



## Crockett County School District Receives Encouragement, Training Prior to Start of School Year

By Ron Barry

In their final session of in-service training prior to the launch of the 2023-24 school year, the faculty, staff, and administration of the Crockett County School District got a shot of positive energy.

Former television sportscaster turned corporate trainer-coach Marlin Williams, who heads MLT Communication, LLC, delivered an informative challenge to the teachers and staff of all five Crockett County district schools in the CCHS Little Theater Friday morning, July 28.

Williams, who also currently serves as the Manager of Member Services for North East Mississippi Electric Power Association, focuses his training efforts on finding positive ways to develop relationships among people, something he feels is a key component for an effective educational experience.

"There is too much negativity in the world," Williams said in his presentation. "Building positive relationships is the best way to promote healthy environments, whether it's in education, business, or even families. Building up one another's self-esteem increases productivity and just makes for a better situation for everybody."

Using a variety of humorous stories as well as sobering research statistics, Williams challenged his listeners to be more aware of the way students may interpret the various forms of communication they receive from their education leaders.

The former broadcaster, who started his career at WBBJ-TV in nearby Jackson before moving on to Augusta, George and Tupelo, Mississippi, encouraged kindness and an openness to the different forms of learning styles that students have in his address to the Crockett audience.

Williams, who has covered everything from the Masters golf tournament to Super Bowls to World Series, told his listeners that awareness of how people receive messages in communication can drastically change the approach a teacher needs to be willing to make, according to the research he has studied.

"Only 7% of communication is the voice expressing the message," he said. "The tone of the voice is responsible for 38% of the message received. And 55% is completely non-verbal, whether it's from facial expressions, body language, or other clues the listener perceives. Effective communication is even less likely in emails, where the tone can't always be determined."

Williams also highlighted the different learning styles of students, citing research that shows that 40% are "visual" learners and only 10% are "auditory" learners. "That means that only 10% of your students are getting that much out of a straight lecture," he told the teachers. "That's why it's much better to mix up the way you present your information."

About 50% of students are "kinesthetic" learners, Williams said, which means that more of the intended message is received if there is an actual task involved in the presentation.

The Crockett audience was also challenged to compare the concept of "Emotional Intelligence" – a measure not just of a person's intellect, but their awareness of the feelings and emotional atmosphere that may be affecting the reception of a message – to deciding how a particular student may fare simply by testing their IQ (Intelligence Quotient).

The Crockett gathering also featured information from Director of Schools Phillip A. Pratt; introduction of new personnel from the five school principals; and an opportunity to meet with various vendors regarding employment benefits.