SANDERS DELIVERS CROCKETT PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT SESSION CHALLENGE



Above: Eddie Sanders delivers his "Make an IMPACT" presentation to Crockett County School District educators Monday. (Photo by Ron Barry)

The 2026-27 school year officially began Monday as employees from throughout the Crockett County School District gathered at the CCHS Little Theater for the system-wide Professional Development session, led by Eddie Sanders, Founder and Chief Executive Officer of Real Talk.

Sanders is a leadership strategist, a published author, and motivational speaker, based in Murfreesboro. He challenged Crockett educators to "make an impact rather than just making contact," stressing the point that students don't really care how much you know until you demonstrate to them how much you care.

A former high school football and basketball coach, Sanders explained that it is those individuals who go "above and beyond" in their approach – as opposed to those who meet the bare minimums and just "check off the boxes" of the routine requirements – are the ones who will truly make a lasting impact on students.

As he developed his presentation, Sanders eventually landed on six key traits for which educators should strive, forming the word IMPACT: Integrity, Motivation, Purpose, Accountability, Commitment, and Teamwork.

"If you have a pulse, you have a purpose in this life," Sanders said. "And if you think you're too small to make an impact, try going to bed at night with a mosquito in the room."

Sanders' talk followed a review of new public education legislation from Crockett County Director of Schools P. A. Pratt, who also issued his own challenges to district employees. Pratt encouraged the group to remember the "fire and convictions" they had when they began their careers, warning that time and subtle compromises can slowly erode the original desire for excellence.

He reminded the educators of the four characteristics that they should both possess and then transmit as best as possible to their students, illustrated by the acronym WAVI: Work ethic, Attitude, Values, and Intelligence.

"I believe in these things in that exact order," Pratt said, "because without the first three, the fourth isn't going to matter much. Academics are certainly important, but these other characteristics need to be grasped in order for the knowledge to take effect."

Crockett's educators will continue professional development sessions throughout this week at their individual schools. Open houses will be held Thursday and the first official day of school for students is next Monday.



Above: Crockett Director of Schools P. A. Pratt shares his encouragement to remember "WAVI" as a motivator. (Photo by Ron Barry)