Governor comes to see STEAM Academy

N.C. Gov. Roy Cooper came to E.M. Rollins Elementary School on July 26, because he wanted to see the innovations at the new STEAM Academy and show his support for public education in rural areas.

He also announced the start of his second annual statewide Governor’s School Supply Drive that will result in the donations of thousands of school supplies to public schools.

Citizens across the state for the next several weeks can donate school supplies to any State Employees’ Credit Union location or at any state building in Raleigh. Volunteers will later distribute the supplies to public schools.

“I wanted to come here today to see the progress the school is making and to shine a light on the needs of public schools in our rural areas,” Cooper said. “Our public schools, particularly in rural areas, have a lot of needs. We have to actually show that public education is a priority and not just talk about it.”

Cooper gathered information during his visit as he talked with five E.M. Rollins teachers and local educators who are leaders in the Vance County chapter of the N.C. Association of Educators. The E.M. Rollins teachers were Aqueria Hargrove, Regina Hilliard, Ebony Watkins, Patrick Vincent and Tiffany Manning. He also visited five classrooms, including those with first graders, second graders (in Robotics), third graders, fourth graders and students in kindergarten.

Principal Stephanie Alston led Cooper and local dignitaries on the classroom tours. Superintendent Anthony Jackson and several Vance County Board of Education members were in attendance.

“My heroes are these educators,” Cooper said after the classroom visits.
E.M. Rollins students begin school year

The year-round STEAM Academy at E.M. Rollins Elementary School opened with the first day of classes for the 2018-2019 school year for students on July 23.

Administrators, teachers and support staff members were prepared for the approximately 440 students attending the school for the new year. There were lots of excited faces for both students and staff members. The school also hosted a successful open house for students and parents on July 19.

In the photo at right, a parent completes paperwork in her son’s classroom during the open house. In the photos below, students and teachers are busy with classwork on the first day.

Principal Stephanie Alston said the first day of school went very smoothly.

“I think the students are really glad to be back in school,” she said. “They have gotten used to our year-round schedule and they’re ready to get started on the new year.”

The school will continue its project-based learning and innovative instruction strategies as students enjoy unique experiences in the MakerSpace classroom, LEGO robotics, visual art and music instruction in both choral and instrumental, with the continuation of the String Orchestra.

E.M. Rollins Elementary has several new teachers this year and Alston and her staff are excited about working together.

“We are committed to doing whatever we need to do for our students,” Alston said.
**AdVance Academy has additional 2018 graduates**

AdVance Academy held another commencement exercise on July 12 for six additional seniors who completed requirements to receive their diplomas.

Principal Stephanie Ayscue presented diplomas to each graduate during a ceremony held in the auditorium of the former Henderson Middle School.

Each of the students recently met requirements through online course work to complete high school.


**Early College earns award from national magazine**

Vance County Early College High School earned recognition as a Bronze Medal school for the outstanding academic performance of its students from the national magazine *U.S. News & World Report*.

The national recognition was announced in late June as the magazine published its annual rankings of schools throughout the nation. Early College High was rated among the best in our state.

Principal Debbie Hite said the honor was the result of a lot of hard work on the part of students, faculty, staff, leadership and parents.

“The recognition shows that our children are capable and hungry for knowledge and have an innate desire to achieve at an advanced level,” Hite added. “Our teachers passionately purpose and implement instructional strategies that teach to different learning needs. Also, our parents and leadership believe in us and support us.”

Early College High School has been designated as an “A Plus” school by the state.
Carraway leading Clarke

Dr. Jennifer Carraway has been settling in to her new duties as principal of Clarke Elementary School since July 16.

She has been meeting with school system administrators, teachers and other school staff members as they prepare for the return of students to begin the new year on August 27.

Carraway is succeeding Crystal Richardson as the school’s principal and is taking over a school that has been experiencing strong academic growth over the last few years.

She has joined Vance County Schools after serving most recently as the principal of Hawley Middle School in Granville County. Carraway is a Vance County native and graduate of Southern Vance High School.

She has been a public school educator for the last 23 years and also has worked as a director, assistant principal and teacher.

VCHS student leaders

Principal Rey Horner has been meeting during the summer with student leaders for Vance County High School.

He is shown at right talking with a group of students who will be part of the Student Government Association at a session held on July 12.

Horner discussed plans for the new school year with the group and stressed that he wants them to assume active leadership roles in the school.
Elementary students complete reading camps

Summer reading camps at Clarke and E.M. Rollins elementary schools assisted students in improving their reading skills in preparation for the upcoming school year. Teachers in the program at Clarke worked with students, particularly in third grade, from across the district. The camp at E.M. Rollins served students who attend the school in grades 1-3. Students at both sites received more individualized instruction with their teachers. They also worked in small reading groups and completed online reading activities to strengthen their skills.

Each of the programs lasted for three to four weeks and ended on July 13. Students’ progress was assessed at the end of the camps.

Mi Centro a success!

Approximately 45 pre-school children who do not speak English as their native language completed the school system’s summer Mi Centro program on July 18. The students participated in the approximately six-week program designed to help prepare them for pre-kindergarten and kindergarten.

They received their completion certificates in a ceremony at Zeb Vance Elementary School, as shown at left, that was attended by about 200 parents and other family members.