Board names new schools and principals

The Vance County Board of Education has named the district’s new high school and middle school and appointed their new principals.

Board members at their meeting on April 16 selected the names Vance County High School and Vance County Middle School for the newly combined schools, which will open in the fall for the 2018-2019 school year. The board also chose Rey Horner as the principal for the high school and Heddie Somerville as the principal of the middle school.

Effective July 1, Horner will take over leadership of the new high school, which combines the current Northern Vance High School and Southern Vance High School. The new Vance County High School will serve approximately 1,330 students in grades 9-12 and will be located on the campus of what is now Southern Vance High School. Somerville also will become the instructional leader of Vance County Middle School on July 1. Her school will serve approximately 840 students in grades 6-8 in the facility currently serving as Northern Vance High School.

Horner is the current principal of Southern Vance High School and Somerville is principal of Pinkston Street Elementary School. They have 21 and 24 years of experience in education, respectively, all with Vance County Schools.

Both principals will complete the current school year at their schools, but they also will be very involved in establishing their new schools. They will select their administrative teams and support staff members and merge their faculties with educators currently in our middle and high schools, along with the addition of new teachers. They will be involved in every aspect of establishing the new schools from course selections, to services and programs for students, to athletics and parent involvement.

School system officials have established four teams to assist Horner and Somerville in planning for the schools. The teams are focusing on: operations including facility renovations and usage and technology; student services; curriculum and instruction; and human resources for staffing. The time frame for the school consolidations includes: having all school items packed and ready to be moved to the new locations by June 18; cleaning, construction and painting crews starting work at the two sites on June 18; and all needed items moved to the new school sites July 16-27.
VCS receives $400,000 Golden Leaf grant

Vance County Schools was selected by the Golden Leaf Foundation to receive a $400,000 grant for technological innovation.

Mark Sorrells, senior vice president of the Golden Leaf Foundation, attended the April 16 Board of Education meeting for the official grant presentation.

The grant funding from the foundation will be used to equip zSpace laboratories in our middle and high schools for the 2018-2019 school year.

This funding will support the establishment of 24-30 digital student-learning stations in the middle school and high school, as well as 12-15 digital stations at the STEM Early High School.

Teachers will be trained on specific skills to utilize virtual reality technology in the delivery of their individual content areas. Wikis, blogs and an e-lesson repository will be constructed to allow teachers to share and collaborate as they train and implement new strategies. Business and industry partners will engage with our Career and Technical Education program teachers to develop a functional profile of the worker needed to support their industry. Skills and attributes will be embedded in the core competencies and outcomes of each learning module. Students will have direct interaction with virtual reality and artificial intelligence software to enhance their level of knowledge, understanding and application of science, career and technology course work.

In the top photo, Mark Sorrells, far left, leads the grant presentation to, from left, Superintendent Anthony Jackson, Vance Board of Education Chairperson Darlynn Oxendine and Vance County Manager Jordan McMillen. In the bottom photo, a student works on a digital learning station that is very similar to those that will be placed in our zSpace laboratories.
Eboni Terry chosen Volunteer of the Year

Volunteers, business partners receive deserved recognition

Officials with Vance County Schools awarded a total of 88 school volunteers and business partners with plaques and certificates during the school system’s annual Volunteer/Business Partner Recognition Reception held on April 25 at the Henderson Country Club.

Principal Harold Thompson, Jr. of New Hope Elementary School, presented Eboni Terry with the plaque for her recognition as the school system’s Volunteer of the Year for the 2017-2018 school year. Terry was selected for the honor from an outstanding group of school volunteers who all earned their respective school’s Volunteer of the Year award.

In addition to Terry, the school Volunteers of the Year include: Amanda Gill of Aycock Elementary; Curtis Durham of Pinkston Street Elementary; Woody and Sandra Woodland of E.M. Rollins Elementary; Amparo Villalobos of L.B. Yancey Elementary; members of Guided Star United Holy Church of E.O. Young, Jr. Elementary; Catherine Parham of Zeb Vance Elementary; Rev. John Miles and his Risen Faith Outreach Ministry of Eaton-Johnson Middle; Brenda Burton of Henderson Middle; Joanna Whittacre of STEM Early High; Sofia Miller-Ford of Early College High; members of Central Baptist Church of Northern Vance High; and Fanta Terry of Southern Vance High.

The members of Clearview Baptist Church again were recognized as the top business partners for the current school year. The church actually received the Shining Moment Award in late January at the Henderson-Vance Chamber of Commerce Annual Banquet.

Other top business partners honored were First Baptist Church, First United Methodist Church, Flat Rock United Methodist Church, Henderson Family YMCA, Henderson-Vance Recreation and Parks, Kiwanis Club of Henderson, Mazatlan Restaurant, MiLibroHispano.org, Optimist Club of Henderson, The Science House at N.C. State University, Townsville Lions Club, Toyota of Henderson, Versatrim and Zeb Vance Ruritan Club.

Each recipient received their award from Superintendent Anthony Jackson and Vance County Board of Education members Darlynn Oxendine, chairperson, and Edward Wilson.
Students who attend the Vance County Early College High School were recognized as “Leaders of the Pack” in a special ceremony held in the Civic Center at Vance-Granville Community College on March 22.

The 20 students were recognized for their outstanding academics in being on track to graduate from the five-year program with their high school diploma and the completion of two years of college course work.

They each received a certificate of achievement from Principal Debbie Hite and Dr. Stelfanie Williams, president of Vance-Granville Community College, among other dignitaries.

The students include: Marcus Baggett, Amber Cotton, Matthew Denton, Jessica Grissom, Zurisadal Guzman-Vazquez, Kaitlyn Harris, Maya Hawkins, Henry Huynh, Tim Jiang, Alondra Lopez, Ashley Pendergrass, Joel Renteria, Ethan Roberson, Jarrett Seaman, Amaya Sneed, Jonyiah Teasley, Alexis Watson, Kianna Wills, Jadakiss Wilson and Al-Leain Young.
Aycock hosts Touch-a-Truck

Aycock Elementary School hosted its annual “Touch-a-Truck” event for students on March 30, as part of the school’s Career Week activities.

School counselor Erika Barnett planned events for students throughout the week.

The “Touch-a-Truck” event was the culmination event for the week. Other events were special presentations by local business leaders and a “Career Day” event in the school’s multipurpose room that featured fourth and fifth graders providing information and displaying project boards on their future career plans.

“Touch-a-Truck” had vehicles used by workers in a variety of jobs on display for the students in a parking lot of the school. The above photo shows students talking with a N.C. State Highway Patrol trooper, with a sno-cone truck and fire trucks in the background. The event also featured a log truck, dump truck, police vehicle, maintenance truck and plumber’s truck, among others.

Hughes gives to students

Superintendent Anthony Jackson presented Peggy Hughes, a resident of the Senior Citizens Home near Henderson, with a Vanceformation pin and Vance County Schools cap for her generosity in donating her Bingo winnings to Carver Elementary School for school supplies for needy students. He visited Hughes in the facility on March 30, to make the presentation and to thank her for wanting to help our students. Hughes plays Bingo with fellow residents each week and had been saving her winnings for quite some time. Jackson and Hughes are shown in the photo at right during their visit.
Board pays tribute to Bawcum

Members of the Vance County Board of Education recognized the valuable work of Sharon Bawcum, who retired March 1 as the administrative assistant to the superintendent, during their meeting on April 16.

Bawcum was presented a wooden rocking chair featuring the school system’s seal on its headrest.

Bawcum is shown at left sitting in her new rocking chair as she is joined by, from left, longtime board members Margaret Ellis and Gloria J. White and Superintendent Anthony Jackson.

Ellis and White were among the board members who spoke about Bawcum’s outstanding work in her almost 33 years of experience with Vance County Schools. They were joined by Jackson in praising Bawcum for her dedication, support and outstanding decision-making skills.

Students and staff support blood drive

An American Red Cross Blood Drive, sponsored by the Air Force Junior ROTC and held on April 18 at Northern Vance High School, received great support from students and staff at the school.

Dozens of students and school staff members signed up to donate blood.

Students are shown in the photo at right as they are assisted by nurses during their blood donations.

Col. Garry Lunsford, the instructor for the ROTC students, said the event was a way for the students to provide a needed service to the local community. The American Red Cross works throughout the year to conduct blood drives with local organizations in order to provide hospitals with much needed blood supplies for transfusions.
Schools ‘pitch in’ for Litter Sweep

Groups from several local schools did their part to pitch in and help with local efforts during the N.C. Spring Litter Sweep at the end of April.

Over the last two weeks of the month students, parents, teachers and other staff members participated in projects to beautify school grounds, clean up along roadsides and join in the national observance of Earth Day.

Students in several different classes and school organizations joined in the clean-up efforts, but also learned about the importance of keeping our environment clean and the need to recycle reusable items.

Their efforts included picking up trash on school campuses, pulling weeds and planting flowers in school courtyards and picking up trash along nearby roads.

The above photos all feature students from Northern Vance High School who are members of the school’s Key Club and the Air Force Junior ROTC. Students from both organizations joined together to pick up trash along the shoulders of Satterwhite Point Road, which is located north of Henderson. There were about 40 students who participated in the clean-up project. They spent the morning of April 26, cleaning up both sides of the road from Norlina Road all the way up to the N.C. State Park at Satterwhite Point on Kerr Lake.
Advance Academy hosts local foundation board

Principal Stephanie Ayscue of the Advance Academy, along with her staff and students, hosted a visit by members of the Vance County Public School Foundation’s Board of Directors on April 24.

The board held its quarterly meeting in a classroom of the school and then toured the facility.

Ayscue introduced them to Dr. Ralphel Holloman and staff members who work with middle school students in the Empowerment Academy. The foundation members also had a chance to talk with students. Holloman explained to them how his staff works with the students in small classroom settings to improve their behavior and get them back on track with their academic performances.

Ayscue also led them into several classrooms for Advance Academy, which focuses on helping high school students to complete mostly online course work in order to receive their diploma. She stressed the positive effects of students getting more individual attention with the teachers who help them with their course work.

“The teachers are available to help them with any questions and to help them understand the curriculum,” she said.

“The work going on here is very impressive,” said Archie Taylor, Jr., president of the foundation’s board. “This is a great asset for our students.”