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Thornton Fractional District 215
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Thornton Fractional School District 215 partners with National Education Equity Lab to bring prestigious university courses to high school students

Lansing, IL- Students of Thornton Fractional School District 215 are earning free college credit in courses from universities such as Harvard, Cornell, Howard, Arizona State, University of Connecticut and Yale, thanks to the district’s new partnership with [National Education Equity Lab](#).

National Education Equity Lab (NEEL) brings college credit-bearing classes from top colleges to high school students in historically underserved communities around the country, at no cost to students. The courses are offered during the regular school day and are co-taught by a professor and a District 215 teacher.

During the fall 2021 semester, 11 students participated in the inaugural NEEL course, [Poetry in America: The City from Whitman to Hip Hop](#), which was offered by Arizona State University in collaboration with Harvard University professor Dr. Elisa New. Students in the course studied American poets covering a wide range of poetic movements, including the Harlem Renaissance, the Beats, the New York School, the Chicago School, and others.

English teacher Carrie Hood co-taught the Poetry in America course at T.F. North, and Julie Kelly, also an English teacher, was the co-teacher at T.F. South. In November, National Education Equity Lab informed Kelly that her eight T.F. South students had achieved some of the top scores of all schools participating in the course.

Kelly stated, “The NEEL experience has been enriching and rewarding to see our students engage in the next step of their futures. Each of them rose to the challenges in sophisticated thinking and writing as well the adjustments to their time management. The growth sets each of these students up for a smooth transition to university life.”



This semester, Howard University’s Principles of Criminal Justice is being offered at T.F. South and will be co-taught by Howard professor Dr. Bahiyyah Muhammad and social studies teacher Eric Siemann. On Friday, January 21st, Lansing police chief Al Phillips and Kiara Bogan, school resource officer, visited the class for a question and answer session and to share information.



Siemann stated, "I am very excited to help my cohort reach great success and I think it is awesome that the NEEL is able to provide this great opportunity. I am also looking forward to increasing my knowledge on criminal justice and finding ways to integrate that information into other classes I teach."

About Thornton Fractional High School District 215: District 215 serves the students of Burnham, Calumet City, Lansing, and Lynwood at Thornton Fractional North High School, Thornton Fractional South High School, Thornton Fractional Center for Academics and Technology, and Thornton Fractional Center for Alternative Learning. The mission of District 215 is to provide diverse learning opportunities that inspire all students to become life-long learners who contribute to their community.

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