

Time of Reflection

And that's a wrap! Congratulations to all our students and families for completing the 2021-2022 school year! Our goal this year was to open our school doors and remain open, emphasizing creating a supportive and positive learning environment to address the needs of the whole student in partnership with educators, staff, parents, and communities. And, of course, this never would have happened without you! Summer has arrived in Halifax. The school year was a year of challenges, but a very successful year! Another class has graduated and is now Halifax County Schools alumni. The administration team is already planning for another exciting year!

Since my arrival here in 2016, I have spoken about "Charting a new course." What does that mean, and what progress has been made? We want to be the district where families come to settle down and raise their children in a great environment and great communities. It means everyone is working together to make our children's educational experiences the best in the area. What have we done to begin the process? We continued to focus on building the capacity of our staff. We implemented a "pyramid of success," providing staff with various ways to earn additional income through salary supplements, retention bonuses, categorical plans, and performance plans. We expanded access to and use of data for student-level, school-level, and district-level decision-making. We created more teacher and administrator collaboration opportunities through monthly professional developments and boot camps.

To better engage our external stakeholders, we worked to build more robust communications with legislators, key state educational leaders, community leaders, and others to advocate for legislation supporting strategies to increase student achievement and sustainable school funding, such as with Leandro. Across the district, we've worked on improving efficiency and reducing costs. Our finance team continues to do an exceptional job as our audits are clean. We purchased new instructional materials and improved technology across all schools, providing students with Chromebooks to engage in individualized learning. Through the Public School Needs-Based Grant, we will rebuild Eastman, which will reduce travel time and give scholars a brand new state-of-the-art facility to provide students with the best learning environment.

Everything we do in Halifax County Schools is focused on student outcomes and achievement. We launched the first Solar Energy Apprenticeship, providing scholars with credentials and earning while you learn opportunities. We also expanded that opportunity for students through Greenleaf farm and our warehouse. We graduated our first Halifax County Early College High School, where five students were able to receive their high school diploma and their associate's degree. Additionally, we opened two makerspaces at our middle schools, created an IT Help Desk program, and so much more. I do not say all of this to brag but to let you know that we are doing great things in Halifax County Schools, and there is more to come.

Throughout this school year, you unselfishly supported teachers and staff in adjusting to changes in social distancing and mask mandates. It is huge that parents and families willingly sacrificed to ensure that we could continue our sports and activity schedules while still adhering to local health regulations. Those sacrifices did not go unnoticed or unappreciated by district staff and, for that matter, the whole community. In closing, I cannot express my gratitude to all our parents, families, and the entire Halifax community for their overwhelming support of our school district and students. I feel very fortunate to be part of such a great school district and community.