

A Place Where They Want To Be: *Schools That Focus On Students*

Dr. Mark Wilson

2009 National High School Principal of the Year

June 4, 2014



National Dropout Prevention Center/Network at Clemson University

Solutions
TO THE DROPOUT CRISIS



Photo by Jesse Walker, Morgan County Citizen

In our time together:

A Place Where They Want To Be:

1. What does it look like?
2. How do you build it?

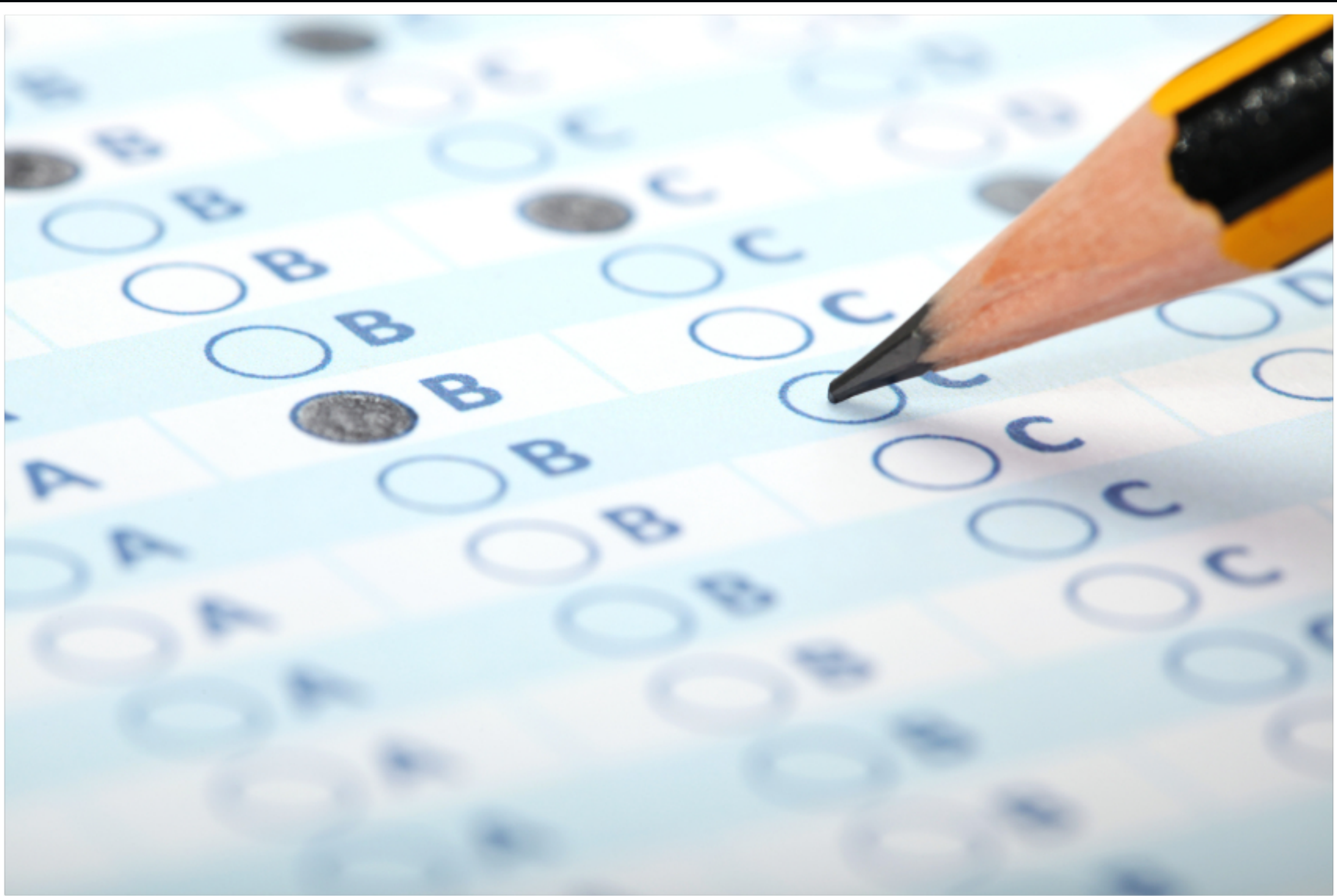


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A Place Where They Want To Be

WHAT DOES IT LOOK LIKE?



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Instructions: Using a softlead pencil, completely blacken only one oval per question. Do not use ink or colored pencil. Cleanly erase any unintended marks.

Poor ☒ ☒ ☒
Good ☐ ☐ ☐

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Students from all four schools in the Morgan County School System presented original artwork at "AFLAT: A Funky Little Art Thing" last Thursday. The Morgan County Cultural Center donated their hall for the event, with the middle school and high school jazz bands performing as parents and students perused the art, try-

Why Students Drop Out

Among the most common reasons for students dropping out:

- Did Not Like School
- Did Not Feel Belonged There
- Could Not Get Along With Teachers
- Could Not Get Along With Others
- Moved; Did Not Like New School

— Source: Dalton, Glennie, Ingels, and Wirt (2009, p.22); Dropout Indicator 29.



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A Place Where They Want To Be

WHAT DOES IT LOOK LIKE?

What Does It Look Like?

Students at the school are:

- Valued
- Respected
- Listened to (and heard)
- Cared for
- Challenged
- Empowered



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Morgan County High School

1231 College Drive | Madison, GA 30650 | (706)342-2336

Visit us online @ www.morgan.k12.ga.us/mchs

Follow us on twitter @MorganCoHS



What Does It Look Like?

Adults at the school are:

- Deeply committed to student success
- Unified in a common mission
- Professionals, supported and encouraged
- Driven by purpose and desire to do well and help others do well



What Does It Look Like?

Together, the citizens of the school have
a strong sense of:

Unity	Identity
Vision	Purpose



Culture and Climate Matters

Developing and sustaining high-quality school climates is deeply tied to strategies emerging from dropout prevention research and work.

—Marty Duckenfield and Beth Reynolds,
“School Climate and Dropout Prevention”, February 2013



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Freshman Passing Six or More Classes

Year	Percentage
2000-2001	72%
2001-2002	94%



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Graduation Rates

(Calculated Using The Cohort Method)

Year	Percentage
2003-2004	70%
2011-2012	86%



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HOW?

A Place Where They Want To Be

HOW DO YOU BUILD IT?

Build a Culture of Success

Vision

Unity

Empowerment



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Adults in the Building

**CHANGE THE WAY THEY
THINK AND ACT**

—CHANGES THE WAY
STUDENTS IN THE SCHOOL
PERFORM

—CHANGES THE WAY
PARENTS AND THE COMMUNITY
VIEW THE SCHOOL AND
LEARNING

Build a Culture of Success

Vision

Unity

Empowerment

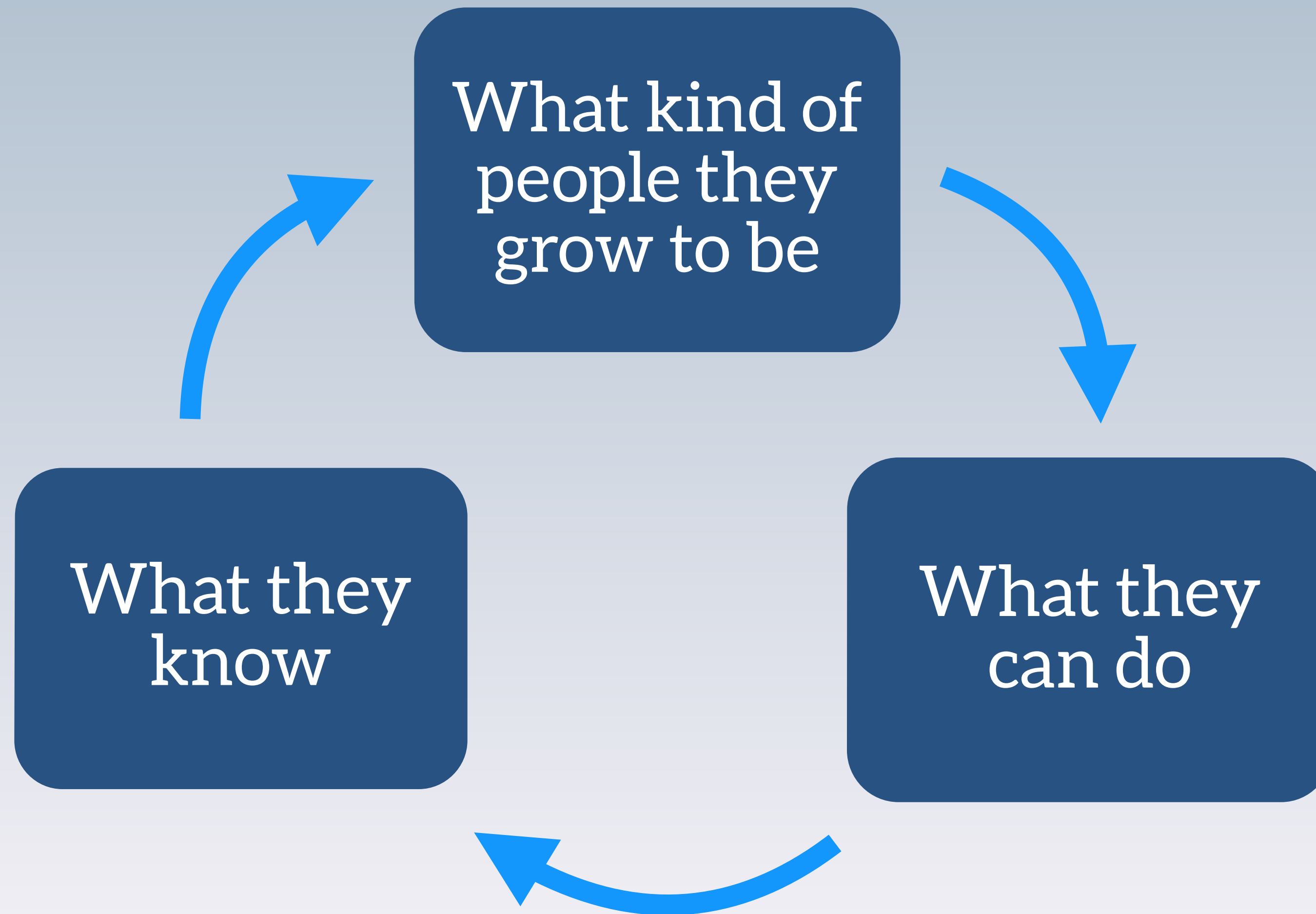


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SUCCESS

Vision: Student Success



What They Know

2012-2013

47 AP Scholars (1 in '07-'08)

18 IB Diploma Graduates (4 in '06-'07)

225 High School Graduates

Over 80% of applicants to state's research universities accepted

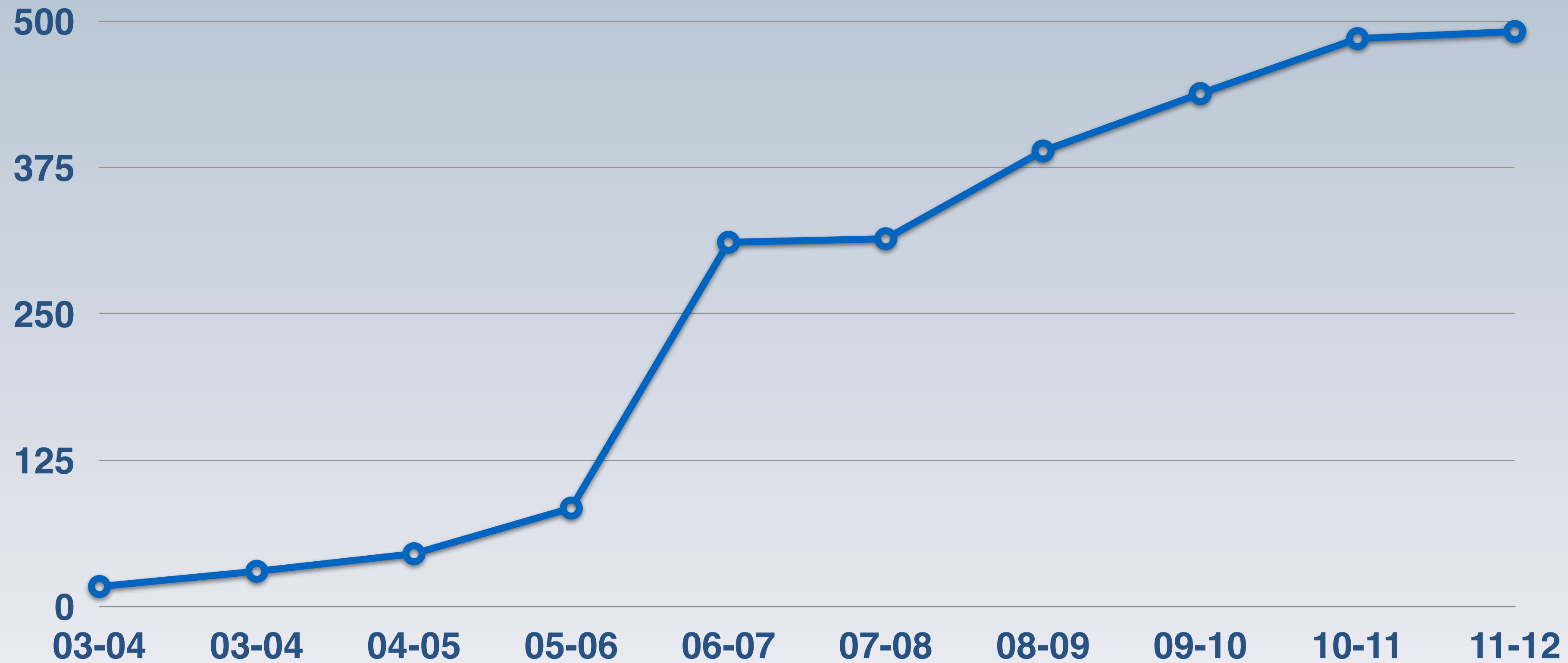
Over 75% of graduates continue post-secondary education



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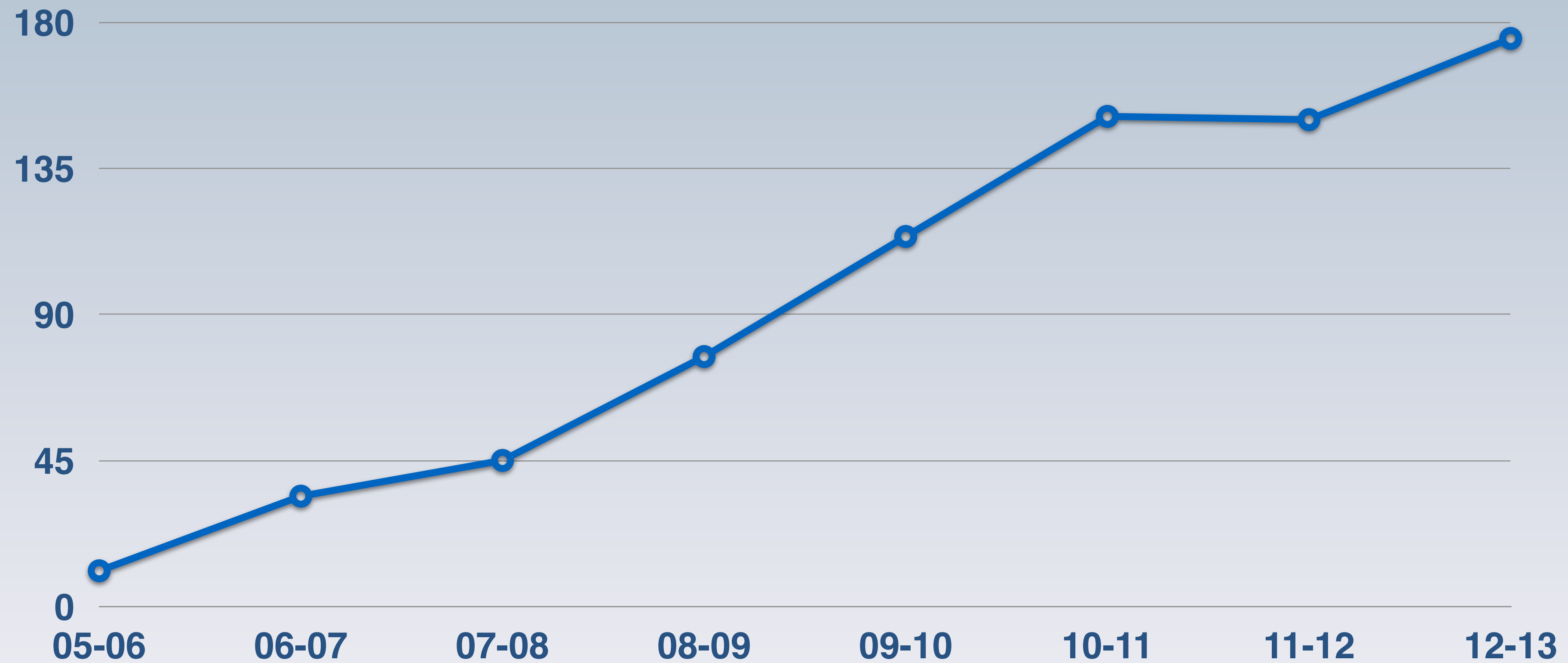
Number of Students in AP or IB Classes (non-duplicated)



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Number of AP Test Scores of 3, 4 or 5



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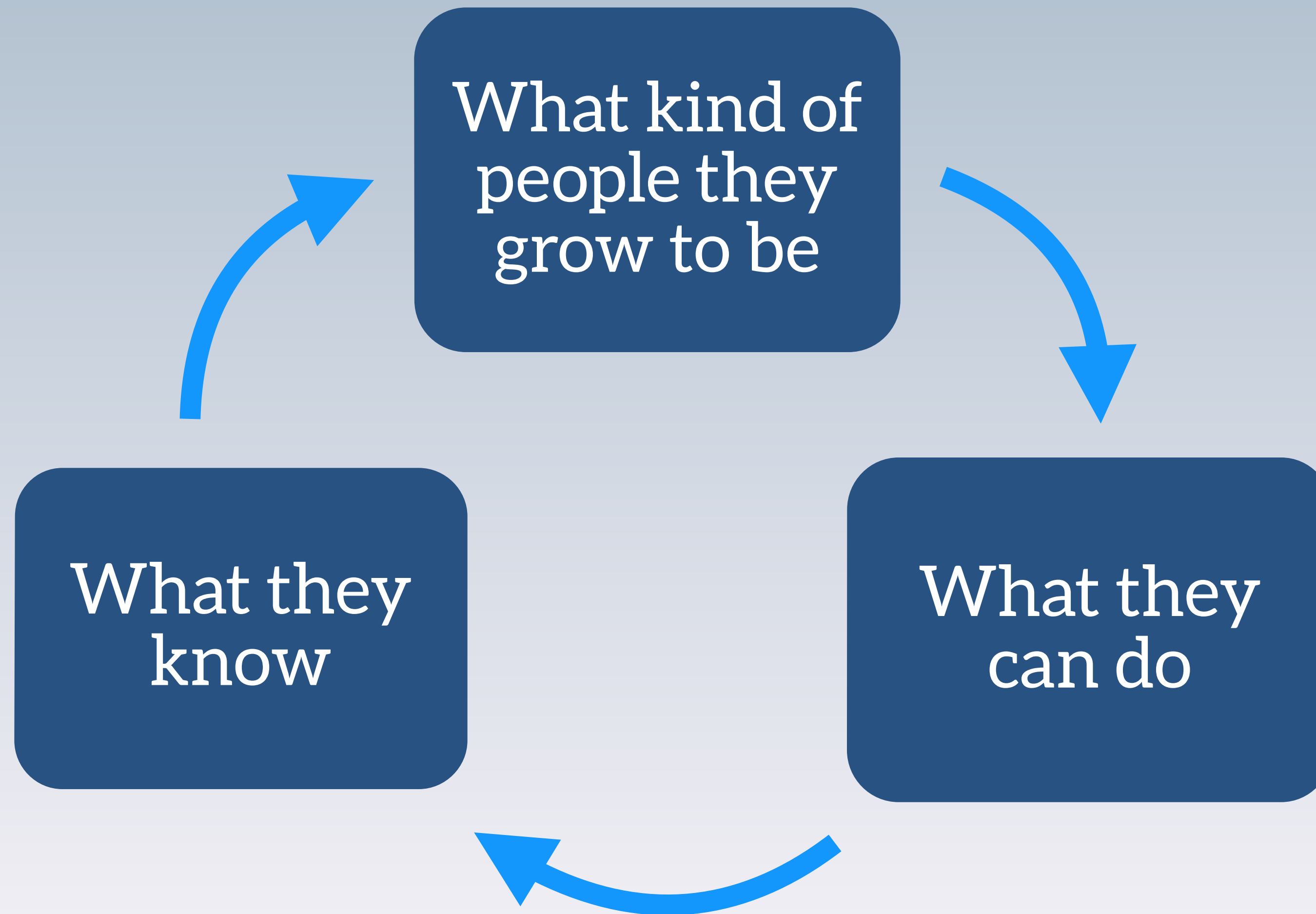
WHAT THEY CAN DO



WHAT KIND OF PEOPLE THEY ARE GROWING TO BE



Vision: Student Success



Build a Culture of Success



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Build a Culture of Success

Vision

Unity

Empowerment



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DARIUS GOES WEST





CALEB'S LESSON LEARNED

*Morgan County students impact
legislators' unanimous vote for Caleb's Law*

BY KATHRYN SCHILIRO * PHOTOS BY ANGELINA BELLEBUONO

It's rare that all manner of politicians—Democrat, Republican, Independent—could band together in passing a piece of legislation.

Even more uncommon—teenage lobbyists.

Last Thursday, however, upon the encouragement of Morgan County High School's own students, the Georgia Senate unanimously elected to pass Senate Bill 360, better known as "Caleb's Law."

Caleb Soroohan, a recent graduate of Morgan County High School, was only 18 years old when he was killed—the victim of a tragic, but preventa-

Belton worked his way through the state Senate, finding an acquaintance in Senator Jack Murphy (R-Cumming). Murphy worked up anti-texting while driving (TWD) legislation and, in early February, Murphy's SB 360, a bill that then called for Georgia drivers age 18 and under to be prohibited from using "wireless communications devices" for text messaging while behind the wheel, made the floor.

The bill progressed, and got farther than similar anti-TWD legislation. Over the weeks, SB 360 evolved to include all drivers—not just those 18 and



From top: Students and teachers are joined by Caleb Soroohan's mother, Mandi, for a day of lobbying at the state Capitol Thursday. Students handed out bumperstickers and green reminder bracelets as they lobbied for Senate Bill 360.



GREAT THINGS HAPPEN AT SCHOOL
EVERYDAY





MAY 2011						
SUN	MON	TUES	WED	THURS	FRI	SAT
1 Labour Day	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17 Victoria Day	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30	31				









“You look beautiful today!”

How Morgan County High School students and faculty recognized one student among all others—**Nicholas Walker**—for his random acts and words and of kindness.



CLOCKWISE: Walker enjoys being surrounded by his friends and peers at MCHS. When he gets the chance, he enjoys visiting select teachers and their students. Walker is known for his outgoing personality and kind words.



PHOTOS BY ANGELINA BELLEBUONO

TEXT BY CHRISTINA SANTEE

If words could describe Morgan County High School special needs student, Nicholas Walker, chances are “inspiring,” “selfless” and “bighearted” would only attempt.

A 16-year-old sophomore, Walker sets the bar for how students should treat one another, as well as the MCHS faculty.

Without doubt, his benevolent demeanor and appreciation for his peers have touched the hearts of all whom he has met. It was only appropriate that the same warmth be repaid to Walker, but in a remarkable fashion.

The idea for his incomparable acknowledgement arose amongst the thoughts of two students, peers of Walker’s who at the time had only witnessed his altruistic nature—juniors Tyler Buckalew, 17, and Jared Needham, 17.

“We see Nick every day,” Buckalew said. “He’s the first person at lunch, always opening the door and he’s the last one to eat after everyone’s through. Jared [Needham] actually went into the lunch room and he heard Nick tell the lunch lady, ‘Thank you for blessing me with this food,’ and to have a wonderful day and that’s one of the things that sparked it. We already wanted to do something because he’s just a great guy, but that’s what kicked off the idea.”

The two boys had initially intended for a MCHS “Good Dog Deed” award to be presented to Walker, but soon realized they wanted something bigger—something that paralleled Walker’s own thoughtfulness.

“We wanted to recognize Nick Walker for being one of the best people we know,” Buckalew said. “We wanted to give him a personal award—

something that would say how good of a person he is.”

After consulting with MCHS’s principal, Mark Wilson, it was decided that a plaque would be specially designed for Walker—but the brainstorming didn’t cease there.

From a spontaneous idea followed plans to organize a special assembly in celebration of Walker. An assembly that would establish a new tradition for the students of MCHS to partake in annually.

“He was gun-ho for it,” Needham said of Wilson’s attitude toward he and Buckalew’s proposal. “He told us, ‘All right, I’m writing y’all a blank check. You design the award and get everything together and we’ll set up a date.’ That was a shock for us. We didn’t know it’d be this full-blown thing. We knew we were going to give him an award, but it kept escalating.”

There’s no question that the students and faculty of MCHS are more like one big family rather than a casual joining of different generations. Some would say it resembles a sanctuary, where things like respect, friendliness and generosity are easily found in astronomical sums.

“They were really trying to give recognition to someone who deserves it,” said Meredith Holloway, special education teacher, regarding Buckalew and Needham. “Nick has just a way about him that really brings out the best in everybody.”

Among the teary-eyed audience were Walker’s proud peers, friends, teachers and mentors, all of whom anxiously awaited his acceptance of the newly established Mr. Morgan County title.

“He has a really good sense of

“Nick just has a way about him that brings out the best in everybody”
—MEREDITH HOLLOWAY



SUCCESS



Thank You!

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