



Texarkana Gazette

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TC's graduation rates are highest in Texas

College's three-year completion rate more than double state average, report shows

By JENNIFER MIDDLETON
Texarkana Gazette

Texarkana College has been ranked as the No. 1 community college in the state for students' three-year graduation rates, according to the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board.

The report, released last week, shows that TC has a completion rate of 45.8 percent for the group, or cohort, of students which began as first-time students in 2015. The state average for students' three-year graduation rates from community colleges is 22.8 percent.

TC's administrators attribute the high ranking to the college's culture of expecting student success and several programs they have put in place to support students in their academic careers.

"Several things attribute to it," Dr. See **TC** on **Page 2A**

Palmer Awards



Photo by Stan Shavers

■ Cary Patterson, flanked by Dean and LaCrecia Barry, receives the Texarkana Chamber of Commerce's C.E. Palmer Award for outstanding community service Friday during the chamber's annual celebration.

Patterson honored for service to community

By JENNIFER MIDDLETON
Texarkana Gazette

Cary Patterson received the Texarkana Chamber of Commerce's C.E. Palmer Award for outstanding community service during the chamber's annual celebration Friday.

He said he was flabbergasted to win the award and that the previous award winners, who selected him for the award, were very good at keeping a secret. He then went on to tell the audience the source of his sense of personal duty to the community.

"There are two people that have driven the idea through my head of

community commitment and that's my mother and father," he said. "They've done this from when I was a very young age. I've tried hard to do that here and I hope to succeed even further with the help of the chamber and the REDI group and we think there are big things happening in Texarkana."

Patterson went on to say that he was not the only one working to improve Texarkana.

"Dean Barry has a favorite saying, he says there are only two types of people—givers and takers," he said of the 2018 Palmer Award Recipient. "This is a room full of givers. I've had the fortunate ability to travel across the United States and then

in hundreds of communities. I can say without a doubt that Texarkana, per capita, has more givers than any place I've ever seen in the United States."

Patterson has been a partner in the firm of Nix, Patterson & Roach, L.L.P. since 1991.

He received a bachelor of business administration degree from the University of Texas in 1973 and graduated from St. Mary's University School of Law of San Antonio in 1975.

He is a member of the Bowie County, Morris County, Northeast Texas and the American Bar asso-

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Annual event raises money, awareness in homelessness fight

By GREG BISCHOF
Texarkana Gazette

With early evening temperatures hovering near 45 degrees, a moderate wind may have cut into winter wear but not into the spirit of more than 100 people wearing it in downtown Texarkana Friday.

The weather could hardly deter the group gathered in a small field near the Salvation Army building as the collected learned more about helping local homeless people during the sixth annual Bridge City Project.

The main point of this gathering is to learn more what causes homelessness, about the people experiencing it and what the public can do to help them, said Alaina Marcum, chairwoman of the Texarkana Homeless Coalition.

The first of these annual events,



Staff photo by Greg Bischof

■ Chili cooking teams gather Friday for the annual Bridge City Project.



Associated Press

■ The Capitol is seen at dawn Jan. 11 during the partial government shutdown.

Shutdown ends without wall money, for now

By JILL COLVIN,
LISA MASCARO
AND ZEKE MILLER
The Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Amid growing disruption, President Donald Trump agreed to a deal Friday to reopen the government for three weeks, backing down from his demand that Congress give him money for his border wall before federal agencies get back to work.

Standing alone in the Rose Garden, Trump said he would sign legislation funding shuttered agencies until Feb. 15 and try again to persuade lawmakers to finance his long-sought wall. The deal he reached with congressional leaders contains no new money for the wall but ends the longest shutdown in U.S. history.

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► Even with IRS staffers returning, tax refunds may be delayed, **4C**

► High wait times at Atlanta airport 9 days before Super Bowl, **3C**

First the Senate, then the House swiftly and unanimously approved the deal, sending the legislation to Trump for his signature.

Trump's retreat came in the 35th day of the partial shutdown as intensifying delays at the nation's airports and another missed

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CDC: School killings have become more common, more deadly

By MELISSA HEALY
Los Angeles Times

A new report from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention confirms what too many students across the country already know: The incidence of mass homicides on school campuses has risen steeply in recent years, as has their toll.

Between 1994 and 2018, there were 38 school rampages that resulted in multiple fatalities. Five of those occurred during the 2017-2018 academic year, which ended in June, and three others were in the 2016-2017

school year, according to a study in Friday's edition of the CDC's Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report.

All told, 121 people died in school homicides with multiple fatalities over the 24-year period. But 29 of those deaths—accounting for nearly one-quarter of the total—were shootings that came in just three incidents during the most recently completed school year. Seventeen students and teachers were killed on Feb. 14, 2018, at Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School in Parkland, Fla., 10

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Woman drove drunk on vanilla extract, police say

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

NEW CANAAN, Conn.—Police say a Connecticut woman charged with driving under the influence was drunk on vanilla extract, which contains a significant amount of alcohol.

Hearst Connecticut Media reports that New Canaan police found 50-year-old Stefanie Warner-Grise sitting in a car at an intersection with her eyes closed at about 4:45 p.m. Wednesday.

Officers say they found several bottles of pure vanilla extract inside her vehicle.

They say they detected an odor of vanilla on her breath, her speech was slurred and she was unable to answer basic questions.

Police say she was arrested after failing field sobriety tests.

Warner-Grise was released on a promise to appear in court. No lawyer was listed for her in online court records.

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Corrections & Clarifications

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Palmer

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ciations, the State Bar of Texas, the East Texas Trial Lawyers Association, the Texas Trial Lawyers Association and the Association of Trial Lawyers of America. He also serves as a member of Texarkana College's Foundation Board, the Texas A&M University-Texarkana Foundation Board of Directors and on the board of ART-TX REDI.

Patterson is admitted to practice in all state courts in Texas and Arkansas, the United States District Courts for the Western District of Arkansas and Eastern District of Texas and the United States Court of Appeals for the 5th and 8th circuits.

He was born and raised in Texarkana, Texas, and is the son of Dorothy Sue Patterson and the late Dr. W. R. Patterson. He and his wife, Lois, have two sons, Ty and Chad and seven grandchildren. The C.E. Palmer Award was established in 1941 and is named for the longtime publisher of the Texarkana Gazette. The Palmer Award is Texarkana's most prestigious honor for public service and recognizes a lifetime of altruism.

Fight

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which took place in the same location in 2014, focused on what it felt like to survive in frigid weather as people with homes attempted to sleep in cardboard boxes

“The first year was helpful, but it didn’t really represent a cross section of how homeless people live,” Marcum said. “Many actually live in tents and abandoned buildings. “Our main concern this year is to focus on what causes homelessness and what we can do to help serve homeless people.

Marcum said last year’s event, which was held near the Randy Sams’ Outreach Shelter, raised about \$3,000 to aid those needing shelter. It drew about 50 participants. This year, she said she hopes they raise \$5,000. The money raised will be used fund scholarships for former homeless residents seeking to go to college and get a job.

Last year’s fundraiser drew six local chili cooking teams, but this year had 13 teams. The event featured live music and even a movie titled “Same Kind of Different as Me.”

One of the chili cooks, Tiffany Studebaker, a Dunbar Early Education teacher, said this is her first year to participate.

“I love this—giving the homeless any support I can,” she said.

Besides holding the fundraiser, Marcum said the coalition also conducted a count of local homeless people—one which added up to 133 last year. This year’s count, which is still being conducted, will focus more on demographic data, such as age, gender, race, health and other details.

“We are doing this to give us a better idea of how to help our local homeless residents find homes and services,” Marcum said.

TC

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Donna McDaniel, TC’s vice president of instruction, said. “One is being a part of Achieving the Dream and really monitoring our developmental education students and really tweaking our program to meet those needs and make sure those students get to the level they’re supposed to be.”

In 2018, TC received the Achieving the Dream Leah Meyer Austin Award, the highest honor awarded to community colleges. It is given to recognize outstanding, transformational change leading to student success and completion. They were one of two colleges in the nation to win the award, which was accompanied by a \$25,000 prize.

TC has been a part of Achieving the Dream since 2012. It is a network of more than 220 community colleges that work together to achieve academic success, personal growth and economic opportunity.

In 2015, TC implemented a quality enhancement plan that includes faculty advising, a learning frameworks course

and an early alert system to let advisors and professors know if a student is struggling.

“Our faculty and staff are very involved in advising our students so that when they come to Texarkana College, our goal is to get them there, get them done as quickly as possible and get them out,” McDaniel said. “It could not happen without our faculty and their willingness to go above and beyond.”

Other programs supporting the high completion number include a redesign of Enrollment Services and the Financial Aid Center. The Student Success Center, located in the Palmer Library, offers tutoring services and a developmental math lab.

TC President Dr. Jason Smith, who began his position Jan. 1, said he’s seen firsthand the dedication of the faculty and advisors.

“You know the thing that has amazed me is I’ve associated with a lot of community colleges, a lot of colleges and universities, did an adjunct professorship at a university and what I have found that is different about TC is the commitment of all faculty,” he said. “Them taking on the advising, the personalization. We’ve talked about data, tracking students, it almost

sounds like a number, but the personalization of it from the faculty, the professors, down to our recruiters on a personal level. It’s real. They know those kids.”

In addition, the college has been using tools to create pathways to success, which include streamlining degrees, degree worksheets, a redesign of the school website and faculty and staff training.

Phyllis Deese, TC’s vice president of administrative services, said completion numbers are going up at community colleges across Texas.

“I think what you’re seeing is a statewide trend upward. In no way is it going downward,” she said. “You can even look back two years ago when we were No. 1 in the state for our four-year completion rate, our graduation percentage was only in the 30s. A lot of that has to do with the statewide effort to focus on completion. Getting them in and getting them out and you’re seeing an entire upward trend across the state. Next year I think it will be even higher.”

The trend can also be considered a reflection of Texas’ 60X30 plan, which has a goal of 60 percent of Texas residents between the ages of 25 and 34 having a higher education credential by 2030.

“I just think it’s beautifully connected to where the college was in 2012 when you look at our rankings, you really saw TC at the bottom in 2012 and have steadily risen, kind of the phoenix analogy,” Deese said. “Everything really began to turn around and do some amazing things for our community in that 2012 year. I don’t think it’s an accidental connection.”

TC almost had to close its doors in 2011, when then-incoming President James Henry Russell looked at the college’s financials and realized there was a \$5.6 million deficit in the school’s \$23 million budget and a possible \$6.3 million deficit the next year. Russell then asked TC alum and billionaire Ross Perot to donate \$5 million to the college, the amount of which Perot gave in \$1 million annual increments. In November 2012, Bowie County voters also approved being annexed into TC’s taxing district, another move which saved the college.

“It’s people and putting the correct procedures in place and people that are willing to do it,” McDaniel said of the ranking and of the college’s near-closure.

For more information on Texarkana College, go to www.texarkanacollege.edu

Trump

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payday for hundreds of thousands of federal workers brought new urgency to efforts to resolve the standoff.

“This was in no way a concession,” Trump said in a tweet late Friday, fending off critics who wanted him to keep fighting. “It was taking care of millions of people who were getting badly hurt by the Shutdown with the understanding that in 21 days, if no deal is done, it’s off to the races!”

The shutdown was ending as Democratic leaders had insisted it must—reopen the government first, then talk border security.

“The president thought he could crack Democrats, and he didn’t, and I hope it’s a lesson for him,” said

the Senate Democratic leader, Chuck Schumer. House Speaker Nancy Pelosi said of her members: “Our unity is our power. And that is what maybe the president underestimated.”

Trump still made the case for a border wall and maintained he might again shut down the government over it. Yet, as negotiations restart, Trump enters them from a weakened position. A strong majority of Americans blamed him for the standoff and rejected his arguments for a border wall, recent polls show.

“If we don’t get a fair deal from Congress, the government will either shut down on Feb. 15, again, or I will use the powers afforded to me under

the laws and Constitution of the United States to address this emergency,” Trump said.

The president has said he could declare a national emergency to fund the border wall unilaterally if Congress doesn’t provide the money. Such a move would almost certainly face legal hurdles.

As part of the deal with congressional leaders, a bipartisan committee of House and Senate lawmakers was being formed to consider border spending as part of the legislative process in the weeks ahead.

“They are willing to put partisanship aside, I think, and put the security of the American people first,” Trump said. He asserted that a “barrier or walls will be an

important part of the solution.”

The deal includes back pay for some 800,000 federal workers who have gone without paychecks. The Trump administration promises to pay them as soon as possible.

Also expected is a new date for the president to deliver his State of the Union address, postponed during the shutdown. But it will not be Jan. 29 as once planned, according to a person familiar with the planning but unauthorized to discuss it.

As border talks resume, Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell said he hopes there will be “good-faith negotiations over the next three weeks to try to resolve our differences.”

CDC

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were shot to death three months later at Santa Fe High School in Texas, and two students were killed at Aztec High School in Aztec, N.M., before the gunman took his own life.

During the 2017-2018 school year, an American student’s likelihood of dying in a school shooting was one in 2 million. That was the highest by far in the entire period studied, the CDC researchers found.

Counting only the incidents through June 2017, the spasms of violence claimed lives in patterns that reflect the nation’s makeup: Females perished as often as males, and two-thirds of the victims were white. A majority of the homicides occurred in urban or suburban schools.

There was one exception. Nearly a quarter of the victims were between 5 and 9 years old.

Among those with known motives, the perpetrators were most often propelled by a desire for retaliation. In

39 percent of these incidents, the killer was thought to have been reacting to bullying, rivalry between peer groups, or a bad grade. Gang-related activity was seen as a factor in 34 percent of incidents, and “interpersonal disputes” played a role in 29 percent of them. (More than one motive was considered in each event.)

But though mass school shootings command the nation’s rapt attention, their numbers and their toll are dwarfed by the daily drumbeat of one-on-one violence taking place in and around the nation’s schools.

Just over three-quarters of all school homicides took place in a single act of one-on-one violence, the CDC researchers found. These incidents tended to occur in urban schools (60 percent), and they often involved a teen-aged African American male perpetrator (39 percent of those identified by ethnicity or race) and an African American male victim (53 percent of those identified by ethnicity).

Indeed, the single-victim homicide rate was 8.27 times higher for non-Latino black youths than for non-Latino white youths, the study found.

Those grim statistics “are consistent with national data” showing not only a higher risk of homicide deaths in urban areas, but higher rates of homicide death among minority youths, the CDC team wrote.

Gang-related activity was cited as a motive in 58 percent of these killings. But other daily realities that set off impulsive adolescents—interpersonal disputes, retaliation, dating partner problems—were cited as motives

in almost three-quarters of these homicides.

About 63 percent of one-on-one school homicides were carried out with a firearm, typically in the hands of an adolescent. Stabbings represented 24 percent of these deaths, and 8 percent were due to blunt force.

Guns were much more likely to be used in “multiple-victim” school homicides. Between 1994 and 2018, 115 of the 121 victims who perished in such incidents—95 percent—died by gunshot. Stabbing claimed two lives, and blunt force trauma was the cause of death in four school-based homicides involving more than one victim.

Between 2004 and 2016, school homicides of all stripes claimed 423 lives, the researchers found. That’s roughly the seating capacity of a Boeing 747 jumbo jet.

In the wake of the shootings in Parkland, the Trump administration and the National Rifle Assn. have called for the training and arming of teachers and school administrators so that they can respond to outbreaks of violence. And on Jan 2, the Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School Public Safety Commission issued a call to allow some teachers to carry weapons on campus.

Lawmakers in 19 states have proposed bills to allow or expand the presence of guns in K-12 schools, according to the Giffords Law Center to Prevent Gun Violence; none have succeeded so far. At least eight states currently allow, or do not specifically prohibit, concealed weapons in K-12 schools.

Dr. Rebecca Cunningham, an emergency physician at University of Michigan who

has studied the toll of firearms on children, said she was struck by the new study’s analysis of killers’ motives. Whether a perpetrator killed one person or several, his actions were often a response to interpersonal disputes, bullying, insults, romantic break-ups or disappointments, she said.

“There’s a lot of push for people to jump to the conclusion that these are gang-related” killings, Cunningham said. But in three-quarters of single-victim school homicides and almost 90 percent of multiple-victim school homicides, “typical teens things” were seen as a factor. “Bullying, talking smack, someone talking about your girlfriend—this is common, and those are typically the conflicts that escalate,” she said.

When kids don’t have access to firearms, these disputes are often resolved in fistfights and sometimes with knives; either way, multiple deaths are rarer, Cunningham said. When firearms are more readily available, she said, “these escalate to become more lethal incidents.”

One in three U.S. homes with children under 18 has a firearm, and in 43 percent of those homes, it is kept unlocked and loaded, Cunningham and her colleagues recently reported in the New England Journal of Medicine.

Cunningham also said schools need to do more to coach students and administrators in the skills they need to defuse potentially violent situations, and school leaders need better tools and more resources to identify and help kids with substance use and other problems that make them combustible.

Texarkana ★ Gazette

Statement of core values

Impartiality means reporting, editing and delivering the news honestly, fairly, objectively, and without personal opinion or bias.

Credibility is the greatest asset of any news medium, and impartiality is the greatest source of credibility.

To provide the most complete report, a news organization must not just cover the news, but uncover it. It must follow the story wherever it leads, regardless of

any preconceived ideas on what might be most newsworthy.

The pursuit of truth is a noble goal of journalism. But the truth is not always apparent or known immediately. Journalists’ role is therefore not to determine what they believe at that time to be the truth and reveal only that to their readers, but rather to report as completely and impartially as possible all verifiable facts so that readers can, based

on their own knowledge and experience, determine what they believe to be the truth. When a newspaper delivers both news and opinions, the impartiality and credibility of the news organization can be questioned. To minimize this as much as possible there needs to be a sharp and clear distinction between news and opinion, both to those providing and consuming the news.

—WALTER HUSSMAN JR., PUBLISHER

“A newspaper has five constituencies, including first its readers, then advertisers, then employees, then creditors, then shareholders. As long as the newspaper keeps those constituencies in that order, especially its readers first, all constituencies will be well-served.”

—WALTER HUSSMAN, 1906-1988