



Student Spotlight: Emily's Story, Madison



Emily with Dr. Andy Felt,
Madison Foothills Site

Some students come to Foothills to catch up on graduation requirements; others come to Foothills because they are ahead. Emily Gambrell, a recent graduate at our Madison site, is in the second group. When she finished her junior year, Emily realized she only needed two additional classes to graduate. Not wanting to spend an entire year in school to finish those two courses, she looked for other options. Her high school guidance counselor recommended Foothills.

Emily, who finished her junior year in May of 2016, is an August 2016 graduate of Foothills Charter High School. She completed the two remaining courses over the summer. Emily appreciated that Foothills allowed her work at her own pace. She did not have to wait for classmates to move ahead. She was able to “work on a course in one night” instead of “taking a few weeks” to complete tasks. Foothills provided the perfect option for Emily to complete her courses, begin working more during the day,

and graduate earlier than her peers. Her immediate plans including continuing to work and looking at attending college in the next few years.

What impressed Emily about Foothills was the encouragement provided to students by the staff. Emily was mostly self-sufficient as she moved through her courses, but she felt the support from Foothills staff. She also witnessed the level of support given to other students. She saw teachers “high five” students who did well on assessments, and continually encourage students who made “50s or 70s.” It was a level of encouragement that Emily had not always witnessed in her traditional high school classes—and it is a level of support that Foothills strives to provide to all students.

Congratulations on your graduation, Emily, and best wishes for a bright future!

Message from the Superintendent

At this writing, Foothills Education Charter High School has held its final graduation ceremony for 2016, a summer graduation ceremony at the Clarke Foothills site. Including our summer graduates, the Foothills class of 2016 is 135 strong. In addition, as you will see in “Foothills by the Numbers,” Foothills students have earned over 2,300 credits in our first year. We have accomplished much in our first year, and we are not finished yet.

As we enter our second year, Foothills Education Charter High School is continuing to fulfill our mission of offering a high-quality, flexible, responsive high school option for students in the communities we serve. We take pride in our accomplishments in 2015-16, but we continue to move forward into 2016-17.

It continues to be a great day for Foothills!

Dr. Sherrie Gibney-Sherman, Foothills Superintendent

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Foothills by the Numbers (as of 8.19.16)

7 sites

383 staff members

956 students

Student to teacher
ratio: 15:1

135 graduates

2,350 credits earned

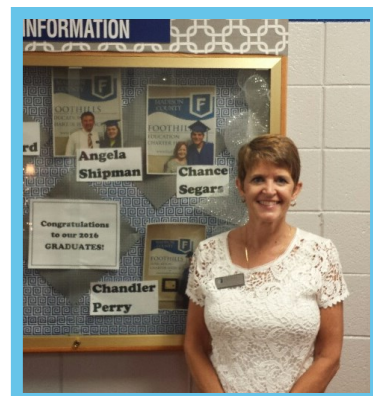
81 different schools
of origin

70% enter school at
least 1.5 years be-
hind their cohort

84% report feeling
“successful” at Foot-
hills

Improving Instruction Through Communi- cation: Angel Edwards

With an innovative instructional model come unique instructional challenges. This is something that Angel Edwards, Foothills’ new Instructional Services Quality Control Coordinator, is learning all too well as she takes on her new role. Foothills staff have worked to develop teaching protocols for the delivery of instruction as students work through Gradpoint modules. Mrs. Edwards supports teachers as they implement the teaching protocols, which are designed to maximize student achievement.



After just a few weeks on the job, Mrs. Edwards already sees her role as one of support and communication. She serves as a link between administrators and teachers, communicating with both to ensure that instruction happens and that the “pieces of instruction are working like they should.” An online instructional environment looks different, and sometimes the communication required is different. Mrs. Edwards laughed as she shared a story of helping to communicate and resolve an issue with a server being turned off—which is a very different type of barrier to instruction than she was used to in her former classroom.

In addition to the unique challenges presented by technology, Mrs. Edwards has noted other unique situations that arise at Foothills. While there are advantages to students working at their own pace, Mrs. Edwards also recognizes the challenge of making sure that students are progressing through their courses in a timely manner—especially when life or a lack of basic skill gets in their way. Yet, she also has recognized the “determined, willing” Foothills teachers. All of them are “working toward a goal” with the students. In addition, the Foothills students are working toward a goal—they are “focused” in a way that is “rejuvenating.”

As she continues to get her feet on the ground in her new role, Mrs. Edwards has developed a personal goal for her work: “That teachers would feel confident to ask questions, to vent, to offer suggestions.” She wants to “truly assist teachers to be productive so that students can be successful.



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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.