

SURRY COUNTY SCHOOLS
NEWS RELEASE

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Surry County Schools Kicked Off a Year of Impact

The Surry County School System kicked off the 2018-2019 school year with a moving and inspiring celebration of the impact the district regularly makes on students, the local community, and economy. The theme of Convocation 2018 was *Surry County Schools: Making an Impact in our Schools, in our Communities, on our World*, and throughout the program, there were elements of storytelling in addition to music by the Convocation Choir and Band.

Convocation 2018 began with the Board of Education welcoming everyone and Superintendent, Dr. Travis L. Reeves serving as the master of ceremonies. After a powerful rendition of *America the Beautiful* by the joint Convocation Band and Choir, the program quickly turned to that of a personal nature, personal stories of triumph, success, and dedication by educators who made profound impacts on the lives of students they touched. Recognizing educators who made an impact on them as students were Superintendent Reeves, who recognized his 4th grade teacher, Mrs. Barbara Lyons, North Carolina Parole Commissioner and former Sheriff of Surry County, Mr. Graham Atkinson, who recognized Board Member, Mr. Earlie Coe, Graham's 7th and 8th grade teacher and basketball coach, and Mrs. Cathrine Lockhart, who recognized, Dr. Terri Mosley, Board Chairperson, who was Lockhart's adopted mother and coach.

Superintendent, Dr. Travis L. Reeves remarked, "The decisions the Board of Education makes impact all students and the college-going culture of Surry County Schools. This impact is building a highly skilled workforce in Surry County. Students are graduating from high school after having taken college courses for free. Students are learning skills through real-world experiences in CTE (Career and Technical Education) courses and through the rigorous and thought-provoking lessons you [teachers] create.

Surry County Schools is the largest employer in Surry County and our footprint directly impacts the county economically while simultaneously impacting workforce growth and development. This type of impact goes on to impact our world as we prepare citizens equipped to make their mark on the future by replicating that impact in our schools, our communities, and on the world."

Other stories of impact included those from the 2018-2019 Teacher of the Year, Mrs. Hanna Holder, who serves as a cross-categorical teacher at Westfield Elementary and the 2018-2019 Principal of the Year, Mrs. Paige Badgett, principal of North Surry High School. Both educators of the year inspired the audience along with storytellers, student, Kurtis Johnson, a senior and

football player at Surry Central High School and Lance Corporal Colton Bruner, a 2015 graduate of East Surry High School. All of the stories shared a common thread; that Surry County Schools' teachers and other educators have made a positive and profound impact, thereby encouraging students to make an impact on the surrounding community and on the world, as in the case of Lance Corporal Bruner.

Students Emmi Draughn, 1st grader at Cedar Ridge Elementary, Dan Lee, 1st grader at Dobson Elementary and Camden Roberson, Kindergartener at Westfield Elementary stole the stage when they welcomed new employees and pointedly told teachers, "We are depending on ALL of YOU to make an impact on us!" While there were many impactful moments during the program, when Juliana Cooke, a North Surry senior and Angie Smith, chorus teacher at Central Middle and Surry Central High, accompanied by Cheryl Hicks, assistant principal at Surry Central performed *For Good*, it is doubtful there were many dry eyes in the filled gymnasium. In fact, many times throughout the program audience members wiped tears as they experienced the sheer emotions of the stories as they unfolded.

The program's theme song was performed by the Convocation Choir with help from Superintendent Reeves, central office staff, principals, assistant principals, social workers, nurses, counselors, bus drivers, maintenance workers, custodians, directors, the Surry County School System 2017-2018 Volunteer of the Year, Mrs. Julie Henne, child nutrition managers, and board members. The song, entitled, *Together We Can Change the World* included the passing of a 40-inch diameter inflatable globe of the earth all around the gym until it came to rest center stage in the hands of Superintendent Reeves with all participants on the floor and on the stage united, with hands in the air. The moment was truly magical.

Superintendent Reeves, shared with the audience, estimated to be approximately 1,200 people, "Through our collaborative work this year, we will no doubt make an impact on the lives of students who may think they have no options because perhaps they can't see the possibilities for success. YOU will be their eyes. Through our joint efforts this year, we will influence the development of leadership skills for ALL and the implementation of a new strategic plan to take teaching and learning to new heights of academic success. You will be our students' guides to help them find their passions, creativity, and voice for impact. Impact happens because of leadership, commitment, drive, and determination to make a difference. Great teachers, principals, and all 1,100 employees who make up our great school system, have a direct and lasting impact on the future of Surry County."

At the conclusion of the program, the Convocation Marching Band and Color Guard charged educators for the task at hand with the song, *Get Ready*. Audience members danced in their seats as the drum line got everyone pumped up and ready to go. As educators left the event, they appeared to be ready to make an impact on the lives of their students this school year.

The influence of Convocation 2018 was felt this week as the district welcomed its 8,000 students back to school. 2018-2019 promises to be a year full of energy, enthusiasm, creativity, innovation, and impact. Teachers and students were ready and the impact of a great start to the school year will undoubtedly lead to positive outcomes for all. Surry County...Here WE Come!

