

Tony Baldwin, Ed.D.
Superintendent of Schools

Stacia M. Harris
Director of Communications

SUPERINTENDENT DR. TONY BALDWIN'S COMMENTS FOR THE SCHOOL BOARD MEETING –SEPTEMBER 7, 2017

Celebrating a New Year We are off to a very good start as today represented Day 8 of the new school year! Since August 28, I've had the opportunity to visit classrooms in all 43 of our schools. I'm impressed with how efficiently our teachers and students have stepped back into the classrooms and a quality learning environment. I would also note how clean and inviting our school buildings and campuses look. This past summer, Mr. Clark Wyatt and our maintenance department put a lot of time and effort going district to district helping beautify the campuses—a big thanks to them for a job well done. Likewise, we are so fortunate to have the many community partnerships, including local churches, providing volunteers who donated considerable amounts of time on school grounds—many thanks for their assistance!

New Faces I want to officially welcome the 232 new employees to our Buncombe County School Family - 130 of those are new classroom teachers and certified support staff. Thanks to Mrs. Cynthia Lopez and the Human Resources staff who put in many dedicated hours over the summer to assist our schools throughout the hiring process. I am sure our board would agree that the orientation session was extremely well organized and a great way to welcome our new employees.

School Grades Released School Performance Results from the previous 2016-17 school year were officially released by the State Board of Education earlier this afternoon. Mr. Steve Earwood will be providing you a comprehensive presentation of the data at the next board session in October. I am pleased to announce that our four-year graduation rate rose from 85.74% to 88.32%! Our rate also exceeded the state's average of 86.5%. Congratulations to the Graduation Initiative teams and all of our community partners including Eblen Charities, United Way, YMCA and Children's First. I also send kudos to Owen High and Community High for raising their graduation rates over the previous year by 8% each – the highest increases among our schools! There were definitely some highlights regarding individual school growth as Valley Springs Middle exceeded their growth target for the fifth consecutive year, and Emma Elementary exceeded growth for the fourth consecutive year. Congratulations to North Windy Ridge Intermediate for achieving the highest growth index across the district and to Erwin High School for the highest growth of all middle and high schools. In the overall composite school grades, our results were mixed with a couple of A's (Early College and Nesbitt Discovery), 17 B's, 18 C's and 5 D's. Eight of our nine graded high schools received a B or higher! Hominy Valley Elementary had the highest performance and growth composite of all our elementary, intermediate, and middle schools.

Digital 1:1 In closing, I would like to mention from our Technology Initiative front, Phase III student 1:1 devices are currently being rolled out to all 10th-12th graders. Plus, elementary school STEM Lab Coordinators received training last week. This means that ALL of our Elementary Schools will enjoy having a STEM Lab this year after a very successful pilot in 6 elementary schools last year.

Purpose: To provide safe and engaging learning environments that prepare students for their tomorrow.

Direction: Our students will become successful, responsible citizens in an ever-changing global society.