

2024 Duplin County Schools

A **STEAMA** Driven School System



Bright Spots



Duplin County Board of Education

The mission of Duplin County Schools is to work collaboratively with the community to prepare all students for career, college, and life success.



Brent Davis
Chairman

The vision of Duplin County Schools is to become an exemplary school system where all students and staff excel in a globally competitive society.



Reginald Kenan
Vice-Chairman,
Member of the State
Board of Education



Pam Edwards



Claudius Morrissey



David Jones

It is the policy of Duplin County Schools that no otherwise qualified student shall be excluded from, be denied the benefits of or be subjected to discrimination in any educational program or activity solely on the basis of age, sex, race, religion, color, national origin, handicapping condition, creed, political affiliation or any other issues based on Title VI, Title IX, Section 504, Title II ADA, and provides equal access to the Boy Scouts, and other designated youth groups.

Welcome

WE ARE EXCITED to bring you the 2023-2024 issue of Duplin County Schools Bright Spots. This annual publication showcases students, parents, staff, as well as school level events or activities that were deemed as this year's Bright Spots.

Each year, schools are given the task of selecting students, parent representatives, and staff members to share their perspectives of innovative teaching and learning opportunities, provided to our students, that are unique to Duplin County Schools. Each school also selected a specific event, club, or program that they feel has a direct impact on student's success and their future goals. In addition, district departments and teams highlighted current projects and/or programs from the year that have contributed to the success of our students.

I am honored to be part of a Board of Education that always puts students first. Our commitment to school safety and seeing our students achieve at their highest potential will always be our top priority. We are so appreciative of the hard work being done every day across the district. Our teachers and staff will stop at nothing to make sure that every student is given the opportunities they need in order to have career and life success. Everyone in Duplin County Schools is a "Bright Spot" working to light the pathway of success for every child in our district. We hope that you enjoy this publication as it showcases the 2023-2024 Bright Spots of Duplin County Schools.

Brent Davis
Chairman, Duplin County
Board of Education



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SCHOOL-BOOK VENDING MACHINE

The book vending machine at BF Grady Elementary School (BFG) is used as a reward for students who exemplify what it means to be a BF Grady Panther. These students are responsible, organized, accountable, and respectful. It is also used to reward students who exceed their reading goals each grading period. The book vending machine is an innovative addition to our school and we are proud that BFG was the first school in the county to have one.

KINDERGARTEN



SAVANNAH SKINNER

At BF Grady Elementary School, I am learning how to read and how to work with numbers. I love getting to play with my friends and learning new things. We all get to learn together and my teacher lets me help her a lot in class.

7TH GRADE



MARLENY SEGUNDO-LOPEZ

When I grow up, I plan on being a professional soccer player. Attending Duplin County Schools has helped me in that goal by providing me an opportunity to be on the soccer team. I have improved my skills as a soccer player, and I work well with my teammates. I enjoy getting to work in groups with my classmates. The teachers help students by being there for them every day.



TEACHER HIGHLIGHT



BILL HOUSTON
6TH-GRADE MATHEMATICS

The school culture at B. F. Grady Elementary is supportive with a warm environment. It is not only designed to engage students in their learning but to help them thrive both socially and emotionally. Duplin County Schools is a place where faculty and staff love their students and want nothing but the best for them. We will do any and everything in our power to help every student succeed. I try to expose my students to how their learning connects to the real world. We learn how to work with other people, even though we may disagree, and how to solve challenges that we are faced with.

4TH GRADE



ANGEL RAMIREZ MONROY

At my school, I enjoy learning about math, science, social studies, and history. I would say that my favorite subject is lunch, but I'm just kidding. One of my most favorite things about school is that I get to learn. Learning helps me to be whatever I want to be when I grow up. BF Grady is a special place because the teachers help the students learn new things. School is fun and it is not boring.

PARENT



RUBY ANDRES

Duplin County Schools is unique because of its loving, caring, and family-oriented atmosphere. Everyone is so friendly and supportive and it's like having a big extended family. DCS provides opportunities for my child to learn important values like teamwork, empathy, and inclusivity. It is truly heartwarming to see my child thrive in such a positive family environment. Not only has my child thrived at learning, but has had the opportunity to discover new interests by engaging in extracurricular activities and participating in enriching field trips.



FUTURE TEACHERS CLUB

The Future Teachers Club (FTC) was started last year to promote teaching careers and encourage students to become involved with activities in our school. The FTC meets twice a month to talk about concerns in our school, community involvement, and the path they will need to take in high school and college in order to become a teacher. This year the Future Teachers Club along with the middle school Leadership Team planned the BES Saint Patrick's Day 5k. Students partnered with businesses to gain community support for the race. The students set up the 5k and worked at water stations and assisted students around the course. The Future Teachers Club is growing, and many students are excited about the prospect of becoming teachers here in Duplin County.

1ST GRADE



KREE YOUNG

At Beulaville Elementary School, I like learning new things at our different resource classes. Going to school at BES is lots of fun and I really like learning with my friends. I get to do fun things every day at school.

6TH GRADE



ZOEY NORRIS

Duplin County Schools is preparing me with the best education to become a doctor one day. I enjoy how the teachers are respectful at my school. Beulaville Elementary is a very special place because of the nice administrators and teachers who help to keep my learning on track during the day.



4TH GRADE



MONICA ESPINOZA RODRIGUEZ

When I grow up, I want to be a veterinarian and Beulaville Elementary is helping to prepare me for my future goal. I am also a translator to one of our new students that speaks only Spanish and that makes me feel like a leader in my classroom. I mostly like math in school because I have learned multiplication, long division, and using the butterfly method to solve fractions. I also like reading and learning about critical vocabulary. I think my school is special because sometimes our teachers give us extra outside time and on special occasions we get to watch a movie. I don't think other schools get to watch movies. I think some schools are really strict.

PARENT



ERIN MOBLEY

Duplin County Schools, specifically Beulaville Elementary, offers a unique learning environment where students are immersed into a STEAMA based community. Students are encouraged to engage in agricultural awareness activities with hands-on exploration of equipment and animals, as well as opportunities to ask questions to professionals in the field. Duplin County Schools also encourages students to participate and explore the areas of Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts, Math, and Agriculture for future careers. What further makes Beulaville Elementary a unique school is from the moment you walk in the door, you become part of a family where the staff knows you by name. While attending DCS, my child stood with the stars at the BES STAR party, participated on the Battle of the Books team, and looks forward to future opportunities such as BETA club where she can further serve her school and community. Duplin County Schools has provided the educational building blocks that will provide continued growth in her school career. She has been given the opportunities to excel academically while also being encouraged to be a leader and friend to others.

TEACHER HIGHLIGHT



KARI ROBERTS

1ST GRADE TEACHER

At BES, everyone is a stakeholder for student learning. From bus drivers, cafeteria staff, to teachers, we all play a role in student success. Duplin County Schools is unique due to the level of support provided to teachers and students. There is constant support provided to teachers to further their education, showing students that education doesn't end once you graduate from high school/college. There is always an opportunity to learn and grow. I feel that it is important to teach the whole child. Not only should we teach the content, we should also give students the opportunity to learn that school is an awesome place to be and allow them to develop relationships with their teachers that will last a lifetime.



DUKE SCIENCE NIGHT

Duke Science Night is a community event that we have participated in for the last three years. It is a highly anticipated event that brings together our staff, students, families, and community. Students and their families visit several stations throughout the school that are targeted to various science standards studied throughout elementary and middle school. We are fortunate to have volunteers from James Sprunt Community College, East Duplin High school, and our Beta club who help guide families around the school. We also have special guests from Four County Electric who have bucket truck simulations. This is a special event because it brings our community together, provides an opportunity to build relationships, and encourages learning through science. We look forward to this event every year!

3RD GRADE



HAYDEN DIXON

When I grow up, I have a goal to be a veterinarian. My teachers help me learn about animals so that I will be ready for my future job. I enjoy reading books the most. My favorite books are Junie B. Jones because she is very similar to me. My school is special because of all the fun things we do. My teacher, Mrs. Ratliff, makes learning fun by teaching me about moon phases with oreos and then she lets us eat them!

2ND GRADE



SADIE EDWARDS

I have a goal to be in the band when I get to middle school. The time I spend playing music and learning about instruments with Coach Rod helps me to reach my goals. I love how my teachers make learning fun. We always do fun things when we learn something new. I remember my teacher, Mrs. Hope, gave us gummy worms to represent ten blocks in math. My school is special because of the fun events we have. In first grade, we learned all about Cinderella and the different ways the story is told. We had a fancy ball after reading the story and it was so fancy and fun!



6TH GRADE



DYLAN CAMACHO DUARTE

The Chinquapin Elementary School Beta Club gives me the opportunity to show my knowledge in many areas such as engineering and academics. Being in Beta makes me aspire to challenge myself. It also helps me to spend time with other students who have similar interests and goals. I enjoy learning about every subject in school. Each year, I get to learn from new teachers and see their perspective on the things we are learning. This year, I have really enjoyed being in the band so that I can learn more about music. Our school is special because of all the people inside. I have great friends, teachers, and the most awesome principal and assistant principal!

CES PTO BOARD



**SHANNON COLE,
BROOK HOLLEY,
AND CARRIE BROWN**

Duplin County Schools is unique in its close-knit nature. Being made up of small schools in a rural area does not hinder our students from receiving an enriched educational experience. Our schools provide personalized learning experiences and individual attention to students. Small schools serve as the heart of our communities, nurturing a sense of belonging and community spirit among students, teachers, and families. The close-knit nature of our schools allow students and peers to form stronger relationships. Our schools offer various extracurricular activities, such as sports, clubs, and community service initiatives. These opportunities help our students develop life skills, leadership qualities, and civic responsibility.

STAFF HIGHLIGHT



KARLY EARP
DATA MANAGER

Chinquapin is a small school with a big heart. Students know they're loved from the moment they walk in our doors and that encourages and enables them to learn! DCS feels like home - this small community boasts strong roots! Students see adults who once learned in the same classrooms where they sit now, go on to lead and succeed. I've been blessed to work with student-leaders to form the COM Squad. They take charge of school communication and events ranging from pep rallies to Read Across America week. I cannot wait to see what the future holds for our COM Squad!

DCS CENTER OF OPPORTUNITY



AGRICULTURAL AWARENESS DAY

At the DCS Center of Opportunity, Agriculture Awareness Day is an all inclusive day that allows students to have a better understanding of agriculture in our area. We have had extremely successful Agricultural Awareness Days with lots of help from our community. The students not only had a good time but they learned a lot as well. Not only were the students introduced to local employers, they also learned skills and valuable information about agriculture that will better prepare them for their life beyond school.

10TH GRADE



NICOLE SULLIVAN

At the Center of Opportunity, my teachers take the time to help me learn and they go at a pace that makes it easy for me to understand. I am able to come to school and learn without any troubles at all. I get to learn new things everyday. With help from the staff at the Center of Opportunity, I know that even though I am a slow learner, they make me feel like I am smart enough to do anything. There are less students here, so there is more opportunity for one-on-one teaching. More than anything, my school has wonderful people in it. Everyone here is always happy and ready to teach. They are funny and smart. None of the teachers give up on us. I wouldn't trade them for the world.

12TH GRADE



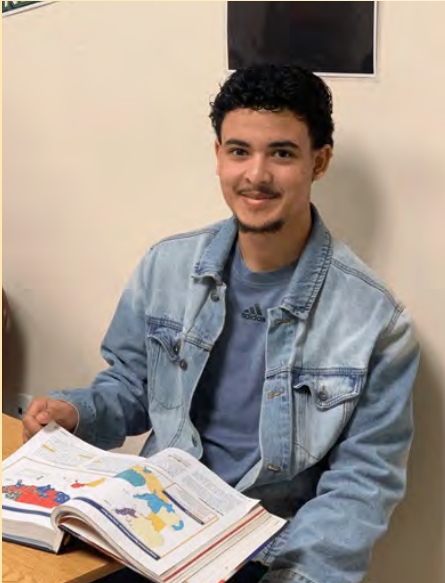
ASHLEY SUTTON-PARKER

I feel that my Career and Technical Education (CTE) classes have prepared me the most for my future goals. I know that other subjects are important, but I really enjoy my English classes the most. The DCS Center of Opportunity shows us the importance of learning, allows us to grow in our own unique ways, and helps us value our education.

SITE ADMINISTRATOR AND DROPOUT PREVENTION COORDINATOR: IVY DOWE



12TH GRADE



ATIK ALMONTASER

My experience here at the Center of Opportunity has been very good. The amazing help that I have received from the teachers here and the teachers at Duplin Early College High School have been very beneficial to my learning. Because of that, I am able to graduate early. The willingness of my teachers to provide this support has made learning easier for me.

TEACHER HIGHLIGHT



JEFFREY HALL
CTE TEACHER

At the DCS Center of Opportunity, we cultivate a positive school culture that fosters a safe, respectful, and supportive environment for our students. Here, we encourage students to take risks in their learning journey. Our atmosphere promotes active engagement, allowing students to participate in open discussions on lesson topics. This approach provides them with the opportunity to voice their perspectives on the material being covered. I believe that student engagement is a crucial element in their overall academic success.

PARENT



JUDY WILSON

The Duplin County Schools Center of Opportunity allows children the opportunity to overcome their mistakes and continue on their educational journey. The Center of Opportunity is a great program that teaches kids that they are important. The staff here are committed to building positive relationships with the students and showing them that they have a purpose in this life.

DUPLIN EARLY COLLEGE HIGH PRINCIPAL: TANYA SMITH



DUPLIN TEACH ACADEMY

This year, DECHS piloted the Duplin TEACH Academy. TEACH stands for Tomorrow's Educators Are Created Here. Thirteen freshmen have chosen teaching as a future career and are currently participating in activities that are helping to cultivate their love for teaching.

Partners in this endeavor are Duplin County Board of Education and James Sprunt Community College. The Duplin TEACH Academy is a district initiative designed to increase teacher candidates who will come back to teach in Duplin County. Participants are also a part of the Future Teachers Club and have the opportunity to earn a scholarship-loan in the amount of \$20,000 to contribute to their bachelor's degree and teaching certification. The Duplin TEACH Academy was chosen because it shows how our district is working to solve the challenge of our teacher shortage while supporting students who have a desire to teach.

12TH GRADE



BRITNEY FUNEZ-HERNANDEZ

The best part of Duplin Early College High School for me has been the incredible environment and the opportunities I've been given. The environment of excellence pushed me way outside of my comfort zone, but in the best way possible. From attending Governor's School, participating in BETA club, taking classes with Arizona State University to my internship with Amazon, I found myself getting involved in leadership roles individually that were game changers for me. Thanks to the amazing support from teachers and counselors, I have really come into my own and found success in ways I never thought possible. Duplin Early College High School is not just about classes; it is about pushing boundaries and achieving excellence. Here, being challenged is not the exception, it is the norm.

11TH GRADE



EMILY KNOWLES

Duplin County Schools offers opportunities to students, such as the Duplin Agribusiness and Health Science Academies, that empower us to take ownership of our learning and connect us with others in the process. At DECHS, I love having the flexibility to work on assignments on my own time. That allows me to manage my schedule and be able to study in ways that I learn best. But that does not mean I am doing it alone. There is always the option to collaborate with classmates or brainstorm ideas with teachers. Whether it is independent study time or group projects, Duplin Early College empowers us to take ownership of our learning and connect with others in the process.



12TH GRADE



TAEKWON WRIGHT

Duplin County Schools opened doors I never expected. Not only did they challenge me academically, but they connected me with people who truly get my passion for learning. From guest speakers to industry professionals, I have had the chance to meet inspiring role models who gave me a glimpse into the future I am working towards. It is a supportive environment that makes all the difference. There is a real sense of community here, a warmth that makes you feel like you belong. The teachers and staff are incredibly dedicated and they take their jobs seriously, pushing us to learn and grow, in ways that show they truly care about our success. I would not trade my experience at Duplin Early College High School for anything.

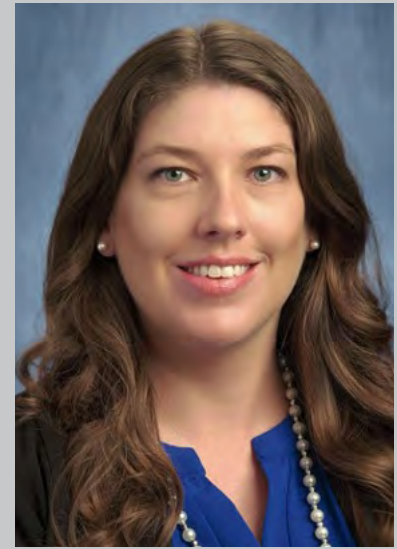
PARENT



DEAN BUTTS

I think that Duplin County Schools fosters and encourages students to be involved in the decision making process. My son Nic has thrived, thanks to his involvement on the school improvement team at Duplin Early College High School. He feels empowered to voice the concerns and ideas of his fellow classmates. Witnessing him contribute to decisions that impact the entire student body makes me incredibly proud. It's clear that DECHS fosters leadership qualities and gives students a platform to develop their leadership skills and make a real impact. Seeing the staff members at DECHS empower students like Nic to become involved, fills me with gratitude. It's a testament to their commitment to fostering leadership and giving students a voice!

STAFF HIGHLIGHT



WILLOUGHBY NEWCOMB
SCHOOL COUNSELOR

As the school counselor, I help students to uphold our expectation, "Excellence is the norm." We know that every student and staff member has a life outside of this building that can be challenging at times, but when we are in the building together, we are loved! Duplin County's rural setting fosters a unique sense of connection. This close-knit atmosphere fosters a learning environment that goes beyond textbooks. Teachers can connect with students on a personal level and families feel invested in their children's education. This collaborative spirit helps create a love of learning that extends far beyond the classroom. Whether it is academic challenges, personal goals, or simply needing a listening ear, I am here to be their champion. I am here to help them discover and nurture growing opportunities, so they can reach their full potential.



EAST DUPLIN TENNIS PROGRAM

The tennis program is a varsity sport for student-athletes regardless of playing experience. Under the supervision of Julie Register, our women's tennis program has been thriving for years. Coach Register offers our girls an opportunity to learn and grow spiritually as women, and as athletes. Her roster is more than full each year, but she supports them all. This year, the men's team has made a comeback at East Duplin after several years of not being able to form a team. Coach Register has managed to fill her roster with 14 young men, many of whom have never played tennis before but felt supported and encouraged to give it a try. Coach Register and our tennis program is touching the lives of many of our students. With a record 23-player roster, this year's Women's Tennis Team claimed their third consecutive Conference Championship. Both teams utilize Fellowship of Christian Athletes Team Huddles with players serving as Huddle leaders.

12TH GRADE



MAIKO VELASQUEZ PEREZ

At East Duplin, I have enjoyed the opportunity to play music in the band. My time in the band has helped me grow as a person and has taught me how to collaborate with others. It has also taught me to be more patient with myself. I have realized that if you want to be good at something, you have to take it slow and not beat yourself up. Eventually, you will get there. My school is special because it has so many great teachers and administrators who strive to get students like me prepared and ready to succeed in the future. It also has many specialized programs like band and chorus with wonderful instructors.

12TH GRADE



RILEY PARKER

At East Duplin High School, I have been given many opportunities that have helped me to prepare for my future. I have been given the chance to gain hands-on experiences in the classroom by shadowing teachers and delivering lessons. Our Fellowship of Christian Athletes (FCA) has given me and many others the opportunity to grow and thrive. As president of FCA, I have learned many leadership skills that will strengthen my future career in education. Students and staff alike embrace connectivity and engagement that our clubs offer. East Duplin is a large piece of our small community where students are encouraged to explore our futures and connect with one another.



10TH GRADE



ZAKOYA FARRIS

I feel like our clubs and sports at East Duplin have really prepared me for my future goals. HOSA, for example, has given me a chance to visit colleges and different health programs. In our sports programs, our coaches work so hard with us as we put in the work and hours to possibly have an opportunity to play at the next level. Our sports programs are the best around and I'm glad to be a part of one of the best girl's programs in the county. The extracurricular activities at East Duplin give you a chance to meet new people, create new bonds, and enjoy yourself all at once. My school is special to me because of our great school atmosphere. It truly makes me enjoy my days here. Nothing compares to our panther pride!

PARENT



CORI RAYNOR

Over the years, Duplin County Schools (DCS) has created a very unique and welcoming environment for students. At East Duplin, my children have always felt very comfortable, and the teachers, counselors, administrators, and coaches have been very positive and encouraging to them. My children have been nothing but blessed being in the DCS system. My daughter is currently working with K-2 students which will prepare her for her future line of work. She has also been able to participate in many clubs and activities at East Duplin. DCS has always given my children opportunities for growth in the path they desire and I have enjoyed watching my child flourish in the path she loves. I can't wait to see the wonderful opportunities that lie ahead for her and the other students in the DCS system.

TEACHER HIGHLIGHT



AMANDA JENKINS

The culture at East Duplin supports learning by fostering a sense of community. Our students feel valued and respected and our classroom environments are encouraging. From the Career and Technical Education standpoint, students are given the opportunity to obtain certifications in CPR, First Aid and Stop the Bleed. This hands-on training empowers them with life-saving skills, while instilling confidence and a readiness to act in emergency situations, potentially saving lives. It also promotes a culture of preparedness and responsibility for one another's well-being. In the classroom, we provide students with opportunities for learning, critical thinking, collaboration, creativity, and personal growth. These opportunities include: hands-on activities, group discussions, problem solving, and Project Based Learning.



JAMES KENAN HIGH SCHOOL BAND PROGRAM

BAND DIRECTOR, SAMANTHA BEST

JKHS has four total bands: Concert Band and Symphonic Band, that combine to form the Combined Wind Ensemble, as well as the Tiger Marching Band. The first three groups perform biannually as well as at various community events. The Tiger Marching Band performs at all home varsity football games and the annual Warsaw Veterans Day Parade. This program is special because it fosters cultivation of character, musical excellence, community engagement, and school spirit.

Under the leadership of band director, Ms. Samantha Best, the program is experiencing a resurgence, which is exemplified by the Symphonic Band's recent participation in Musical Performance Adjudication (MPA) for the first time in over a decade.

This shows a clear dedication and commitment to progress and excellence within the program.

11TH GRADE



GENESIS FAISON

James Kenan High School (JKHS) has not only allowed me to visit and explore places outside of Duplin County but has provided me with many resources and opportunities to help me achieve my goals. James Kenan offers many clubs and extracurricular activities to help students, as well as motivate them. For me, it has been SGA, Beta Club, JROTC, the Career and College Promise Program and more. Each program pushes me to be a better student and peer, and encourages me to work hard to achieve my goals. JKHS is special because I know I can always count on my teachers, coaches, administrators, and peers. We can push through any challenges we face, together.

11TH GRADE



DIEGO GARCIA

At James Kenan, I have been able to take classes that are preparing me for my future career path. I have worked hard to complete my assignments and get good grades in those classes, because I know that is important. Mr. Bell's class has been one of my favorites because he allows us to do hands-on activities to learn math concepts. James Kenan High School is special because my teachers are so nice to me.



12TH GRADE



GERNYLA MILLER

While attending Duplin County Schools, I have been given many opportunities such as BETA Club, Student Government Association, and athletics. These opportunities have not only challenged me, but have taught me responsibility, dedication, teamwork, and loyalty. During my time at James Kenan, I have been a dual enrolled student which has allowed me to take Advanced Placement and college courses. I have earned my CNA and Pharmacy Technician certification and I will also be earning my Associates Degree in Arts. One reason why James Kenan is special is because of the staff. Everyone that works here has a positive attitude and is always willing to help students no matter the circumstances.

PARENT



BRIDGETT JONES

As the parent of two children attending Duplin County Schools, I have had the opportunity to view DCS from a variety of perspectives. Both of my children have different learning styles and needs. While one needed services from the Exceptional Children's Department, the other thrived with support from the Academically or Intellectually Gifted Program. DCS recognized their needs and abilities, giving them the opportunity to accelerate at their own learning level. My children have had many opportunities in DCS such as Beta Club, Young Authors, STEAMA Fair, Battle of the Books, Athletics, Health Science Academy, Student Government, and taking advanced education courses at the college level. These opportunities have allowed my children to learn more about themselves and their interests, enjoy the social aspect of school, develop friendships, work together as a team, and set the framework for their career path.

TEACHER HIGHLIGHT



TUMIRA MIDDLETON
CTE BUSINESS

James Kenan High School works to foster positive relationships while preparing our students for their future in the real world.

Our educators know that it is vital to grow young minds while supporting each other, respecting different cultures, respecting each student, and their ideas. I am so thrilled to be a Duplin County Educator! Duplin County Schools prioritizes diversity and inclusion, creating a welcoming and supportive environment for students from all backgrounds. By celebrating cultural differences and fostering a sense of belonging, the school encourages students to embrace their identities and learn from one another's perspectives. This diversity enriches the learning experience and prepares students to thrive in an increasingly interconnected world.

KENANSVILLE ELEMENTARY PRINCIPAL: MARKETA HARGROVE



BETA CLUB

BETA recognizes high academic achievement, promotes character and social responsibility, encourages service involvement in school and community, and fosters leadership skills. This school year is the first year that Kenansville Elementary School has implemented an Elementary BETA club. In the fall, 62 members were inducted into our club. Over 30 students participated in the state convention bringing home 10 national placements. Elementary BETA has hosted a sock drive, a Coats for Kids coat drive, and a toy drive for the children's hospital in memory of Layla Mewborn.

KINDERGARTEN



KYLIE PATE

Kylie Pate is a kindergarten student at Kenansville Elementary School (KES). She excels academically, is empathetic, is a good role model for other students, and is an excellent peer tutor. When she grows up she would like to be a zoo keeper. Kylie says KES is preparing her to know how to care for animals. Carpet time is Kylie's favorite time of her school day. KES is special to her because of her favorite teacher, Mrs. Robyn Sutton.

3RD GRADE



JAQUIS BARDEN

Jaquis Barden is a 3rd grade student at Kenansville Elementary School. The 3rd-grade teachers say Jaquis has worked hard to improve his reading this year and he has succeeded! Jaquis would like to be a football player when he grows up. He says DCS is preparing him for this goal by helping him learn to read, do math, and learn about science. Jaquis' favorite subject is reading and he says KES is very special because the teachers and staff help him learn to read.



8TH GRADE



SEHAM ALSANAANI

Seham Alsanaani is an 8th grade student at Kenansville Elementary School (KES). Seham came to the United States from Yemen in 2019 and spoke no English. She appreciates DCS giving her the opportunity to learn English and prepare her for college. Health-Science or Art are the areas that Seham is most interested in and she is thinking about pursuing those areas in college. She enjoys her teachers because they are so helpful and fair. Seham says KES is special because the teachers and staff care so much about her. Seham is eager to learn and works hard in all that she does, setting an example for other classmates to follow.

TEACHER HIGHLIGHT



JAMIE BELL
ELEMENTARY STEAMA
FACILITATOR

Mrs. Jamie Bell teaches the STEAMA class for elementary grade students at Kenansville Elementary School (KES). She supports learning at KES by working with our teachers and staff to integrate STEAMA activities into the classroom lessons being taught to her students. She says that Duplin County Schools are unique because of the Agriculture component of STEAMA, which is so prevalent in Duplin County. Mrs. Bell is proud of the many opportunities that she is able to give her students through her STEAMA, class, such as instilling the value of working together, even though we may not always agree and have different opinions.

PARENT



ANGIE STROUD

Duplin County Schools (DCS) has afforded my kids many opportunities beyond the classroom, through clubs and sports. The BETA club is one area where they have been allowed to express their own creativity. By participating in the annual BETA club conventions, our kids have also had the opportunity to interact and compete with other students from across our state and country. This year, KES has started a Fellowship of Christian Athletes chapter. They meet on Wednesday mornings before school for student-led prayer and discussion. This to me is what is most unique about DCS. As a parent, I've always felt welcomed, but most importantly, I feel that God has always been welcomed in our schools.

NORTH DUPLIN ELEMENTARY

PRINCIPAL: BRENT STAFFORD



FUTURE TEACHERS CLUB

The Future Teachers Club provides K-6 students with the opportunity to focus on a variety of topics and participate in activities aimed at nurturing their interest in teaching and education. Students are exposed to multiple teaching methods, such as group work, hands-on experiments, and educational games. Students also partner with younger grade levels to read with students, assist with quizzes, and practice math facts. Overall, our club fosters a love for teaching and learning for K-6 students, while providing them with valuable skills and experiences that can prepare them for a future career in education. The Future Teachers Club provides a special opportunity by shaping the future for the next generation of leaders, thinkers, and innovators.

KINDERGARTEN



MATEO GONZAGA-HERNANDEZ

When I grow up, I want to be a police officer. My teachers help teach me how to be kind and helpful to others. Police officers are always helping other people. I also like to run in PE class. This helps me get ready to be a police officer too, because sometimes I might have to run after the bad guys. I like going to the cafeteria for lunch and eating with my friends. My friends and teachers make my school special. My teacher makes learning fun because we use LEGOS, books, and blocks to learn new things. I like coming to school at North Duplin Elementary every day!

LINA KIMES



4TH GRADE

Career Day at North Duplin Elementary gave me a chance to listen to a doctor from Goshen Medical Center. This helped me because I want to be a dentist when I grow up. I am thankful that my school offers Career Day so that I can learn more about jobs that I am interested in. I enjoy being in math and science class because those are my favorite subjects, and because my teacher, Mrs. Villa, makes math and science easy to learn. Another thing that I love about my school is my music teacher, Mrs. Becky. She makes music fun and exciting to learn. I thank North Duplin Elementary for giving me teachers that make learning fun.

6TH GRADE



LISDANEE PALOMO

I enjoy the opportunity to have access to the internet and student devices. The use of technology helps me a lot with my schoolwork and it also helps prepare me to use technology tools in the future. I also appreciate the opportunity to participate in sports. Sports help me become more physically fit and have a healthier lifestyle. The thing that I enjoy most about school is that I get to learn new and exciting things, and I am able to hang out with my friends. North Duplin Elementary is a very special place! Our school is filled with great students, teachers, principals, and staff. They all work hard to help us do our very best!

PARENT



JAMES COX

Our family experiences with North Duplin Elementary have been excellent. They provide a safe and caring environment which promotes the development of our children's education and life preparedness. My children have also been challenged to perform at above average levels to reach their full potential. Participating in the Battle of the Books and BETA Club were favorite activities for one daughter and opportunities afforded by the STEAMA programs are another child's highlight. My son is currently enjoying classroom extensions made in his resource classes and especially likes learning life and character skills in his SOAR class. North Duplin Elementary goes above and beyond to provide my children with the skills that they need to be successful and prepared for their future endeavors.

TEACHER HIGHLIGHT



AMANDA BUCKNER
KINDERGARTEN TEACHER

North Duplin Elementary is a community school! While we are small, our outreach is huge. I graduated from North Duplin along with many of my colleagues that teach with me. I think this speaks to the sense of community because so many of us want to come back and be a part of the learning opportunities and the sense of family our small school creates for our students. Even though DCS is a smaller district with fewer resources, our administration, staff, and community all work closely together to provide for the needs of students in every way possible. DCS is always willing to fight for what is best for students! Through our extensive STEAMA program and educational field trips, we provide career paths and opportunities that expand our students' knowledge. While I want my students to learn our curriculum, I also strive to teach them to be caring, hard-working, and respectful little, people who carry those same traits into adulthood.



LATIN AMERICAN FESTIVAL

The Latin American Festival was an energetic community event that featured traditional Latin American music and dance performances. Fun games and activities inspired by Latin American culture were played. This festival included soccer tournaments and traditional games like *lotería* (Mexican bingo). It was inspiring to see our community come together, have fun, and learn more about the Latin American culture, which is a huge part of our school community. This event creates an engaging and educational experience that celebrates diversity, promotes cultural understanding, and builds a sense of unity within our school community.

10TH GRADE



KAITLIN GRANDY

At North Duplin Jr./Sr. High School (NDJS), I really enjoy the opportunity to participate in Band. It is really fun. The teachers at my school are doing a great job teaching and not only do they work hard to get us prepared for testing, but they also work hard to prepare us for life. Mrs. Wolfe will stop the lesson and explain why things are important in real life. This past school year, NDJS got very high EOG scores and that is exciting. Our sports program is also one of the best in the county. Go GREEN, WHITE, GOLD!

8TH GRADE



SCARLETT DYER

North Duplin Jr./Sr. has given me the opportunity to participate in Poetry Out Loud, which has increased my public speaking skills. I have also been given the opportunity to serve on the leadership team for senior Beta. Having these opportunities and learning new things are imperative to life after high school. I enjoy North Duplin Jr./Sr. because I am allowed to be myself and meet new people.

11TH GRADE



**MICHAEL
GONZALEZ-DOMINGUEZ**

Duplin County Schools is preparing me for a future career in healthcare, by allowing me to be a part of the Health Sciences Academy pathway through Career and Technical Education (CTE). I really enjoy my math and chemistry classes at North Duplin Jr./Sr. because they are both mathematical courses. I also like Health Science courses because I like learning about the different body systems and how to help people in emergency situations. North Duplin Jr./Sr. is special because I have made so many friends. I have learned so much while being in school here.

PARENT



JASON LEE

My child has been afforded many opportunities while attending Duplin County Schools, such as learning about different colleges, what each one offers, and the opportunity to be able to take James Sprunt Community College courses. My child has also had the opportunity to work with great mentors at North Duplin Jr./Sr. High School who help him each and every day. Duplin County Schools works hard to provide a safe and effective learning atmosphere that will take my child into his career field after college. The uniqueness of Duplin County schools goes back to the teachers, principals, and guidance counselors. These people sacrifice daily for our children.

TEACHER HIGHLIGHT



PATRICK TREGONING
BAND TEACHER GRADES 6-12

The teachers and administrators at North Duplin Jr./Sr. do a tremendous job of making the school such a tight knit community. We make a point to support our students in their extra curricular activities by attending band concerts, athletic events, and more. I believe students seeing their teachers supporting them at these events helps foster their growth and success in the classroom. Our goal everyday is to discover how WE can help our students to be successful today, tomorrow, and in the future, as we prepare them to enter college, the workforce, and beyond. Duplin County Schools strive to reach every student, every day, and I think that separates us from other school systems in the state. There is a path for every child in Duplin County Schools to find success at school!

ROSE HILL-MAGNOLIA ELEMENTARY



FUTURE TEACHERS CLUB

Our Future Teachers Club promotes the teaching profession and all related careers. The goal is to increase the number of licensed teachers for Duplin County Schools. Members of the Future Teachers Club have the opportunity to serve in classrooms as student assistants. Their duties may range from copying papers, making bulletin boards, reading to students, or working in small groups with students on academic skills.

This past February, Rose Hill-Magnolia Elementary collaborated with Warsaw Elementary for a unique visit to UNC-Wilmington's Watson School of Education. Students were greeted by the Watson Recruitment Specialist and Duplin County native, Mr. Dean Heath, who provided a tour and information on various educational and scholarship opportunities afforded to individuals interested in the field of education.

Anna Marie Jones, FTC member shares, "The Future Teachers Club has taught me so much. The trip to UNCW's School of Education impacted me greatly by showing me that many other teens like myself have an interest in education and that there can be a future for me in that field."

4TH GRADE



ELVIN LIZARDO

At my school, I am learning to build new friendships and feel more confident and comfortable with myself in social settings. My teachers give me encouragement and provide me with hands-on learning opportunities. I enjoy math and art the most. I love creating puppets in art class. I also like using blocks and shapes to help me count and to do my work. I like going to the board to help solve math problems. My school is special because my teachers and principals make me feel loved. I am able to be myself and have fun learning. I enjoy learning with my classmates. My teacher understands my needs. When I may be confused or overwhelmed, they help me. My favorite quote is "Elvin Lizardo is here to save the day!"

KINDERGARTEN



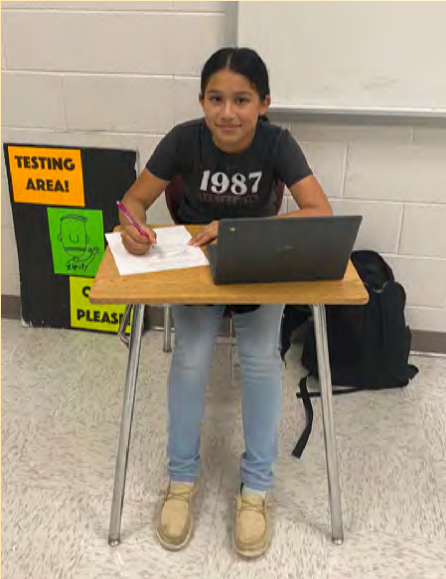
KENNEDIE EASON

When I grow up, I want to be a nurse so that I can help others. My mom is a nurse and I think it is fun. I like everything about school. I like doing Heggerty, learning new things, and working with my partner. My school is special because I get to see my friends and play with them.

PRINCIPAL: SUSAN SELLERS



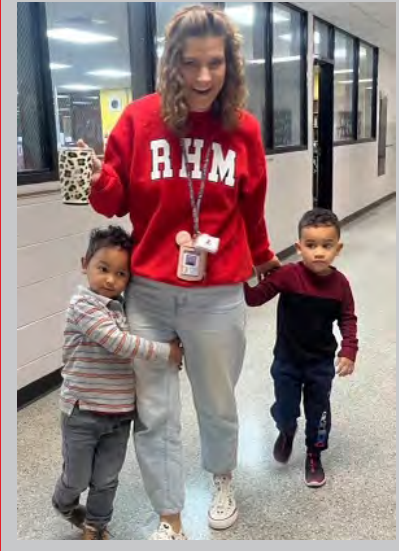
8TH GRADE



YANEIDI CRUZ

This year, I have had the opportunity to apply to Duplin Early College High School and learn about different career pathways by going on field trips. I like being able to be myself and express my creativity. I also like my online Math I class because of the independence and responsibility it gives me. My school is special because this is the place I have been my whole life. I have had the best experiences and have met awesome friends and teachers that have impacted my life. There will never be another school like Rose Hill-Magnolia Elementary.

TEACHER HIGHLIGHT



SHANNON JACKSON
EXCEPTIONAL CHILDREN
PRE-K TEACHER

Duplin County Schools feel like home. As a DCS family, we strive to build relationships beyond the classroom and school. This has fostered opportunities for students with disabilities in the community. Rose Hill-Magnolia Elementary is a place where students, no matter their ability, have a place to belong. Here, students with disabilities are not just acknowledged, but accepted. As a special education teacher, I get the opportunity to foster acceptance through instruction, student support, and school-wide activities. As a mentor, I get to support teachers with lesson planning and instructional practices that extend opportunities for students with disabilities. I am so thankful to call Rose Hill-Magnolia Elementary home.

PARENT



TAMEKA HOUSTON

I am the PTO president at Rose Hill-Magnolia Elementary School (RHM). I have a 6th grader and an 8th grader who have attended RHM since Pre-K. Our school is a unique place for students to learn, and I feel like my children are safe here. The location of the school and the academic programs that the school offers are what makes Rose Hill-Magnolia stand out. Administrators and staff, past and present, have an outpouring of love to all students they come in contact with. Opportunities that my children have benefitted from include tutoring and the TRIO program that collaborates with James Sprunt Community College. My children both participate in athletics and have been in the BETA Club as well. Rose Hill-Magnolia is a very special place to be!



WALLACE ELEMENTARY BETA CLUB

The National Beta Club is an organization for 4th through 12th grade students. The purpose of Beta is to promote the ideals of academic achievement, character, leadership, and service among elementary and secondary school students. Wallace Elementary is so excited to have our Beta Club back again this year. Although the club did not get started until late November, we had 20 students attend the state convention in January. Out of those 20 students, eight placed in the national competition. To be a part of the Beta Club, students must maintain an A average and have no disciplinary referrals. The club has over 130 students and the club sponsors are Mrs. Candace Bizzell, Mrs. Tara Davis, and Mrs. Jessica Villaruel, along with other helpful staff members. The sponsors are looking forward to being bigger and more successful next year, and are thankful the school has this opportunity for the students.

1ST GRADE



AUSTIN MONTOYA

The best thing I like about my school is being smart in all of my classes. Wallace Elementary School is special because it's a fun place to learn every day. When I get picked up from school, I like playing in the car with my baby brother.

4TH GRADE



SHERLYN
VELAZQUEZ CALDERA

I like being in the Wallace Elementary School Beta Club. I feel that opportunities through Beta help to prepare me for my future. I enjoy going to my school because the people there are caring, generous, and very kind. My teachers show me respect and teach me something everyday. Wallace Elementary School is special because my teachers teach in their own unique way and the students get to learn in their own unique and special way. We are all treated like family.



7TH GRADE



PRESLEY BROWN

My school allows us to be in many clubs such as Beta. Clubs give me opportunities to do things not just in my school, but in the community too. I feel that my future is going to be bright and with the correct guidance, I will become a dentist one day. I enjoy being able to learn new things and to help my classmates. My favorite subject is band due to the fact that I feel the connection with music. Wallace Elementary is special to me because my teachers help me understand what we are learning. My teachers listen to us and I feel like they hear us when we talk about certain subjects or problems.

PARENT



AUDELY PAZ

Wallace Elementary School is unique for many reasons. We have so many good teachers and staff members who really work hard to prepare our kids for college. The school has so many opportunities that allow my kids to do their best in class. The kids love all the awards that they are able to earn. They also enjoy being in the Beta Club and all of the other clubs and events that the staff creates for them.

STAFF HIGHLIGHT



MARY LANIER

Head Custodian/Bus Driver

At Wallace Elementary, we have a variety of diverse staff, students, and teachers that are willing to learn and work together. Most students that I have interaction with enjoy coming to school in an environment where learning is fun. As an employee of Duplin County Schools, I feel that we have many learning opportunities and clubs for our students.

We also support our students by offering various events and opportunities within the community. As a bus driver, I make sure that my passengers have an environment that is clean and safe for everyone. I love driving the bus due to the fact that I get to interact with the students each and every day.

My heart just smiles to see the students get on and off the bus.



HOSA: HEALTH OCCUPATIONS STUDENTS OF AMERICA

HOSA, Health Occupations Students of America, is an organization for students that aspire to be in the healthcare field. It is sponsored by Mrs. Bonny Sholar and Mrs. Jessica Hunter.

This group was selected as a Bright Spot because of the impact they have on our community. Each year HOSA hosts blood drive events on campus. In October, they hosted a very special event called the "Pink Out for Perry" blood drive. The event was held in honor of Coach Motsinger's wife, Dr. Perry Motsinger. Dr. Motsinger is currently fighting cancer and the entire school has rallied behind her. Mrs. Sholar stated, "Bulldogs never fight alone! It's always so humbling to see the willingness of our students to donate blood in order to save lives." The organization has also hosted a second blood drive and made hand made Easter cards for distribution to nurses and doctors at ECU Vidant Duplin Hospital.

9TH GRADE



HESLEY MACIAS REYES

Duplin County Schools has given me the opportunity to take part in real world experiences for my future career in healthcare. The county has many academies such as the Duplin Health Sciences Academy, which has allowed me to visit various medical facilities and discover all the possibilities in the healthcare field. I really enjoy all of the opportunities to get involved as a student at Wallace Rose-Hill. The school also provides space for students to voice their opinions, concerns, and even take on leadership roles. Wallace-Rose Hill is special because it offers us plenty of time to complete all of our work and exceed in our classes through different learning environments.

11TH GRADE



IRVING BROWN

One of the opportunities that I have been given while being a student at Wallace-Rose Hill High School, is being able to go on college visits. I enjoy being shown around the school campuses and learning what it takes to get ready for college. As a student, I appreciate the good manners and respect shown by our student body, and I enjoy going to class and making bonds with friends that could last a lifetime. I would consider our school the world's greatest high school.



12TH GRADE



ELLE RAEGAN DAVIS

At Wallace-Rose Hill High School, I have been able to discover different pathways, such as journalism and health science, allowing me to discover my passion in medicine and photography. One of the things I enjoy most about our school is our sporting events, pep rallies, and other school-wide activities. I help out mostly by being the statistician for sports teams and capturing pictures for the school's yearbook. I have been given many opportunities such as painting a school mural and bringing back homecoming traditions. You can always count on the Wallace-Rose Hill Bulldogs to have a good time.

TEACHER HIGHLIGHT



KYNDALL MARSHBURN

EXCEPTIONAL CHILDREN'S TEACHER

Wallace-Rose Hill High School supports learning by supporting staff and students. My students and I feel loved and valued as part of our school community and I feel that this plays a key part in my students' success, their confidence, and willingness to learn. To be a part of Duplin County Schools is to be a part of a family. The support and interest from the community in the well-being of our students and schools is wonderful. This support allows me to provide my students with experiences and opportunities to help them learn and grow. My favorite thing to do with my students is provide them with activities that promote life skills and prepare them for real world experiences. This year we have enjoyed opportunities to practice real world skills such as meal planning, grocery shopping, money skills, and food preparation.

PARENT



SCOTT IMWALLE

My children graduated from Wallace-Rose Hill High School (WRH) in 2015 and 2018. They were very different in their academics, but WRH catered to their individual needs. My son was very involved in sports and Advanced Placement courses while my daughter had a keen interest in following a health science pathway. The Wallace-Rose Hill administrators and staff did a great job treating my children as individuals and championing their dreams and interests.



NC MUSEUM OF ART:
ARTIST INNOVATION
MENTORSHIP PROGRAM

The North Carolina Museum of Art-Artist Innovation Mentorship (AIM) program, provides six-week sessions led by Mr. Telvin Wallace and Mr. Glenwood Bell. This innovative program, which meets weekly after school, empowers middle school students at WARE by nurturing creativity, fostering mentorship, and building valuable relationships within the community. Through AIM, students gain artistic skills, confidence, and a sense of belonging, breaking down barriers to artistic expression and opening doors to future opportunities. As a former WARE student, Mr. Telvin Wallace's early triumph in an elementary drawing contest sparked his artistic journey. Now, an acclaimed artist splitting time between Durham and New York City, he mentors rural students in the AIM after-school program.

7TH GRADE



JOHN GUZMAN RIVERA

One opportunity that I have been given in Duplin County Schools is being accepted into the Teacher Ambassador Club. This club helps me focus on my goal, which is to one day run a school or be a math teacher. What I enjoy most about school is being able to see my teachers and classmates, and spend time with them. My school is special because of all the staff. They have helped and supported me in everything I do.

4TH GRADE



TANNER MOUTON

Duplin County Schools has given me very nice teachers with different teaching styles who give good instruction and provide a good learning environment. I enjoy math, recess, PE, and music classes. Warsaw Elementary is a nice school with caring teachers and staff members. Ms. Murray is very welcoming to everyone.



2ND GRADE



ZAHARA ROBINSON

One of my future goals is to be a writer. My teacher, Mrs. Gladys Sutton, helps me increase my writing skills by allowing me to practice adding details to my writing, practicing fluency, and learning bigger words. What I mostly enjoy about school is reading, because I like how stories use details. Even if a chapter book does not have pictures, you can still use the details to make a movie of the story in your head. My school is special because everyone brings their best potential. Our teachers tell us to persevere and to never give up.

TEACHER HIGHLIGHT



JACKIE LEWIS
3RD GRADE TEACHER

The staff at Warsaw Elementary share a common goal, which is to ensure success for all students. This school is amazing in that we all work as a team to make sure that every student has the opportunity to be successful and grow year after year. When staff members arrive to work daily with a positive attitude and spread that attitude onto fellow staff members and students, the whole atmosphere transforms into a learning environment that is inspiring and motivational. As a teacher, I believe that building relationships is crucial to a student's success. I also believe that students do well in an environment in which they feel safe and are allowed to express their thoughts and ideas.

PARENT



EBONY WELLS

Duplin County Schools and Warsaw Elementary embrace a diverse and nurturing learning culture for students. They both instill a clear vision and work to equip every student with the opportunities to be globally competitive. DCS welcomes community partnerships such as Talent Search through James Sprunt Community College, and other external resources that help to provide opportunities for students to be successful. Collaborative partnerships such as these help students to reach their fullest potential inside and outside of the classroom.

Duplin County Schools

A unified approach to academic excellence.



Educational Innovation and Accountability

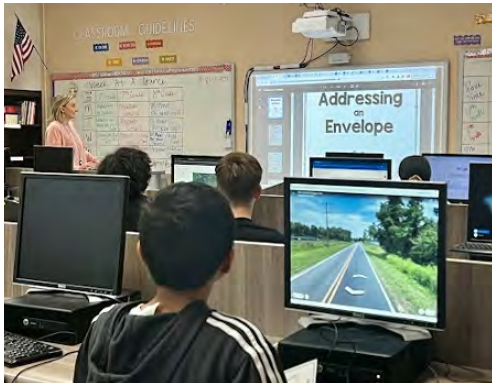
DUPLIN COUNTY SCHOOLS celebrates the successful transition to the administration of all state-mandated assessments online. Through collaboration among district and school staff and by ensuring device accessibility for every student, DCS fully implemented online testing in the 2020-21 school year, one year sooner than required. In 2023-24, online testing was expanded to include the ACT for 11th graders, and 10th graders will participate in the online PreACT next year. Online testing not only provides a familiar format for students but it also supports quicker reporting of results allowing for timely and effective adjustments to teaching.

Technology



THE TECHNOLOGY Department has aligned their efforts to support the Board of Education's priority to leverage available funds to enhance safety and security measures throughout our district. Through the acquisition of security cameras and door access equipment that operate on a secure network, schools are better equipped with advanced surveillance capabilities, supporting the safety and well-being of students, staff, and visitors. These investments in

safety not only enhance the physical security of our campuses, but also provide a peace of mind to the entire school community. With a proactive approach to safety, our Board continues to prioritize the protection of our students and staff, providing an atmosphere for education and growth.



Curriculum Innovation



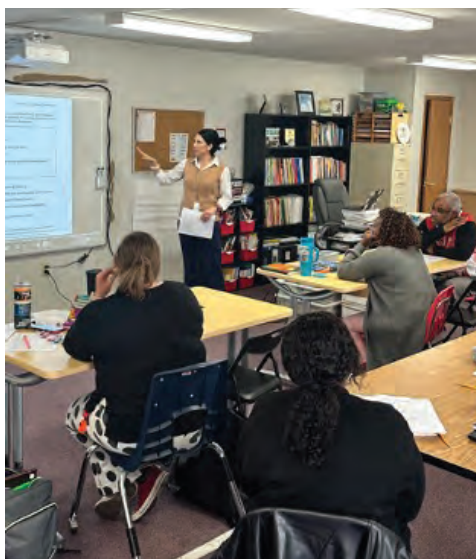
THE CURRICULUM INNOVATION Department supports Duplin County Schools' vision to become an exemplary school system where all students and staff excel in a globally competitive society by providing curriculum support, resources, professional development, and STEAMA-infused learning opportunities for students. Duplin County Schools has continued to implement the Science of Reading and LETRS professional development for teachers with the goal for all students to read on grade level by third grade. Through student events such as the STEAMA Fair, High School



STEAMA Symposium, and artist residencies, students explore cross-curricular content, showcase their talents, and find their personalized pathway to career, college, and life success.

Beginning Teacher Support

AS PART of the Curriculum Innovation Department, the Beginning Teacher Support Program provides support and professional development for all beginning teachers (BTs) in their first three years of teaching. In addition, an integrated summer orientation equips first-year BTs to begin the school year with ongoing, personalized professional development throughout the year. Beginning Teacher Coordinators are assigned to each school and help guide mentors and new teachers as they grow professionally. Consistent classroom support designed to meet the unique needs of our BTs is crucial to the success and retention of our teachers.



Career and Technical Education

THE DCS CAREER AND TECHNICAL EDUCATION (CTE) Department offers courses in eighteen different career pathways including honors and advanced level courses. In 2022-2023, DCS CTE students earned 3,651 industry-recognized credentials. In the 2022-2023 school year, 81.6% of our CTE concentrators earned an industry-recognized credential, which was 57 percentage points higher than the state goal. DCS CTE Concentrators have a graduation rate of 97% showing that CTE truly works for students. Career and Technical Student Organizations at each school have been successful and actively involved in regional and/or state competitions. This past summer, we sponsored a middle grades EPIC Space Camp and a District C Teamship camp for high school students allowing them to gain valuable career experiences. This summer, in addition to the District C Teamship camp, DCS will offer an EPIC Lego Robotics camp. The CTE Department secured a Homebuilder's grant to provide a new foundation and workspace for the carpentry program at James Kenan High School. We recently hosted four Career Pathway Discovery events for rising 9th graders to learn more about CTE programs and a District-Wide Career and College Fair for all 10th graders. This summer CTE, through Career Accelerator grant funding, will offer students paid internships in several DCS departments including technology, maintenance, and transportation.



Duplin Agribusiness Academy

THE DUPLIN AGRIBUSINESS Academy (DAA) had a very active and engaging year offering a wide range of activities aimed at providing students with valuable experiences and opportunities. DAA members attended a field trip to the University of Mount Olive and NC State University that provided students with firsthand exposure to agricultural practices in an educational institution. We visited the 1,000-acre farm of former NFL player Jason Brown at First Fruit Farms and participated in Trade Talks/Lunch and Learn, which engaged students with professionals from House of Raeford and Duplin County Cooperative Extension. The Southern Farm Show exposed students to the latest technologies, and our DCS Women in Ag event provided 100 female high school students an opportunity to converse with agricultural business leaders from across the state to learn about job opportunities in the industry. Overall, these activities highlight the comprehensive approach of the Duplin Agribusiness Academy in providing students with practical experiences, industry exposure, and opportunities for personal and professional growth within the field of agriculture.



Duplin Health Sciences Academy

DUPLIN HEALTH SCIENCES Academy (DHSA) students attended the ECU School of Dentistry where they engaged in labs and simulated clinical scenarios. Additionally, they took part in conferences and career fairs at UNC-Chapel Hill, ECU, and Cape Fear Community College to explore diverse healthcare career options and educational pathways. Clinical workshops covering respiratory therapy, casting, IV fluids administration, neonatal life support, blood typing, and phlebotomy, were held at all high schools. Duplin Health Sciences



Academy students also attended workshops focusing on college and career readiness, including ACT/SAT preparation and professional etiquette training.

Duplin Industrial Trades and Technology Academy



THE DUPLIN INDUSTRIAL Trades & Technology Academy, in its second year with 35 students, embarked on a journey of exploration and empowerment. Through monthly events, students delved into the realm of employability skills, experienced hands-on opportunities, and engaged with industry professionals. From workshops on essential skills to field trips showcasing diverse career paths, the academy nurtured curiosity and ambition. Visits from representatives of renowned companies like Caterpillar sparked excitement for potential future careers. These experiences, including engineering excursions and manufacturing expos, broadened horizons and ignited passions. With each event, the academy sculpted well-rounded individuals ready to thrive in an ever-evolving world of possibilities.

JROTC

THE DUPLIN COUNTY SCHOOLS JROTC programs at East Duplin High School (EDHS), James Kenan High School (JKHS), and Wallace-Rose Hill High School (WRH) have achieved remarkable accomplishments. At EDHS, students

excelled in robotics competitions, and in the National Leadership and Academic Bowl. Their program also earned the prestigious Honor Unit of Distinction during the JROTC Program Accreditation Inspection. Similarly, JKHS supported

Warsaw's REACH program and increased program enrollment. WRH implemented a robotics team, fostering skills in science, technology, and teamwork. These achievements reflect the dedication and excellence of each program.



Digital Learning and Media

IN A TECHNOLOGY-DRIVEN era, our Digital Learning & Media Department's commitment to nurturing digital literacy, critical thinking, and collaboration remains steadfast. Students harness technology's power to access knowledge, while our makerspaces inspire exploration, creativity, and problem-solving skills. Our STEAMA Digital Teaching & Learning Specialists collaborated

with educators, empowering them to integrate technology into lessons through the Blended Learning Educator and Artificial Intelligence PD initiatives. At the heart of learning and innovation, our media centers provide students with spaces for research, collaboration, and a lifelong love of reading. Our renewed interest in Battle of Books ignited a passion for literature and critical thinking.





Federal Programs

THANKS to a generous grant from the Office of Head Start, our Head Start and Federal Programs administrative staff are now situated in the newly established Head Start Community Service Center, located on Beasley Street in Kenansville. This central location will serve as a hub for professional development opportunities for both our staff and parents, fostering a collaborative and supportive educational environment. We would like to extend our heartfelt gratitude to all district staff who contributed to the planning, construction, and renovation of this remarkable facility. Their dedication and hard work made this expansion possible, and we are immensely grateful for their efforts.



Exceptional Children's Department

THE EXCEPTIONAL CHILDREN'S DEPARTMENT is committed to giving children with disabilities access to a free and appropriate public education tailored to their unique needs. Our mission is centered on fostering holistic development in our children, encompassing their mental, physical, emotional, and social growth. Through specialized educational and related services, we aim to equip our students with the skills necessary for further education, employment, and independent living. Annual department highlights include the Knights of Columbus Golf Tournament and Grant Program, Special Olympics, and the Exceptional Children's Celebration.

English as a Second Language and Migrant Education Program

ON FEBRUARY 13TH, our district’s Migrant Education Program staff hosted our second annual Migrant Family Literacy Night at Ed Emory Auditorium in Kenansville. The purpose of this event was to empower parents in helping their children improve literacy skills and promote reading at home. This year’s theme was “Goldilocks and the Three Bears.” After reading the story, students used their skills through the pillars of STEAMA, to build a chair for the Bear Family. We had a total of 16 migrant families attend this collaborative event.



Pre-K

PRE-K STUDENTS and staff have had an absolutely fantastic year filled with learning, growth, and fun experiences! From mastering the alphabet while practicing writing their names to engaging in hands-on activities like tending to flower beds with Mr. Tom, it’s clear that the excitement and joy of learning never ends in Pre-K. In our Pre-K classrooms, every discovery, new skill mastered, and bond formed, contributed to a strong foundation for future academic and personal success. The students’ enthusiasm for



learning and exploration serves as an inspiration to us all and reminds us of the boundless potential within each and every child.

Finance Department

DUPLIN COUNTY SCHOOLS Finance Department, in conjunction with the Duplin County Board of Education, Superintendent, and district leadership, are a trustworthy steward of taxpayer's investment in education. The Finance Department is committed to supporting individual schools and departments to maximize available financial resources to effectively educate the students of Duplin County. In addition, our offices strive to serve the public at large, ensuring that all funds are disbursed in accordance with Duplin County Board of Education policies, public laws, and regulations. The Finance Department provides accurate, timely and transparent financial information and support for Duplin County Schools. We strive to ensure the tax dollars received each year are handled in an efficient, effective, and fiscally responsible manner and that all funds are spent in accordance with the Duplin County Schools Board of Education's mission, vision, objectives



and goals. The Finance Department is responsible for all financial activities of the district as well as other duties assigned by law, the Superintendent or state agencies. In addition, the Finance Department manages the district's employee benefit program. It is our pleasure and honor to serve the students and staff of Duplin County Schools.

School Counselors



SCHOOL COUNSELORS are vital members of our school's education team. They play an essential role in successfully educating the whole child to be a lifelong learner and career and college ready. As an additional highlight this year, Mr. Michael James, School Counselor at Wallace Elementary was selected as Duplin County Schools (DCS) 2023-24 School Counselor of the Year. He has provided professional development sessions for the NC Department of Public Instruction's School Counseling Department, and truly devotes his time to supporting the development of students and educators. Our DCS school counselors will stop at nothing to ensure that all students have what they need to be successful and are a true asset to our students, families, and entire school community.

Human Resources Department

THE DCS HUMAN RESOURCES Department (HR) understands the importance of the teacher role in the classroom in spite of the nation-wide teacher shortage and works diligently to find quality teachers for Duplin County Schools. With assistance from North Carolina's Teacher Assistant (TA) to Teacher grant, the Human Resources Department is currently assisting Teacher Assistants who want to pursue a college degree that will result in a teacher license. This assistance might be exam

preparation for enrollment into a university's School of Education, textbooks, loan of an electronic device, tuition assistance, or employment during internships. So far, eight teacher assistants have benefited in some way from the TA to Teacher program, while some have completed their education and are currently teaching in DCS classrooms. In addition, we are excited to announce that nine teacher assistants are pursuing teacher education degrees.



School Resource Officers

THE DUPLIN COUNTY Board of Education is committed to providing a safe and nurturing learning environment for our students, teachers, and staff. For years, we have been fortunate to have full-time, sworn, and trained School Resource Officers (SROs) present in our schools. Their knowledge of law, current crime trends, and school safety practices make them an asset to our school community. SROs seek to build positive relationships with students and help guide them toward making safe and responsible decisions. They also work to minimize disruptions during the school day, so that the focus can remain on teaching and learning. SROs also play a key role in our crisis prevention and preparedness efforts through the Critical Incident Response Training (Crisis and Active Shooter) for all employees, conducted by the Duplin County Sheriff's Office. Periodic assessments and monthly drills are also conducted in an effort to evaluate facility safety and student and staff readiness in the event of a crisis. Duplin County Schools is thankful for the longstanding partnership with the Duplin County Sheriff's Office. We look forward to our continued work together as we focus on our number one priority – keeping our schools and campuses safe and secure for our students and community.





Child Nutrition

THIS SPRING, Duplin County Schools' Child Nutrition Department, in collaboration with the NC Child Nutrition Procurement Alliance, hosted its inaugural Food Show themed, "Family Reunion." The event took place on the campus of James Kenan High School, welcoming over 700 student representatives from various schools throughout the district. Highlighting locally sourced products, the event showcased diverse cuisines, including a Wing Stop Bar, Authentic Mexican Cuisine, Taste of Italy, and a Pasta Station. Cafeteria managers impressed attendees with scratch-made dishes, fostering community pride and celebrating



culinary heritage. Students actively engaged in tasting and evaluating dishes, empowering them in menu planning. The event's success reflects collective dedication and sets the stage for future culinary showcases, promising an even grander experience next year.

Maintenance

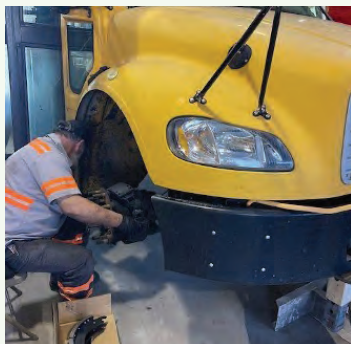
THIS YEAR, the Duplin County Schools' Maintenance Department continued upgrading HVAC systems throughout the district. These upgrades enhanced indoor air quality in school facilities, including mechanical and non-mechanical heating, ventilation, and air conditioning systems. In addition, our custodial teams continue to make sure that all campuses and facilities are cleaned, maintained, and disinfected thoroughly. The entire Maintenance Department staff is committed to providing clean and safe environments for everyone.



Transportation

With safety being our top priority, the DCS Transportation Department works hard to make sure that our students are transported safely to and from school and other activities that they may be involved in. We have a great team of drivers, mechanics, and office staff to make sure this happens.

A current feature in the department, allows staff to be able to track our fleet of yellow buses, which enables us to be able to locate every bus within seconds. We are able to see what road the bus is traveling on, the direction of travel, speed of travel, and if the bus has stopped unexpectedly. This helps us with calls received about where the student's bus is, locating the bus if there is an accident or if there is a mechanical issue.



Facilities

THE DUPLIN COUNTY SCHOOLS' Facilities Department strives to provide students and staff with safe and comfortable environments in which our students and staff can learn and grow. We have many projects going on across the district including installation of modular classroom units, media center flooring upgrades, and ADA ramp modifications. In addition, our team continues to work on

renovations in some of our schools' guidance offices. We have HVAC system equipment, ductwork, lighting, and ceiling replacement going on throughout our district and our department continues working with contractors on the installation of the new Door Access System. The DCS Facilities Department is thankful for the support of our entire district which allows us to provide facilities that we can be proud of.

Social Workers



SCHOOL SOCIAL WORKERS play a crucial role in the school setting, serving as advocates, liaisons, and counselors for students and families. They provide essential support by addressing various social, emotional, and behavioral challenges that students may encounter. They help students navigate personal issues, develop coping skills, connect with community resources, and foster positive relationships. Additionally, school social workers collaborate with teachers, administrators, and community organizations to create and implement interventions that promote academic

success and overall well-being. By addressing barriers to learning and advocating for students' rights, school social workers contribute significantly to creating a supportive and inclusive school environment.

School Nurses



SCHOOL NURSES play a pivotal role in ensuring the health and well-being of students through their tireless efforts and innovative initiatives. Among these, the ECU Healthier Lives at School and Beyond program, stands out as a beacon of progress providing tele-health services to extend healthcare access to students, even beyond the confines of traditional healthcare settings. Whether it's providing first aid, managing chronic conditions, addressing acute illnesses, or promoting preventive care, the nurses' work enhances

the outcomes of students. Their commitment to ensuring that every student receives the care they need, exemplifies their dedication to fostering student success.

Student Support Services

THE DUPLIN COUNTY Schools' Student Support Services Department operates within the framework of the Whole School, Whole Community, Whole Child (WSCC) model, dedicated

to strengthening students and families through a multifaceted approach. The department includes nurses and social workers who work to address academic, social, emotional, and health needs to provide personalized support for every student.

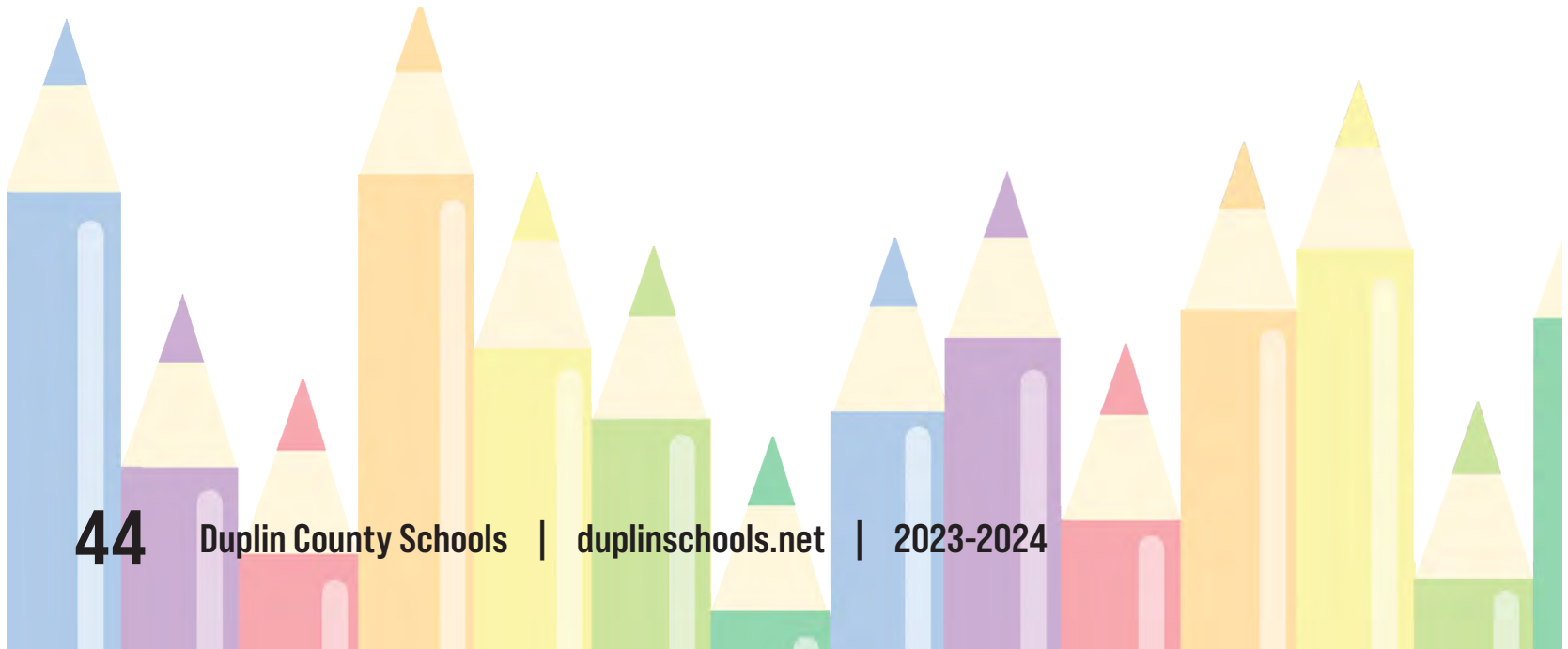
Through collaborative partnerships with students, families, school and community partners, we cultivate a supportive network that effectively addresses challenges through open communication and cooperation. Our unwavering commitment remains focused on supporting the holistic development and success of every student and family within our community.

Student Athletics

INTERSCHOLASTIC ATHLETICS are an important part of the school experience for our students and community. Designed to promote the physical, mental, social, and emotional well-being of student athletes, athletic programs also work to support the academic mission of Duplin County Schools. Athletics teaches many life skills such as responsibility, accountability, staying positive, resiliency, hard work, how to work together as a team, and how to be there for others. Each year in Duplin County Schools, over 1,200 middle and high school student athletes strive for success on and off the field. Our coaching staff serve as great mentors and leaders for our student athletes and they are dedicated in their efforts to make sure our athletes have what they need to be successful in the classroom, on the field, and after graduation. This year, DCS athletic teams successfully competed for county conference titles, while taking home 1st place honors in the Carolina Conference and East Central Conference Championship. We are also proud of the fact that all four district high schools received the National Safe Sports School Award for 2023. Duplin County Schools' athletic staff continue to not only strengthen



athletics programs year after year, but do an amazing job of developing and nurturing student athletes, which ultimately leads to their physical, academic and social success in life.



STEAMA

SINCE ITS IMPLEMENTATION in 2018, Duplin County Schools STEAMA (Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts, Mathematics, and Agriculture) continues to empower students in taking ownership of their learning through endless opportunities that provide personalized pathways for all. Over the past six years, STEAMA has opened up an incredibly vast amount of innovative, engaging, and real-world opportunities for Duplin County Schools students, beginning in Pre-K. Every student can find themselves in STEAMA, so it is our mission, based on their talents and interests, to connect their learning to the workforce and expose them to the many options that lie ahead in order to put them on a pathway to career and life success.





Agriculture Awareness Days

DUPLIN COUNTY SCHOOLS recognizes and values the importance of agriculture in Duplin County and beyond. In 2022-2023, the Board of Education approved Dr. Obasohan's recommendation to designate two days in the academic calendar as Agriculture Awareness Days. This year, these special days took place in November and February, and provided students with engaging, hands-on experiences and educational opportunities related to all things agriculture. Since our students live in a rich agricultural area, the District aims to deepen students' understanding and appreciation of the agricultural industry, its importance in our community, and potential career paths. Through interactive activities, presentations, and demonstrations, students can engage with various aspects of agriculture, from crop cultivation to animal science. Agriculture Awareness Day is a unique, learning event that truly promotes agricultural literacy and inspires the next generation of farmers, scientists, and industry professionals.



From the Superintendent



“Through those STEAMA pillars, our students can find themselves and determine a relevant pathway that is connected with their talents, interests, and dreams.”

IN A CONSTANTLY CHANGING world, a quality education is essential for our students to compete globally and become positive and successful contributors to society. Education looks very different than it did years ago. In a rapidly advancing technological world, our educational practices must adapt in order for our students to be able to learn the content and skills necessary to thrive in this evolving landscape. We must discover ways to build meaningful and trusting relationships with our students, so we can understand them and how they learn. As educators, we must meet our students where they are academically, emotionally, and socially and remove any barriers, so that they are not only able to grasp the content, but be able to make the real-world connections so they can apply it to their learning and their life. We must be innovative in our practices and creative in our thinking to understand how our students learn best. Once we understand that, we can nurture those processes in every way possible.

As our children start thinking about their future, we know that the workforce will require them to have an educational background in the areas of science, technology, engineering, arts, mathematics, or agriculture. Through those STEAMA pillars, our students can find themselves and determine a relevant pathway that is connected with their talents, interests, and dreams. Once they determine what that future pathway might be, it is our job to put high-quality teachers, staff, innovative opportunities, and strategic supports in place to make those dreams come true.

Career and life success for every child in Duplin County Schools is our ultimate goal. Our teachers, staff, and parents can't do this job alone. Partners in education are critical, and Duplin County Schools are proud of the many longstanding partnerships that have been built within our communities. We look forward to our continued collaboration ensuring bright futures for all children!

Your humble servant,

Austin Obasohan
Superintendent

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