

SURRY COUNTY SCHOOLS

NEWS RELEASE

Tracey H. Lewis, Ed.D., Director of Communications
P.O. Box 364
Dobson, North Carolina 27017
336/386-8211 Cell: 336/401-1873 Fax: 336/386-4756
E-Mail: lewist@surry.k12.nc.us

For Immediate Release

August 16, 2018

The 2018 Annual SPARK Summit, held at Meadowview Magnet Middle School on Monday, August 13 helped ignite a spark for learning among Surry County Schools educators. SPARK18 was a ticketed event for teachers, principals, and district administrators to come together to learn from each other and become more highly skilled. The event offered sessions based on unique teacher needs and showcased leaders from across the district sharing best practices to enhance student learning.

Director of Digital Learning and Media, Mr. Lucas Gillispie stated, "With concurrent sessions, workshops and unconference breakouts, there's something for everyone!" Indeed, there was. Over 300 teachers took a day out of their summer vacation to attend SPARK18 but why do teachers attend? English Second Language (ESL) teacher at White Plains Elementary and Cedar Ridge Elementary, Mrs. Valerie Mule' remarked, "It is an energizer!" Mrs. Daphne Wright, 4th grade teacher at Pilot Mountain Elementary commented, "Every year at SPARK, I learn something different. We are getting ready to spark our student's brains." Mrs. Heather Tucker, also a 4th grade teacher at Pilot Mountain Elementary shared, "It gets me excited for the new things I can use in my classroom because my students are different every year." Moreover, Tammy Taylor, a Project Lead the Way (PLTW) at Meadowview Magnet Middle, said, "SPARK18 helps us learn lots of new tools to put in our toolbox to be successful and help students learn."

The entirely digital registration process, schedule, and resources demonstrated the innovative approaches Surry County Schools uses with students in the classroom. Teachers who were unable to attend SPARK will still have an opportunity to benefit from the outstanding resources provided since all resources presented are also digitally maintained for future access and learning. Likewise, because Surry County Schools' teachers collaborate in their Professional Learning Communities regularly and routinely, the knowledge and ideas learned will be shared and replicated in classrooms across the district, creating a spark that will ignite student learning.

Dr. Jill Reinhardt, Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum and Instruction, remarked, “I am excited about the number of teachers who attended SPARK18 to learn new tools for the classroom. It was obvious teachers were excited about incorporating these strategies to engage students in their learning. SPARK was not about a gadget but about the application of learning in novel ways. We are beyond gadgets and tools in Surry County Schools. We are about how technology enhances learning.” Media Specialist at Meadowview Magnet Middle, Mrs. Alicia Ray commented, “21st Century learners pick the tool for learning that makes the most sense to them because they are growing up with the technology. We, as educators, must also be adept at making these decisions for quality instructional outcomes.”

The annual SPARK Summit features sessions on a variety of helpful technology tools every teacher should have in their toolkit to best support student learning. Furthermore, Mr. Gillispie commented, “It’s exciting to see passionate educators taking time out of their summer to come and learn how to use digital tools to make learning better.” Certainly, teachers willing to facilitate learning with and among their colleagues on a summer vacation day exemplifies the passion, drive, commitment, and dedication for excellence that is the hallmark of Surry County Schools’ teachers. The goal is to always provide every student a rich and rewarding opportunity for learning that will prepare them for college, careers, and for life. SPARK18 is yet another way Surry County Schools’ educators will do just that.

