Scholars at four BCS schools are enjoying access to new technology this year thanks to partnerships with Verizon Innovation Learning Schools, Heart of America and Digital Promise.

Birmingham City Schools launched two new Verizon Innovative Learning Labs at Hudson K-8 and Wilkerson Middle Schools in August. The labs are made possible by Verizon, through a partnership with Heart of America and the J. Orin Edson Entrepreneurship + Innovation Institute at Arizona State University. School district, city and community leaders joined Hudson Principal Fred Stewart and Wilkerson Principal Jennifer Love-Lott for the launch.

“In Birmingham City Schools we prepare our scholars to innovate and lead in the future,” said BCS Superintendent Dr. Mark Sullivan. “These labs and the other technology investments for our students and teachers help us reach that goal.”

The new Verizon Innovative Learning Lab gives students and teachers access to emerging technology such as augmented and virtual reality (AR/VR), 3-D printing and artificial intelligence (AI). As part of Verizon’s commitment to digital inclusion, Verizon works with its nonprofit partners to provide free technology, free internet access and hands-on learning experiences to help students in under-resourced communities receive the education they deserve to help prepare them for today’s digital economy. Heart of America leads the transformation of the state-of-the-art space in collaboration with the schools, district teams, and the J. Orin Edson Entrepreneurship + Innovation Institute at Arizona State University provides a project-based curriculum and training for the teachers.

“So many students across the nation lack the access to technology and resources they need to be successful in today’s digital world,” said Justin Tanner, Government Affairs, Verizon. In a separate initiative, scholars in Grades 6-8 at W.J. Christian

Wilkerson Middle School Principal Jennifer Love Lott, Hudson K-8 Principal Fred Stewart and Verizon Government Affairs Representative Justin Tanner help cut the ribbon on the new Verizon lab at Hudson K-8 School, along with Board members Derrick Billups, Leticia Watkins and Superintendent Dr. Mark Sullivan.
Report cards for the first grading period are going home October 13. We’ve had a successful start to the 2022 school year, thanks to the hard work of our educators, support staff, scholars and their families. At the height of the pandemic, we began using the phrase “BCS Strong”. Although we faced many challenges individually and as a district, the strength and resilience of the entire BCS family has carried us all to higher levels of accomplishment. We are fortunate and blessed to have an amazing team in BCS.

Once again, the City of Birmingham has stepped up to provide partnerships to benefit our scholars. Scholars at six schools will start learning about financial literacy the second week of October. This initiative is being made possible through a $1 million investment from the City of Birmingham. It’s the first of its kind in the country, and will be called the BHM Freedom Project. I am excited about this partnership because I am confident it can help address the cycle of poverty impacting many of our families.

This initiative would be the first in the country to couple grade-appropriate and culturally relevant financial education with a savings account, an investment platform, and classroom curriculum powered by Goalsetter and Goalsetter Classroom.

The pilot phase launches in October at six Birmingham schools: Jackson-Olin High School, Carver High School, South Hampton K-8 School, Hudson K-8 School, Sun Valley Elementary School and Robinson Elementary School.

We also are excited about the Page Pals initiative. We want all students reading at grade level by third grade. From kindergarten through third grade, you learn to read. Beyond third grade, you read to learn. We want all scholars to read on grade level.

Page Pals encourages reading with our elementary students. Dozens of volunteers have signed up for Page Pals, but we have other opportunities. I am encouraging civic groups, fraternities, sororities and others to make reading a priority and to volunteer for this program.

It’s time now for the annual United Way campaign. The United Way of Central Alabama has been a great partner for Birmingham City Schools. We collaborate with UWCA for our high dosage tutorial program. That’s just one example of the relationship between our two organizations.

The campaign theme this year is “United Starts with You”.

I encourage all employees to support the United Way. We benefit from the great team work at United Way, but we are also a part of the team to ensure continued support for that work.

From left, Oxmoor Valley Elementary School Principal Dr. Melvin Love, Superintendent Dr. Mark Sullivan, South Hampton K-8 Principal Dr. Alicia Washington, and Academic Officer Dr. Jermaine Dawson discussed student performance on the ACAP during a September press conference.

The Superintendent Speaks

UPCOMING DISTRICT DATES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Event</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Oct. 11</td>
<td>BBOE Meeting, 5:30 p.m.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Oct. 13</td>
<td>Report Cards go home</td>
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<td>Oct. 23</td>
<td>The Magic City Marching Festival</td>
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<td>Oct. 25</td>
<td>BBOE Work Session, 5:30 p.m.</td>
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<td>Oct. 28</td>
<td>Fall Break</td>
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<td>Nov. 8</td>
<td>BBOE Meeting, 5:30 p.m.</td>
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<td>Nov. 11</td>
<td>Veterans’ Day</td>
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<td>Nov. 21-22</td>
<td>e-Learning Days</td>
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<td>Nov. 22</td>
<td>BBOE Work Session, 5:30 p.m.</td>
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<td>Nov. 23-25</td>
<td>Thanksgiving Holidays</td>
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BCS MEDIA TEAM

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<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Role</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sherrel Wheeler Stewart</td>
<td>Strategy &amp; Communications Officer</td>
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<tr>
<td>Nikki Seaborn</td>
<td>Communications Coordinator, Editor BCS Report</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fred Fluker</td>
<td>Publication Designer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fred Davenport</td>
<td>Communications Specialist</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rachel Waller</td>
<td>Web Administrator</td>
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<tr>
<td>Estela Tirado</td>
<td>Bilingual Communications Specialist</td>
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Students from Alabama were given the opportunity to be a part of the historic 2022 World Games in Birmingham.

The World Games 2022 Youth Choir was comprised of selected 7th-12th graders that performed at the opening and closing ceremonies of the World Games.

The event was held July 7-17 of this year and it showcased athletes from over 100 countries.

Several students from BCS schools were selected to participate, including 12 representatives from Hudson K-8 school.

The Hudson students practiced at UAB to prepare for the event.

“Felt excited and a little nervous at the same time,” said Jersey Smith an 8th-grader at Hudson.

The 12 representatives from Hudson also were members of the school’s choir class that is taught by Birmingham native and BCS product, Ingrid Irons Brown.

Brown also participated in the adult choir for the 2022 World Games.

“I think it was a wonderful opportunity for the students to be a part of history, this is something they can remember for the rest of their lives,” said Brown.

“It was fun being a part of history,” said Caleb Washington. “We saw a lot of celebrities and I met a lot of sport celebrities ... I’m a big sports guy.” Washington is also a member of the Carver High School football team.

“It was really stressful, but worth it, and very fun,” said Karmen Jones, who is now a 7th-grader at Hudson. “I wish other children could have experienced this as well because this is something they would want to do.”
Mrs. Lourdes “Lou” Cardona is a Bilingual ESL Instructional Assistant at Huffman Academy and goes above and beyond for her students and faculty.

Cardona has been with BCS for her entire career in education. Originally, from McAllen, Texas, her start in 1999 as an Instructional Assistant came as an interesting surprise, yet necessity for the district. She was a BCS bilingual parent and the principal at her son’s school immediately saw how she could be an asset to the district and the Hispanic population.

Since she began in the district 23 years ago, Cardona has been instrumental at several schools: Robertson Elementary, North Roebuck Elementary, Arthur Elementary, Going Elementary, W.J. Christian K-8, Huffman Academy, Huffman Middle School, Huffman High School, and Woodlawn High School. She incorporates her culture and home language to help Birmingham City Schools’ scholars and their families. This includes from translating to helping parents understand district policies, test scores, and much more.

Cardona’s colleagues sang only praises about her work. “She is the heart of our community at Huffman Academy,” said Paige Dodd, ESL teacher. “She is a blessing to our ESL parents and students. She works diligently with our students they get the services they need and communicates with our parents so they get the information about their children.”

When asked about Hispanic Heritage Month, Cardona said acknowledging the celebration is extremely important in our city.

“It is essential to celebrate this month because of the growing Latino and Hispanic population in our schools and in our city,” she said. “It is an opportunity to learn about our music, our food, our stories, and our traditions; among us, we are very different.”

Cardona encourages everyone to learn and embrace the richness and diversity of our district as it makes us stronger as a community.

Want to learn and more about Hispanic Heritage Month? Here are some things Cardona loves:
- Favorite Food: Red Pozole
- Favorite Tradition: Día de los Muertos
- Favorite Music: Anything from Selena! Also, Tejano music is good!
- Myth to debunk: We don’t speak Mexican! We speak Spanish and other indigenous languages.
- Hispanic Culture in four words: Exciting, colorful, love, and unity
Scholars in Birmingham City Schools returned to school on Aug. 8, 2022, met with cheers from teachers, principals, board officials and community leaders.

Superintendent Dr. Mark Sullivan started his week at Huffman Academy, where he and Principal Dr. Jeff Willis greeted hundreds of smiling faces, along with educators and volunteers.

Sullivan, who has been an educator about 30 years, says he still gets excited about the first day of school. The superintendent spent the first days of the school year crisscrossing the district to greet educators, support staff and students.

Across town, Mayor Randall Woodfin also greeted students with high fives at West End Academy and at Hemphill Elementary School. The mayor continued visiting schools during the first week of school to show support for students and BCS employees.

Several board members including Leticia Watkins and Derrick L. Billups also greeted students during the first days of school.

The school year launched with a big band sound during BCS Institute Day at the Bill Harris Arena on Friday, Aug. 5. The BCS Fine Arts Department arranged for high school band members from throughout the district to march in, wearing full uniform. The bands brought the crowd to its feet and set the tone for the year.
and at L.M. Smith Middle School joined Verizon Innovative Learning, Verizon's award-winning education initiative, which addresses barriers to digital inclusion and helps drive equity within education for some of the most vulnerable populations across the country.

In partnership with Digital Promise, the Verizon Innovative Learning Schools program provides free technology devices, internet access and innovative STEM learning programs to help give under-resourced students the technology, education and opportunity they deserve. Being part of the program will keep students connected, helping to facilitate learning wherever it's taking place.

Powered by a next-gen, technology-infused education model, Verizon Innovative Learning Schools also equips each school with a technology coach and provides professional development support for teachers to effectively integrate technology into the classroom.

L.M. Smith Middle School and William J. Christian K-8 School are among 50 new schools joining Verizon Innovative Learning Schools for the 2022-23 school year, equipping nearly 30,000 new students with technology resources and bringing the program’s impact to 561 schools nationwide.

A total of 879 iPads will be provided to these schools as part of the program. The market value of the Verizon Innovative Learning program’s investment in the 1:1 device schools is on average over $2.3 million per school.

"Programs such as Verizon Innovative Learning Labs help to level the technological playing field for our scholars while providing tools that are integral to learning,” said Dr. Sullivan said. “We are appreciative of this opportunity, and I have no doubt that our students will use it to further their learning.”

"TOP: Councilman J.T. Moore tries his hand on some of the technology at Hudson, in competition with a student.

BOTTOM: Students at W.J. Christian use their devices for an exhibition at the school during the roll out and distribution of new iPads."
Congrats to the W. J. Christian Lady Chargers’ Volleyball team who defeated the West Division Champion, Parker Middle, to repeat as the BCS Middle School Volleyball Champion October 1 at the Birmingham CrossPlex. We would also like to congratulate the Lady Rams of Ramsay High School who continued their streak as the BCS High School Volleyball Champion by defeating A. H. Parker High School in the title game.
Watch the BCS football teams and bands play live every Thursday night.

WATCH LIVESTREAM.COM/BCS
& WWW.NFHSNETWORK.COM/ASSOCIATIONS/AHSSAA
EMPLOYEE ACCOLADES

WENONAH PRINCIPAL GETS ‘BOSS LIFT’ EXPERIENCE
As a 15-year National Guard Veteran, Dr. Willie Goldsmith, principal at Wenonah High made the most of his recent Boss Lift experience. This annual event’s purpose, run by Employer Support of the Guard and Reserve (ESGR), is to show appreciation for civilian employers of Birmingham National Guard members. The program also helps to educate those employers about the service, sacrifice, and professionalism. Goldsmith was nominated by staffer and active Guardsman Kenneth Lang. “This was an amazing experience to see the city from high in the sky,” Goldsmith said. “I really enjoyed participating and I’m thankful for the nomination.”

NORMAN WINS AWARD
Congratulations to Dr. Christina Shepard Norman on receiving the President’s Award from the Alabama Library expo. Norman is the BCS Textbook and Library Media Coordinator.

REID RECEIVES DOCTORATE
Congratulations to Alberto Reid who recently earned his Doctorate Degree in Healthcare Administration with a Business Concentration from Virginia University of Lynchburg. VUL is the oldest HBCU in the state of Virginia and the city’s first Institution of Higher Learning.

BOGLIN “BIG DAY SURPRISE’ WINNER
Sabrina Boglin was chosen as a “Big Surprise” winner sponsored by the College Football Playoff Foundation, the community engagement arm of UAB Athletics. Boglin is a Birmingham native and has more than 30 years in education. She has been at Hayes K-8 for 11 years. Boglin is a graduate of The University of Alabama and received $1,000 to use for her classroom.

CONGRATULATIONS TO OUR AUGUST EMPLOYEE RECOGNITION WINNERS
Caught Being Great
- Dr. Shenik Andrews, Huffman High School
- Jennifer Dickson, Avondale Elementary

Customer Service
- Alry Holmes, Glen Iris Elementary

Above and Beyond the Call of Duty
- Dr. Emmanuel Foster, Huffman Middle School
Students in all subgroups showed gains on Spring 2022 tests.

Students in Birmingham City Schools showed significant academic progress on state tests administered in Spring 2022.

Scholars in grades 3 through 8 take the ACAP each spring. The state Department of Education uses the scores in English/Language Arts and Math to gauge proficiency.

“We are pleased with the academic progress of our students, especially following two-years of disruptions brought on by the pandemic,” said Superintendent Dr. Mark Sullivan.

“The success shows that our educators in Birmingham City Schools are making a difference in the classroom. It also shows that our scholars and their families are working hard to grasp the subject matter and learn even more.”

While Sullivan applauded academic progress, he acknowledged the challenges ahead. “Let me be clear, we still have a long way to go,” Sullivan said. “We are not where we want to be, but we are on the path to close the gap in achievement and outperform others in the state in the near future.”

The test report provides details on scores for all students as well as a variety of subgroups. This data showed gains in all categories including students in high poverty, students with disabilities and students who speak English as a second language (ESL).

Sullivan said the district soon will present additional plans to bring student success. “Our goal is for every scholar to meet and exceed his or her highest potential in Birmingham City Schools,” he said. “We want to continue building success in our classrooms and preparing leaders who change the world.”

As people across the country celebrate #NationalHispanicHeritageMonth, the head drum major at G.W. Carver High School in Birmingham is being recognized for making history. Senior Gustavo Garcia Perez is the first Hispanic drum major for the Mighty Marching Rams.

Did you know the historic A.H. Parker High School made the cover Ebony Magazine in 1950, recognized as the “World’s Biggest Negro High School”? Opening in 1900, the now Parker High School was the first high school for Black children in Birmingham under the leadership of Dr. Arthur Harold Parker.
The City of Birmingham has invested $1 million for a financial literacy initiative that will benefit Birmingham area students. Funds will help to launch a partnership with Birmingham City Schools, IMC Financial Consulting, and the Goalsetter savings app for what will be called the BHM Financial Freedom Project. Participating scholars will gain lifelong financial skills, receive coaching, and create their own stock portfolio.

This initiative would be the first in the country to couple grade-appropriate and culturally relevant financial education with a savings account, an investment platform, and classroom curriculum powered by Goalsetter and Goalsetter Classroom. The pilot phase launches in October at six Birmingham schools: Jackson-Olin High School, Carver High School, South Hampton K-8 School, Hudson K-8 School, Sun Valley Elementary School and Robinson Elementary School. “The time is now to ensure that our youth are the most financially prepared and successful generation our country has produced,” said Birmingham Mayor Randall L. Woodfin. “We have both a professional and moral responsibility to ensure the academic and financial success of our students.”

“Our job is not just to prepare students for college and careers, it is to prepare students for life, and that’s what the Birmingham Financial Freedom Project does,” said Superintendent Dr. Mark Sullivan. “This is a one-of-a-kind partnership because the deliverables are built on a 360-approach to solving the wealth gap by providing the education, resources and opportunity needed to break the cycle of poverty and get people on the path to building wealth.”

Students and employees in Birmingham City Schools will have access to free, asymptomatic COVID-19 testing this school year through the University of Alabama at Birmingham School of Public Health. The extended voluntary testing and prevention program also will offer new services, including HEPA air purifiers, rapid over-the-counter test kits, optional student rewards cards, funding to hire on-site testing liaisons, and supplemental funding for participating schools and the school district, as funds are available.

“We received positive feedback from schools that participated in this program last year and this summer,” said Martha Wingate, DrPH, chair of the Department of Health Policy and Organization at UAB and principal investigator of the program. “The additional services will provide better protection to students and staff against COVID-19 and other more common illnesses like flu.”

The free program launched in August 2021 in collaboration with the Alabama Department of Public Health and Alabama State Department of Education, with Birmingham as one of the largest districts in the state to participate. Testing began in Birmingham schools earlier this month.

The event featured food and entertainment from the Huffman High School Band drum line. Students from the Huffman High Honor Society served as hosts and hostesses.

“The need for talented, passionate and dedicated employees is great,” says BCS Human Resources Officer Jenikka Oglesby.

“Birmingham City Schools offers great benefits, competitive pay, and opportunity for professional growth. We are excited about our new potential employees, and we look forward to continuing our recruitment efforts.”