

A large, semi-transparent photograph of a young man in a dark blue graduation cap and gown, smiling and hugging a woman with braided hair. The woman is wearing a dark top and a large, prominent diamond ring on her left hand. The background shows a brick wall and other people, suggesting a graduation ceremony.

# 2016-2017 A N N U A L R E P O R T

Bertie County Schools • 715 US Hwy 13 North, Windsor, NC 27983 • 252-794-6000 • [www.bertie.k12.nc.us](http://www.bertie.k12.nc.us)



# Meet Dr. Hill

Steven Hill, Ed.D was hired as superintendent in October 2016. He came to us in December from the position of Executive Director for STEM East Network, a private-public education initiative focused on developing partnerships between schools, government, employers, and private foundations to provide educational opportunities to students in eastern North Carolina.

Hill has experience as a district director, freshman academy administrator, principal and teacher in the North Carolina Public School System. He began his career in public service as an EMT, firefighter and police officer, while putting himself through school.

Hill completed a doctorate in educational leadership in 2014 from East Carolina University. He received a bachelor's degree from the University of Mount Olive in Mount Olive, North Carolina and a master's degree in school administration from East Carolina University.

"Dr. Hill stood out among the highly qualified field of candidates for his passion and proven track record in making student-focused decisions that support academic success," stated then Board Chair Tarsha Dudley in a press release upon the hiring of the superintendent.

"He has in-depth expertise in instructional strategies and models using technology, innovative professional development programs, and breadth in curriculum. His strengths as a communicator and a collaborative leader, focused on building positive relationships, will further Bertie County Schools' successes."



*We are evolving in  
Bertie County Schools.*

*We are praising our staff and schools for  
their achievements and  
transforming our brand to show that  
BCS offers better opportunities and  
better futures for the students  
enrolled in our schools.*

*Through the development of vertically  
aligned curricula coupled with  
partnerships among institutions of  
higher education, BCS is expanding  
college and career pathways for students.*

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Steven Hill".

## Note from the Editor:

**During the development of this publication, Dr. Hill left Bertie County Schools to serve as Superintendent for Pender County.**

Dr. Del Burns was hired to serve as the Temporary Superintendent for Bertie County Schools.

Burns will serve in Bertie County from September 18, 2017 to January 31, 2018.

Burns spent 24 years in Wake County Public Schools as a special education teacher, assistant principal and principal. These teaching and school

leadership roles were followed by 10 years of service as the associate superintendent, deputy superintendent and superintendent, also for Wake County Public Schools.

In 2011, he became President and CEO of the Burns Alliance, Inc., which provides consulting services to large and small public school districts in rural and urban areas across several states.

Also, beginning in 2011, Burns began to serve in a variety of consecutive interim superintendent roles, providing support for school districts that were experiencing transitions in leadership.

The school districts he has served in as interim include Orange County Schools, Alamance-Burlington School System and Edgecombe County Schools.



**Dr. Del Burns**

"Dr. Burns has considerable experience as a superintendent. He will be a no-nonsense leader for Bertie County Schools," said Board Chair Bobby Occena. "He will set the pace for the next permanent superintendent."

# Meet the Board



**Tarsha Dudley**  
*District 5*



**Jo Davis Johnson**  
*District 2B*



**Bobby Occena**  
*Chair*  
*Districts 1-2*



**Emma Johnson**  
*District 3*



**Barry McGlone**  
*Vice Chair*  
*District 4*

**F**rom considering important details to making substantial decisions and policies for the district, our board members have devoted themselves to a year-round commitment of doing only what is best for the students in our schools.

These individuals selflessly fulfill the duties and responsibilities of their elected office and also participate in rigorous training so they are able to go above and beyond to ensure that our schools are safe and successful.

Did you know that school board members are the only elected officials who are required to attend initial training and professional development in order to fulfill their duties? That speaks volumes for the heavy responsibilities that school board members take on.

*Thank you!*



## MISSION:

**Guided by innovative, effective leaders in partnership with parents and community members, Bertie County Schools will provide high quality, rigorous, student-centered learning opportunities that will prepare our students for life in our ever-changing world.**

## VISION:

**ENGAGED students**

**+ QUALIFIED personnel**

**+ INVOLVED parents**

**+ SUPPORTIVE community**

**= GRADUATES, college, career and life ready!**

# 2016-2017 School Sites



*Windsor  
Elementary School*  
**Principal:**  
**Tracy Gregory**



*Askewville Preschool  
Director:  
Tundra Woolard*



*Aulander STEM  
Elementary School*  
**Principal:**  
**Clara Lee**



*Colerain  
Elementary School*  
**Principal:**  
**Carol Mizelle**



*West Bertie  
Elementary School*  
**Principal:**  
**Cynthia Byrd**



*Bertie Middle School  
Principal:  
William Peele III  
Assistant Principal:  
Tawanda  
Smallwood*



*Bertie High School  
Principal:  
Calvin Moore  
Assistant Principals:  
William Ledford  
Antonio Hoggard*

*Bertie STEM High School  
Principal:  
Daphne Williams*



*Bertie Early College  
High School  
Principal:  
Wanda Cofield*

# Leaders in the Spotlight



**Tracy  
Gregory**  
*Windsor  
Elementary School*

## Principal of the Year

Tracy Gregory, principal of Windsor Elementary School, was chosen as Principal of the Year in 2016. She prides herself on being an instructional leader with a total of 25 years in education, 17 of which were in the classroom teaching, leading and loving students.

Mrs. Gregory is a “people person,” and that same energy, efficiency and effectiveness translates from the classroom into her building. She is a listener and a problem solver, and in three years, she led Aulander STEM Elementary Schools’ growth from 34.8 percent proficiency to 58.9 percent proficiency.

Mrs. Gregory was appointed as the principal of Windsor Elementary School in August of 2016.



**Latonya  
Square**  
*Colerain  
Elementary School*

## Teacher of the Year

Fourth-grade English/language arts teacher Latonya Square represented the district as the Bertie County Schools Teacher of the Year, going on to compete for the Wells Fargo regional title.

Square teaches in the community in which she grew up, Colerain. She has taught for a total of 18 years, 16 of which were in Bertie County Schools, and two of which were in a private school in Winton, called Better Child Care Christian Academy.

She earned her B.S. in Elementary Education from Elizabeth City State University. She also has a Master’s in Elementary Education from Chowan University and a Master’s in Education Administration from Grand Canyon University.

“I believe all children can achieve if you give them the proper tools,” said Square. She said she loves what she does, and that it is because of her dedication that she received this honor.



**Candace  
Benford**  
*Bertie Middle School*

## Teacher Assistant of the Year

Bertie Middle School’s ISS and PBIS Coordinator, Candace Benford, was named the Bertie County Schools Teacher Assistant of the Year for 2016-2017.

Benford, a native of Kelford, has spent her entire career—24 years—serving middle grades students of Bertie County Schools.

She earned a B.A. in Early Childhood Education from Elizabeth City State University and also holds a Master’s degree in Biblical Counseling from Andersonville Theological Seminary.

Benford said that being a teacher assistant allows her to operate in the areas she is gifted in—service, hospitality, help and administration. “I am here to serve,” she said. “As ISS and PBIS Coordinator, I can make a difference ... this is quite an honor.”

# Classes of 2017



## Scholarship Amounts:

### BHS

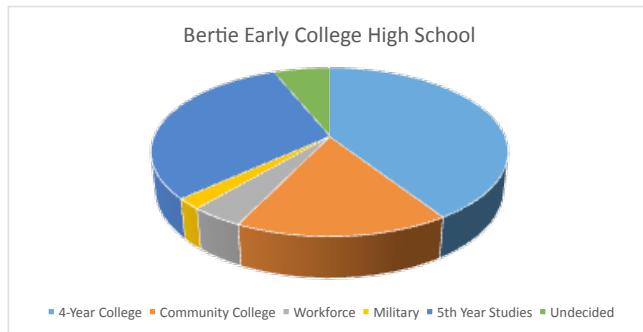
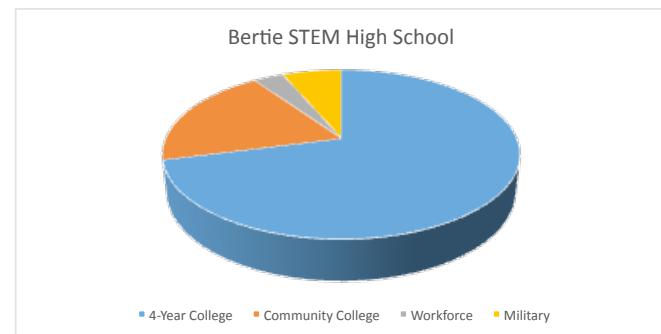
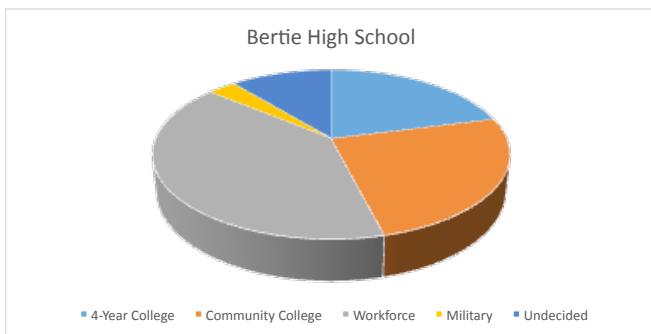
**\$161,372.80**

### STEM

**\$536,857.00**

### Early College

**\$82,520.00**



## Early College 5<sup>th</sup> Year Students:

**4-year college = 3**

**Community College = 2**

**Workforce = 1**

## Early College Cost Savings for Parents and Students in 2016-2017

**\*\*Note that this saving only includes tuition and not books and other fees**

**Last year, there were 627 enrollments and most classes are 3 credit hours.**

**At a major university (NCSU data used here) the cost per credit is \$272.58.**

**627 x 3 = 1,881 Credit Hours**

**1,881 x \$272.58 = \$512,722.98 Total Savings**

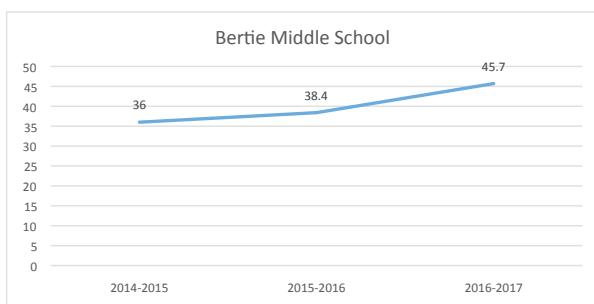
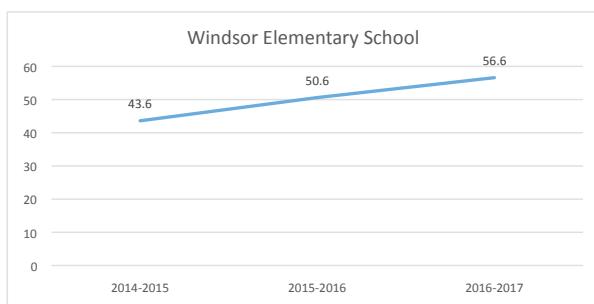
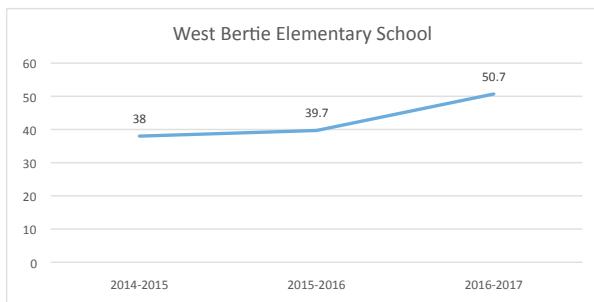
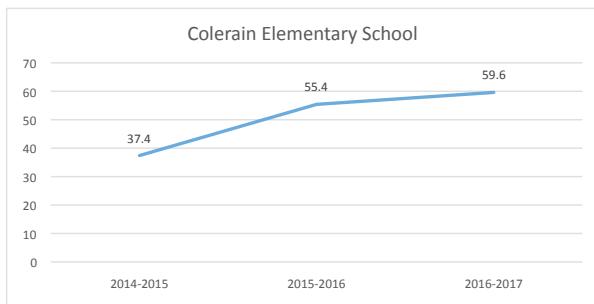
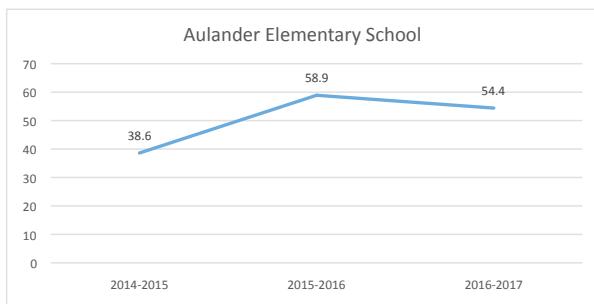
**At a community college (MCC data used here) the cost per credit is \$81.50.**

**627 x 3 = 1,881 Credit Hours**

**1,881 x \$81.50 = \$153,301.51 Total Savings**

# 2016-2017 Data Results

## Grade Level Proficiency Performance Composite



The schools in Bertie County are making steady progress in key areas!



West Bertie Elementary School had the greatest increase in student proficiency in 2016-2017. As a result, its whole School Performance Grade went from a D to a C in 2016-2017. We also had no school below a D; four C's and two B's.

Four schools—Bertie Middle, West Bertie Elementary, Colerain Elementary and Windsor Elementary—exceeded growth on the EVAAS scale, and Bertie Early College and Aulander Elementary Met Growth.



Colerain Elementary School ranked fifth among all schools and second among elementary schools in the entire Northeast Region for EVAAS growth in schools that also exceeded growth.

Graduation rates are on the rise in all of our high schools as well. Bertie High School's 4-Year Cohort Graduation Rate went from 79.8% to 82.2%, and the early college and STEM high schools remain above 95% each.

*Our students, staff and leaders have been pushing students to achieve at their highest potential. We have made great strides, and there is always room to grow and improve. We are proud of where we are and how far we've come. We look forward to how much more we can accomplish as we work together to provide the best educational experience for the children of Bertie County. We have NO SCHOOLS with a grade of F, and we continue to no longer be a low-performing district!*

## 2016-2017 School Performance Grades

Aulander	.....	C
Colerain	.....	C
West Bertie	.....	C
Windsor	.....	C
Bertie Middle	.....	D
Bertie High	.....	D
Bertie STEM	.....	B
Bertie Early College	.....	B

# NCQUEST Grant



**B**ertie County Schools is one of only five projects in the state that is currently being funded by the NC QUEST grant. And the district has recently learned that it will be funded for another year in 2017-2018.

NC QUEST is a Targeted Reading Intervention (TRI) grant developed by researchers at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. It stands for North Carolina Quality Educators through Staff Development and Training.

Prior to implementation, K-2 teachers in Bertie County Schools worked closely with TRI trainers and toolkits—actual containers, for each educator, that hold all of the materials needed for the targeted reading intervention methods. Teacher tool kits include a series of books for each of the four reading levels (about 50 total books); reference tools for the teacher; lesson guides; comparison guides; a dry erase kit and the work boards and tiles that are key to comprehension.

In addition, every teacher in K-2 has access to his or her own TRI Coach, with whom weekly meetings are conducted for feedback and support.

The grant award amount for Bertie County Schools for the 2016-2017 school year was \$281,593, which mostly covers the costs for training and materials. Each K-2 teacher also received an iPad to communicate with the coaches each week.

TRI was developed at UNC-CH by Lynne Vernon-Feagons along with Marnie Ginsberg and Steve Amendum. It is about ten years old, according to Cutrer, who became involved in this program because she grew up in a small, rural town in a poor area of Florida. There, she said, she experienced a lack of resources and thus understands “the systemic effects not having a strong foundation in literacy can have on... basically everything.”

*On June 22, K-2 teachers from across the region, who were a part of the implementation of grant-funded Targeted Reading Intervention strategies last year, gathered at the Central Services Complex to become certified TRI trainers for their schools. They reflected on their successes and refreshed their methods of helping students become more literate and confident.*

Daily implementation of Targeted Reading Intervention (TRI) during the 2016-17 school year within our K-2 classrooms proved to be very successful. The detailed lessons and coaching provided, gave teachers reading strategies to use with struggling readers in order to grow students reading levels by the end of the year. As a result, Reading 3D data revealed significant improvement in each participant's reading level by the conclusion of the year.



*We had much success with TRI last year! The detailed lessons and coaching provided gave teachers strategies to use in growing students' reading levels by the end of the year.*

**Belinda Burkett, M.Ed.**

**First Grade Teacher, Aulander Elementary School**

## 5-Star Preschool Program

All three NC Pre-K sites have a Five-Star Rating from the N.C. Department of Health and Human Services.

The sites are: Askewville, Colerain and West Bertie.

All licensed programs, except religious sponsored programs, have a star-rating similar to those you find for other products and services. A One Star means the program meets North Carolina's minimum child care requirements. A Five Star license means a program meets the voluntary enhanced standards required for the highest star level.

Programs earn their star rating based only on the two components that give parents the best indication of quality: staff education and program standards. For more information, go to: [http://ncchildcare.nc.gov/parents/pr\\_sn2\\_ov\\_sr.asp](http://ncchildcare.nc.gov/parents/pr_sn2_ov_sr.asp)



## Summer enrichment keeps students engaged



*Summer camps kicked off in May and June with the EOC and EOG programs, which provided assistance and extra instruction in specific subject areas to help students score higher upon retest of the state assessments.*

*BCS was also able to offer a variety of other special summer programs through several grants and other funding, which was earmarked for said programs.*

Camps included:

The AIG Summer Camp: "Our Hero the Sphero," which heavily involved computer programming and coding.

The NASA MUREP Aerospace Academy, which was a collaborative effort among NASA, Elizabeth City State University and six satellite school system sites—one of which was Bertie Middle School.

The 21<sup>st</sup> Century Community Learning Center summer program, which engaged students

in grades 6-9 with 21<sup>st</sup> Century skills in math, reading, science, STEM and a multitude of enriching activities in art and literature.

The Read to Achieve Summer Camp, which allowed students in grades 1-3 to participate in a variety of activities that provided summer instruction and fun in fostering literacy.

Summer "Bridge" Camps, which helped prepare students in transition grades for the upcoming year at a different school level.



## Bertie High School's Sade Proctor goes to Governor's School

### "IMAGINE ... A Summer Program

**... where students who are among the best and brightest gather for the love of learning and the joy of creativity**  
**... where teachers and students form a community while searching together for answers to challenging questions**  
**... where there are no grades or tests**  
**... where a synergy of intellectual curiosity fuels the exploration of the latest ideas in various disciplines**

### This is the Governor's School of North Carolina ...

Bertie High School 11th grader Sade Proctor did not have to imagine because she experienced Governor's School first hand. Please congratulate her on this accomplishment. It is a great achievement and an honor to be accepted to participate.

# *Public Safety Cadets included in RCCC graduation ceremony*



Through partnerships with Roanoke-Chowan Community College, Bertie County Schools, the N.C. Department of Public Safety, local community stakeholders and former Gov. Pat McCrory's office, the first ever, historic pilot program known as the Bertie Public Safety Cadet Program has come full circle ...

In 2016, sixteen high school juniors began taking face-to-face college courses in Criminal Justice, earning high school and college credits.

On May 5, 2017, the fruits of the labors of the student cadets, their instructors, mentors and all other stakeholders culminated. The very first BPSCP cohort graduated, having participated in Criminal Justice classes, internships and other exercises that fostered community relations and prepared students for their next steps in life.

Cadets graduated with the "Corrections Specialist I" and "Corrections Specialist II" certificates, having completed a total of 18 Criminal Justice credit hours apiece for the entire program.

Through their courses and experiences, cadets have developed leadership, integrity, responsibility and a sense of community.

The college credits earned by the cadets will also count toward an associate's degree in criminal justice at Roanoke-Chowan Community College or Martin Community College.

College courses completed while in high school were free of charge, and cadets enrolling in a community college after graduation may receive tuition assistance through federal and state programs.

"We all strive to see our students excited about learning, and the BPSCP has sparked an interest in our cadets that will hopefully continue with them long after they graduate," said the Bertie County Schools' CTE Coordinator Stephanie Cottle. "I am so excited about the opportunities that await these graduates."

"I have watched them all grow and mature over the past year and a half as they have explored the field of Criminal Justice.

"I look forward to seeing how they will continue on their journeys and hopefully give back to their community in such a way that will inspire future students to become BPSCP Cadets."

## **2017 Cadet Graduates**

*Terence Andrews, Jr.  
Aaliyah Bush  
Kristany Cook  
Marcilla Demry  
Talya Gamble  
Kamiya Hayes  
Shanidra Outlaw  
Da'Quan Palmer*

*Germika Parker  
Robert Russell  
Eboney Slade  
Erick Speight  
Joshua Tann  
Tywon Wilder  
Aniya Williams  
Gregory Williams*

## **Courses included:**

**Law Enforcement Ops  
Corrections  
Introduction to Criminal Justice  
Investigative Principles  
Crisis Intervention  
Community Service Project**

# Bertie STRONG: Recognizing Achievement Event

The February 9<sup>th</sup> "Bertie Strong: Recognizing Achievement" event focused on recognizing and celebrating the strengths of our schools. There are exciting things happening in our schools! The dedication, skills and accomplishments of students, faculty and staff were showcased at individual school "booths" and on stage by school leaders.

Highlights included:

- The District's improved School Performance Rating,
- The increased number of teachers exceeding state standards of student growth,
- The teachers ranked in the top 25% of performance in 3<sup>rd</sup> grade Reading, CTE teachers who led students to industry level certifications, and much more!



# Elementary School Highlights ...



## Aulander Year Round STEM Elementary School

Fourth and fifth grade students experienced a visit from the Mobile Planetarium from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill's Morehead Planetarium and Science Center.



- First ever Math Night and Multiplication Bee
- Literacy Night, complete with students in character costumes
- Peanut Festival participation
- Visits from the North Carolina Museum of Natural Science
- Sumorobotics competition
- "Spring Fling" schoolwide dance

## Colerain Elementary School



### Literacy: One School, One Book

Books read schoolwide during 2016-2017:

- **"The Tale of Despereaux"**  
By Kate DiCamillo
- **"The HomeWork Machine"**  
By Dan Gutman
- **"The Trumpet of the Swan"**  
By E.B. White

For the third year in a row, the Colerain Elementary School's Battle of the Books team won the district competition. The Battle of the Books tested fourth and fifth grade students' knowledge of 18 books this year. The CES team represented us well at the regional competition.

- One School, One Book
- Jamaica Day
- Science Festival
- Windsor, Colerain and Powellsburg parade participation
- Student of the Month recognitions and family luncheons

## West Bertie Elementary School



In June, the winners in each grade level of the First Annual West Bertie Panther Professional Spelling Bee were recognized by WBES Principal Cynthia Byrd and Media Coordinator Ja'Mese Bazemore. Students in grades K-5 at the school learned 100-200 grade level core content words for the competition.

- Host of "Cinco de Mayo: A Celebration of Culture and Literacy" in partnership with Better Beginnings for Bertie's Children
- Tuesday Folder parent communication to share students' work
- Monthly Family Engagement Nights with "Data Digs"
- Relay for Life and Jump Rope for Heart charitable contributions
- UNC Academic All-Stars for each grade level, complete with trip to Carolina football game

## Windsor Elementary School



In May, Windsor Elementary students participated in a schoolwide College and Career Day event, rising to the challenge of the school's mission and vision, by gaining valuable exposure to real-world colleges and careers.

- Numerous trophies for placing in group math competition at Chowan University
- Canned goods collection for local food drive
- Student-made PBIS videos about demonstrating appropriate behaviors in various school settings
- Fifth grade ecosystem book authorships for the board and county commissioners

## Bertie Middle School

A group of Bertie Middle School students, known as the "Geovators," presented the skills learned and projects completed for a special Project-Based Learning unit on the integration of art and technology in geometry, under the direction of BMS Media Coordinator Pamela Baker and Board Member Jo Davis Johnson. Students also used geo-boards, Cahoot software, green screen technol-



ogy, the Cricket book-making machine and Google docs to explore this concept. Students showcased the projects they created, which included T-shirts, books and pillows that featured each student's unique geometric designs.

## Bertie STEM High School



The "Technical Assassins" robotics team was recognized before the board for their recent accomplishments. The program affords students the opportunities for mentoring, scholarships, training with experts and most importantly, building teamwork. For more information, go to [www.firstinspires.org](http://www.firstinspires.org) or visit the Bertie STEM High School's Robotics web site.

## Bertie Early College High School



At the Annual Biotechnology Symposium, students in Bruce Boller's biotechnology class hosted visitors from the likes of board members, community members and industry representatives, including the North Carolina Biotechnology Center, the United States Department of Agriculture, Martin Community College, North Carolina State University, the Kenan Fellows, and more!

The young scientists of the early college got a feel for how "real" scientists show their work, said Boller. Each student stood at his or her research poster, fielding questions and leading discussions about a variety of topics covered in the school's lab, which is directly linked to Dr. Matt Koci's research at NCSU, dealing with turkey proteins.

## Bertie High School

*A December 8, 2016 News Release from CISNC read:*

**"With \$125,000 in support from AT&T, Communities in Schools of Schools of North Carolina (CISNC) has been able to provide Bertie High School students with wraparound services to increase attendance, improve behavior, enhance coursework and engage more parents and families in student success."**

Just prior to the start of the 2016-2017 school year, Communities in Schools of North Carolina and the BCS Board of Education signed a MOA for services to be provided for Bertie High School.

Bertie High School was selected to benefit from the CISNC services because it is considered to have academic and non-academic barriers.

A Student Support Specialist from the organization was placed in the school to engage with school leadership, teachers and students.

The goal was to address school wide needs and to drill down to create individual student suc-

cess plans for those who need intensive help.

Support from this program is tailored to each student's specific needs and aims to connect students and families to evidence-based services and supports, as well as critical educational and community-based resources.

At the close of 2016-2017, newly appointed CIS Site Coordinator Pamela Chamblee reported, "We made some great strides in providing supports to students who have various barriers in the educational setting."

The target population for 2016-2017 school year was 10% of the enrollment.

Achievements through the 2016-2017 Implementation Year included:

- Individualized support plans for academics and non-academics
- Reduced referrals
- Reduced absences
- Reduced dropouts
- Group and one-on-one tutoring
- Sessions on testing strategies
- Job Fairs and job skills trainings
- Established parental involvement team
- School-wide empowerment (motivational) speaking sessions
- Group and one-on-one counseling (Hygiene, LGBT, Substance Abuse, Gangs)
- Post-graduation goal setting

# Auxiliary Services



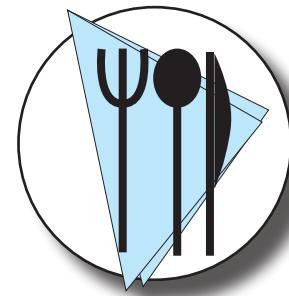
## Transportation

**62 Yellow Buses**  
**1,939 Daily Riders**  
**5,886 Miles Traveled Per Day**

Annual Bus ROAD-eo Winners:  
1st Place: Daryl Warren  
2nd Place: David Biggs  
3rd Place: Terrance White



West Bertie prepares Chef Ambassadors recipes.

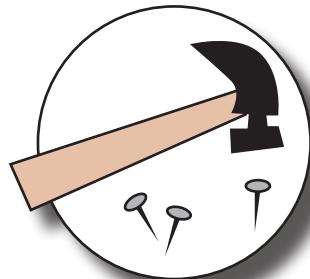


## School Nutrition

### Other Initiatives:

- Fresh Chopped Initiative - West Bertie students learned about nutrition while enjoying fresh, locally grown collards.
- Colerain Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program
- New recipe taste-testing

**Approximately 2,000 Reimbursable Lunches Served Daily & Approximately 285 Catered Meals Daily**



## Maintenance

**More Than 1,600 Work Orders Successfully Completed**

# *Enhancing Communication and Uncovering our Brand*

**B**eginning in February, a committee comprised of the superintendent, some Central Services directors and staff, parents, community members, a writer from the Roanoke-Chowan News-Herald and School Board Member Emma Johnson met for the first time to embark on an exciting new adventure in branding and communication.

The Family and Community Communications Committee met monthly through the end of the school year, working together to create a communications network to share ideas and gather important feedback and information from stakeholders in a sustained effort to help better serve the students of Bertie County Schools.

The goal is to enhance communication and public perception.

Good communication is associated with higher levels of parental involvement; parental involvement is correlated with better school attendance, higher student achievement, higher graduation rates and a host of other positive factors that help students succeed not only at school, but in life.



Good things happen for our children when we vamp up communication and marketing.

The time, creativity and commitment of the committee members is greatly appreciated, and the district is looking forward to continuing the journey in the upcoming school year.

## *A Win-Win for BCS and Summer Marketing Intern*



From May 22 through July 10, the Human Resources and Communications departments had the unique opportunity to work with a summer marketing intern, Antonio Powell.

Powell is a rising senior at UNC-Charlotte where he majors in marketing. He is also a 2014 Bertie STEM High School graduate, and he chose to return to Bertie County Schools to complete his year

three internship, which is a requirement of the Golden Leaf Foundation Scholarship that he received as a senior at the STEM school.

The Golden Leaf Foundation Scholarship program takes high school graduates from the East and turns them into leaders over the course of their college careers in the hopes of developing in them the desire to come back home upon graduation from college and work and serve in their hometown communities east of I-95.

Powell's major project for the duration of the internship was to create a promotional video about Bertie County Schools.

He made a 10-minute promotional video and a shorter version of the same, as well as a short video on the Summer Meals Program at the request of the Superintendent.

The videos will be shared with stakeholders, placed on the web site and used in presentations made by the superintendent.

He left BCS with something tangible for his own portfolio, while also leaving behind for us his videos, which will be used today and in the future.



**Summer Meals Video**  
<https://youtu.be/TivcGN05BRo>



**Promotional Video**  
<https://youtu.be/-2D4Bu-foAk>

# *A word about School Finance in 2017*

**T**he Bertie County Board of Education faced a serious financial decision in April. Ultimately, the board had to implement a Reduction in Force to take swift action to tackle the past carry-over deficit and existing state and federal budget cut challenges.

When Dr. Hill came on board in December, his initial task was to rectify the budget situation and develop an accurate and sustainable financial process for the district.

The board subsequently supported the hiring of an experienced finance

officer in February to bridge past budget discrepancies and ensure that all accurate financial processes are incorporated within the system as norms.

While a Reduction in Force has a negative impact on those affected, one positive aspect that came about as a result was having an opportunity to really drill down and examine processes and procedures in the aim to improve upon the way Bertie County Schools does business.

It has also been an opportunity to improve communication and become more transparent in our financial

dealings.

The work completed by the BCS staff was recognized by the State Board of Education: Its members voted unanimously to support the BCS Financial Recovery Plan.

The BCS Human Resources Department also hosted a resource fair in which affected employees were given an opportunity to learn about a provision of yearlong insurance, unemployment payment information, job application preparation, and other resource as they faced transition.

## *School Improvement Grant*

**A**s a direct result of the efforts of the Curriculum and Instruction Department, the federal School Improvement Grant for Bertie High School was accepted by the BOE in November 2016.

Bertie County Schools received the Federal School Improvement Grant (SIG) funds as authorized under section 1003(g) of Title I of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 (ESEA). The amount was approximately \$2 million.

The 2016-2017 school year was the planning year for how to use the School Improvement Grant for Bertie High School. The 2017-2018 school year is one for the first phase of imple-

mentation.

Key components of the grant include: offering sign-on bonuses and performance based bonuses for good teachers who come and stay; providing regular professional development for instructional staff and in general, having more funds and flexibility to work with in order to meet the needs of the students at Bertie High School.

Bertie High School was also approved by the State BOE to use the Restart Option.

Only 19 schools were approved by the State BOE to become restart schools in the 2017-2018 school year.

The key to "restart schools" is a change in structures that the state approves

to radically decrease the likelihood of repeated low performance in each school that applies.

One example of an innovation strategy includes the recent vote by the local BOE to align all high school calendars with the college calendars.

*"Some other keys to this grant are: new school leadership; efforts to make all courses and instructional programs to support the total school curriculum; extended learning time; and teachers' continuous use of data to help us to better meet students' needs."*



**Dr. Linda Justus**  
Director of  
Curriculum and  
Instruction

## *Looking Ahead ...*

**W**e are on the cusp of great changes in school culture, leadership and performance. A majority of our schools have seen a consistent trend upward in growth and performance on state standardized tests, which are used to measure students' mastery of the curriculum prescribed by the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction.

For the 2017-2018 school year, we will officially adopt an Employee Code of Excellence, which outlines standards and expectations of our employees in order to provide the best possible experience for our students. As public servants, we are holding ourselves to a higher accountability as we shape the futures of our most precious assets—the children.

We are also blurring the lines between

the high school and college experience by partnering with local community colleges to offer post-secondary courses to students while they are still in high school. And Science, Technology, Engineering and Math (STEM) curricula are driving instruction, especially in the middle grades.

Be on the watch for wonderful accomplishments in the coming year!