

LCPS Convocation features a look to the future, guest speakers and student performances...

By Brian Nowlin, Southside Messenger

“Kids don’t make up 100 percent of our population, but they make up 100 percent of our future,” stated Lunenburg County Public Schools Superintendent Charles Berkley.

LCPS held their annual Opening Convocation event at Lunenburg Middle School on August 16th and the event featured, guest speakers, student performances and an introduction of new and current school employees.

The morning activities started with The National Anthem and opening remarks by Lunenburg County School Board Chairman Barry Carnes. Mr. Carnes stated, “I encourage everyone to find something good in your classroom each day.”

Paul C. Nichols, Superintendent of Mecklenburg County Public Schools, was the keynote speaker at the event and spoke about changes and expectations in Virginia public school systems.

Mr. Nichols, who was a former educator in Lunenburg, said that change in education and programs can be positive. He discussed the changing workforce landscape and the importance of tailoring academic programs to that workforce so that students are prepared and equipped for the jobs that are currently available.

Mr. Nichols stated, “Our biggest issue currently is that as society and the workforce has changed, our children and many adults may not be prepared for that workforce.” He would wind up his presentation by using the quote, “We won’t build 21st Century schools with 19th Century thinking.”

Following musical selections performed by the LCPS Bands under the direction of Mr. Maurice Ellis, school personnel heard from Dr. Christopher Kelly who is the Education Coordinator for the VDOE Office of Program Administration and Accountability. Dr. Kelly said that he had worked a wide range of positions within the educational system, including time spent helping with low performing schools. He would point toward the large increase in English Learner (EL) students as a focal point for many school systems.

In Lunenburg the EL students have grown over the past five years from 28-78 students. Dr. Kelly offered tips for helping those students that included knowing the demographics, learning the background of the students, planning a curriculum that can help EL students and working or collaborating with other teachers, counselors and reading specialist in order to bring together ideas to help promote learning in the classroom.

Former Central High School graduate Cal Spencer, who now serves as the LCPS Attorney spoke about social media and some of the issues that can come from inappropriate posts, remarks and pictures.

Mr. Spencer said that social media can be examined by employers prior to hiring an individual and during their employment in order to get additional information that is not seen on an application.

He noted specific cases where social media has caused problems, firings and even ruined careers. Mr. Spencer said that school employees are role models for students and that their conduct outside of the workplace is often observed by kids as well.

LCPS Superintendent Charles Berkley wrapped up the event by thanking all of the school employees for their work and dedication. He said that through vision, collaboration, and focus that Lunenburg would continue to enhance the development of students.

Mr. Berkley noted that he and the LCPS School Board continue to promote and support a safe learning environment for Lunenburg students while “looking forward to a year of learning and achievement.”

He offered the idea of helping students plan for their future by thinking actively in education, helping them flourish in a changing world and promoting the idea of life-long learning.

Mr. Berkley would end the event by stating, “I value and appreciate each of you and look forward to a great year.”