



Rita K. Larrimore, Coordinator  
Work Based Learning Program  
Thomasville City Schools  
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Thomasville, Alabama 36784

### Letter of Support

Mrs. Larrimore:

We are extremely delighted about the possibility of extending our Work-Based Learning Program into a year-round initiative. If we are fortunate to be afforded this opportunity, it will come at a very pivotal time as we are in the beginning phase of refining our Career Technical Education Program and the learning opportunities we provide to our students.

It is no doubt that business/industry in Thomasville City has evolved significantly over the past five to seven years. This evolution demands re-alignment of our educational programs to meet the new demands that exist in Clarke County.

For decades there has been a focus on preparing students for the next level which mainly entailed getting students ready for success on the university level. Unfortunately, this resulted in the neglect of an entire population of students who felt as though they did not fit into the mold of education. As expected, the domino effect was in full force. Drop-out rates started to rise, school attendance began to plummet, and the poverty rate took flight. This toxic combination has resulted in a 70% poverty rate in Thomasville City Schools.

Ironically, the poverty rate is not excessively high due to a lack of jobs being available, but it is actually soaring because there are not enough skilled workers equipped to meet the demands of the current industrial work force. Nonetheless, knowledge is power! Now that we are aware of the problem, we can be a major part of the solution. As we continue to refine our Career Technical Education program, we are committed to engaging in ongoing dialogue with existing business/industry leaders while also reaching out to form new partnerships.

Thomasville City Schools, in partnership with business and industry leaders, hold the key to helping students/families break the cycle of poverty in our area. We can do this by providing students with relevant educational experiences, greater exposure to the trades, and rich hands-on opportunities through work-based learning.

We firmly believe that the success of our work-based learning program relies heavily on our partnerships with others and the effective guidance and support we provide to students. It would be a tremendous blessing if we are afforded the opportunity to extend our services to children beyond the academic year to year-round support. Moreover, the most profound benefit to us is that we can help improve the quality of life for countless children and families.

Sincerely,

Vic Adkison, Superintendent

Dawn Gillis, Director of Curriculum and Instruction

March 1, 2017

