



# The Indian Express



Our annual Senior Sunrise was a wonderful way for the Class of 2026 to gather before the start of school and watch the sunrise on their senior year. This is a year so important to their future and a final year with their friends, their school, activities, and sports all together. Southampton County has some of the most beautiful sunrises and sunsets in the world if you ask us, and it is always a joy to see these students excited to start their last chapter at SHS.



## Class of 2026

Southampton High School Career and Technical Education (CTE) students recently attended a Skilled Trades Day hosted by Camp Community College. Students from the Independent Living course and others with an interest in trades participated to forge connections with local businesses and explore skilled trade programs available either during or after high school, helping them prepare for their future careers. SHS CTE is enthusiastic about fostering strong partnerships with the local community to secure valuable opportunities for its students.

**SHS CTE**

## Senior Sunrise

Rhea Cutchins, SHS senior, serves as a state Vice President of the Future Business Leaders of America, representing the Colonial Region and Southampton High School.

Rhea has been working all summer serving on the state officer team. She attended the State Officer Training Program at the University of Richmond, where she developed workshops, learned skills, and participated in team building to help them through the busy year ahead.

Rhea recently served as a presenter at the Learn To Lead Conference in Virginia Beach, where she also kicked off the fundraising for Project ASK.



1st & 2nd Quarter Edition ~ SCPS



# The Indian Express

## EXTRA!! EXTRA!!

**SCPS REMIND CODES**

**@shs202526** Southampton High School  
Text the code at left to 81010

**@learn25-26** Southampton Middle School  
Text the code at left to 81010

**@caprones** Capron Elementary  
Text the code at left to 81010

**@eaglesmes** Meherrin Elementary  
Text the code at left to 81010

**@notto** Nottoway Elementary  
Text the code at left to 81010

**@1riverdale** Riverdale Elementary  
Text the code at left to 81010

### SEPTEMBER, 2025

Have you ever forgotten about a quiz, practice, or school event? That's where Remind comes in! Remind is an app that lets teachers send quick messages straight to your phone.

With Remind, you can get updates about homework, tests, and activities without digging through your email. Parents also get the same messages, so everyone stays on the same page.

One of the best parts is that messages can be translated into different languages. That means every family can stay connected, no matter what language they speak at home.

Overall, Remind makes school communication easier and faster. It's like having a friendly reminder in your pocket!



**DR. SHONDA HARRIS-MUHAMMED**  
SCPS ACTING SUPERINTENDENT

On behalf of Southampton County Public Schools, we would like to say, "Thank You" to Dr. Harris-Muhammed for hosting a wonderful Back-to-School Bash for the 2025-26 school year. Our team asked Dr. Harris-Muhammed some questions to gain insight on the wonderful event.

*Thank you*

**What inspired you to host the Back-to-School Bash this year?**

Such celebrations are inspired by my desire to strengthen our community spirit and foster a strong collaborative partnership with our stakeholders. In addition, it was critically important to me and my JVG specialists, we provide an atmosphere to kick off our school year with positivity, build excitement among our families and students we serve while supporting our teachers and staff. My inspiration was driven by the "heartwork" of strengthening relationships, creating a sense of belonging for all students regardless of their socioeconomic status, and allowing the community to learn more about the Jobs for Virginia program in Southampton County Schools.

**How do you believe events like this impact students, families, and the larger community?**

Events such as this have a positive impact on students, families, and the larger community while building connections within the community and all stakeholders. Events such as this will allow students, families, staff, and others to come together in a fun and welcoming environment. I also believe events with intentionality of demonstrating LOVE will create a sense of belonging for those who feel they do not have a voice in the decision-making process. It also serves as a catalyst to build a positive school culture and climate. At the end of the day, it is about the students.

**What moment from the event stood out to you the most?**

A standout moment for me was when the staff shared with me, they appreciated me thinking of them and enjoyed the time to enjoy each other's company away from work inside of the buildings and they enjoyed the food. Another standout moment was the love and support shown to me from my central office colleagues who volunteered at the event. YOU all rock!

**How does this celebration connect to your vision for the school year ahead?**

In our strategic plan we discuss community engagement. That is one of our Virginia Tiered System of Supports goals for the 2025-2026 school year. Furthermore, activities such as Fall Festivals and Back to School Rallies connect closely to the vision for the school year emphasizing community involvement, student discipline, and student and staff attendance that brings together and highlights the importance of collaboration, community pride, school pride, and love for the community we serve. SCPS is in the business of illuminating minds one student at a time!





## **New Teacher Orientation 2025: Planting Seeds of Success – Growing Together**

On August 18–19, 2025, new staff members of the division were warmly welcomed at the annual New Teacher Orientation, held under the inspiring theme: “Planting Seeds of Success: Growing Together.” This two-day event was designed to acclimate new hires to the district’s mission, introduce essential personnel and resources, and foster a sense of community as they begin their journey in education with the division.

The orientation kicked off with a continental breakfast giving new staff an opportunity to connect before the day's activities began. Mrs. Latonia Hutcheson, Coordinator of Human Resources and Marketing, formally welcomed the group and outlined the purpose of the orientation.

Mr. Alfred Charity, Safety and Security Supervisor, led a critical session on Navigate 360 and the Crisis Manual, reinforcing the division’s commitment to staff and student safety. Following a short break, staff enjoyed a delicious lunch. The afternoon focused on inclusive practices and support for all learners. Ms. Angela Coleman and Ms. Antonina Griffith facilitated “The Power of Observation: A Classroom Approach to Recognizing Disabilities.” This was followed by a presentation on “Roles and Responsibilities of Inclusive Classrooms” by Dr. Andrea Hall-Leonard, Speech Pathologist.

On Day Two, the energy was reignited with a fun icebreaker from Mrs. Gillette, Director of Curriculum and Instruction, who set a positive tone for the day.

## **New Teacher Orientation cont’d**

Mrs. Hutcheson then led a session on Effective Communication, providing practical strategies for building positive relationships over all facets of our school communities.

After a short break, attendees engaged in an in-depth instructional session titled “Let’s Chat About Instruction,” led by a panel of district experts:

Following a collaborative lunch with assigned mentors from staff traveled to their respective schools. There, they met with their mentors providing a valuable opportunity to begin building school-based connections and preparing for a successful start.

## **A Day of Inspiration and New Beginnings: Opening Convocation – Monday, August 25, 2025**

On Monday, August 25, 2025, Southampton High School was alive with excitement and anticipation as faculty and staff gathered for the annual Opening Convocation. The day began at 8:30 A.M. in the SHS Commons with a “Breakfast, Mix, and Mingle” session. Educators from across the division reconnected, shared stories from summer break, and welcomed new faces into the fold.

The ceremony began with a heartfelt welcome from Mrs. Orris Lane, Vice Chair of Southampton County Public Schools’ School Board. She welcomed everyone with a message of purpose and unity, setting the tone for the year ahead.

The morning continued with a powerful Keynote Address by Mr. Todd Nesloney, whose words inspired and challenged all in attendance to lead with passion, resilience, and a heart for students.

## **Opening Convocation cont’d**

After lunch catered by QDaddy’s Pittmaster BBQ, our Teachers of the Year were recognized with a commemorative apple and beautiful bouquets. New administrators, teachers and staff were recognized and welcomed by their home schools.

A highlight of the afternoon was the Presentation of 2024–2025 Service Pins, delivered by Mr. William Hatch, celebrating the dedication and longevity of educators and staff who have served the school division with distinction.

As attendees departed, there was a palpable sense of readiness and excitement for the school year ahead fueled by shared purpose and the promise of new beginnings.





What message would you like to share with Southampton County students and families as we begin this new school year?

As we begin this new school year illuminating minds, I would like to share this message with Southampton County students and families: "Believe in your child's potential and embrace the opportunities and challenges ahead."

Each new year is a renewed start filled with growth, learning, forming a strong foundation for all students, and forming a new path forward. Remember that you are part of a supportive community that cares about your child's success. To our students, stay positive, work hard, and never hesitate to reach out for help. Together, let's make this year a memorable and inspiring journey for everyone. We are better together! I am here for each of you! Let's make it the best year yet!"

**DR. SHONDA  
HARRIS-MUHAMMED  
INTERVIEW CONTINUED**



**Southampton County Public Schools  
Celebrates Division Teacher of the Year,  
Mrs. Tynethia Cooper**

Southampton County Public Schools is proud to announce and celebrate Mrs. Tynethia Cooper as the Southampton County Public Schools' Division Teacher of the Year. This exciting recognition honors Mrs. Cooper's outstanding dedication to students, excellence in instruction, and the positive impact she continues to make in our school community each day.

To celebrate this special achievement, staff, students, families, and guests gathered for a schoolwide celebration in the gymnasium creating an unforgettable moment for Mrs. Cooper and those who support her most.

Music and energy filled the gym as Mrs. Cooper entered through a "tunnel" formed by her 3rd grade students, who welcomed her with pom-poms and confetti poppers and a huge sign that read, "Congratulations Mrs. Cooper." Dr. Harris-Muhammed, Acting Superintendent, officially announced Mrs. Cooper as the District Teacher of the Year, prompting cheers and celebration throughout the gym. She stated, "This award reflects Mrs. Cooper's dedication, excellence, and the lasting impact she makes on students every day. Mrs. Cooper, thank you for representing the very best of our school division. Congratulations!"

At the conclusion of the celebration, the 3rd grade classes enjoyed a brief reception complete with professional photographs alongside Mrs. Cooper and her guests. Congratulations Mrs. Cooper!





## Southampton County Public Schools Strengthens Student Success Through the JVG Program

Southampton County Public Schools is proud to support student growth and achievement through its continued involvement in the Job for Virginia Graduates program (JVG) at Southampton Middle School and Southampton High School. This program provides meaningful opportunities that extend learning beyond the classroom and ensures students have access to tools, resources, and support systems that help them thrive both academically and personally.

Through a focus on engagement, accountability, and skill-building, the JVG program plays an important role in strengthening student outcomes across grade levels. By meeting students where they are and helping them develop confidence, focus, and strong decision-making abilities, the program aligns directly with the division's mission to prepare learners for success in school and beyond.



Southampton County Public Schools recognizes that strong student outcomes are built on collaboration between families, staff, and community partners. The JVG program is an excellent example of how targeted support and positive mentorship can influence student success in powerful ways.

SCPS remains committed to providing programs that strengthen academic performance and student well-being. The division values its involvement with the JVG program and looks forward to continued growth and positive results at both Southampton Middle School and Southampton High School.

We are better together!

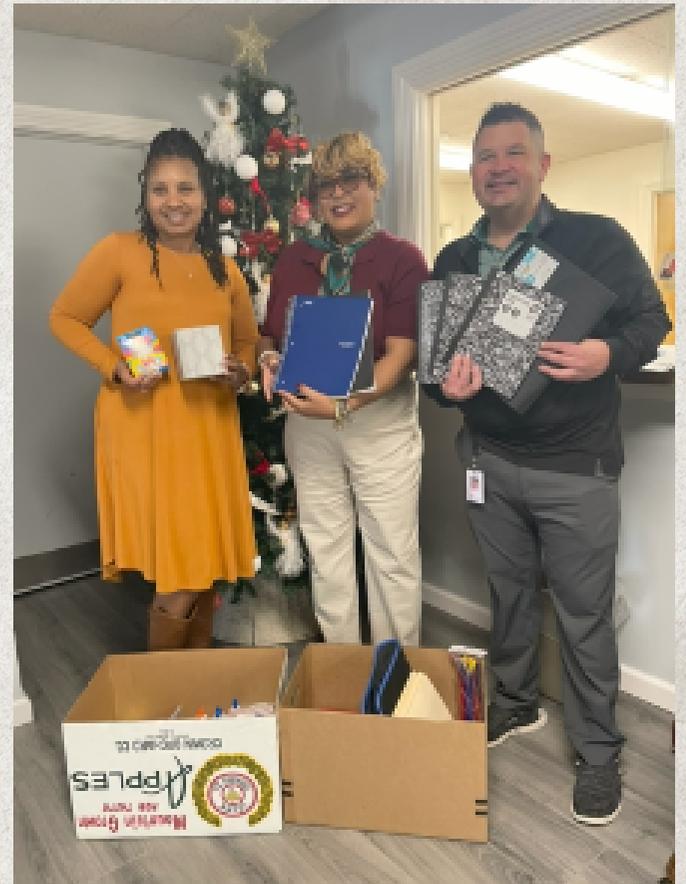
## Courtland Library Donates School Supplies to Support Southampton County Students

COURTLAND, VA — Students across Southampton County Public Schools will head into the second semester with added support thanks to a generous school supply donation from the Courtland Library, led by Branch Manager Donna Pope.

The donation included a variety of essential classroom materials such as notebooks, pencils, folders, paper, and other resources that many students will need to remain focused, organized, and ready to learn. School division officials expressed gratitude for the library's contribution, noting that these supplies will help ease the burden for families and ensure students have the tools necessary for academic success.

"Donations like this make an immediate difference," Acting Superintendent, Dr. Shonda Harris- Muhammed shared. "When students are equipped with the supplies they need, they are more confident, focused, and prepared to participate fully in the classroom."

Pope's leadership and the library's community-minded efforts reflect a strong commitment to supporting local education beyond the library walls. The Courtland Library has long served as a vital resource for learning, literacy, and community engagement, and this donation continues that tradition in a meaningful way.



Southampton County Public Schools officials emphasized that partnerships with organizations such as the Courtland Library strengthen the entire community.

"This generosity is a reminder that student success is a shared responsibility," Chief Operations Officer, Dr. Will Melbye, said. "We appreciate Donna Pope and the Courtland Library for their continued support and for helping our students kick off a new semester on the right foot."

The school division encourages other local organizations and community members to consider ways they can support students through donations, volunteer efforts, and educational partnerships throughout the year.





## Southampton Middle School JJV Cheerleaders Inspired by Visit from Las Vegas Raiders Player

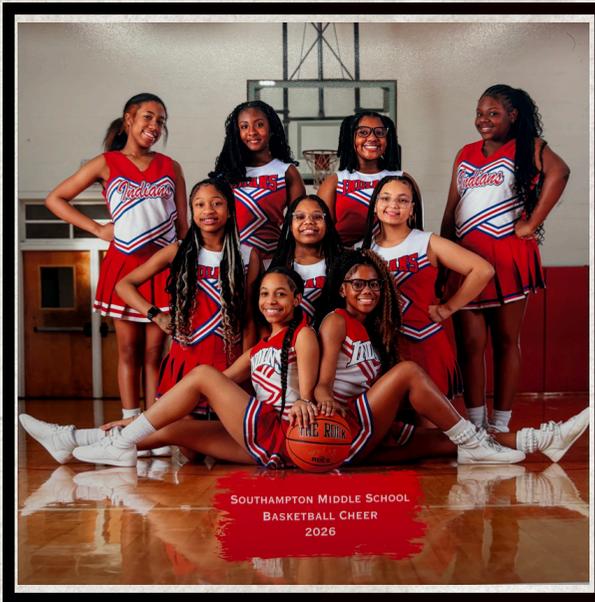
The Southampton Middle School JJV Cheerleaders recently had an unforgettable experience when they met Las Vegas Raiders player, Charles Grant, a moment that will leave a lasting impact on the team both on and off the mat.

Throughout the season, the JJV cheerleaders have shown remarkable dedication, commitment, and teamwork. The girls consistently demonstrated resilience, school spirit, and pride in representing Southampton Middle School. Their hard work paid off as they grew stronger as athletes and as a team, learning the value of discipline, accountability, and supporting one another.

During his visit, Grant took time to recognize the cheerleaders' effort and perseverance, reminding them that success in sports comes from consistency, preparation, and believing in yourself even when challenges arise. As a professional athlete, Grant emphasized that while talent matters, dedication and work ethic are what truly set athletes apart at every level.

Grant also stressed the importance of education, sharing his own journey as an example. He explained how earning a full scholarship to the College of William and Mary allowed him to pursue both his academic goals and his dream of playing football at a high level. By prioritizing his education alongside athletics, Grant built a foundation that helped him reach the NFL. His message was clear: sports can open doors, but education is the key that keeps them open.

The cheerleaders were encouraged to continue striving for excellence in the classroom and in athletics, understanding that the skills they develop now—leadership, time management, and perseverance—will benefit them far beyond middle school.



## Southampton Middle School JJV Cheerleaders Inspired by Visit from Las Vegas Raiders Player

The visit served as a powerful reminder that hard work, education, and a positive mindset can lead to incredible opportunities. For the Southampton Middle School JJV Cheerleaders, meeting Charles Grant was more than just an exciting moment—it was motivation to keep pushing forward, cheering loud, working hard, and dreaming big.



## Southampton County Public Schools Spring Sports Season

As the school year continues, Southampton County Public Schools celebrates student-athletes who compete throughout the winter and spring seasons. Basketball remains a cornerstone of the athletic program, bringing excitement, school spirit, and strong community support to gyms across the county.

Following basketball season, athletes transition into spring sports such as baseball, softball, tennis, and track and field. These programs continue to emphasize teamwork, perseverance, and personal growth, allowing students to finish the year with pride both on and off the court.

