

JUNE JUBILEE

Halifax County Schools is excited that June 2021 has finally arrived. We proclaim this month as “June Jubilee: a month of celebration.” While we are aware that we are not back to normal, our joy is in knowing that our challenges have presented situations that will make us stronger and better. Our commitment to teaching and learning remains our top priority.

Annual high school graduations with family and friends cheering on seniors have been a standard celebration in communities for decades. Unfortunately, the tradition of commencement ceremonies, along with proms and award banquets were canceled last year for the class of 2020 because of the coronavirus pandemic. Halifax County Schools seniors received their diplomas during masked social distance mandates outside with a limited number of guests. Administrators were cognizant that high school graduation is an important chapter in the lives of their students and worked hard to provide families, relatives and friends with an opportunity to witness their loved one walk across a temporary stage to receive their diploma.

I am reminded of a quote which states: “*We cannot direct the wind, but we can adjust the sails*” (Dolly Parton). As uncertain as the past fifteen months have been, we have learned how to adjust our sails and are moving forward. Life has twists, turns, ups and downs, and even though we adjusted to a strong operational pivot, we knew that morning would come. New days, nights, weeks and months bring about fresh perspectives. As we recently experienced “*Sharing is Caring*” in March, “*Dancing in the Rain*” in April and “*Beautiful Flowers*” in May, we can see “*Hope*” in June. Sails were adjusted for many of our high school students as reflected in comments about their experiences during the pandemic. Ty’Teana Harris, Senior, Southeast Collegiate Prep, states: “With graduation coming up, I am sure that I have taken the necessary steps in high school to become a college student, I am not letting this pandemic stop me from continuing on with my education, or life. Every day I try to keep an optimistic mindset during everything and I haven’t let it stop me from being happy. Maria Castanon, Junior, Northwest Collegiate and Technical Academy, recalls the challenges she faced during the pandemic and how she decided to use those challenges as opportunities to focus on family, learning new instruments, singing techniques and reading.

It has been a challenging time for all of us. Our students are turning the page on an important chapter of their lives, stepping into a post-pandemic world, and likely dealing with significant anxiety around what your life will be like next. In a sense, we all are. But my heart is filled with so much “joy” knowing that through this pandemic our students have learned that their life is an invaluable, priceless, gift. Their life is worthy of boldly, vibrantly living each day. My challenge to you is to find gratitude for all you have, stay open to all that remains possible, and remain diligent in the pursuit of both personal success and selfless significance. It’s June – a month of observance and celebrations. Be hopeful, live inspired, and find Joy.