

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

July 26, 2018

Surry County Schools Educators Complete UNCG PPEERS Program

DOBSON, NC - Surry County Schools is pleased to announce its three principal interns, Shannon DuPlessis, Matt Scott, and D. J. Sheets completed the Principal Preparation for Excellence and Equity in Rural Schools (PPEERS) program through the University of North Carolina at Greensboro (UNCG). UNCG partnered with the Southern Regional Education Board, Surry County Schools and ten other rural school districts to recruit and train 20 highly motivated instructional leaders who participated in an intensive 42-credit hour program. Over the course of 18 months, these Surry County Schools teacher leaders earned a Master of School Administration and NC Level I Principal Licensure.

The PPEERS program was funded by a \$1.8 million grant from the North Carolina Alliance for School Leader Development, and according to Dr. Kimberly Kappler-Hewitt, faculty member in the School of Education's Department of Educational Leadership and Cultural Foundations and principal investigator for the grant, the program "bridges what the School of Education knows about leader preparation with the school's mission to increase access to opportunity." Moreover, Hewitt says, "This grant helps districts grow their own principals by providing the resources to identify, train and support star teachers who are committed to rural schools and have outstanding leadership potential."

The program provided full in-state tuition both years and salary for the principal interns during year two. During the full-time internship, Surry County Schools' interns gained valuable hands-on experience working alongside practicing principals, Mrs. Celia Hodges at Surry Central High School, Mrs. Paige Badgett at North Surry High School and Mrs. Lorrie Sawyers at East Surry High School, who served as the interns' mentors. Moreover, the interns received leadership coaching and feedback, enrichment experiences from visiting innovative high needs schools and participated in topic seminars about key concepts and best practices for principals in high needs rural schools.

When asked to reflect upon the experience of the PPEERS program and the principal internship, Mrs. Shannon DuPlessis remarked, "The PPEERS program, a rigorous and comprehensive, 18-month leadership preparation program, provided a demanding, yet, authentic learning

experience. Combined with a full-time, year-long internship, the program has helped me to reflect on and leverage my strengths to become an inclusive, collaborative school leader who puts student learning and success at the forefront of my purpose as an educator.” Mrs. DuPlessis completed her internship at Surry Central and will serve as the assistant principal at East Surry High School during the 2018-2019 school year.

Mr. Matt Scott, who interned at East Surry shared, “The PPEERS program provided a plethora of rich opportunities from which I was able to build my leadership capacity. Many growth opportunities came from the coursework, Thursday seminars, Saturday professional development sessions, school tours, and performance learning days. However, I am most grateful for the year-long internship and the immeasurable insight I gained from the experience.” Scott has been named the assistant principal at Meadowview Magnet Middle School for the 2018-2019 school year.

“The PPEERS program was rigorous, fast-paced, and demanding, much like school leadership. The program components, including the principal internship, have given me the tools I need to build upon my strengths and learn new skills to be an effective school leader,” commented Mr. D.J. Sheets, who interned at North Surry. Mr. Sheets will assume the role of assistant principal at Surry Central High School for the 2018-2019 school year. Mr. Sheets is replacing Mr. Jonathan Frasher, who will serve as the assistant principal at Pilot Mountain Middle School.

Superintendent, Dr. Travis L. Reeves, commented, “Surry County Schools is pleased to have partnered with UNCG as part of this tremendous grant opportunity. One of our strategic priorities as a school district is to attract, train, and retain quality personnel with skills to deliver 21st Century content. The PPEERS grant enabled these educators to obtain valuable coursework knowledge while simultaneously gaining needed leadership skills during the internship experience for immediate application of learning. I am proud of the hard work and effort of the interns and their mentor principals. I look forward to working with and supporting each of them in their new roles as assistant principals.”

