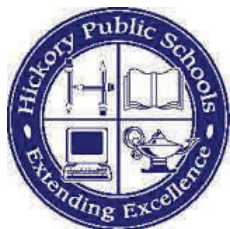


November 2013



News You Need to Know

"Extending Excellence to Every Child, Every Day"

Dear Friends of HPS:

The first READY Accountability report was presented to the State Board of Education on November 7th, revealing the expected drop in test scores with the first year of more rigorous standards.

Like many other states, North Carolina implemented the new Common Core curriculum in Reading and Math. More rigorous tests were developed by the State to assess this new curriculum. Last year's scores reflect significantly higher achievement standards and requirements than on prior End-of-Grade (EOG) and End-of-Course (EOC) tests. Simply stated, the tests got harder and the required scores to pass got higher.

Across North Carolina and depending on the grade level, the percentage of students scoring proficient dropped 16-25 percent in reading, 27-44 percent in math and 9-33 percent in science.

Last year's test results stem from significant increases in the rigor of the tests and increases in 'cut scores' used to determine proficiency rates. For example, third grade students had to correctly answer 82 percent of the questions on the reading test in order to be considered proficient. Last year our teachers did NOT become less effective, our students less bright, our parents less engaged and our community less caring.

Think of it this way, if a track athlete long jumped 15 feet in a year when the proficiency standard was 15 feet, we would proclaim the athlete proficient. If the same athlete jumped 15.5 feet the next year we would say he grew. However, if the proficiency standard in the second year was 17 feet, the same student would have grown and not been proficient at the same time.

While we accept the challenge to ensure that all students master the skills needed to do well on any required test, we especially want to prepare them for life as productive, successful citizens. Hickory Public Schools and its teachers, staff, administrators, students and parents accept the challenge to continually raise academic achievement but will not be defined solely by test scores. We take pride in a history of academic, athletic and artistic excellence and will continue to prepare all students for a bright, exciting future.

Respectfully,

Dr. Walter Hart

HPS Superintendent



A student from Northview Middle School teaches Dr. Hart how to use classroom technology.

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828-322-2855

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Kiwanis Donates Dictionaries to HPS 3rd Graders!

Every student attending the third grade at Hickory Public Schools will receive the gift of a personal dictionary. This annual donation campaign, started locally in 2005, provides new dictionaries to children while encouraging them to learn new words so that they may enhance their use of the English language.

Members from the Hickory Kiwanis, Bruce Blackburn, secretary, and Helen Devlin, past president, recently shared a personal distribution with the students at Viewmont Elementary School. HPS Superintendent, Dr. Walter Hart and Viewmont Principal, Jeff Hodakowski, celebrated with the students as they received their new dictionaries.

“We are so grateful that the Kiwanis Club sponsors this program,” said Hodakowski. “Students were very excited to receive their personal dictionary.”



HPS Principal of the Year!

Jeff Hodakowski is selected by his peers at the 2013-2014 Principal of the Year for Hickory Public Schools!



Former Hickory High EC Teacher, Rebecca Tuttle, is now serving as a new Assistant Principal for HHS!

**HHS Tornado
Marching Band
WINS 1st Place
Overall in class
with Superior ratings,
Spirit Award
and highest
scores !**



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Polio Survivor Shares Personal Story with Southwest

Susie Fender was just four years old when she started limping on her left side. That's nothing new for an active four year old; but when she started running a fever, Fender's parents became alarmed. And with good reason.

There was an epidemic of polio going around the country, and for Fender in particular, polio was also wide-spread in her hometown of Mars Hill, NC. Her parents rushed her to the local doctor who used a small rubber hammer to tap her knees for reflex. "My first knee reacted just fine—with a big kick," said Fender. "And then the doctor tapped my other knee, and he tapped it again, and then again. Nothing. There was no reaction," she said.

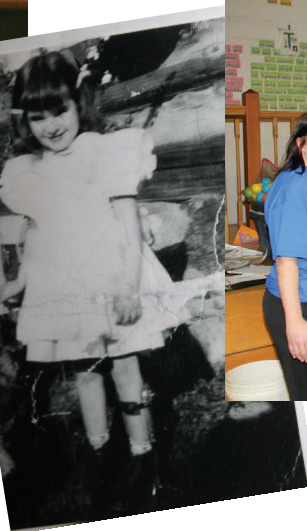
Fender was admitted to a hospital in Asheville, a hospital that was designated to receive polio victims. "The March of Dimes was a big supporter of the hospital and they placed polio victims in a pool of warm water, followed by the wrapping of our legs in a wool Army blanket," said Fender. "They gave me a brace to wear on my leg—one to help me walk since my left heel stopped growing. As I continued to age and grow, the polio left its mark with one leg 2.5 inches shorter than the other," said Fender. "I wore the brace until I was 12 years old."

Following Susie Fender's recent presentation at Southwest Elementary, the president of the Hickory Rotary Club, Suzanne Trollan, demonstrated "the purple pinkie project," a process used during polio vaccinations with children. HPS Superintendent, Dr. Walter Hart, volunteered to join the purple pinkie excitement at Southwest—as Trollan colored Dr. Hart's pinkie with the purple solution. Throughout the world, each time a Rotary volunteer administers a polio vaccine, a child's pinkie is colored purple with the topical solution Gentian Violet - temporarily marking the child to prevent double dosage.

All Southwest students, with parental permission, were invited to bring in a \$1 donation for the purple pinkie project—and in doing so, they could have their pinkies colored purple. According to Southwest Principal, Jenny White, each \$1 donation will cover vaccinations for ten children. In addition to the purple coloring of Dr. Hart's pinkie, Conrad the Crawdad (from the Hickory Crawdads) was on the scene—waiving a purple glove on his claw to help generate enthusiasm for the project.



Susie Fender shows brace that she wore as a young girl (also in photo at right, age 5)



Southwest Student Council members celebrate the "Purple Pinkie Project" with special visitors.

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Two Hickory Schools Named to State Honors Chorus



Jenkins Elementary Honors Chorus



Oakwood Elementary Honors Chorus



HPS Recognizes Frye Regional Medical Center

Hickory Public Schools recently recognized Frye Regional Medical Center for the hospital's outstanding partnership with the school district.

Over the last three years, Frye Regional has opened their doors to provide job training to the students enrolled in the Occupational Course of Study (OCS) program at Hickory High School. The students have received training in multiple areas with an emphasis in the hospital cafeteria, under the supervision of Sheila Hooper, patient service manager for Frye.



HPS eLeaders Present to Board

Each month, the eLeaders of Hickory Public Schools, a group of teacher leaders who are engaged in professional development that focuses on effective technology integration, will present to the HPS Board of Education. They will demonstrate several tools and techniques used in today's classrooms.

The first presenters included Rachael Moyer and Chris Rice, both English teachers at Hickory High School and participants in the eLeader Academy program. Their Prezi, entitled "The eLeader Effect" included a zoomable canvas of ideas including: New Minds, New Hardware, New Environment and Subsequent Outcome.

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Special Veterans Day Connection for Oakwood Students



The third graders at Oakwood Elementary School experienced a new appreciation for Veterans Day. While many of these youngsters may know someone who has served in the Armed Forces of the United States, they typically don't get the opportunity to exchange in a personal dialogue about the veteran's sacrifice and honor of service.

But all that changed as the Oakwood students prepared for their final assignment designed to focus on Veterans Day. Entering the media center with prepared questions in hand, the third grade students, accompanied by their teachers and HPS Superintendent, Dr. Walter Hart, joined their principal, Ryan McCreary, for a very special event.

Principal McCreary set up Face Time technology using an iPad, document camera and projector, while the children took their seats. Indeed, this was going to be a unique Veterans Day celebration. As the screen revealed a connection, there sat 2nd Lt. Morgan McCreary, US Army, along with his dog, George. With an American flag appropriately draped in the background, 2nd Lt. McCreary, was introduced from his home in Colorado. He recently returned from a tour in Afghanistan and was joined by his wife, Elizabeth, who helped to video the connection with the Oakwood students.

2nd Lt. McCreary is the younger brother of Principal McCreary—and they brainstormed this educational opportunity for the students.



Meet **Rebecca Allen**—new
Director of Child Nutrition
for Hickory Public Schools

HPS Child Nutrition serves
4,200 meals each day!



Hickory Career & Arts Magnet High School
(HCAM) recently presented a theatrical production,
HeartFelt, to support the fight against breast cancer.

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Meet April Icard!

HPS 2013-2014 Teacher of the Year

Pre-K Teacher, HHS

According to Icard, a teacher is one of the most influential people in a child's life—other than a parent. "That is why I believe teaching to be one of the greatest and most important careers a person can have," she said. "Teaching is not easy and brings great responsibility, but the reward is great. Teaching is what I am privileged to say that I do and who I am."

"Make it ORANGE & Make it End!"

The students and staff of Jenkins Elementary recently joined in the national movement to end bullying. The school family, with approximately 450 students and 40 staff members, wore orange to remind one another that bullying is unacceptable at Jenkins or anywhere else.

Hickory Public Schools uses the Olweus Bullying Prevention Program, a research-based bullying prevention training program. The HPS faculty is currently involved with on-going training and implementation strategies to reduce bullying problems in the schools—for the long term.

The Olweus Bullying Prevention Program is designed to improve peer relations and make schools safer, more positive places for students to learn and develop. Goals of the program include: reducing existing bullying problems among students, preventing the development of new bullying problems, and achieving better peer relations at school.



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Viewmont Elementary recognized as REWARD School!

A REWARD school, according to the NC Department of Public Instruction, is considered a “highest-performing” school with all student groups making AYP—Adequate Yearly Progress; and additionally, the school exhibits no significant achievement gaps across student subgroups.



Homemade Yeast Rolls for your Holiday Table!

The Culinary Academy at Hickory Career & Arts Magnet High School (HCAM), under the leadership of Brenda Deitz, is taking orders from the community for their “made from scratch” yeast rolls for the holidays! The rolls are \$4, per dozen.

NOVEMBER: Place your orders by November 18. Pick up rolls on Nov. 25 or 26 between 8:30 AM—3:30 PM at HCAM.

DECEMBER: Place your orders by December 11th. Pick up rolls on Dec. 17 or 18 between 8:30 AM—3:30 PM at HCAM.

To place your order, call HCAM: 828-328-6738

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Newsletter:

HPS Public Information Office / snowdenbe@hickoryschools.net