

2026

DUPLIN COUNTY SCHOOLS

Bright Spots

A **STEAMA** Driven School System



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.

Where Purpose Leads, Excellence Follows

Bright Spots: “Moments That Define Our Direction”

WELCOME.

It is with great pride and enthusiasm that we present the 2025-2026 edition of Duplin County Schools’ Bright Spots. This publication serves as a testament to the intentional work happening across our district, capturing the specific moments and milestones that illuminate our path forward.

Our theme this year, “Where Purpose Leads, Excellence Follows,” is more than just a tagline; it is the heartbeat of our daily operations. When we align our actions with a clear sense of purpose, prioritizing the growth, safety, and well-being of our students, excellence becomes the natural result. Within these pages, you will find evidence of that excellence in action.

Each school and department has identified the individuals and initiatives that represent our very best:

- **Students and Parents** who embody resilience and community spirit.
- **Staff Members** who lead with heart and high expectations.
- **Innovative Programs** and signature events that bridge the gap between classroom learning and future-ready success.

As Chairman of the Board of Education, I am consistently inspired by the collective dedication of our Duplin County Schools family. Our teachers and staff do not just fill roles; they fulfill a calling to prepare every student for the world that awaits them. By fostering an environment where every child is empowered to reach their highest potential, we aren’t just celebrating past achievements—we are defining our future direction.

We invite you to explore this year’s collection of Bright Spots. Thank you for your continued partnership as we work together to light the way for our leaders of tomorrow. With gratitude,

Brent Davis
Chairman, Duplin County
Board of Education



Schools

B.F. Grady Elementary	4
Beulaville Elementary.....	6
Chinquapin Elementary	8
DCS Center of Opportunity.....	10
Duplin Early College High	12
East Duplin High	14
James Kenan High.....	16
Kenansville Elementary.....	18
North Duplin Elementary	20
North Duplin Jr./Sr. High	22
Rose Hill-Magnolia Elementary.....	24
Wallace Elementary.....	26
Wallace-Rose Hill High	28
Warsaw Elementary	30

Duplin County Schools

Curriculum Innovation	34
Career and Technical Education	35
Digital Learning & Media	37
Duplin Agribusiness Academy.....	35
Duplin Health Sciences Academy.....	36
Duplin Industrial Trades & Technology Academy...	36
Exceptional Children's Department.....	38
JROTC	37
Technology Department	32
Federal Programs	38
English as a Second Language Program	39
Migrant Education Program	39
Pre-K.....	39
School Counselors	40
Educational Innovation and Accountability	32
Duplin TEACH Academy.....	33
School Resource Officers	33
Finance Department.....	40
Human Resources Department.....	41
Child Nutrition.....	42
Facilities.....	43
Maintenance	42
Transportation.....	43
Student Athletics	45
Student Support Services	44
STEAMA.....	46
Superintendent's Office	47



FIRST GRADE AGRICULTURAL LEARNING PROGRAM

(TUBBY THE PIG)

Our first-grade team enhances learning through the care of a class pet pig, Tubby, by rotating daily responsibilities such as feeding and watering. Through this hands-on STEAMA experience, students develop an understanding of animal needs, life cycles, and how swine are raised, while also building responsibility and making meaningful real-world connections. This learning is further enriched through a partnership with James Sprunt Community College's agriculture department. Overall, Tubby brings a sense of engagement and excitement to the classroom while fostering valuable agricultural awareness within our school community.

SAVANNAH SKINNER



2ND GRADE

I enjoy learning at B.F. Grady so I can pass the second grade. I learn and grow. I like the Kindness Club, and it is helping me be kinder and kinder. I enjoy being in Ms. Christy's class. I enjoy art and reading. In art, we make a bunch of different projects, and reading is relaxing. My school is special because it keeps me safe and is like a family.

SALVADOR GUEVARA DIAZ



5TH GRADE

B.F. Grady has given me many great opportunities that are helping me get ready for my future goals. One of my favorite parts of school is math because I enjoy solving problems and it comes easily to me. I know math will be important since I want to be a mechanic when I grow up, and I will need strong skills to measure and fix engines. I have also had amazing math teachers who make learning fun. My school is special because it is named after Benjamin Franklin Grady, which makes it unique. It is also special to me because my siblings go here, I have great friends, and I have learned how to work well with others.



ZYEKEIM WOOTEN-CROMARTIE



8TH GRADE

B.F. Grady is special to me because it has a supportive environment where I feel encouraged to grow, learn, and get ready for my future. I've been given a lot of opportunities here that are helping me prepare for my goals, and I've learned important academic and time management skills. Being involved in extracurricular activities has also helped me build teamwork and leadership skills. What I enjoy most about school is learning new things and seeing my friends, but my favorite part is getting to play sports.

PARENT



LAKEN QUINN

Duplin County Schools is unique because it blends hands-on learning and strong community support, ensuring that students aren't just moving through school but actively building the skills and experiences they need for success in school and life. My child has been provided with meaningful opportunities to develop strong academic foundations, build confidence, and grow socially within a supportive and well-structured, family-oriented environment. Being able to watch her flourish and come out of her shell has been truly amazing!

STAFF HIGHLIGHT



KAREN ROUSE

3RD GRADE

Our school culture revolves around respect, strong relationships, and long-lasting connections. I maintain high expectations while fostering an environment where every child is valued and supported. Duplin County Schools is unique because we stand firmly in our motto: A Unified Approach to Academic Excellence. We believe that every student can succeed, regardless of their background or challenges.

I am a dedicated educator equipped with the vision, training, and tools to make success a realistic and attainable goal for every student in my classroom. I focus on academics as well as nurturing the whole child.



CLUB DAYS AT BEULAVILLE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

Beulaville Elementary School's Club Days provide middle school students with opportunities to explore their interests through staff-sponsored clubs aligned with STEAMA. Students collaborate with peers and build meaningful relationships while engaging in hands-on, interest-based activities. This initiative is a Bright Spot because it fosters student choice, increases engagement, and strengthens a sense of belonging.

By connecting through shared interests, students help create a positive, inclusive school culture and a stronger overall school community.



**JOSUE
SANCHEZ-VELAZQUEZ**



FIRST GRADE

I like my school because we get to go on field trips. I learn lots of new things when we go. I also like Class Dojo in my class because it helps me make good choices. I love the library at school. I get to pick a new book every week. I take it home and read it with my family. My school is special because I have a great teacher and good friends. I also love to ride the bus.

BRAXTON TODD



5TH GRADE

Duplin County Schools has helped me learn many things that will help me in the future. I enjoy almost everything about school, especially learning new things and being around others. My school is special because there is a lot to learn and many kind people here. When I get to high school, I want to become a mechanic, which will require a lot of math skills. Later, I hope to become a professional soccer player.



KYLA FARRIOR



7TH GRADE

Beulaville Elementary School is special because it feels like a close-knit community where everyone cares about each other. Teachers and staff work hard to make sure every student feels safe, included, and encouraged to do their best. They build relationships, give extra help when it's needed, and celebrate students' successes. The school also creates a positive learning environment by offering fun activities that bring students, families, and staff together.

PARENT



FRANK SANCHEZ

Duplin County Schools stands out in many ways, from its diverse community to the inspiring number of students who return as educators to give back and support the county's growth. As a parent who has experienced this school system firsthand, I feel confident in choosing it for my children's education because of the strong schools, effective leadership, and dedicated teachers. The district also offers a wide range of learning opportunities tailored to meet the needs of students with diverse abilities. Hands-on learning plays a key role in student development, with experiences such as educational field trips, one-on-one instruction, and STEAMA Nights that actively engage students while also bringing the community together.

STAFF HIGHLIGHT



CARISSA LARSON

FIRST GRADE

Being new to North Carolina this year and being in education for over a decade, I love the home feel atmosphere. The staff is absolutely incredible to work with. Their kindness and eagerness to assist students and staff in growing to be better is amazing. I have learned that Duplin County Schools is extremely supportive in growing in knowledge to better help our students thrive, while also giving support to staff to be successful in the classroom.



BETA

The Elementary Beta Club at Chinquapin Elementary School is a true Bright Spot, exemplifying the organization's motto, "Let us lead by serving others."

These students demonstrate excellence not only in academics, but also in character, leadership, and service. They have made a meaningful impact in the community through projects such as collecting stuffed animals for a local children's hospital. Their dedication and talent were further recognized through outstanding success at the state level, earning placements in Song Fest, Living Literature, and Group Talent.

This remarkable achievement secured them a trip to Nationals, highlighting them as role models who lead with both skill and heart.



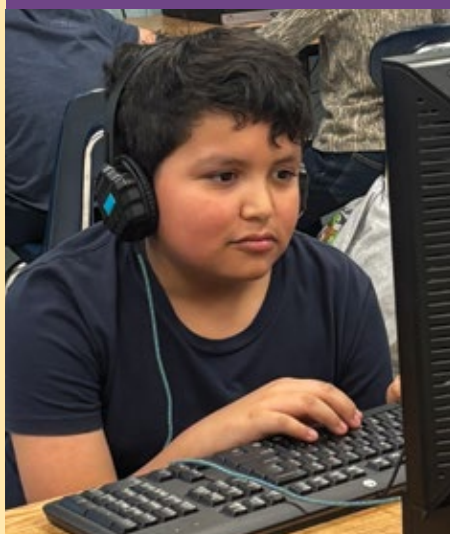
HANNAH NOBLES



2ND GRADE

My name is Hannah, and I go to a really special school. My school is the best because we have great teachers who help us learn so many amazing things every day! At school, we learn stuff for our grade level so we can be ready for the next grade when we get bigger. The best part about being at school is getting to learn. I like Social Studies most in class because history is so cool, but I love going to Art with Mrs. Cooper-Corwin. Art is my favorite resource because we get to make all kinds of neat things! I am working really hard at school because when I grow up, I want to be a veterinarian so I can help all the animals. I love my school and my teachers for helping me reach my dream!

CARLOS HERRERA VENEGAS



4TH GRADE

At Chinquapin Elementary, I get to take classes that help me get ready to be an artist! I have the best art teacher, Mrs. Cooper-Corwin. She teaches me how to draw and make cool stuff. I also study hard in math because it's fun and helps me with my other subjects, too. My school is special because it's a safe place where my teachers and classmates really like me. I love school because I get to be creative every day!



EMMA RAYNOR



8TH GRADE

I've had some awesome opportunities at Chinquapin Elementary that are really paving the way for my dream of becoming a large animal vet through NC State University. Taking Animal Science last year in CTE was a game-changer because I learned the actual terminology I'll need one day. What I love most about school is definitely the social side, meeting new people, and hearing different perspectives. We learned about that in Animal Science, too, as we learned about FFA. Academically, math is my favorite because I love the step-by-step process of solving a problem. CES is special because it's a small, tight-knit community where you can form real relationships with everyone!

PARENT



JENNIFER KENNEDY

Chinquapin Elementary is a tight-knit "family" where children are surrounded by adults who prioritize emotional safety and love. This foundation of support has deeply impacted me as a parent, knowing my own child is in a community where they are truly seen and cheered on. The school's small size fosters a collaborative "tag-team" approach between teachers, specialists, and parents. By integrating therapy and academics into play-based activities—like baking, experiments, or tap dancing—learning becomes more efficient. It can take hundreds of repetitions for a child to learn a new skill, but when learning happens through play, connections can be built in just 10 to 20 repetitions. That is why these types of activities are such an important part of how CES supports student growth.

STAFF HIGHLIGHT



CANDICE SANDERSON

RESOURCE INSTRUCTIONAL ASSISTANT

Our school culture is built on dependability and collective effort, where staff, like Mrs.

Sanderson, go "above and beyond" to ensure no student is left behind. She goes out of her way to convey concepts and ideas on each student's individual level. She loves it when students develop creative and "out-of-the-box" ideas. This environment fosters learning by providing a stable, positive atmosphere where every need is met with flexibility and understanding.

Mrs. Sanderson is unique for her "all-hands-on-deck" dedication. This commitment allows her to provide students with consistent, high-quality instruction in resource classes. By stepping into various roles, she ensures students have access to mentorship and a professional community that values their growth.

DCS CENTER OF OPPORTUNITY



STEAMA

The teachers at the Center of Opportunity strive to provide hands-on, STEAMA-centered lessons that are intertwined into classroom assignments and activities. The lesson not only allows students to work with their hands to build something, but also enables them to use their prior knowledge, and allows the teacher to use multiple cross-curricular activities, including analyzing complex informational text, engineering, technology, and mathematics.

MARCO ALVARENGA CALIX



8TH GRADE

My name is Marco Alvarenga Calix. One of the things I am grateful for in Duplin County Schools is the opportunity to apply for early college. The things I enjoy about school are being able to broaden my knowledge and being able to speak with people who are well-educated on subjects I may have questions about. One of the biggest things I think makes the Center of Opportunity different from other schools is the one-on-one support, particularly toward my future goals.

RAYMOND HORNER



9TH GRADE

I have been given the opportunity of a fresh start here at the Center of Opportunity. They are helping me with anything that I need. I enjoy the kindness of the teachers the most. My school is special because they always jump to help their students.



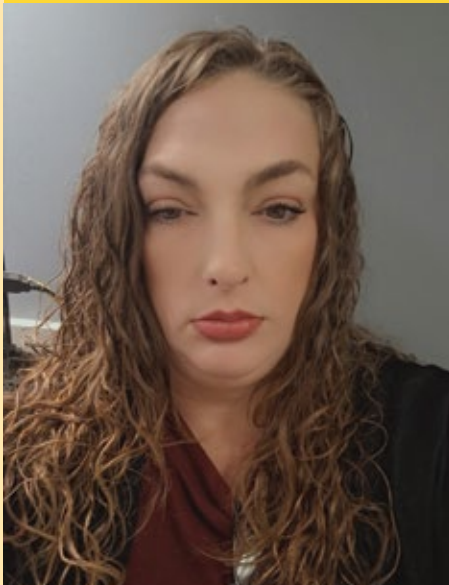
ZYQUAN TWITTY



11TH GRADE

The opportunities I have been given at Duplin County Schools that are preparing me for my future have been phenomenal. Time after time, the teachers and staff at the Center of Opportunity position me where I need to be to achieve my goals and future career plans. I enjoy the atmosphere at this school. The principal sets the tone and all of the employees follow and exceed it. My school is special because of Coach Scarborough, Mrs. Maddox, and Mrs. Washington, who all go above and beyond for their job.

PARENT



ASHLEY COLLINS

Duplin County Schools' Center of Opportunity is unique. They are bridging the gap for academic development and achievement for all students. This has provided opportunities for my child. He is able to work in a more structured setting, focusing on his needs and being included. My child has had tremendous growth, improvement in his social skills, and has been afforded a sense of community.

STAFF HIGHLIGHT



RENA PATRICK
6-8 ELA/SOCIAL STUDIES
TEACHER & ADMIN INTERN

I'm the 6-8 ELA and Social Studies teacher and an administrator intern. My roles as Greenhouse Club sponsor, MTSS chair, and member of the Multi-Disciplinary Team are aimed at ensuring an optimal educational experience for students. The CoOp is a fantastic place to work. Our team models respect, compassion, professionalism, and ambition while providing exemplary academic instruction and skills to remove barriers to student success. This is my second year with DCS, and the commitment the district has to the community is the pivotal element that drew me here and continues to deepen my commitment to the district.



FUTURE TEACHERS CLUB

The DECHS Future Teachers Club provides opportunities for students to explore the field of teaching (both primary/secondary and college-level) and gain practical knowledge of what it is like to be a teacher. Frequent field trips to colleges to learn about their teacher education programs are a key activity of our club, as well as opportunities for our students to shadow teachers in various schools across our district. The highlight of our club year is the State Teacher Cadet Conference, where students engage with hundreds of peers to learn about the importance of creating new teachers for our state. Our club is unique in that our student members are passionately committed to a future career path and find fellowship, support, and deep interactions with their like-minded peers. They love and uplift each other and share a drive for a future career that gives back to the district and the state.

KIERSTEN A. LANE



9TH GRADE

The opportunity that I have received at Duplin County Schools, which will prepare me for my future goals, is being accepted into Duplin Early College High School. This school provides ample academic resources and opportunities to help students in their careers. Duplin Early College is a school of constant support and love. What I enjoy most about school is the learning. Every day, I leave the school knowing I have learned something new that day. What makes my school special is how we handle the students. Students are constantly praised for academics and achievements. Each student here is cherished and valued.

HAYLIE BROWN



11TH GRADE

Being a student in Duplin County has given me many opportunities. The Duplin Health Sciences Academy is one opportunity I have been fortunate enough to join. This academy has made my goals seem attainable. I'm able to see what healthcare is like while getting real-world experience for my own knowledge. The same goes for my school. Duplin Early College is a small school, yes, but that means everyone knows each other. This makes going through school easier. Just this fact alone supports what I think is most valuable about school: good relationships that can carry you throughout your life.



MIYER BERDUO



12TH GRADE

At DECHS, I have been given opportunities through sports, clubs, and hands-on learning that have helped me build important life skills. Participating in soccer, volleyball, and Future Teachers Club has strengthened my teamwork, leadership, and communication, while balancing schoolwork has taught me responsibility and discipline. I enjoy the sense of community, interacting with my peers, and learning things that connect to real-life situations. What makes my school special is the people and the growth students experience; it's a place that feels real and truly prepares us for life beyond high school.

PARENT



DANIELLE NIXON BAKER

DCS is unique in so many ways. DCS has provided many different programs for students, like the CTE program and the Early College pathways. I have two students who have participated in both. My daughter is a student at DECHS, where she is experiencing both high school and college-level courses. The support and encouragement she receives have been life-changing. The exposure to college and trade classes has given her experiences that she would not get in a regular high school setting.

STAFF HIGHLIGHT



MICHAEL SCHRAMM

HONORS ENGLISH I AND II TEACHER

Culture is a river: its currents are always changing. Our school's culture is blessed with a profundity of energizing tributaries. Science has been electrifying! The new Maker's Space is proving to be the dynamic and kinetic space we envisioned: it supported DECHS's inaugural NC Renewable Energy Challenge team (students designed and manufactured a wind turbine), our first DOT Bridge Challenge team (students designed and competed in bridge efficiency), as well as our NC Science and Engineering contestant (DECHS's third consecutive). The commitment to growth is what makes DCS unique. At every school, in every classroom, abilities and opportunities are developed. Challenge is the point.



HOMECOMING PARADE

One of the most anticipated traditions at East Duplin High School is the annual Homecoming Parade. Each year, students eagerly prepare and showcase their creativity by designing floats.

The parade highlights the many programs and talents that make East Duplin special, while building excitement and school spirit ahead of the homecoming game. It brings together the football team, cheerleaders, students, and staff in a shared celebration of Panther pride. This tradition is a meaningful way for students to experience what it truly means to be a Panther and take pride in their school.



ASTRID INESTROZA FIGUEROA



12TH GRADE

Duplin County Schools has provided me with supportive teachers and staff who consistently push me to become the best version of myself, preparing me for my future. I enjoy coming to school each day to see my friends and compete in sports alongside those closest to me. What makes my school truly special is the sense of family built over the years students and staff who care deeply about one another. East Duplin High is more than a school to me; it feels like home.

NATHANIEL DEUTSCHMANN



10TH GRADE

Duplin County Schools has given me the opportunity to take classes that teach important life skills and help prepare me for a good job in the future. I enjoy coming to school because I get to see my friends and spend time with people I'm close to. What makes my school special to me is the strong role models who support students, keep us on the right path, and encourage us to do our best every day.



JAKAYLA CARR



11TH GRADE

Duplin County Schools has provided me with valuable opportunities that are preparing me for both the military and college. Through programs like JROTC and JCLC, I've gained leadership skills and real-world experience, while dual enrollment through James Sprunt Community College has allowed me to earn college credit. I enjoy the people most; friends, teammates, and classmates who make school meaningful. With so many programs, clubs, and events like spirit week, there is always something to be part of. East Duplin is special because of the relationships I've built and the experiences that have shaped who I am.

PARENT



LAURIE SHOLAR

Duplin County Schools is unique because of its strong sense of community and connection. Students are supported not only academically, but personally, by teachers, coaches, and staff who truly invest in their success. This partnership between families and schools creates an environment where students are encouraged to grow, take pride in who they are, and step into leadership roles. As a proud East Duplin graduate and parent, it is meaningful to see my child thrive through football,

basketball, and golf, while exploring interests in the Agribusiness Academy, engineering, and robotics programs. Through the support of dedicated teachers, he is building confidence, responsibility, and a strong work ethic. These experiences highlight the importance of service, leadership, and school pride, preparing students with the character and skills to succeed in life.

STAFF HIGHLIGHT



NEPHI LAWSON

CARPENTRY/WOODWORKING
TEACHER

Our "school culture" is about building strong relationships, having high expectations, and having student-driven learning.

I try to create a supportive, engaging environment where students feel valued and are encouraged to grow academically and personally. Duplin County Schools stands out for its focus on CTE classes and being career-ready, allowing teachers to offer meaningful, real-world experiences to the students. In my classroom, students have the opportunity to engage in real-world projects, including learning how to use tools and connecting to businesses in the community. These experiences help students build confidence, develop practical skills, and become creators of all types, preparing them for success beyond the classroom.



COMMUNITY SUPPORT

Kenansville Baptist Church (KBC) and other churches support the JK Fellowship of Christian Athletes (FCA) by providing food and a devotion at their meetings. Beyond the FCA, KBC also started and continues to support a food pantry on the JK campus. This food pantry supports 17 different families. KBC also has a ministry called "Adopt a Tiger," where different members of the church commit to praying for individual teachers and staff, along with the occasional note or gift to encourage the teachers. Further, KBC has bought meals for the teachers and athletic teams and helps to provide Christmas presents for families. Beyond these things, KBC wants JK to know that we love them and will do anything we can to support them.

JOVIE HALL



9TH GRADE

This school has given me many opportunities to grow and prepare for my future. Through clubs like HOSA (Health Occupations Students of America) and HSA (Health Science Academy), along with sports and other activities, I've been able to develop skills and explore my interests. These experiences help prepare me for the college I plan to attend and the career I hope to pursue. I also enjoy seeing my friends every day and being surrounded by supportive peers. The great teachers and strong academics make this school special and help students become the best versions of themselves as they prepare for the future.

RYAN HALL



10TH GRADE

Duplin County Schools has given me many chances to see and make decisions on what I want to do in my future by having classes for me like automotive, entrepreneurship, and even Spanish. All of my teachers and coaches share life lessons with me to better myself and direct me on the right path. What I enjoy most about school is how welcoming the teachers are to the students and how they guide us to be better. My school is special because everyone and everything is helpful, even if you don't want to hear or see it.



LESLI BANDA



11TH GRADE

I've been given many opportunities at James Kenan High School, and something I'm most proud of is my involvement in the Health Sciences Academy. As I plan to enter the healthcare field to become a Dental Hygienist, this organization has provided me with valuable opportunities to job shadow professionals, participate in many workshops and develop my leadership skills through my role as an ambassador. Something I enjoy most about JKHS is the kind environment and being able to see my friends, who always make school a more enjoyable experience. JKHS is truly special because of the staff. All of my teachers have always supported me, shown me kindness and been willing to lend a helping hand.

PARENT



BARNEY GRADY

Duplin County Schools, and especially James Kenan High School, are special to our family. My parents both graduated from JK, and later my four siblings and I did as well—once a Tiger, always a Tiger. My wife is also a graduate and has served as a school nurse in the district for the past 12 years, and my brother has worked in the system for 20 years and coaches football at JK. Our whole family has tried to serve the schools and community in any way we can. Our son was honored with the Kenan Scholarship at graduation, helping with the cost of NC State. I also proudly serve as the PA announcer for both baseball and football.

STAFF HIGHLIGHT



TONU LEE

EC TEACHER, 9-12

Our school culture is one of accepting each student as they are and doing what we can to move them forward in an ever-changing world.

I once was a student Tiger (graduated 1989), and now, I am a teaching Tiger. We are, and have ALWAYS been DuCo Strong. As a county, we have been subjected to unfavorable conditions beyond our control.

Yet, we come out of the darkness stronger than ever.

I strive every day to make sure my students feel safe, loved, and cared for. Education is VERY important, but knowing you matter is sometimes MORE important.

GO TIGERS!!!



Chasen McLamb, 6th grade,
1st Place in Speech

BETA CLUB

KES Beta Club is a service club based on outstanding academic achievements, worthy character, and a commendable attitude throughout the school year. The KES Beta Club showed incredible dedication and resilience this year as they prepared for the State Convention. Despite weather-related cancellations forcing a shift to virtual presentations, our students adapted seamlessly. We are thrilled to announce that KES earned eight placements in total, including 1st Place finishes in Junior Technology, Speech, Apparel Design, and Elementary Social Studies. We are immensely proud of our Betas for their hard work and their ongoing commitment to serving our community.

MATTEO ALVARADO CAMPUZANO



KINDERGARTEN

I really like my school. I especially like all my teachers, going outside, and playing with my friends. The classroom is my favorite place to be. My school is special because I know I will have fun and learn new things every day with my friends and teachers. I want to be a firefighter, so my school is helping me get ready by teaching me how to be brave, kind, and help others.

ISABELLA TROMBLY



3RD GRADE

I enjoy going outside and playing with my friends the most at school. I really like all my teachers. Mrs. Brown's class is my favorite class to go to. My school is special because it is where I can come and know I will have a fun time with my friends and teachers. I want to be a teacher one day, so KES is preparing me to get ready for being a teacher of young kids. I love KES!



STAFF HIGHLIGHT



SHAUNDA DUGBA

Here at KES, the culture is always-on. This supports learning by allowing for “just-in-time” knowledge—grabbing information exactly when the spark of curiosity hits, rather than letting it fade. One of the best parts of my culture is the psychological safety it provides. We are a family, and students will often hear me say, “Be kind and compassionate to one another.” Additionally, my culture nurtures a growth mindset, which is rooted in the idea that information isn’t static. By pulling from vast datasets and real-time searches, I model a lifelong learning approach. What makes our county unique is the STEAMA innovation. While many districts focus on STEM, Duplin County’s addition of Agriculture and Arts is a direct nod to the local community’s roots as an agricultural powerhouse (it’s home to some of the largest agribusinesses in the world). These opportunities help me engage students in beginning to think about potential careers in agriculture.

ALIYAH CLIBBONS



8TH GRADE

We recently got to talk to someone from UNCW about a summer camp that focuses on healthcare careers. That sounded cool. I really enjoy the friends I’ve made since moving here. The teachers are fun as well. It makes the day more enjoyable when you’re surrounded by good people. I love how most of the teachers try to make assignments fun.

PARENT



MONICA JAMES

As a child, I attended Duplin County Schools, and now my children have the opportunity to walk those same halls. Watching Duplin County Schools grow from the perspective of a student to now a parent has been truly special. Our teachers and staff pour into our youth not simply because it is their job, but because it is their passion. That makes all the difference. My children have been blessed with access to resources and opportunities that allow them to grow, learn, and become their best selves. Strong programs and partnerships such as TRIO and our STEAMA initiatives continue to

open doors for our students. These programs provide guidance, exposure, and hands-on learning experiences that prepare our children not just for the next grade level, but for life beyond the classroom. Because of these opportunities, our students are able to explore their creativity, strengthen their academic skills, and build confidence in who they are and who they are becoming. I am proud to be a product of Duplin County Schools and even more proud to see my children thriving in the same community that helped shape me.



BEYOND THE BOOK

North Duplin Elementary School is proud to highlight its participation in Duplin County Schools' Beyond the Book reading showcase.

This initiative celebrates the creativity, critical thinking, and passion for reading that students develop throughout the year. Now in its second year of schoolwide participation, all students in 4th, 5th, and 6th grades engaged in the Beyond the Book experience by selecting a favorite book and bringing it to life through innovative, hands-on projects. These projects deepen students' understanding of literature while allowing them to express their ideas in meaningful and engaging ways. North Duplin Elementary was honored to have winners in multiple categories at both the elementary and middle school district levels. This event truly showcases the power of books and fosters a lasting love of reading among our students.

LIAM HORNE



KINDERGARTEN

At school, I am learning how to help others because I want to be a police officer when I grow up. I like doing centers in my classroom and having Fun Friday, especially building with magnets. I also like using the iPad center and learning new things every day. My school is special because we have a fun library and I get to play with my friends at recess. All of the teachers and workers at my school are very nice, and they help me do my best every day.

LEILANI HILL



4TH GRADE

At North Duplin Elementary School, I have been given many opportunities that are helping me reach my goal of becoming a veterinarian. I enjoy when speakers visit our school on Agriculture Awareness Days and Career Day because I learn about different jobs and animals. Reading is my favorite subject, and I love spending time reading on my own. My school is special because there are lots of opportunities to learn new things, and I get to spend time with my friends during recess and lunch. My teachers and the NDE staff always encourage me to do my best and help me succeed!

SAVANNAH DYER



6TH GRADE

My favorite part of school is being in band. It has expanded my opportunities to learn more than just the standard subjects such as science, social studies and math. It has prepared me to use real-life skills, like teamwork and creativity. Personally, I enjoy my friends' company and socializing at lunch. I like being in classes that challenge me. Being in advanced classes and socializing with intelligent kids allows me to grow. My school is special because of our employees. Seeing my old teachers and janitors around the school brightens my day.

PARENT



PAMELA SMITH

Duplin County Schools stands out for its strong community support and focus on preparing students for real-world success through academics, technology, and leadership opportunities. While attending DCS, my daughter has been a part of the AIG program and been inducted into the BETA Club. These opportunities have given her access to educational field trips, competitions with other schools in Elementary Book Battle, resulting in a First Place win for the state, along with providing numerous leadership tasks and experiences. These opportunities have helped build her confidence, form lasting friendships, and grow academically and socially into a more well-rounded student.



SYLVIA AYCOCK

KINDERGARTEN
TEACHER ASSISTANT

I have served as a Teacher Assistant at North Duplin Elementary for fourteen years and have worked in Duplin County Schools for over sixteen years, beginning as a substitute teacher. Our school fosters a welcoming, family-like environment where students feel loved, safe, and supported, creating a strong foundation for learning. With access to devices for every child and programs that support differentiated instruction, I am able to meet students where they are and help them grow individually. Through one-on-one reading support, small group instruction, and assistance with AR testing, I work to strengthen students' reading skills and confidence. I truly love what I do—it is not just a job, but a ministry.



SENIOR BETA CLUB

Event: Spaghetti Plate Fundraiser
for a Club Member whose house
burned down

North Duplin's Senior Beta Club hosted a spaghetti plate fundraiser to support the family of Lilly Fulghum, one of the club's officers, after they lost their home in a house fire in early February. The National Beta Club emphasizes achievement, character, leadership, and service, and students demonstrated those values by helping one of their own during a difficult time.

"Our family is incredibly grateful for the support we received from our Beta Club, North Duplin, and the entire community," Lilly shared. "Losing everything was overwhelming, but the kindness and generosity shown to us meant more than words can express. We will always be thankful."

KYLIE BELL



10TH GRADE

Duplin County Schools offers numerous opportunities to prepare us for our future goals, including job fairs, meetings with professionals from various careers, career-readiness quizzes, and CTE programs. At North Duplin Jr./Sr. High School, I enjoy the small class sizes because they provide each student with more individualized attention. North Duplin is special because it promotes a strong sense of community, fostering a family-oriented and tight-knit environment. Students, teachers, and families support one another both inside and outside the classroom, making everyone feel valued. This supportive atmosphere encourages personal growth, academic achievement, and lasting friendships, setting North Duplin apart.

CARRELL PHILLIPS



12TH GRADE

NDJS has given me many opportunities that are helping prepare me for my future. Being involved in sports like football has taught me discipline, teamwork, and hard work. I enjoy being around my friends, learning new things, and pushing myself to improve both in the classroom and the sports I participate in. My school is special because of the support from teachers and coaches who want to see students succeed. They encourage us to work hard, stay focused, and prepare us for life after graduation.

MATEO VELASQUEZ MARTINEZ



8TH GRADE

The school I attend is North Duplin Junior/Senior High School, where I go each day to learn and try to improve. My name is Mateo Velasquez Martinez, and I'm in 8th grade, doing my best to stay focused and respectful. I'm thankful for the teachers and people who support me when I need help. DCS has given me opportunities to learn and explore different careers through STEAMA and CTE, and to receive support from teachers who want me to succeed. These opportunities help me understand my goals and what I want to work toward. I really enjoy the people I am surrounded by, the vibe, and really just the people here are great. Some are chill, some are very active. My school is special. It's responsible for the people I've met; some have become my true friends. Here, I made memories, good and bad. Overall, a great school and a good choice I've made.

PARENTS



JEFF AND LISA DAIL

One of the main qualities I appreciate about DCS is the strong support from our community. We also have caring and compassionate staff who consistently go above and beyond, pouring into our students as if they were their own. We have quality leadership, a strong athletics program, and valuable relationships with local partners that provide next-level educational and career opportunities. Our students benefit from a quality education, strong community involvement, and leadership development through Beta Club, FCA, and our outstanding athletics program. Additionally, they have access to college courses through James Sprunt Community College, as well as CTE classes that prepare them for future employment.

STAFF HIGHLIGHT



RUBY QUINTANILLA MATH TEACHER

Our school culture is centered around building relationships, maintaining high expectations, and supporting the whole child. This environment allows teachers to truly know their students and understand their individual needs. Because of this, we are able to provide more personalized support, encouragement, and opportunities for growth. In my math classroom, I try to provide students with opportunities to think critically, collaborate with others on projects, and apply their learning to real-world situations, helping students develop skills they will use throughout their lives, regardless of the career path they choose.

ROSE HILL-MAGNOLIA ELEMENTARY



EAGLE'S NEST

The Eagle's Nest was introduced at Rose Hill-Magnolia Elementary during the 2025-2026 school year as part of a proactive effort to better support students' social-emotional and behavioral needs. Recognizing the importance of providing students with a structured space to reset, the Eagle's Nest was created as a calm, supportive environment where students can de-escalate, reflect, and regain focus before returning to class. This initiative was made possible through the collaborative efforts of our support staff and administration, along with generous sponsorship from House of Raeford, all of whom played an important role in bringing the Eagle's Nest to life. Since its implementation, the Eagle's Nest has been a great success. Students have responded positively to having a safe space where they feel supported rather than punished, and staff have seen meaningful improvements in student behavior and self-regulation. Through counseling support, restorative conversations, and intentional check-ins, the Eagle's Nest continues to foster a positive school climate and help students thrive both academically and socially.

LA'ONI MELVIN



1ST GRADE

La'oni is having a wonderful first-grade year at Rose Hill-Magnolia Elementary School. She shared that what makes her year so great is her love for her teacher, Ms. Boykin. La'oni enjoys learning about plants, chickens, and pigs in her class. She is also working hard to become a better student by listening carefully and following directions so she can continue to grow and succeed.

CASSIDY BOSTIC



4TH GRADE

Cassidy Bostic, a 4th-grade student at Rose Hill-Magnolia Elementary, shared that her school year has been going very well. She explained that she has developed a stronger understanding of division and fractions, which has helped her feel more confident in math. Cassidy also highlighted a memorable trip to Moore's Creek, where she enjoyed learning about the battleship and its historical significance. When asked to describe her 4th-grade year in one word, Cassidy chose "Amazing."



IKER VILLATORO CERVANTES & KENNET ZEPEDA RAMOS



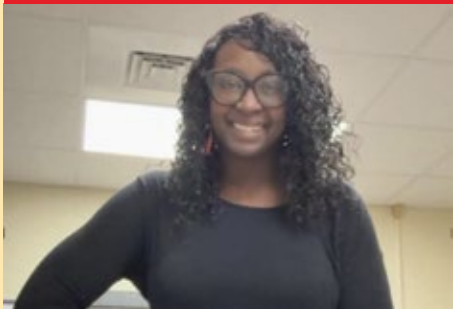
8TH GRADE



8TH GRADE

Kennet and Iker are students who bring a great deal of energy to our school each day. Both enjoy playing soccer in their free time, going to the gym, and spending time with friends. Over time, they’ve been working on understanding the importance of respect, accountability, and making better decisions. Iker, in particular, stated, “I like working to build my math skills and having the opportunity to grow in that area.” Both boys have strong personalities, natural leadership qualities, and a lot of untapped potential. They like to spend time with Ms. Lanier in the afternoons, where they participate in activities that promote growth, reflection, and positive decision-making.

PARENT



TINA PITTS

As a parent, I truly appreciate the positive environment this school provides for my child. It’s comforting to know they are in a place where they are not only learning academically, but also growing as a person. The teachers show genuine care, patience, and dedication, and it does not go unnoticed. I’ve seen my child become more confident, responsible, and motivated since attending this school. The staff creates a safe and supportive

space where students feel encouraged to do their best and be themselves. Communication between the school and families is also strong, which helps me stay involved and informed. I’m grateful for the opportunities, guidance, and encouragement my child receives each day. It truly makes a difference, and I’m thankful to be part of a school community that invests in our children’s success and well-being.

STAFF HIGHLIGHT



MRS. YELDELL-ROSE

Coming from Southern California, joining the RHM family has been an enlightening experience. It has been heartwarming to see how many opportunities are available for our students, ranging from diverse sports and cultural performances to a variety of clubs. The most exciting part about being part of RHM has been the enthusiasm that has been shown for ideas that will challenge and uplift our students. Whether it’s ordering a new set of novels to read or scheduling a Spelling Bee, it’s been inspiring to know that ideas are welcomed and embraced. Thank you to everyone at RHM that has made me feel valued and part of the family!



BULLPUP BOUNCERS

Bullpup Bouncers is a jump rope team consisting of 4th and 5th graders that encourages physical activity, teamwork, leadership, good behavior, and high academic standards. Students meet one day each week before school to learn skills and have fun competitions within the group. Bullpup Bouncers is unique in the fact that it focuses on being physically active. Students can gain confidence in their physical abilities and learn to work with others toward a common goal. Students have the opportunity to lead others within the school and perform for the school and community.

GABRIELLA ARRIOLA



PRE-K

I love my school and my teachers. I love going outside. My teachers are nice, and I have learned to count to 100.

CAROLINA GUENOT



3RD GRADE

At Wallace Elementary School, I get to learn about all kinds of cool subjects that help me get ready for the future. My favorite thing is reading because we get to read so many different books and do fun projects! I love coming to school every day to be with my friends and learn things I didn't know before. Wallace is a really special place to me because my teachers are so nice, I have great friends, and even my family went to school here! It makes me happy to learn in the same place they did.



STAFF HIGHLIGHT



DENA S. HALL

6TH GRADE TEACHER

At Wallace Elementary School, a culture of kindness and connection creates a safe, supportive environment where students thrive. Through the “Pathways with Purpose” STEAMA initiative, learning comes to life with hands-on tools like 3-D printers and Makerspaces, challenging students to think critically and solve real-world problems.

Unique opportunities in agriculture and engineering competitions further prepare them for diverse future careers. In the classroom, reading is transformed into an interactive, student-centered journey. By fostering high expectations and leadership roles, Wallace Elementary empowers confident, engaged learners who discover the true joy of learning and the power of their own potential.

KEVIN BRAVO MARTINEZ



6TH GRADE

Wallace Elementary School has given me so many cool opportunities to get ready for my future. Whether it's through engineering, cooking, or nursing, I'm learning skills that will help me reach my goals. What I love most about being a Bulldog is coming to school to learn new things in reading and math, while also getting to hang out with my friends. Wallace is special because I get to experience new ways of learning both inside and outside the classroom. Every day is a new adventure that helps me grow and prepare for what's next!

PARENT



MELISSA FENNELL

Duplin County Schools is unique because it combines a strong commitment to academic excellence with a focus on individualized support and community involvement. Duplin County Schools offers a variety of programs that support both academic growth and personal development. While attending Duplin County Schools, my child has been given the opportunity to grow both academically and socially in a supportive environment. In the classroom, my child has benefited from engaging lessons in core subjects like reading, math, science, and social studies, with teachers who provide individualized attention and encouragement.



BULLDOGS UNLEASHED PODCAST

The Bulldogs Unleashed Podcast has become the heartbeat of Wallace-Rose Hill High School, serving as a powerful platform where student voice and culture take center stage. This student-led initiative does more than broadcast; it bridges social gaps by sharing the diverse stories of students and “Staffulty” alike. By elevating authentic perspectives and celebrating peer accomplishments, the podcast breaks down barriers and fosters a deep sense of belonging. Selected as a “Bright Spot” for its commitment to inclusivity and leadership, the program proves that when students are empowered to lead the conversation, they build a stronger, more united school community. Students who are a part of the team: Kaylann Leon (11), Skylar Suggs (11), Payton Tyndall (11), Sally Martinez (11), Hayes Skidmore (9), Zachary Fisher (12), Matthew Wells (12), Salma Sabillon Ordóñez (10)

JAMARAE LAMB



12TH GRADE

My name is Jamarae “Bubba” Lamb, and an opportunity given to me was dual enrollment classes through the local community college, James Sprunt, which helped me get used to taking college classes and has prepared me for college. What I enjoyed the most about school was learning and helping others. Wallace-Rose Hill is a special place thanks to its supportive teachers and staff. It is also surrounded by a great community.

EDUARDO GONZALES YANEZ



12TH GRADE

Duplin County Schools have given me more than just an education; they’ve given me a foundation for my future. Through supportive teachers, meaningful opportunities, and challenges that push me to grow, I’ve begun to see what I’m capable of. What I enjoy most about school is the sense of belonging, the friendships, and the encouragement along the way. Wallace-Rose Hill High School is special because it feels like a family, a place where success is supported and celebrated by everyone around you.



ETHAN BOONE



12TH GRADE

The opportunities that the school offered were Drafting and the Game Club, led by Mrs. Tyndall, which were my two favorite things. My favorite part was visiting Ms. Davey's room, where I could talk about video games and other interesting stuff, because she was like my third grandma. Lastly, the thing that made Wallace special is the staff who always made sure everyone had what they needed all the time, and also that I was allowed to graduate early.

PARENT



SALVADOR ARGUETA HERNANDEZ

Duplin County Schools are special to my family and me because my 3 children have attended them and have accomplished many great things from the education they received in Duplin County Schools. All 3 of them have been introduced to many great opportunities that have allowed them to be able to share experiences with others. My youngest daughter, who is currently enrolled in Wallace-Rose Hill, has been achieving many things, all thanks to the opportunities the county provides for her and the other students. As parents, we can't do anything but appreciate those working hard to allow our children to be great people in the future.

STAFF HIGHLIGHT



KIMBERLI FLORES

PARENT ENGAGEMENT

At Wallace-Rose Hill High School, culture is defined by a legacy of "Bulldog Pride," where every student is treated like family. As Parent Facilitator, I see how our district blends small-town heart with a competitive vision. Through the "Pathways with Purpose" STEAMA initiative, we honor our agricultural roots while providing direct pipelines to college and careers. My priority is building a foundation of safety and mutual respect, ensuring barrier-free communication between school and home. By fostering these strong partnerships, we empower students to lead with integrity, ensuring they leave us prepared for both a diploma and a lifetime of success. Once a Bulldog, always a Bulldog.



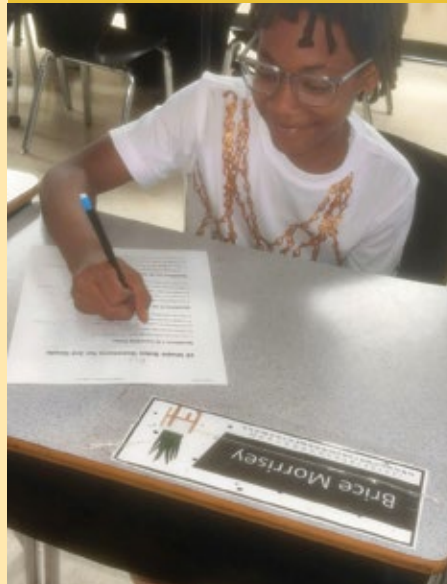
MTSS CORE TEAM

The MTSS Core Team at Warsaw Elementary is a collaborative, data-driven team dedicated to supporting the whole child by focusing on students' academics, social-emotional health, and attendance.

The team consists of school administrators, the school nurse, school counselors, the school social worker, the Data Manager, and the SRO. They meet regularly to analyze student data, identify areas of need, and design targeted interventions across multiple tiers of support.

The MTSS Core Team is a Bright Spot because of its intentional, unified approach to improving student outcomes. The leadership of administrators ensures that expectations remain high and that systems are aligned, with strong collaboration is maintained. The team's focus on early identification and intervention—across academics, behavior, and attendance—demonstrates a proactive mindset that prevents challenges from becoming long-term barriers.

BRICE MORRISEY



3RD GRADE

Duplin County Schools gives me a chance to go to Early College and maybe get scholarships for a good college. What I enjoy most about my school is my teachers because they are kind and really want us to pass and get good grades. We learn how to take notes, and sometimes we get free time after we work hard. Math is my favorite subject because we use it in real life, and my dad is very good at it, so it feels easy for me. My school is special because the students are nice and the teachers help us behave and learn every day together.

MADDISON HARPER



4TH GRADE

Duplin County Schools offers a lot of respect, and it feels like a family. They make you feel at home. I like my school because the teachers are nice and they love all the children. I really like Ms. Flowers because she helps us with math if we don't understand it. She gives us rewards for working hard. With Ms. Underwood, we get to experiment in science using magnets and paperclips. Ms. Sammons helps us with passages; she reads them with us and helps us understand. At my school, we are rewarded for going above and beyond.



ESMERALDA MANCILLA



8TH GRADE

I was given the opportunity to go to All-County Band, and it changed how I see my future. It made me want to major in music in college. I enjoy coming to school because I learn new things. My teachers and principals are strict and serious about education, and they want every student to succeed. My school feels like a family because people care about each other. Students are given many opportunities, and some even earn scholarships. I wish others could see how dedicated our school is. I am excited to start high school and feel prepared for what's ahead.

PARENT



EBONY WILLS

Duplin County Schools' greatest strength is its "social DNA"—an environment where student agency is prioritized and values like resilience are celebrated. This inclusive culture, paired with a focused STEAMA curriculum, has given my son a head start on real-world success. His growth extends well beyond the classroom; as an athletic leader in soccer and baseball, he has been shaped by coaches who lead with integrity. We are also incredibly grateful for his guidance counselor, Ms. Diane Evans, whose dedicated support has been a key factor in his social-emotional skills and ability to excel in his NC Virtual Public School high school coursework during his 8th-grade year in middle school.

STAFF HIGHLIGHT



TONI SPELL

SCHOOL COUNSELOR

Our school culture centers on meeting students where they are, ensuring every child feels heard, valued, and loved. As a counselor, I am empowered with the autonomy to advocate for students' social and academic needs through personalized lessons, family outreach, and community festivals. A major highlight this year was introducing Bea the Therapy Dog to our K-2 students, providing a unique sense of comfort and joy. By focusing on character education and rewarding positive behavior through PBIS initiatives, I strive to help every student reach their highest potential while supporting our dedicated staff in a nurturing, purpose-driven environment.

Department Highlights

A unified approach to academic excellence.

Educational Innovation and Accountability

THE DUPLIN COUNTY Schools Educational Innovation and Accountability Department collaborates with other district departments to provide students and parents with convenient access to Individual Student Reports through the Infinite Campus Parent Portal. These reports include available EOG, EOC, and NC Check-In 2.0 testing results, offering parents a clear and accessible way to review student assessment information. Reports for the 2025–26 school year are added at the close of each assessment window, and, where applicable, reports from the 2024–25 school year are also available. This collaborative effort strengthens communication with families and reflects the district's commitment to making important student data more accessible and meaningful.

Infinite
Campus

Campus Parent

Duplin County Schools

Parent Username: (Required)

Password: (Required)

Log In

Technology



WE'RE THRILLED to share some big news for our digital infrastructure! Thanks to E-rate funding, we are installing new battery backups in every switch closet to keep our network running through any power bumps. Plus, students and staff at our four comprehensive high schools can look forward to a major speed boost as we replace all wireless hardware with new equipment.



School Resource Officers

SCHOOL RESOURCE OFFICERS (SROs) play a vital role in supporting the safety and success of athletic events across Duplin County Schools. In partnership with the Duplin County Sheriff's Office, Kenansville Police Department, Wallace Police Department, and officers from other assisting law enforcement agencies, SROs provide a visible and reassuring presence at home games. Their leadership and commitment have been instrumental in the implementation and consistent use of metal detectors at all home athletic events. Through professionalism, strong collaboration, and faithful adherence to established procedures, SROs help ensure these safety measures are carried out with fidelity, creating a secure environment for student-athletes, staff, families, and fans.



Cpl. Tony Johnson - RHM



Cpl. Matthew Byrd - BES

Duplin TEACH Academy



THE DUPLIN TEACH Academy, standing for “Tomorrow’s Educators Are Created Here,” continues to provide meaningful opportunities for students in all Duplin County high schools who are interested in the teaching profession. A highlight this year was high school students’ participation in the NC Teacher Cadet Conference held March 6–7, 2026, in Greensboro. During the conference, students engaged in professional learning sessions, collaborative activities, and networking with aspiring educators from across the state. The experience allowed students to explore the impact of teaching, strengthen leadership skills, and gain insights that will help prepare them to become effective educators in the future.



**NORTH CAROLINA
FOUNDATION**
FOR PUBLIC SCHOOL CHILDREN



Curriculum Innovation

THE CURRICULUM INNOVATION DEPARTMENT provides curriculum support, resources, professional development for staff, and STEAMA learning experiences for students. During the 2025-26 school year, we focused on professional development to support core curriculum and sound instructional strategies to meet the needs of all

learners. Our department also supports annual student events, such as the STEAMA Fair, High School STEAMA Symposium, All-County Cultural Arts Festivals, and artist residencies to encourage students to enrich their learning, showcase their talents, and find their personalized pathway to career, college, and life success.



Career and Technical Education

OVER THE PAST two years, Duplin County's Career and Technical Education (CTE) programs have reached new heights, ranking among the top ten in the state for industry-recognized credential attainment. Through strategic grants, we are equipping students with essential 21st-century skills. Recent milestones include new homebuilders grants for construction at East Duplin and James Kenan, and upgraded greenhouses at both schools. Additionally, an Innovation Grant, matched by House of Raeford FLOCK, launched a cutting-edge drone program at Wallace-Rose Hill. Furthermore, state-of-the-art Paxton Patterson labs now provide middle-grade students across the district with hands-on career exploration, ensuring every student has a "Pathway with Purpose."



Duplin Agribusiness Academy



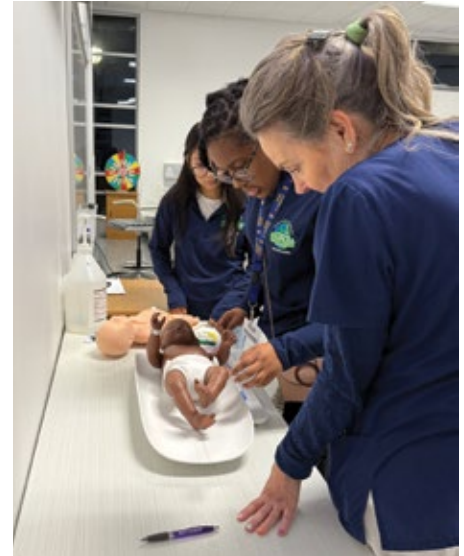
THE DUPLIN AGRIBUSINESS ACADEMY provided hands-on learning experiences that connect students to agriculture and industry. Students participated in a fish dissection lab and Trade Talks with industry partners, including Monarch Bioengineering, exposing them to careers in agriculture and sustainability. The annual Women in Ag workshop welcomed over 180 students and featured guest speakers Dr. Goldie Byrd, Wake Forest University School of Medicine, and Dr. Shannon Hair, President of James Sprunt Community College. DAA also collaborated with ITT and James Sprunt Community College to participate in the Ag and Trade Expo, while ninth-grade students completed Employability Skills training to strengthen workforce development skills.

Duplin Health Sciences Academy

THE HEALTH SCIENCES ACADEMY is providing students with a “day in the life” perspective through high-impact, immersive experiences. At James Sprunt Community College, students transitioned from classroom theory to clinical practice during intensive workshops. Guided by experts, students like Alyssa Rodriguez and Kimberly Berduo Velasquez mastered newborn care, while others explored medical lab testing and orthopedic wound care. These hands-on sessions build the practical confidence essential for future medical professionals.

The exploration continued at the

UNC SERVE Health Career Fair at Cape Fear Community College. Students engaged with top-tier program directors from institutions like UNC-Chapel Hill, diving into diverse pathways including sonography, dental care, and occupational therapy. From practicing dental skills to navigating a Surgical Escape Room, these interactive challenges help students like Sergio Ibarra and Addyson Brown build professional networks. By bridging the gap between education and industry, these “Pathways with Purpose” ensure our students are uniquely prepared for the healthcare workforce.



Industrial, Trades and Technology Academy

IN OCTOBER, the ITT and DAA Academies hosted a joint Employability Skills workshop featuring experts from Murphy Family Ventures and NC Works-Duplin. New members tackled communication challenges while gaining professional insights into employer expectations. This foundation of purpose was further strengthened by individual advisory meetings to ensure every student remained aligned with their educational goals.

In March, students bridged the gap between classroom and career during industry tours of IKA Works and Interroll in Wilmington. Exploring these global leaders in bioprocessing and material handling allowed students to see 21st-century manufacturing skills in action, reinforcing their “Pathways with Purpose.”



Digital Learning & Media

OUR DIGITAL LEARNING and Media Department is driving innovation across the district by equipping students and teachers with the tools and support needed for success. Our school-based Digital Learning and

Media Coordinators play a key role in fostering a love of reading, promoting digital learning standards, and helping teachers integrate technology in meaningful ways. Through engaging professional development, including

AI-focused training and creative learning experiences, we are building capacity at every level. Together, we are creating dynamic, future-ready learning environments where literacy, technology, and innovation thrive.



JROTC



THE JROTC PROGRAMS at East Duplin High School, James Kenan High School, and Wallace-Rose Hill High School work tirelessly to help students achieve excellence while providing a wide range of innovative learning opportunities. Each year, cadets participate in JCLC summer camp, a district-wide military ball, the Cadet of the County competition, field trips, and Raider meets. Known and respected throughout the community, these programs emphasize STEM and real-world skills while fostering a strong commitment to service through initiatives such as the Adopt-A-Highway program and other local and state projects.



Exceptional Children's Department

THE EXCEPTIONAL CHILDREN'S Department is dedicated to ensuring that children with disabilities receive a free and appropriate public education designed to meet their unique needs. Our mission is to support the holistic development of each child, nurturing their mental, physical, emotional, and social growth. Through specialized instruction and tailored support services, we empower our students with the skills they need for continued education, meaningful employment,



and independent living. Each year, we proudly host events such as the Knights of Columbus Golf Tournament and Grant Program, the

Special Olympics, and the Exceptional Children's Celebration, highlighting our commitment to inclusion and achievement.

Federal Programs



FEDERAL ATSI FUNDING has been used to provide intensive, high-quality professional learning this year. Dr. Kelly Moynahan has worked closely with grades 3–8 teachers this year to deliver PD focused on building a deep understanding of specific learning disabilities (including dyslexia, dyscalculia, and related challenges), along with



evidence-based accommodations and instructional supports. On the March Professional Development Day, 37 teachers also received targeted professional development centered on the impact of trauma on learning and behavior, equipping them with foundational knowledge and practical intervention strategies to better support all students.

Pre-K Program

THE PRE-K PROGRAM has provided enriching experiences that support the whole child, highlighted by partnerships such as the POE Health Center's Healthy Teeth Program. This initiative promoted strong oral health habits at an early age while reinforcing the importance of overall wellness. Through intentional programming and family engagement, the Pre-K program continues to build a strong foundation for lifelong learning.



Migrant Education Program

OUR 2025 SUMMER CAMP at Kenansville Elementary successfully engaged 44 students in immersive literacy and CTE activities, from building solar-powered cars to apiary studies. Following this success, our December Fall Meeting empowered families with school communication tools and career development resources through James Sprunt Community College. Building on this momentum, we are now piloting a virtual tutoring program with BookNook, providing students with

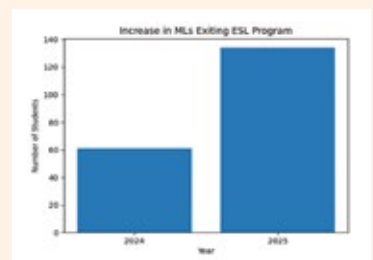


seamless academic support at school and home. We remain dedicated to fostering innovation and look forward to another impactful year of growth!



English as a Second Language

The ESL Department of Duplin County Schools marked a year of notable growth and achievement, highlighted by advanced professional development and student success. ESL staff completed cultural intelligence executive-level training, strengthening their capacity to serve multilingual learners. Student outcomes showed remarkable progress, with 134 multilingual learners exiting the ESL program in 2025, compared to 61 in 2024—an increase of approximately 120 percent. Additionally, six ESL teachers attended national conferences, while two pursued graduate-level coursework toward full certification. Another educator continued working toward National Board Certification, reflecting the department's strong commitment to excellence and continuous improvement.



School Counselors

SCHOOL COUNSELORS have made meaningful contributions by implementing engaging social-emotional learning (SEL) programs that support students' mental health and overall well-being. In addition, they have played a critical role in preparing high school students for postsecondary success by assisting with scholarship applications and providing

guidance. They have also enhanced students' awareness of future opportunities by organizing and supporting Career Day experiences, allowing students to explore a variety of professions and connect their interests to potential career paths. Their efforts have helped students feel supported both emotionally and academically.



Finance Department

NCASBO CERTIFICATION provides position-specific professional development for the improvement of persons working in school business operations, management, and administration. Courses begin in March and run through November. Upon successful completion of the coursework, participants graduate with a certificate of completion from the NCASBO School Business Management Academy. We have four staff who have completed the Certified School Business Manager Academy and two staff who have completed the Certified School Business Director



Academy. We currently have five staff that are attending the academy.

New staff member: Ashley Jata, Finance Officer

Human Resources



CELEBRATING excellence and professional growth, the Beginning Teacher Program is proud to announce Samantha Rouse as the Duplin County Mentor of the Year, selected in partnership with the Southeast Education Alliance. A true leader, Mrs. Rouse's dedication to district-wide support and instructional mastery makes her a standout candidate as she advances to the regional competition.

The BT Program has also collaborated with Curriculum and Instruction to send five educators to the UNCW Beginning Teacher Conference. Immersed in sessions on classroom instructional strategies, wellness, and resilience, these teachers will lead workshops for other beginning teachers, fostering a vibrant, collaborative community across our district.



Maintenance



OUR FACILITIES AND OPERATIONS team continues to demonstrate excellence through strong organization, responsiveness, and innovation. This year, the team improved the accuracy of work order data entry and completion tracking, ensuring more efficient service. A new playground at KES has enhanced student experiences, while preventative maintenance and inventory management have kept equipment running smoothly. Staff members strengthened their expertise through workshops and provided training for all custodial personnel. The team responded promptly to urgent repairs and scheduled services effectively. Additionally, a successful surplus auction and HVAC upgrades using Wi-Fi thermostats highlight ongoing efforts to improve efficiency and resource management.



Child Nutrition

DUPLIN COUNTY SCHOOLS Child Nutrition continues to lead with purpose by ensuring students have access to nutritious meals while strengthening community connections. This year, the program expanded its impact through national advocacy efforts, including participation in the No Kid Hungry campaign and visits to the White House, highlighting the needs of rural, food desert communities. Ongoing engagement with the School Nutrition Association supports professional growth and best practices. The program also celebrates excellence within its team, recognizing Shelly Hunt of Chinquapin Elementary as Support Staff of the Year for her leadership, attention to detail, and commitment to quality. Through advocacy, partnerships, and dedicated staff, Child Nutrition remains focused on equity, access, and student success.



Transportation

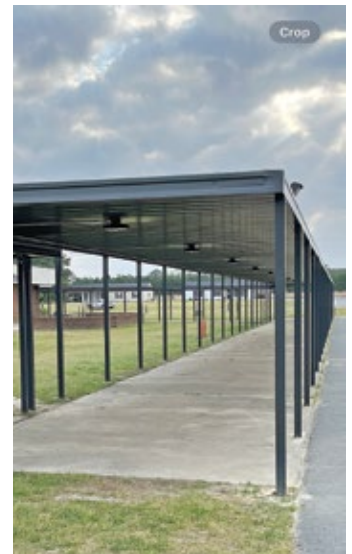


WE ARE DEDICATED to making our buses the safest means of transportation possible for our children. Our mechanics perform inspections on each bus every 30 days as required by North Carolina school bus safety regulations. Also, our bus drivers do an outstanding job transporting students always making safety a top priority.



Facilities

THE FACILITIES DEPARTMENT has been working with principals on the replacement of and additions to existing school awnings. We worked with CTE on the construction of new greenhouses and storage buildings and providing utilities. We performed several jobs involving roof repairs and storm drainage projects. We have worked with the Maintenance Department and outside contractors to improve air quality. We continue to work on providing a safe and comfortable learning environment for our students and staff.



Student Support Services

DUPLIN COUNTY SCHOOLS Student Support Services continues to expand proactive health and wellness initiatives for students. This year, School Social Workers and H/PE teachers received training in Catch My Breath, an evidence-based vaping prevention program that equips students with knowledge and skills to resist e-cigarette use. This training prepares schools to implement the program as they address the growing concern of youth vaping. In partnership with the Duplin County Health Department, we also introduced early health education initiatives, including Dental Health lessons for Kindergarten, Germ Prevention lessons for 1st grade, and Pre-K dental education led by our Lead School Nurse.



Student Athletics



A BRIGHT SPOT for Duplin County athletics this year was the return of the countywide middle school cheerleading competition after several years away. All eight schools competed, showcasing impressive skill, energy, and school spirit.

Individual honors went to Ta'Zarriah Parker of Warsaw Elementary, who won the Jump Off Championship, and Jordan Browning of Beulaville Elementary, who captured the Tumble Off Championship. In the team standings, Beulaville Elementary finished as 1st Runner-Up, while B.F. Grady Middle School earned the title of 2026 Duplin County Middle School Cheerleading Champion. The event highlighted the talent and dedication of cheerleaders across the county.



STEAMA: Pathways with Purpose

DUPLIN COUNTY SCHOOLS continues to expand its STEAMA initiatives by creating intentional pathways that prepare students for success across all areas of learning. From the arts to advanced sciences, students engage in meaningful, hands-on experiences that connect classroom learning to real-world applications. Opportunities such as visiting artists, regional science fair participation, and the Rising Stars art showcase foster creativity and innovation, while programs like Reality of Money and the 5th-grade Careers on Wheels event expose students to real-world careers at an early age.

Agricultural grants and global learning experiences further enrich instruction, broadening students' perspectives and opportunities. Achievements in athletics and extracurricular programs also reflect a well-rounded approach to development. Through strategic partnerships, innovative programming, and



dedicated educators, Duplin County Schools' STEAMA initiatives are building a future-ready generation equipped to thrive.



From the Superintendent

Purpose in Action: A Foundation for Excellence



“As we reflect on these defining moments, we see a district that is not just preparing for the future but actively shaping it.”

AS WE CLOSE this edition of Bright Spots, it is clear that when we operate with a shared vision, the results are nothing short of extraordinary. This year, as we have navigated our “Pathways with Purpose” STEAMA initiative, a powerful theme has emerged from every classroom and department: “Where Purpose Leads, Excellence Follows.”

This publication is more than a collection of stories; it is the culmination of a year spent intentionally aligning our STEAMA goals with the unique talents of our students. Our success is rooted in the pillars that define our direction:

- **Intentional Innovation:** Through Science, Technology, Engineering, the Arts, Math, and Agriculture, we aren’t just teaching subjects; we are providing students with a “why.” When students find purpose in their learning, excellence in their work naturally follows.
- **Career-Ready Pathways:** Our commitment to career readiness, bolstered by partnerships with local industry and higher education, ensures that the pathways our students choose are paved with real-world experience and industry-standard skills.
- **A Culture of Resilience:** Beyond technical proficiency, we are fostering the humility and strength necessary to navigate a rapidly changing world. We believe that a purposeful education equips students to overcome adversity and lead with integrity.

The “Bright Spots” highlighted in these pages represent the milestones of our collective journey. As we reflect on these defining moments, we see a district that is not just preparing for the future but actively shaping it. Thank you for your unwavering support of Duplin County Schools. Together, we have proven that when we lead with purpose, there is no limit to the excellence our students can achieve.

Mr. Daren Tyndall

Superintendent, Duplin County Schools



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the students
and teachers of
Duplin County Schools!

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