in the past three years have complemented each other. I have studied with the Greater Birmingham Math Project, the Cornerstone Framework for Instructional Practices, ALAHASP science training, technology sessions, and have received training in the WOW Framework. Each one of these training programs emphasizes clear objectives, organized instruction, student inquiry, and support in the earlier stages of learning, communication between students and between students and teacher, and high standards for the work product. My students pour themselves wholeheartedly in projects that have worthy goals, that have clear directions, and for which they have received interesting, appropriate models. I have a profound image of my role in their learning and my responsibility in providing well designed lessons that challenge and propel the students forward. Teachers have the full support of the system to put into action the dreams that they have had for what learning should look like in a classroom. I am pleased to be teaching at this time and in this system.”

### **Danielle Butler-Paine Intermediate, 4<sup>th</sup> grade teacher**

“Science is an ever-changing process. The addition of the hands-on modules has really made a difference in my teaching. I enjoy the content more and feel that the students get more out of it. The students were truly “alive” in conversations when they were explaining the electrical houses from the electricity module to third graders.”

### **David Dobbs-Hewitt-Trussville High School, Science teacher**

“Technology is the end product of pure science. When we use technology to further our understanding of pure science we are able to see the scientific process come full circle.”

### **Sabrina Wilks- Paine Primary, Reading Coach**

“In 13 years of teaching, I have never had a direct conversation with my superintendent (previous system). Our superintendent NEVER once visited our schools unless it was for a public relations opportunity. Our superintendent never had meetings in neighborhoods giving the parents a time to share their opinion or ask questions. Our superintendent

## *Trussville City Schools- See what our teachers are saying!*

never met with every single employee in the school system to determine needs. I never felt like I could e-mail, phone, or write my superintendent with concerns. I never felt any of these things until the moment that we became Trussville City Schools. I am thankful Dr. Freeman cares enough about all of our employees.”

### **Don Everett Garrett- Paine Intermediate, 5<sup>th</sup> grade teacher**

“Incorporating technology into my classroom has given me a unique way to reach students. Using interwrite pads, LCD projectors, and digital video gives students practical application to the concepts being learned in class. Technology takes learning a step higher by allowing them to synthesize what they have learned. It allows them to solve real world problems. My hope is that students leave my classroom, not only having mastered the subject matter, but better prepared to compete in a 21st century world. “

### **Janelle Adams- Hewitt-Trussville Middle School, 6<sup>th</sup> grade teacher**

“Teaching science has changed for the better. No longer are my students reading information from a textbook and just placing memorized facts back on a paper test like I did in school. Today, my students can watch actual footage on United Streaming and have a discussion with other people around the world via blogs, wikis, and e-mails. They are given the opportunity to send a letter of questions and concerns to a specialist in the field we are studying. They can have their voices heard on a discussion board through my Sharepoint site. (See discussion board located on left of site regarding Earth Day) Students are also learning about science through inquiry. They are applying observations to real world experiences and problems. They are having open discussions in labs every week. The labs build on past lab objectives which are being documented in a lab manual. My students are asking higher level questions and thirsting for more knowledge than a book could possibly offer. The highest compliment that I have received, is to watch a child who said they hated science at the beginning of the year, recently state that they couldn’t wait to get to science. I love and enjoy the world of science and I hope to give this gift to my students. I might have the finder for the cure of cancer sitting in my classroom. “

### **Tina Fortenberry- Paine Primary, 1<sup>st</sup> grade teacher**

“Using technology in the classroom has elevated the level of learning in my classroom. My students have learned to take research to a whole new level. My students are excited about learning and can’t wait to get to the computers or see what kind of things I have developed for them to view with the LCD projector. With the use of technology in the classroom, students feel more at ease. They have technology in their own lives everyday. To embrace that and bring it into their learning environment just makes sense.”

### **Tim Stull- Hewitt-Trussville High School, Social Studies teacher/Coach**

“Trussville City Schools encourages professional development. I am encouraged to read literature, attend conferences, and engage in collaboration with my colleagues. For the first time in my career, I feel that I am being invested in as a professional. I feel that my input is important and valuable. Professional development improves my practice and allows me to be a more effective teacher.”

## *Trussville City Schools- See what our teachers are saying!*

### **Chandler Chauvin-Paine Intermediate, 3<sup>rd</sup> grade teacher**

"I feel blessed to be able to participate in professional learning opportunities. Just as I long for my students to love learning for a lifetime, I am continually learning about how to be a better teacher. I do not want to settle for mediocrity because my students deserve more than that; therefore, I embrace what I learn in professional development opportunities and apply new learning in my classroom daily!"

### **Angie Seely- Paine Primary, 1<sup>st</sup> grade teacher**

"I feel we are truly working toward a better future for all our students. I want my students to think for themselves and learn to give reason for their thinking, not simply spit back facts. I also like the professional development...the only way to become a better teacher is by being a continuous learner. The meetings and workshops I have attended help me continuously learn new ideas to use in my classroom."

### **Kristi Stacks – Paine Intermediate School, Technology Integration Specialist.**

"I have achieved the status of being a Nationally Certified teacher. Everything our system is trying to accomplish: engaging students and teachers in "minds on" activities; encouraging collaboration of students and of teachers to provide a wealth of insights; and developing lifelong learners in students and teachers, meet or even exceed the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards' criteria for a stellar learning environment. These two years as part of the Trussville City School System have been the most rewarding time of my 15 year career as a teacher. This system gives our students and our teachers phenomenal opportunities."

### **Lynn Hollis- Hewitt-Trussville High School, Anatomy and Physiology Teacher/Biology teacher**

"Using webquests has been a new way to think about knowledge needed and sorting through the information available. It requires the student to think and then do. Using Classroom Performance Systems give great feedback immediately and provides a game like atmosphere. No student has ever complained about "learning" or "reviewing" in the remote type of way. 100% engaged – always."

### **Bobbi Thompson- Paine Primary, 2<sup>nd</sup> grade teacher**

"My two years with Trussville City Schools has been exciting, rewarding, and a positive learning experience. I have attended many insightful workshops and I have been allowed to apply these skills in my classroom. Jefferson County Schools was a good system but Trussville City Schools has united all the teachers to work for the best interest of each student."

### **Don Garrett- Paine Intermediate, 5th grade teacher**

"At the end of the day I want my students to remember, not what I did, but what I encouraged them to do. I want them to understand the difference between being lectured and being allowed to learn in a way that has meaning and significance in their lives. My performance is not important. It is the performance of my students that matters

## *Trussville City Schools- See what our teachers are saying!*

most. I am thankful to the Trussville City Board of Education for allowing me to Work on the Work so all my students can realize their full potential.”

### **Niki Lincoln- Hewitt-Middle School, 7th grade teacher**

“I believe in everything that Trussville City Schools is doing and I am so proud to be apart of it. I grew up in this city and went to Hewitt my whole life and I only wish I could’ve experienced the type of education that is available to all of our kids now. Our students are entering into a world far different even from the world I entered into six years ago. Everything we’re learning as teachers in the system goes hand in hand with what I learned at Auburn. The world is changing and our classrooms have to change with it!!!”

### **Beth Howard- Paine Primary, Kindergarten Teacher**

“I am excited to be part of Trussville City Schools – both as a parent and as a teacher! As a parent, I wanted my children to “learn the basics” but also want them to become lifelong learners. That is the education experience we are finding in Trussville. For example, my son's middle school math class has learned math content through a "stock market project" where they track the stocks their group chose. They also learned percentages and ratios by doing stats for a basketball game. My younger son (a student at the Intermediate School) counted the days until it was time for his group to dissect a squid. We’ve have animated (and child led) discussions at our dinner table that come straight from my sons’ classrooms, from political situation in Rwanda to the poetry of “The Beatles.” I am grateful to my children’s teachers for their purposeful planning, their genuine respect for students and their high expectations. My children are learning “the facts,” but they are also thinking, planning, interacting with others, and evaluating their work. As a teacher, I wanted to be in a place that would encourage me to continue on the path of being a lifelong learner also. I cannot say enough about the level of training offered and the opportunities for professional growth that are provided. I have benefited greatly from our planned sessions and yet, I’ve learned just as much (if not more) from the informal professional learning community that is being fostered within our school, such as small group collaboration, verticals and a daily planning time with a “buddy” so to brainstorm solutions and celebrate successes. We intentionally chose to become a part of this community and moved here because of the direction of the Trussville School System. It was definitely the right choice for our family!”

### **Vicki O’Connor- Paine Primary, Exceptional Education teacher**

“The direction that we have taken as a school system has already visibly impacted the students that I work with on a daily basis. I am in regular classrooms where **all** learners are active, excited participants in meaningful and engaging lessons in which they can experience success. I am pleased and proud to be a part of TCS, a school system that is proactively preparing our students for an ever-changing world.”

### **Marcia Segers-Paine Primary, Kindergarten teacher**

“I feel that my teaching effectiveness has improved and that improvement is directly tied to the professional development I have received. The most direct influence was the training in Indianapolis by The Schlechty Center. I have embraced the vision of WOW instruction and can see the direct benefits of rethinking how I teach concepts. In the

## *Trussville City Schools- See what our teachers are saying!*

past I simply covered what the Alabama Course of Study required and had no knowledge of what made one lesson more interesting to the students. As I now attempt to intentionally incorporate design qualities into my lessons, I can see that they make a tremendous impact on the students' engagement."

### **Larry Jones- Hewitt-Trussville Middle School, 8th grade Science teacher**

"The use of technology in the classroom is not an 'option' to consider, but a requirement to meet. As a science educator, I am responsible for preparing my students to compete and be successful in a global economy while creating an interest in science; the two cannot be separated. Technology in the science classroom fulfills two primary purposes: 1) enhance student engagement in learning, and 2) expand inquiry-based teaching methods. Technology must be integral to the classroom to make learning both meaningful and engaging. It enables students (scientists) to collaborate with peers and explore, verify, extend, and discard various concepts and questions. By integrating science and technology, students experience authenticity by making connections to new and expanded knowledge resources. Working at Trussville City Schools is one of the most rewarding experiences I've had in my 30+ years of work in corporate America. There are several things that contribute to this:

1. The direction, leadership, and support from both the BOE and HTMS administrators. I believe that the direction and work being put in place is 'spot on' in terms of what's best for the students.
2. I've worked in a global company so I know what's required to be successful in a global economy, and I believe we're laying the foundation and creating a direction that's on target.
3. If we are ever to attack the drop out rate that TCS is experiencing at the high school level, we must change something. It should be obvious that the traditional ways are not working.
4. I enjoy the collegial atmosphere that exists at HTMS. I find the teachers and staff here most helpful and willing to go the extra mile.
5. Since I come from a technology background, I really enjoy working that into the instruction. It is something I must continue to apply moving forward.
6. The environment where it's okay to take risks and fail. Of course, you want to minimize this when it comes to students, but this is what is needed in order to reach the various learning styles that exist.
7. I appreciate so much the cooperation that I receive from the parents. We both realize that this effort to train their children is a joint responsibility, and the community environment we have is fantastic.
8. Most of all, it's the STUDENTS I enjoy the most. These are precious people, and I care about each one so much. "

### **Cindy Kennemur- Hewitt-Trussville Middle School, Office Assistant**

"I certainly hope Trussville City Schools continues in the direction it has been headed. We must require more of our teachers and expect more from our students. Our students must be able to compete with students around the world. We need to raise the bar! The world is changing, and so must we. Our teachers must realize that students must be equipped with all we can offer them to succeed at every level of their education. We must make sure our students are prepared for college. Don't our children deserve this? Our students want to be challenged. They are hungry to learn. Are we going to fail them? We have the unique opportunity to advance and become the best system in the

## *Trussville City Schools- See what our teachers are saying!*

state. We are headed in the right direction. We must continue to challenge our teachers to teach in different ways. They must be equipped to reach the “unreachable” students. That’s what professional development is all about. When our teachers stop learning, so do our students.”

### **Missy Burns Wright- Paine Intermediate, 5<sup>th</sup> grade teacher**

“As an educator, I recognize that and want to provide my students with every opportunity to be successful and productive members of society. While the basics of education are important, it is necessary to push our children beyond those basics to levels at which they can apply that knowledge. The vision of Trussville City Schools is crystal clear to me, and my level of understanding grows with every accomplishment and bump in the road. I appreciate the opportunity to be part of such an amazing and innovative organization.”

### **Susan Hampton-Paine Intermediate, Teacher**

“I have taught in several different school systems (Mobile, Florida, Colorado, Virginia, and Louisiana). I have never been as energized and excited to be where I am as I have this year. After 22 years of teaching, *this is the best year I’ve ever had*, and I am so thrilled to be a part of this system. I wanted to let you know, and thank you for your vision, and your ideals and goals for our children.”

### **Lauren Blake- Paine Intermediate, 4th grade teacher**

“I have greatly benefited from studying students and really developing an understanding of how they learn. I have learned how to design lessons to meet their individual needs and can apply these strategies to every subject across the curriculum. The way I approach the teaching of reading has been greatly impacted. I have learned how to target the specific needs of my students and design lessons that will reach each and every one of the children in my classroom. Because of all of this, my students are excited about learning and enjoy coming to school each day. I know there will be bumps along the way, especially with a new school system, but I truly believe we are headed in the right direction. I am excited to see what the future holds for Trussville City Schools and for the children of our community.”

### **Jeanette Cerisano, Paine Primary, 1<sup>st</sup> grade teacher**

“I have grown so much as a learner and am proud to be a part of Trussville City Schools. I feel that I have a better idea of what my children need in order for them to be successful. I am supported and encouraged by my colleagues as well as my administration. My children benefit from my learning. They are eager to come in our classroom and learn. They love being able to get on the computers and research the Arctic or the Rain Forest. They love to write about everything they have been learning. I encourage my first grade students to think and problem solve. My children are happy, energetic, and eager to learn. The world is changing everyday and we must also change or our children will not be prepared for what awaits them in the real world. I feel so blessed to be with TCS! I know the direction we are moving in is the right one. What we do everyday is for the children as it should be. Dr. Freeman is continuously thinking of what is best for our students and our children!”

## *Trussville City Schools- See what our teachers are saying!*

### **Joan Bynum, Paine Intermediate, 5<sup>th</sup> grade teacher**

“Our professional development has been so powerful this year. Teachers on the fifth grade hall collaborate with each other in ways that benefit our students. We exchange ideas for lesson plans that will spark the student's desire to learn important content in the Alabama Course of Study. Through collaborative planning with other teachers, our lessons now include more use of technology and more student involvement in learning.”

### **Micheal Looney, Paine Intermediate, 5<sup>th</sup> grade teacher**

“I have grown more as a teacher in the past two years at Paine Intermediate than I ever thought possible. The exposure to various professional development opportunities has broadened my view of the teaching profession and the way students learn. I had the opportunity to be part of a Working on the Work Conference held in Indianapolis, Indiana in 2005. I walked away from that conference rejuvenated about teaching and with the confirmation that the field of education was where I wanted to be. The WOW framework simply helps me to design work that will engage children to think at high levels. Currently my students are studying systems of the human body. Once the students finish their research they will be expected to diagnose and provide recommendations for their patient based on their expertise in their specialty. Without the strong emphasis our system has on collaboration, I could never have dreamed up such an engaging way for students to learn about the human body systems. I am excited to be a part of a school system who values their employees enough to spend money on professional development and allow us the time to view model lessons and collaborate with fellow colleagues to help us in our endeavors to become lifelong learners, thus ultimately benefiting the children we serve everyday.”