Expanded options for Randolph County students

Dear Randolph County School System students, staff members and parents:

I want to welcome everyone back to the Randolph County School System for the 2017-2018 school year. In a few days, our 31 schools will open their doors to 17,000 students.

The previous school years have involved efforts by our school system to increase access to instruction for students at school as well as away from campus through the acquisition of digital resources. This same approach, with a consistent focus on learning and teaching, will be used during the 2017-2018 school year. In addition, efforts to address the individual instructional needs of our students at all levels of academic performance will remain a priority.

The 2017-2018 school year will be highlighted by several exciting developments in multiple zones of the school system. Examples of these initiatives include:

1. The conversion of Uwharrie Middle School from a school with grades 6-8 to Uwharrie Ridge Six-Twelve will start during the 2017-2018 school year.

As a result, a ninth grade will be added to the school for the upcoming school year. By the 2020-2021 school year, the school will have students in grades 6-12 due to adding one high school grade level per year starting with the 2017-2018 school year. This project, the school system’s first one-to-one technology school, will represent another “school choice” option for our students. Another important note is the fact that the project’s total cost of $410,000 was funded by the Randolph County commissioners.

2. A new Metals Manufacturing Program will open at Eastern Randolph High School during the 2017-2018 school year. The opening of this program will result from the school system’s receipt of $720,000 in “Golden LEAF” funding in April 2017. It also is important to note that our application for this funding, submitted as a partnership with Asheboro City Schools and Randolph Community College, was made possible by the county commissioners’ efforts to contribute $240,000 in matching funds.

3. The existing Metals Manufacturing Program at Randleman High School will be upgraded during the 2017-2018 school year. This program has been in existence since the late 1990s. Part of the $720,000 in “Golden LEAF” funding received by the school system in April 2017 will be used to make this project a reality.

4. Plans are being made to build a new middle school in the Archdale-Trinity zone. In fact, the county commissioners allocated an additional $500,000 in “capital outlay” funding to the school system for the 2017-2018 school year to use to complete the initial planning stages of this project.

5. A new Agriculture Program involving the school system’s partnership with Mount Olive University and Randolph Community College will start at Providence Grove High School during the 2017-2018 school year. With this program, students will be able to complete an Associate of Science Degree in Agriculture without leaving the county.

6. The Apprenticeship Randolph Program will continue during the 2017-2018 school year. Our school system is very grateful for the 12 companies engaged in the program. Students who complete this program will earn an Associate of Applied Science Degree and a Journeyman’s Certificate. Furthermore, they will exit the program with a job at the company involved in their apprenticeship experience.

Our staff is working hard to help students graduate with options for the future. Furthermore, the Randolph County Board of Education and county commissioners continue to provide a high level of support for our school system. In fact, for the 2017-2018 school year, the county commissioners increased our “current expense” funding by $819,346. An additional $700,000 was added to our “capital outlay” funding for the 2017-2018 school year as well.

While these funding increases will be used to address multiple needs, I also am very proud to note that our employees’ local supplement will be increased for the second consecutive year as a result of this work by our board of education and the county commissioners.

It is an exciting time to be a part of the Randolph County School System. Efforts are being made every day to increase the learning opportunities for our students. Innovation on the campus of each school throughout the school system also will continue to contribute to this result. I look forward to the 2017-2018 school year and the opportunity to work with you in an effort to help our school system continue to improve during our move to the future.

Dr. Stephen Gainey is superintendent of the Randolph County School System.

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