VSCS graduates its first senior class

Over 250 members of the Class of 2019 at Vance County High School received their diplomas during the school’s Commencement Exercise held during the morning of June 8.

It was the first graduation for the newly consolidated high school. The event was fittingly held in the gymnasium at Vance County Middle School, the site of the last countywide graduation in 1990 for seniors then attending Vance Senior High.

Principal Rey Horner presided over the ceremony and proudly addressed his first senior class. He also welcomed the community to the proceedings, which were watched by a packed audience.

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Jackson is Superintendent of the Year

Dr. Anthony Jackson, superintendent of Vance County Schools, has been named the Superintendent of the Year for 2019-2020 by the Central Carolina Regional Education Service Alliance (CCRESA).

Dr. Neil Pederson, executive director of CCRESA, came to Henderson on June 17, and presented the award to Jackson during the school system’s administrative meeting with principals and directors.

Jackson is shown with Pederson in the photo at right holding the plaque for his award. His peers in our 17-district region chose him as the recipient for the honor. He is being recognized for his outstanding leadership in directing the school system to the successful consolidation of two middle and two high schools, as well as improving student performances and increasing graduation rates, among other accomplishments.
facility with an audience of over 1,250 people. Each of the graduates marched into the gymnasium in their black cap and gowns, with a white sash featuring the school’s emblem in Viper green at the front center.

Laura Care was the class valedictorian and Tomesha Jefferson was the class salutatorian. Jefferson welcomed everyone to the important event and Care talked about the anxiety of the high school consolidation and challenges she and her classmates faced. Care stressed in her final remarks that she and her classmates had grown close over the school year and were ending their high school careers feeling very positive about their experiences.
The 107 AdVance Academy graduates stand on the stage after marching in to begin their Class of 2019 Commencement Exercise.

AdVance Academy seniors receive diplomas

Parents, family members, friends and community residents watched as 107 members of the Class of 2019 at AdVance Academy received their diplomas during their Commencement Exercise held on June 6.

The memorable event was held during the evening in the auditorium at McGregor Hall in downtown Henderson. The graduates, all clad in their green caps and gowns, processed down one of the aisles of the auditorium as almost 900 well-wishers cheered for them.

Principal Stephanie Ayscue welcomed graduates onto the stage as they ended their processional. She stressed how proud she was of each of them for overcoming obstacles and their determination to complete their high school education.

Retired U.S. Congresswoman Eva Clayton was the featured speaker for the commencement. Clayton recognized the graduates for making the most of their second chances. She challenged them to remain committed to their goals in life and to not let anything stand in their way.
VCS Banquet honors 31 retiring associates

Vance County Schools honored 31 retiring associates during the evening of June 12, at the school system’s Annual Retirement Banquet.

The event was held at the Henderson Country Club.

The Honorable Judge Caroline Burnette, who is a Ninth District Court judge, was the evening’s featured speaker. She offered the retirees encouraging words and reminded them to have fun. She stressed that they have dedicated their lives to help others and now it is time to do things for themselves.

Jan Vaughan, who retired last year as a teacher at Aycock Elementary School, spoke about her first year as a retiree. She told those now joining her in retirement to do things they enjoy and to remember that every day is Saturday.

Those honored for their retirement included: Larry Alston of Zeb Vance Elementary; Christine Ayscue of Vance County Middle; Mamie Banks of Vance County High; Carnetta Blakely of the Exceptional Children's Department; Larry Bobbitt of the Exceptional Children's Department; Willa Clark, director of the Career and Technical Education Program; Jeanette Cousin of L.B. Yancey Elementary; Faye Crawford of E.M. Rollins Elementary; Lisa Finch of New Hope Elementary; Hye Griffin of Vance County High; Louis Hargrove, Jr. of Dabney Elementary; Terri Hedrick, Public Information Officer; Rosa Henderson of Vance County Middle; Susan Hughes of Dabney Elementary; Isabella Jenkins of E.O. Young, Jr. Elementary; Nancy Lee of E.O. Young, Jr. Elementary; Brenda LeMay of Clarke Elementary; Barbara Lucas of Zeb Vance Elementary; Michael Miller of Vance County High; Alexa Molden of Clarke Elementary; Randolph Oxendine of Carver Elementary; Ingrid Palmer of Vance County Middle; Crystal Richardson of Vance County Middle; Dr. Alice Sallins of Dabney Elementary; Alisa Salmon of the Maintenance Department; Claudette Scales, preschool coordinator; Cynthia Simpson of Zeb Vance Elementary; LaRose Stainback of Zeb Vance Elementary; Judy Tatum of Zeb Vance Elementary; Barbara Vann of Vance County High; and Donna Vann of Dabney Elementary.
Tillis visits VCHS

U.S. Sen. Thom Tillis of North Carolina, visited Vance County High School during the afternoon of May 30, as one of his stops for the day in the area. He is shown in the center of the photo at right as he presents a U.S. Flag that had flown over the U.S. Capitol in Washington, D.C., to members of the school’s Air Force Junior ROTC and other students. Tillis met for about 45 minutes with students from VCHS and our STEM Early High School. Principal Rey Horner of VCHS, and Principal Kristian Herring of STEM Early High, presented Tillis with gifts from their schools.

Nurse Aide pinning

Rebecca Harris, Vance Medical Academy instructor, is shown at right as she pins Jenna Dement to signify her successful completion of studies. Dement was one of seven students to complete nurse aide training. Others were Nancy Duran, Shirley Lopez-Alor, Lidia Morales Vital, Dayon Thornton, Emily Valenzuela Valdilivar and Dyamond Williams. They all were honored at a ceremony on May 29, at Vance County High School.
Four local educators selected as OC Fellows

Four local educators who are cohorts with the nationwide Opportunity Culture (OC) Fellows Program were recognized at the Vance County Board of Education meeting on June 10.

The educators are, starting second from left in the photo at right, Amber Hines of Zeb Vance Elementary, Casey Jackson of Aycock Elementary, and Cherie Dixon of L.B. Yancey Elementary, all multi-classroom leaders, and Kristen Boyd, principal of Aycock Elementary. With them are Dorothy Gooche, board chairwoman, far left, and Superintendent Anthony Jackson, far right.

Hines was honored as an Opportunity Culture Fellow for the current school year. Dixon, Jackson and Boyd are new cohort members for 2019-2020. They are among 15 fellows from across the nation who are Opportunity Culture multi-classroom leaders and principals and exemplify success and strong leadership.

Visiting Washington

Twelve of the 16 Student Spotlight award winners from our schools this school year participated in their free trip to Washington, D.C., on June 20. During the day in our nation’s capital, they visited with U.S. Rep. G.K. Butterfield in his offices, top left, U.S. Sen. Thom Tillis in the U.S. Capitol, top right, and visited the Smithsonian Institute’s Natural History Museum, left, among many other museums. The students’ trip was made possible by sponsors of the award program including the Vance County Public School Foundation.
Our two middle schools completed a successful school year with important year-end events and celebrations in early June.

Vance County Middle School, led by Principal Heddie Somerville, recognized its first eighth-grade class during a special ceremony held in the school’s gymnasium and attended by hundreds of parents and family members on June 4. Somerville presented a certificate for successful completion of middle school to each eighth grader.

At the STEM Early High School, Principal Kristian Herring led recognitions of his school’s eighth-grade class and celebrations to complete the school year.

Both schools had marked improvement in students’ academic performances and provided time and events for students and school staff members to celebrate their achievements and enjoy the results of all of their hard work.

Vance County Middle School staff and students especially celebrated their successes during a school year that involved the school coming together in a different facility with the consolidation of two middle schools into one middle school. They all met the challenge head-on with great success!

Top photo: Principal Heddie Somerville of Vance County Middle School, presents a certificate to an eighth-grade student during the school’s Recognition Ceremony on June 4. Above left: STEM Early High School students celebrate at the end of the school year. Right: Principal Kristian Herring poses with a student during the STEM Early High School end-of-the-year celebration.
Teachers and students in the school system’s Read to Achieve Summer Reading Camps at L.B. Yancey Elementary School, above left, and Aycock Elementary School, above right, began their work to improve reading skills among selected first, second and third graders on June 18.

Summer reading camps open at two schools

Selected students from our elementary schools in grades 1-3 began working with teachers in the school system’s Read to Achieve Summer Reading Camps at Aycock and L.B. Yancey elementary schools on June 18.

The camps will operate Mondays through Thursdays until July 18, the final day for third graders at the two sites. First and second graders will end their camp participation on July 17.

Teachers are working with the students in small classroom settings to improve their reading skills to help them be more successful in the new school year. Third-grade students will be tested again on the reading skills with a focus on having them fulfill requirements for promotion to the fourth grade.