

December BOARD HIGHLIGHTS

19 December 2024

- Staples - Stuff the Bus
- Morgan's Tavern & Grill - Pancakes for PIE
- Foreign Exchange Students
- Holiday Card Winners
- Advanced Degrees
- School Nutrition Awards for Excellence
- Principal of the Year
- Teacher of the Year
- Beginning Teacher of the Year
- Exceptional Children's Teacher of the Year

- NORTH CAROLINA DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC INSTRUCTION RECOGNITION FOR OUTSTANDING GRADUATION RATE
- NORTH CAROLINA ACADEMIC GROWTH AWARD
- NORTH CAROLINA COUNCIL OF TEACHERS OF MATHEMATICS OUTSTANDING EDUCATOR
- SCHOOL BUSINESS OFFICIALS CERTIFICATIONS
- FINANCIAL AWARDS (GFOA/ASBO)





Staples - Stuff the Bus

Craven County Partners In Education is proud to recognize Staples as a valued PIE Partner. Lisa Pekau, General Manager of Staples, has consistently supported and hosted the annual Stuff the Bus event and took their commitment even further this year as a title sponsor.

P.I.E. extends their heartfelt gratitude to Staples for allowing them to park the bus at the store and for their enthusiastic support of the initiative. Thanks to their involvement, P.I.E. received an estimated 20,000 individual school supply items valued at over \$50,000, along with \$35,000 in in-kind contributions from media sponsors.

The collective effort resulted in over 220 boxes of supplies, which were distributed to school principals on the event day to ensure students in need were equipped for success. The Board of Education extends our thank you to P.I.E., Staples and Lisa Pekau, for making such a meaningful impact on our students and staff in Craven County.

Morgan's Tavern & Grill - Pancakes for PIE

Tonight, the Board of Education is honored to celebrate Craven County Partners in Education and Morgan's Tavern & Grill. For the past nine years, Morgan's has hosted the beloved Pancakes for PIE event, a cherished tradition that kicks off a festive day of shopping and holiday celebrations in downtown New Bern while supporting the education foundation. It is incredibly generous of Morgan's Tavern & Grill to provide the venue, food, and staffing for this event.

Pancakes for PIE not only brings the community together but also serves as a wonderful way to support the students and staff of Craven County Schools. The funds raised during this event provide funding for grant programs offered by Partners In Education. The dedication of Morgan's Tavern & Grill exemplifies true community spirit. We deeply appreciate Morgan's commitment to education and their ongoing efforts to make a difference in the lives of Craven County students. Thank you, Candice and Adam Simmons, for your unwavering support!



Foreign Exchange Students

This year, Craven County Schools welcomes three foreign exchange students to our district. We welcome these students because of the educational and cultural advantages foreign exchange students bring to our schools. Foreign exchange students serve as ambassadors for their home countries and share their own culture and experiences with students in our schools, as well as with the community. Many thanks to these organizations and the local coordinators for making this experience a reality.

Name: Rei Ohno
School: New Bern High School
Host Family: Louis and Maria Rosa
Local Coordinator: Rev. Joseph Williams

Rei Ohno is a 16-year-old exchange student from Tokyo, Japan. International Fellowship Inc. sponsors Rei.

She is a member of the Youth Group at Cornerstone Church; Rei is a Sho-Dan in the martial art of Aikido. She enjoys hiking, badminton, fishing, and ice skating. Rei enjoys playing the Cello and piano.

Name: Natalia Pozycka
School: New Bern High School
Host Family: Kathy Renzulli
Local Coordinator: Amy Burke

Natalia is a 16-year-old exchange student from Łódź, Poland. She is on an exchange through the ASSE High School Exchange Abroad.

She is a member of the New Bern High School golf team and is joining the swim team here in New Bern. In her home country, she was also on the swim team and studied piano. Her school does not have club activities so she enjoys that here.

Name: Nelio Slagman
School: Havelock High School
Host Family: Linda Scott
Local Coordinator: Christopher Cunningham

Nelio Slagman is not your typical sophomore at Havelock High School. As an exchange student from Berlin, Germany, he has eagerly embraced the opportunity to learn about the American culture while fully engaged as a teenager. Nelio is also a proud member of the Havelock High Men's Soccer Team. At 15, Nelio is a friendly, inquisitive young man who is both eager to learn and willing to share about himself and his home country. With a sharp mind, good manners, and a quick wit, Nelio has consistently excelled in his classes through hard work and dedication. He's not only a great student, but an outstanding young man.



Holiday Card Winners

This holiday season we reached out to our students to help spread the message of joy and hope. Students from across the district were given an opportunity in art class to showcase their artistic talents by submitting their vision of the holidays. At the Board Work Session on November 12, 2024, the Board of Education was asked to select the image to be used to represent Craven County Schools for the district's holiday card out of 19 very worthy submissions from three schools representing elementary, middle, and high schools.

Tonight, the Board would like to recognize Greta Schimmel, who created the winning entry under the instruction of her teacher, Shannon Tarlton. Greta is in 9th grade at New Bern High School. Her artwork was scanned in by the print shop onto the cards with holiday greetings added to the inside and distributed to over 300 people both locally in our schools and community as well as across the state to other school systems.

The Board would also like to recognize Everett Merritt, who created the winning entry for the Superintendent's Holiday Card under the instruction of his teacher, Leah Yurk. Everett is in 1st grade at W.J. Gurganus Elementary. His artwork was scanned in by the print shop onto the cards with holiday greetings added to the inside and distributed to over 100 people both locally in our schools and community as well as across the state to other school systems.

Congratulations to both Greta and Everett for your artwork being featured on our district's holiday card and Superintendent's holiday card!



Advanced Degrees

As a district, we believe that the professional growth of our employees is essential for performance excellence. Just as we celebrate the accomplishments of our student leaders in and out of the classroom, likewise, we celebrate the achievements of our classroom leaders as well. Employees who earn advanced degrees show commitment to the vision of the school district. Completing a program of study reflects their desire to be involved in professional growth, to increase their impact on student learning, and to possibly assume positions as school leaders. Tonight, we would like to recognize:

**Yesenia Valdez: Brinson Memorial Elementary
Masters Degree - Curriculum and Instruction
Western Governors University**

**Heather Santos: Arthur W. Edwards Elementary
Masters Degree - Library Science
East Carolina University**



School Nutrition Awards for Excellence

At the School Nutrition Annual Conference in Greensboro held on June 11th - 14th, School Nutrition employees participated in a culinary competition on June 14th. Tara Britt, Marc Williams, and Paula Green. They all came away with smiles, winning awards in the following categories:

Tara Britt, Trent Park Elementary: 2nd place in Sandwich or Wrap Plate Category

Marc Williams, Grover C. Fields Middle: 2nd place in the Ethnic Plate Category

Paula Green, Havelock High: 3rd place with Salad Entree Category

The Board of Education celebrates your creativity and passion for ensuring our students receive a healthy and nutritious meal daily.



Principal of the Year

It was a double celebration filled with excitement on October 16, 2024. During a surprise announcement, Mrs. Caroline Godwin, Principal of Roger Bell New Tech Academy, was named the 2024-2025 Principal of the Year for Craven County Schools. This prestigious honor allows Mrs. Godwin to serve as the local advisor to the Board of Education and represent Craven County Schools at local, regional, and state events. Her selection qualifies her to compete for the Southeast Regional Principal of the Year title alongside other local district award recipients.

During the interview on October 10, 2024, Mrs. Godwin captivated the selection committee with her passion for leadership and commitment to the school's vision and mission. She highlighted numerous initiatives and strategies that enrich classroom instruction and enhance the learning environment at Roger Bell New Tech Academy. A core value of the school is, "We believe we can, so we will because we are LIGHTNING," reflecting the strong military connection within the Roger Bell community. These words serve to inspire and motivate students to excel.

In her first year as principal, Mrs. Godwin faced the challenge when the school returned to low-performing status. This experience fueled her dedication to student learning and collaboration with teachers. During her interview, she proudly announced that Roger Bell has been designated as an Apple Distinguished School, an impressive international recognition highlighting the school's innovative use of technology to engage students.

Mrs. Godwin emphasizes the importance of celebrating her staff and teachers each month, fostering an environment of trust, mutual respect, and collaboration. "I haven't forgotten what it is like to be a teacher," she remarked. Her portfolio details her commitment to recognizing staff efforts through small acts of appreciation, showcasing the powerful impact of these gestures on morale and motivation. She acknowledges that her community plays a crucial role in student achievement.

Tonight, the Board of Education extends congratulations to Mrs. Caroline Godwin on this well-deserved recognition. The district is immensely proud of her accomplishments and the leadership she brings to Roger Bell New Tech Academy. We look forward to seeing her passion continue to drive excellence in education.



Teacher of the Year

For more than 50 years, our nation has honored teachers with the National Teacher of the Year Program. In 2014, the NC Department of Public Instruction announced its partnership with Burroughs Wellcome Fund as the new major sponsor of the North Carolina Teacher of the Year Program. Craven County Schools has had the honor of celebrating a district teacher of the year for many years.

Johnicia Simmons, currently a 5th grade teacher at J.T. Barber Elementary School, has been selected as the 2024-2025 Teacher Ambassador for Craven County Schools. As an elementary teacher, Ms. Simmons communicates the importance of education through her actions in the classroom. She cultivates relationships with students by building and maintaining authentic relationships. "I treat my students as if they were my own, showing a true investment in their education and personal life".

As the Craven County Schools Teacher Ambassador, Ms. Simmons will serve as the local advisor to the Board of Education and will represent Craven County Schools at various community and civic events. Ms. Simmons was chosen following an application, a presentation, and interview process with the local selection committee, consisting of the current Craven County Schools Teacher of the Year, who is also the Southeast Regional Teacher of the Year, central office staff, and a community leader from Craven Community College.

Ms. Simmons has been teaching for 12 years, with many of those years in Craven County. She is committed to the success of all learners and creates learning experiences based on continuous improvement and rigorous content. In her application, Ms. Simmons stated, "The adage "it takes a village" speaks to the importance and value of ALL stakeholders in the educational success of children and generations thereafter."

When asked about the rewards she has found in teaching Ms. Simmons stated, "My greatest reward is having students and families whom I've taught recognize me in public settings and take the time to stop and share with me their accomplishments.

Congratulations to Ms. Johnicia Simmons, the 2024-2025 Craven County Schools Teacher of the Year.



Beginning Teacher of the Year

This fall, Mr. Christian Martin was honored as the Craven County Schools Beginning Teacher of the Year during a surprise announcement. Currently, in his second year as an 8th grade English Language Arts and Social Studies teacher at H.J. MacDonald Middle School, Mr. Martin's dedication and innovative teaching methods have made a lasting impact on his students.

Mr. Martin's selection for this prestigious acknowledgment came as no surprise to his colleagues and school leaders. In his first year, he was chosen to be a part of the Rookie Team for Craven County Schools, a testament to his exceptional potential and commitment to education.

Principal Mike Swain praised Mr. Martin, stating, "Christian is a naturally talented teacher with a huge heart for children. He possesses a deep knowledge of the ELA/SS curriculum and creates inventive lessons that are both relevant and rigorous. Every day, he works diligently to ensure his students are learning and growing."

Assistant Principal Arlander Brickhouse also shared her enthusiasm for Mr. Martin's teaching style. "He is a dynamic teacher who's doing big things at HJ MacDonald Middle School. I remember the first observation I had with him during a lesson on Thank You, Ma'am by Langston Hughes. I was so captivated by his teaching that I forgot I was there to observe! His ability to engage students and build relationships is phenomenal. He truly exemplifies what an awesome teacher should be."

The Board of Education applauds Christian's hard work, dedication, and commitment to his students and the community. His recognition as the Beginning Teacher of the Year highlights the positive impact he has made at HJ MacDonald Middle School.



Exceptional Children's Teacher of the Year

This year, Ashley Peele from Havelock High School has been selected for the EC Educator of Excellence Award. Ms. Peele's unwavering dedication and innovative approach to special education have profoundly impacted her students and their families. As the EC teacher, she expertly tailors her teaching methods to meet the diverse needs of her students, ensuring that every student has the opportunity to succeed.

In addition to her teaching role, Ms. Peele also serves as a coach, further demonstrating her commitment to fostering both academic and personal growth in all students. Her ability to create personalized, engaging learning experiences makes her an exemplary model of excellence in education. She not only transforms educational outcomes but also inspires those around her.

Ms. Peele embodies flexibility and perseverance, working collaboratively with staff and students alike. Her readiness to welcome feedback further enhances her effectiveness as an educator.

In all these ways, Ms. Peele exemplifies the spirit of the EC Educator of Excellence Award, making a lasting impact on her students and community. Congratulations on this recognition and the Board of Education acknowledges your hard work and commitment to our students.



North Carolina Department of Public Instruction Recognition for Outstanding Graduation Rate

Ensuring that every student who starts 9th grade finishes with a diploma and is well-prepared for college and the world of potential careers is one of the highest goals that our state and nation strive to achieve. The Department of Public Instruction and the State Board of Education recently recognized one of our high schools for achieving commendable graduation results for the Class of 2023-2024. Craven Early College High School achieved a graduation rate of 95.8%.

Thank you and congratulations to Dr. Marlow Artis, Principal at Craven Early College, and all the students and educators at CEC who contributed to this accomplishment together through their hard work.

The Board of Education celebrates Craven Early College for your recognition by the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction.



North Carolina Academic Growth Award

Tonight, the Board of Education celebrates the 16 schools in the district that received the distinction of meeting and/or exceeding Academic Growth based on the 2023-2024 school year. Using all End of Grade and End of Course test scores, school accountability growth is calculated using EVAAS, a value-added growth modeling tool. This indicator is significant since it is used in calculating the (A-F) school performance grades. The School Performance Grades are based on student achievement (80%) and growth (20%).

These certificates represent an impressive amount of hard work by our students and educators.

Tonight, we recognize the following schools for meeting academic growth:

A.H. Bangert Elementary School
Bridgeton Elementary School
Brinson Memorial Elementary School
Vanceboro Farm Life Elementary
Early College EAST High School
H.J. MacDonald Middle School
Havelock High School
J.T. Barber Elementary School
James W. Smith Elementary
Roger Bell New Tech Academy
West Craven Middle School
Craven Virtual Academy

The following schools exceeded academic growth:

Arthur W. Edwards Elementary School
Tucker Creek Middle School
Grover C. Fields Middle School
Craven Early College High School

The Board of Education applauds your commitment to student success.



North Carolina Council of Teachers of Mathematics Outstanding Educator

The importance of mathematics instruction in our schools cannot be overestimated. To emphasize this reality, the North Carolina Council of Teachers of Mathematics and the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction strive to recognize and reward teachers who exemplify mathematics teaching excellence by nurturing students' enthusiasm for mathematics through everyday classroom experiences. This recognition is for those teachers who succeed in motivating students to excel in mathematics. Each year, either an elementary or secondary teacher is recognized. The district rotates this honor each year, so this year's recognition selection is for a deserving elementary school teacher.

Each principal was asked to select an outstanding teacher from their school and applications were forwarded to the district for review. The Math Goal Team reviewed each application and selected a teacher from our district to receive this recognition.

The Board of Education is proud to celebrate Katie Williams from Vanceboro Farm Life Elementary School as the Outstanding Mathematics teacher for 2024



School Business Officials Certifications

The North Carolina Association of School Business Officials provides customized certification training programs through their NCASBO Academy program. School bookkeepers and instructional support staff learn about various topics which include accounting principles, internal controls, payroll accounting, budgeting, public relations and communications skills, ethics, contract law, and purchasing law.

The Board of Education recognizes the following staff member who completed these training programs within the past year and celebrate her commitment to being a life-long learner.

Alisha Ruberio, A.H Bangert Elementary



Financial Awards (GFOA/ASBO)

The Craven County Board of Education would like to commend the Business Department staff for attaining the Association of School Business Officials (ASBO) International Certificate of Excellence in Financial Reporting Award for its Comprehensive Annual Financial Report for the fiscal year-end of 2023. This award represents a significant achievement and reflects the team's commitment to transparency and high-quality financial reporting.

The Government Finance Officers Association of the United States and Canada has also awarded the Certificate of Achievement for Excellence in Financial Reporting to Craven County Board of Education for its annual comprehensive financial report for the fiscal year ending June 30, 2023. The report has been judged by an impartial panel to meet the high standards of the program, which includes demonstrating a constructive "spirit of full disclosure" to clearly communicate its financial story and motivating potential users and user groups to read the report. The Certificate of Achievement is the highest form of recognition in the area of governmental accounting and financial reporting and its attainment represents a significant accomplishment by a government and its management.

Therefore, tonight we congratulate the Business office staff on the receipt of the awards and celebrate them for effectively and efficiently managing Craven County School funds.

Ellen Corey
Terry Dixon
Josephine Espinoza
Colleen Froming
Lori Jones
Jessica King
Denise Krofchick
Jasmine Roach
Karri Rogers
Renise Spellman