



“An Opportunity to Finish What We Started”: Graduation Speech, Burruss

This spring and summer, we have enjoyed graduation ceremonies across all of our Foothills sites. Our students consistently impress us, and pull on our heartstrings, as they talk about what Foothills has meant for them on their path to graduation.

This summer, one of our graduates at the Burruss site gave an especially poignant graduation speech. Noting that Foothills gave him a chance not to be “another dropout,” this graduate encouraged his fellow students to make the best of their circumstances. Below is the text of his speech, as he wrote it.

“Good morning! First I would like to give my warmest regards to all of the family members that are here on our behalf. It means the world to have you here celebrating such a great moment. I also would like to thank Foothills, all of administration, and everyone responsible for making this special day a reality for us.

For those of you who don't know me, my name is _____. By the looks of it, some of us have gone to school together. Good times . . . Yeah . . . While it wasn't your typical high school experience, we have all managed to accomplish a great feat by being here today. Today, we are not just another drop-out statistic. No we were given an opportunity to finish what we started, and as a result of our hard work and dedication, sprinkled with some help and guidance, we are the class graduates of 2018. Go on and give yourselves a hand.

Make no mistake; we have endured many hardships in order to reach this point. If you took Algebra, you know what I mean. From long hours of studying, notes, countless quizzes and tests, we get to as Edgar Allan Poe's raven say 'Nevermore, Nevermore.'

At this time, I must give credit to all of the committed teachers and staff members for their persistency and dedication in aiding us to be successful. I personally want to thank each and every one of you for sacrificing time out of your everyday lives to come here and give us a proper education. Your selflessness has not gone unnoticed by any of us.

Though our academic journey has drawn to a close, don't be fooled, the wheels don't stop turning here. There is still much more to learn in the curriculum called LIFE. In my time, I have come to learn experience is a hard teacher. It gives the test first and the lesson afterwards. Sure, we have been faced with many challenges and set-backs along the way, limiting or confining us, but it's what we do moving forward despite these obstacles that defines who we really are. So, where do we go from here? While there is no definite answer, I ask that you consider the past, present and the future. I'm not referring to the verb tenses. Take the past for what it was and learn from it. Hold onto the hope and expectation that today will be better, living it with a purpose and reason. Most of all don't worry about what lies ahead. Much like a rocking chair, it gives you something to do, but never gets you anywhere.

I encourage you guys to make the best of your given circumstances. Utilize this time to better yourselves. In doing so consider your loved ones and progress towards the men we are meant to be. It's been a pleasure going to school with you guys and sharing this awesome occasion. Thank you and congratulations.”

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Message from the Superintendent

As we begin our 4th year at Foothills, we are projected to have over 1800 students in 14 sites. As we continue to grow, we are also adding additional support positions so that our students can continue to benefit from academic and student support services.

We continue our focus on aligning curriculum, instruction, and assessment as we move into the sustainability phase of our Charter Implementation Grant. We saw increases in scores on the End-of-Course assessments, and we feel confident in our work in this area.

Most importantly, we continue to be a viable option for students who have not found success in the traditional high school. For a variety of reasons, students in all of our service areas reach out to Foothills when they need flexibility to pursue the goal of a high school diploma. As we grow and change, we remain committed to our students. The idea that it is “never too late to become what you might have been” drives us to serve tirelessly.

With Pride,

Sherrie

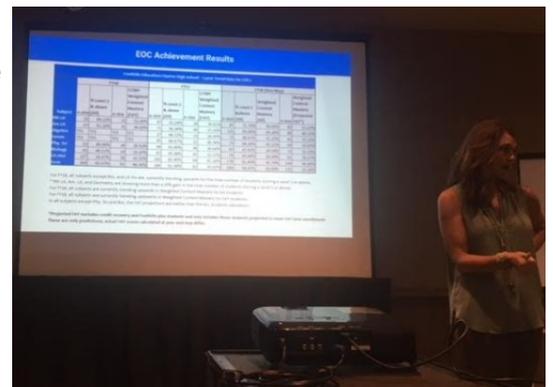
Dr. Sherrie Gibney-Sherman

Working on the Work: Foothills Annual Planning Retreat

This July, leaders from across our Foothills sites held the 2nd annual planning retreat. Because of the nature of our campuses, it is not often that we are able to come together and network as a group. The annual retreat is a time to share, problem-solve, and develop improvement plans for the coming year.

Some of the most valuable time that leaders spent at the retreat was in networking to share best practices and strategies for improved results. Our graduation rate and End-of-Course test scores have increased. Leaders at the various sites were given the opportunity to share some of the best practices for improving assessment scores, as well as motivating students. In addition, site directors shared their thoughts about what factors have influenced the graduation rates at their sites, including how course completion and attendance factored into results.

As site directors shared, district leadership encouraged them to focus on what has “worked and not worked,” so that other sites can replicate what has been successful. The discussions as the retreat culminated with each site developing a site-specific improvement plan for the coming school year.



Federal Programs Coordinator Brittan Ayers shares EOC Results for 2017-18 at the annual retreat.



Foothills Education Charter
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The Foothills Vision

Foothills Education Charter High School strives to be an accessible, high-quality high school option that is flexible and responsive to the needs of the People of Georgia and its communities.