



## PRESS 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

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### **Congresswoman Virginia Foxx Makes Several Visits to Surry County Schools**

Congresswoman Virginia Foxx, the United States Representative for North Carolina's 5th congressional district, recently made several trips to visit Surry County Schools and classrooms. Representative Foxx first visited Meadowview Magnet Middle, guided by Mustang Student Ambassadors, Ashley Flores and Maci Whittington. Dr. Foxx visited the zSpace Lab where she saw Mustang Scholars engaged in learning through virtual reality. The zSpace Lab is a virtual reality STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math) lab in which students wear 3-D glasses and use a stylus to view and manipulate STEM applications that are difficult to teach without seeing them brought to life.

Students were also proud to showcase their Project Lead the Way (PLTW) classroom. PLTW students were extracting strawberry DNA. Dr. Foxx could not resist and participated in a DNA extraction alongside students. In another PLTW class, students learning about Vex gears used in building robots that students program through coding to perform functions and missions demonstrated their high-tech skills. Congresswoman Foxx spoke to PLTW classes and told them, "You are gaining skills you will need for careers and you are building a resume. With these skills, you will be able to get a job right down the road, if you want."

Dr. Foxx later visited an Earth and Environmental Science course. This course allows Meadowview Magnet students to go deeper in science content standards since this is a high school course. Meadowview Magnet students have the option of pursuing high school credits while in middle school, and many do. During the 2017-2018 school year, Meadowview students earned a total of 94 high school credits. Earning high school credits in middle school facilitates more individualized and personalized flexible scheduling in high school.

Representative Foxx did not stop with her visit at Meadowview Magnet but also traveled to Central Middle. While at Central Middle, Dr. Foxx had an opportunity to visit 7th grade Social Studies, 7th

grade English Language Arts, and Exploring Career Decisions classes. During classroom visits, Representative Foxx told students about what she does in Congress, and students had an opportunity to ask her some questions. One student asked why she became a member of the U.S. House of Representatives, to which Representative Foxx shared her journey about deciding to run for public office. “I was inspired to run by people I know and by the feeling we should all use our talents to help other people,” stated the Congresswoman. Before leaving Central Middle, eighth-grade students, Elorah Gillispie, and Jesus Mena-Arambula presented Dr. Foxx with framed artwork they created.

During her final visit to Surry County Schools during the mid-term election season, Congresswoman Foxx visited Flat Rock Elementary to make a special presentation. While at Flat Rock, a formal program was held in the media center. Principal, Ms. Dana Draughn, presided over the program that began with recognition of special guests. Special guests included members of the Surry County Board of Education, Superintendent, Dr. Travis L. Reeves, and members of the Pendleton family. Mrs. Rebecca Pendleton was present and is the daughter of Mrs. Cora Beasley, the teacher who lost her life days after the 1957 Flat Rock fire. Mrs. Beasley died from complications after trying to save one of her students. The main building of Flat Rock Elementary is named the Cora F. Beasley building and was commemorated by the Board of Education with a beautifully etched black granite plaque with a picture of Mrs. Beasley and her students.

Other members of Mrs. Pendleton’s family were also present. They were Mr. Ben and Mrs. Tammy Pendleton. Mr. Ben Pendleton is the son of Mrs. Pendleton, and grandson of Mrs. Beasley; Mr. Bill Pendleton, son of Mrs. Pendleton and grandson of Mrs. Beasley, and his guests, Ms. Jan Frye Hill, and service dog, Tobey; Ms. Kathryn (Kitty) Martin, granddaughter of Cora Beasley and daughter of Mrs. Pendleton; and Mrs. Barbara Haynes, wife of Mr. Johnny Haynes, one of the Flat Rock Six, who passed away. Additionally, NC Representative Sara Stevens, a dear friend of Congresswoman Foxx, was in attendance.

William Watts, a 5th-grade student, gave a warm welcome on behalf of the student body, followed by third graders, Heather Childress, Kopeland Kirkman, Aidan Watson, and Alyssia Adame, who led the Pledge of Allegiance. Fifth-grader, Raiden Warner, shared the background and significance of the occasion. Raiden explained how the 1957 Flat Rock fire is an important part of the history of Flat Rock Elementary.

An emotional presentation moved the crowd of students, educators, and special guests, as Representative Foxx shared her story about having read about what the Surry County Board of Education did to recognize Mrs. Beasley. She stated, “I knew about the story of the Flat Rock fire and felt it warranted telling the world the story of Mrs. Beasley’s sacrifice for a student.” Dr. Foxx then read the speech she shared on the floor of the United States House of Representatives. She explained that members of the House of Representatives are permitted to speak for up to five minutes on any subject and she spoke on the floor of the House of Representatives about the Flat Rock fire of 1957, and the heroism of those who survived and those who lost their lives. At the conclusion of reading the speech, Representative Foxx presented a beautiful plaque with the entire speech engraved on it, and

remarked, “It is important we remember heroic acts. This is a celebration of one woman’s act. What Mrs. Beasley did that day was heroic.”

Subsequently, Congresswoman Foxx complimented Flat Rock students on their good behavior and encouraged them to stay in school and get their education, elaborating, “One of the things I have learned while visiting Surry County Schools is how many options you have to take college classes for free.”

Superintendent Reeves addressed students, stating “Students, I am so proud of you for your leadership today and how you have conducted yourselves. It is evident you have great teachers.” Dr. Reeves went on to explain, “I got to meet a special lady, Mrs. Pendleton. I have sat in her living room as she shared stories about her mother. It was an honor for the Board of Education to dedicate this building the Cora F. Beasley building. Heroic acts are acts we should emulate. Students, your teachers work hard to develop well-prepared lessons to help you be successful in life. These students will feed into Meadowview Magnet Middle, where they will have STEM opportunities. They come to school, work hard, and are ready to learn, much like Mrs. Cora Beasley.”

Members of the Pendleton family made remarks about how thankful they were for the opportunity to be at Flat Rock in honor of Mrs. Beasley. They also expressed gratitude to Representative Foxx for coming to do the presentation and for making the speech on the House floor. Representative Stevens also complimented Flat Rock students on their behavior, remarking, “I was struck by how many adults do not have these skills, the skills you have exhibited today. These skills will help you with interactions like getting a job. Many people will not look you in the eye. Teachers, you are to be commended. Kids, you rock!”

Following the remarks, Ms. Draughn facilitated a brief question and answer period. Students from each of the third, fourth, and fifth-grade classes had questions for Representative Foxx, which she graciously answered. Closing remarks were made by Brytin Ward, who presented Congresswoman Foxx with a gift of Flat Rock gear. Finally, Ilihanie Caro led all visitors on a tour of the campus.

Surry County Schools recently held a district-wide Campus Tour Day event. Interested in learning more about the zSpace lab, STEM opportunities, PLTW, CTE, and the college-going culture of Surry County Schools where today’s students are being equipped to be tomorrow’s leaders and problem solvers? Tours of any Surry County School system campus may still be scheduled by either calling the school or registering on the Surry County Schools website at [www.surry.k12.nc.us](http://www.surry.k12.nc.us) and clicking *Schedule a Tour* under the *Quick Links* section. Make an investment in your child’s future. Schedule a tour today!

