

**CORRECTION: Gemette McEachern, one of the district's 2023 Principal of the Year finalists, is the principal of New Century International Middle School. A previous version of this release incorrectly notated her school as New Century International Elementary.*



NEWS RELEASE

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Cumberland County Schools successfully launches the 2022-2023 school year with Convocation 2022

Fayetteville, N.C. – More than 6,000 Cumberland County Schools (CCS) employees gathered at the Crown Arena in Fayetteville, N.C., on the morning of August 16 to kick-off the 2022-2023 school year with Convocation 2022.

CCS Superintendent Dr. Marvin Connelly, Jr., the Cumberland County Board of Education and leaders from across the district welcomed the district's premier professionals for a morning of invigorating speeches, energizing performances and inspiring presentations that centered around the theme: Together, We Will Rise — People, Purpose, Passion.

Dr. Lindsay Whitley, the district's Associate Superintendent of Communications and Community Engagement, and CCS Communications Manager Renarta Moyd served as the masters of ceremony.

To begin the event, which was organized by CCS Academic Services and Chief Academic Officer Dr. Stacey Wilson-Norman, high school student drumlines played and Central Services employees performed for the crowd. Each district attendance area participated in the CCS Revue, a performance competition that was assessed by a panel of judges. 'Merriel and The South Viewettes' from the South View Attendance Area won the first-place trophy and the 'D.B.A. Futuristics' from the Douglas Byrd Attendance Area received the second-place trophy.

Dr. Connelly took the stage during Central Services' performance of 'Celebration' and roused the packed arena with his inspiring words.

"We are here today to set the stage and prepare to take flight into one of the greatest years in the history of CCS," said Connelly. "When we think about people, purpose, passion — it is all about perseverance and understanding

that, despite the challenges, we have what it takes to prepare our students to be lifelong learners and reach their maximum potential.”

Cumberland County Board of Education Chairman Greg West expressed how proud he is of the district. “As premier professionals, you continue to go above and beyond to help our young people succeed at school and in life,” said West. “As your Board, we are here to support you.”

Keynote speakers addressed the crowd and each of the theme focus areas. The district’s 2022 Principal of the Year, Joy Williams from Luther ‘Nick’ Jeralds Middle School, emphasized the theme of ‘People’ by sharing her admiration for the premier professionals who fulfill the many roles that support the success of every student.

Representing the purpose of CCS, New Century International Elementary School third grader Braylen Mayfield and Massey Hill Classical High School 12th grader Riley Nazario shared how teachers and staff have supported them throughout their educational journeys. As the students completed their remarks, they each received a standing ovation from thousands of CCS employees.

Elaborating upon the shared passion of every educator, the district’s 2022 Teacher of the Year, Daniel Smith from Westover High School, invited each employee to consider why they joined the field of education. After a moment, Smith challenged them to examine how they intend to foster this passion in the coming school year.

Special moments were captured from the event. To view an album of high-resolution photos, click [here](#).

Throughout the event, the district was proud to announce the finalists for CCS’ 2023 Principal of the Year, Assistant Principal of the Year, Teacher of the Year and Beginning Teacher of the Year. View a video recap of the event, lists of the district finalists and select photos below.



CCS' 2023 Principal of the Year Finalists:

- Antoine McGill, J.W. Seabrook Elementary
- Erica Fenner-McAdoo, Howard Hall Elementary
- Lisa Gillespie, Mary McArthur Elementary
- Dr. Shanessa Fenner, W.T. Brown Elementary
- Tara Bratcher, Loyd Auman Elementary
- Gemette McEachern, New Century International Middle
- Regina Blanding, Hope Mills Middle
- Dr. Zoletta Taylor, Douglas Byrd High
- Phyllis Jackson, South View High



CCS 2022 Principal of the Year Joy Williams, 2023 Principal of the Year finalists, Superintendent Dr. Marvin Connelly, Jr., and Associate Superintendent of School Support Dr. Jane Fields pose for a photo on stage during CCS' Convocation 2022 on Tuesday, Aug. 16, 2022, at the Crown Arena in Fayetteville, N.C.

CCS' 2023 Assistant Principal of the Year Finalists:

- LaTonya Adams, Elizabeth Cashwell Elementary
- Marcus Stewart, Sherwood Park Elementary
- Carleen Evans, Vanstory Hills Elementary
- Amy McDowell, Cumberland Mills Elementary
- Dr. Laura Fields, Margaret Willis Elementary
- Kanisha Jones-Dunor, Luther 'Nick' Jeralds Middle
- Travis Stroud, Spring Lake Middle
- Kenneth Williams, E.E. Smith High
- Janet Blue, Westover High



CCS 2022 Assistant Principal of the Year Dr. Queesha Tillman, 2023 Assistant Principal of the Year finalists, Superintendent Dr. Marvin Connelly, Jr., and Area Superintendent La'Shanda Carver-Moore pose for a photo on stage during CCS' Convocation 2022 on Tuesday, Aug. 16, 2022, at the Crown Arena in Fayetteville, N.C.

CCS' 2023 Teacher of the Year Finalists:

- Dana Johnson, Loyd Auman Elementary
- Talicia Smith, Douglas Byrd Middle
- Gantice Lee, New Century International Elementary
- Jennifer Bobby, Beaver Dam Elementary
- Sherry Dooney, Luther 'Nick' Jeralds Middle
- Cristen Frazier, Gray's Creek Middle
- ElWanda McLaurin, Spring Lake Middle
- Patsy Beth Whittington, Hope Mills Middle
- Shannon Blue, Ashley Elementary
- Shawna Kay Lawes, Ponderosa Elementary



CCS 2022 Teacher of the Year Daniel Smith, 2023 Teacher of the Year finalists, Chief Academic Officer Dr. Stacey Wilson-Norman and Superintendent Dr. Marvin Connelly, Jr., pose for a photo on stage during CCS' Convocation 2022 on Tuesday, Aug. 16, 2022, at the Crown Arena in Fayetteville, N.C.

CCS' 2023 Beginning Teacher of the Year Finalists:

- Tonya McGill, Morganton Road Elementary
- Madeline Baker, Alma Easom Elementary
- Sarah Milroy, Glendale Acres Elementary
- Sheretta Armstrong, Benjamin Martin Elementary
- Angela Hodge, Stedman Primary
- Michael Parker, Gray's Creek Middle
- Tiara May, Douglas Byrd Middle
- Maureen Johnson, Max Abbott Middle
- James Heyward, South View High
- Justin Grandenetti, Jack Britt High
- Brandie Ingram, Seventy-First High



CCS Executive Director of Professional Development Dr. Theresa Perry, Beginning Teacher Coordinator Kari Grates, 2023 Beginning Teacher of the Year finalists and Superintendent Dr. Marvin Connelly, Jr., pose for a photo on stage during CCS' Convocation 2022 on Tuesday, Aug. 16, 2022, at the Crown Arena in Fayetteville, N.C.



Superintendent Dr. Marvin Connelly, Jr., addresses a crowd of more than 6,000 district employees at CCS' Convocation 2022 on Tuesday, Aug. 16, 2022, at the Crown Arena in Fayetteville, N.C.



Teachers and staff from the Seventy-First attendance area cheer at CCS' Convocation 2022 on Tuesday, Aug. 16, 2022, at the Crown Arena in Fayetteville, N.C.



CCS Revue winner 'Merriel and The South Viewettes' from the South View Attendance Area and a member of runner-up the 'D.B.A. Futuristics' from the Douglas Byrd Attendance Area pose for a photo after receiving their trophies at CCS' Convocation 2022 on Tuesday, Aug. 16, 2022, and the Crown Arena in Fayetteville, N.C.

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