School system honors top local educators

*Stewart, Boyd, Crosson and Mangum earn awards as district’s leaders*

The school system honored its most outstanding educators at a banquet on September 6 at McGregor Hall in Henderson.

Kedecia Stewart of Pinkston Street Elementary School, was named the 2017-2018 Teacher of the Year. Kristen Boyd of Aycock Elementary School, won the award as the district’s 2017-2018 Principal of the Year and Dr. Jacqueline Batchelor-Crosson of Pinkston Street and L.B. Yancey elementary schools, received the 2017-2018 Assistant Principal of the Year trophy. Estelle Mangum of L.B. Yancey Elementary School, won the district’s inaugural award as Beginning Teacher of the Year for 2017-2018.

Stewart also was presented with a 2018 Toyota Camry to drive for the next year by Dave Genetti, owner of Toyota of Henderson.

Kristen Boyd, second from right, accepts the Principal of the Year award, above left, while Teacher of the Year Kedecia Stewart reacts as Dave Genetti presents her with a new car.

Estelle Mangum, at above left, accepts her Beginning Teacher of the Year award from Superintendent Anthony Jackson, while Dr. Jacqueline Batchelor-Crosson holds her Assistant Principal of the Year trophy, at above right, with Jackson and Darlynn Oxendine, vice chairwoman of the Board of Education.

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2016-2017 accountability data indicate some gains

For the 2016-2017 school year, state school accountability data indicate that Vance County Schools continues to make steady progress in some areas and have opportunities for improvement in others.

There were 52 percent of the schools in the district that met or exceeded state accountability standards. One school in the district, Early College High School, earned a School Performance Grade (SPG) of an “A.” It was the second consecutive year that Early College was an “A” school.

Two schools, Aycock and Clarke elementary schools, earned a SPG of “B.” Aycock maintained its SPG from the previous year, while Clarke improved from a SPG of “C” in 2015-2016. Five schools earned a SPG designation of “C.” Those five schools were Dabney, Pinkston Street, Zeb Vance, STEM Early High and L.B. Yancey. The staff and students at L.B. Yancey had the largest improvement by moving up from a “D” school in 2015-2016.

Early College, L.B. Yancey and Zeb Vance exceeded the state’s expectations for student growth in 2016-2017. Early College High has exceeded growth for the past two school years. L.B. Yancey and Zeb Vance also have met state expectations for student growth for the three previous years.

The data also indicate that five schools earned the SPG designation of “D” and three schools’ performances declined earning a SPG of “F.” The “D” schools included Carver, New Hope, E.O. Young, Northern Vance and Southern Vance. The “F” schools were Eaton-Johnson Middle, Henderson Middle and E.M. Rollins Elementary.

The state accountability data also indicate the district again improved its four-year cohort graduation rate to 82 percent in 2016-2017. The five-year cohort graduation rate improved to 83 percent last year.

“The district remains focused on finding and implementing strategies to improve the instructional outcomes of students,” said Superintendent Anthony Jackson. “We will not be pleased until all of our schools are performing at high levels. While we celebrate the improvements in some of our schools, our commitment remains steadfast that we will do whatever it takes to ensure improvement in all of our schools.

“This work reflects our unyielding belief in the possibilities of our students,” he continued. “I want to thank our staff, teachers, parents and community for their support of the many innovative strategies we are executing to ensure that every student has the opportunity to receive a sound public education in the public schools of Vance County. We are proud of the work we are doing. We acknowledge that there is much work to do. Our sleeves are rolled up and we are totally committed to giving this community a school system in which they can be proud.”
Board of Education receives Gold Bell Award

The Vance County Board of Education was presented the Gold Bell Award from the N.C. School Boards Association (NCSBA) during the District 3 meeting for the organization in Chapel Hill on September 13.

The Gold Bell Award is a prestigious award presented by NCSBA to boards after all of their members have successfully completed extensive training.

All seven members of the Vance board completed 12 hours of training each from July 1, 2016 to June 30, 2017.

Board members earning the award are Gloria J. White, Darlynn Oxendine, Margaret Ellis, Dorothy Gooche, Ruth Hartness, Clementine Hunter and Edward Wilson.

Shown at right accepting the award are, from left, Ellis, Gooche and Wilson.

Dabney gives

Principal Michael Putney and Assistant Principal Joy Suther of Dabney Elementary School, are shown in the photo at right as they stand behind boxes and bags filled with over 1,800 items for donation to Hurricane Harvey relief efforts. They are joined by students from grades 3-5. After two weeks of collecting basic personal items for hurricane victims, the school’s staff and students gave the collection to Salvation Army representatives on September 15 so that it could be sent to southeastern Texas.
zSpace mobile lab brings students fun learning experiences

Representatives from zSpace, Inc. brought their company’s unique educational computer software to Vance County on September 21, aboard the zSpace Virtual Reality mobile classroom.

The classroom, contained in a large trailer, was equipped with approximately 12 computers with interactive three-dimensional software that allowed students to electronically dissect images. The students each wore special 3D glasses and used a special stylus to enjoy the dissection experience. They could choose from a variety of images to dissect. The images included several virtual animals and insects, various geographic landscapes and the human body.

Students from E.M. Rollins Elementary School, Clarke Elementary School, STEM Early High School and Southern Vance High School rotated in small groups through the mobile lab during its four-hour visit. School administrators and some teachers from throughout the district also came to see the virtual reality based learning experience.

zSpace officials bring the mobile lab at no charge to school districts that are considering including their products as a part of students’ learning experiences.
It’s ‘We Inspire 2.0’

New group of local educators join blended learning leadership for this year

The school system recognized a new group of local educators, who will participate in the “We Inspire” blended learning initiative in its second year during 2017-2018, at a special “draft day” event on September 12.

Superintendent Anthony Jackson called each educator’s name as they came forward, walked down the red carpet and signed the “We Inspire” pledge poster.

This year’s cohort of 57 educators will participate in several all-day training sessions led by representatives from the Friday Institute at N.C. State University. The focus of the trainings is to share strategies with teachers and other school staff members to enhance the use of technology in supporting daily teaching and learning in our schools.

This year’s initiative is referred to as “We Inspire 2.0.” The new cohort joins the first group of about 50 educators who went through the training last year. The initiative is designed to train leading educators in all of our schools, so that they can train their colleagues on how to best use technology in the classroom.

The trainings are being funded through a three-year $200,000 grant from the Golden Leaf Foundation. The foundation supports technology use in education in rural districts.

Educators, who are part of the “We Inspire 2.0” cohort this year, danced down the red carpet and signed the pledge poster on September 12.
School relocation projects completed

After a lot of hard work over the summer and the first few weeks of the new school year, the relocation projects for AdVance Academy and the STEM Early High School have been completed.

AdVance Academy was moved from the old Western Vance facility and that building has been closed. The academy is now in a two-story building next door to Henderson Middle School on Charles Street in Henderson. Principal Stephanie Ayscue, her staff and students have now settled in to their daily routines in their new home. The facility also now houses the school system’s Youth Empowerment Academy for long-term suspended students at the middle school level.

The STEM Early High School is now located in a classroom wing of Southern Vance High School. All furniture and equipment was moved and in place by the beginning of classes on August 28. Smartboards and other needed technology now is in place and being used in classrooms.

Instrumental in the relocation projects were personnel in the district’s Maintenance Department, Technology Department and school staff members at each location. They all worked diligently to get things in place for the arrival of teachers and students. Now, they’re off to a successful start for this year.

The STEM Early High School’s new location at Southern Vance High School was ready for hundreds of students and their parents when the school hosted its orientation event for sixth graders in late August.

VCS Photos
District Awards

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All of the award winners were selected from outstanding fields of nominees who represented their respective schools.

In addition to Stewart, nominees for Teacher of the Year were Kelly Smith of Aycock; Fe McCoy of Carver; Cynthia Arthur of Clarke; Justin Wrenn of Dabney; Tina Terry of New Hope; Faye Crawford of E.M. Rollins; Kevon Grant of L.B. Yancey; Julia Morton of E.O. Young; Alfreda Murphy of Zeb Vance; Katrina Tunstall of Eaton-Johnson Middle; Rosalia Cervantes of Henderson Middle; Mary Soriano of STEM Early High; Joannie Aldridge of Northern Vance High; Brandelyn Breining of Southern Vance High; and Ana-Maria Topliceanu of Early College High.

Nominees joining Boyd for Principal of the Year consideration were Dr. Carnetta Thomas of L.B. Yancey; Kristian Herring of Zeb Vance; and Rey Horner of Southern Vance.

Angela Pugh of Henderson Middle School, joined Crosson as a finalist for the Assistant Principal of the Year honor.

Beginning Teacher of the Year nominees joining Mangum included: Regina Durham of Dabney; Rachel Bradshaw of New Hope; Conetta Terry of Pinkston Street; Sikera Alston of E.M. Rollins; Julia Hicks of Zeb Vance; Anthony Davis of Eaton-Johnson Middle; Trevor Kirby of Henderson Middle; and Peter Hasselburg of Southern Vance High.

The awards for the evening were presented by Superintendent Anthony Jackson, Darlynn Oxendine, vice chairwoman of the Vance County Board of Education, and Ruth Hartness, a member of the Vance County Board of Education. They were assisted by Joy Suther, 2016-2017 Assistant Principal of the Year; Michelle Burton, chief Human Resources officer; and Angela Miles of Human Resources.

Dairy tour visits Southern Vance

A mobile dairy classroom, sponsored by the Southland Dairy Farmers association, visited at Southern Vance High School during three class periods on September 20. Courtney Bumgarner of the farmers’ association, is shown in the photo at right as she talked with students in Career and Technical Education courses during one of the class periods. She brought a Holstein cow with her in the large trailer as she told students details about the milking process and about the nation’s dairy industry. Bumgarner’s classroom is based in Greensboro and visits schools across the state.

VCS Photo
Board recognizes art students

The Vance County Board of Education recognized the outstanding work of art students at Southern Vance High School and their teacher, Amy Simpson, at its meeting on September 11.

Six of the students who worked during the summer to paint amazing murals in hallways of local schools, attended the meeting. They are shown in the photo at top right as Simpson speaks behind them. Simpson and her students talked about their art projects in schools, which are continuing now, and the work that went in to creating the huge, colorful mural on an exterior wall at the school system’s Purchasing and Distribution warehouse.

The students also showed board members, as shown at bottom right, the canvas Vans shoes they have painted again in 2017 with their creative art work that has a local flavor. The Southern Vance students’ Vans shoe art won regional honors in 2016 in national art competitions sponsored by the shoe production company.

There were additional students, including some recent graduates, involved in the summer art work projects who could not attend the board’s meeting.