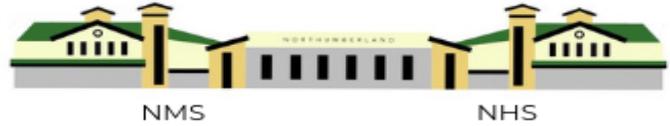


# NORTHUMBERLAND COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS



## **PRESS RELEASE**

### **For Immediate Release**

**Contact: Donna Booth, Clerk of the School Board**

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**[dbooth@nucps.net](mailto:dbooth@nucps.net)**

**May 11, 2020 - Lottsburg, Virginia** – The Northumberland County Public Schools’ School Board met on Monday using audio conferencing services as a result of the Governor’s Executive Orders and COVID 19 Pandemic.

### **Retirements**

The Northumberland County Public Schools’ School Board extends their congratulations on the retirements of Northumberland Elementary School Custodian Terry Taylor and Northumberland Middle School Custodian Carolyn Noel. “We wish both Terry and Carolyn a happy, well deserved retirement, and we are grateful for your dedication to our students and the upkeep of our buildings.”

### **New Hires**

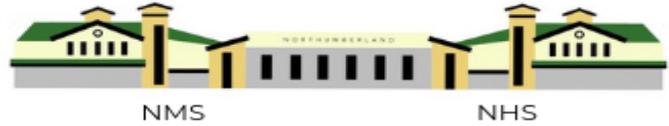
Brittany Fiscus will join Northumberland Elementary School’s faculty as a fourth grade general education teacher. Fiscus is a graduate of Longwood University and is finishing her sixth year of teaching.

Charles Hapgood will join Northumberland High School’s faculty as a Social Science teacher. Hapgood is a graduate of the University of Virginia, with a Bachelor’s degree in History, and a graduate of Hawaii Pacific University, with a Master of Arts degree in Diplomacy and Military History.

Dr. Jamie Sears was appointed as the Northumberland County Public Schools’ Director of Special Education and Student Support Services. Sears earned a Bachelor of Arts in Therapeutic Recreation from Virginia Wesleyan University; a teacher certification in Special Education from Old Dominion University; a Master of Education in Education Administration & Supervision from Regent University; and just earned a doctoral degree in Special Education Leadership from Virginia Commonwealth University. She has served as Director of Compass Academy for Middlesex County Public Schools; Dean of Students at St. Clare Walker Middle School (Middlesex County Public Schools); and Special Education Teacher at St. Clare Walker Middle School.

**Meals with Wheels** The School Board voted to extend the Meals with Wheels program for the remainder of the summer through June 30, 2020, pending available funding.

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## **Northumberland Elementary School Teacher of the Year: Mrs. Tammy Fulford**

Fulford is a second grade teacher and currently serves on the NES PBIS team. She enjoys creating lessons that integrate reading, writing, and science or social studies in meaningful ways. She is passionate about teaching math using real world examples, Number Talks, manipulatives, and small group instruction. Her favorite part of the school day reading aloud a chapter of Junie B. Jones, by Barbara Parks, to her class.

Fulford is a member of Bethany Baptist Church where she serves as a teller, Vacation Bible school teacher, and volunteers with the food pantry. She enjoys spending time at home with her family. Her daughter Anna is a freshman at Virginia Commonwealth University (VCU), and her son Dalton is a rising junior at Northumberland High School. Fulford and her husband enjoy boating and relaxing at home.

Fulford graduated from Longwood College with a Bachelor of Science Degree in Elementary Education. She earned a Master of Education as a Reading Specialist from the University of Virginia. She is a native of Center Cross in Essex and taught in Essex County for 22 years. During her time in Essex, she taught pre-kindergarten, kindergarten, first and third grades. Fulford moved to Northumberland County after marrying her husband and began teaching at Northumberland Elementary in 2014.

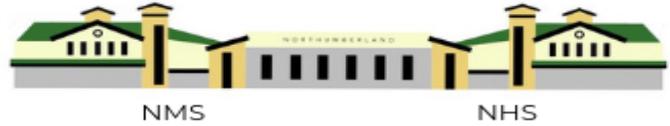
Fulford dreamed of becoming a teacher as a young girl. “To be named NES Teacher of the Year is such an honor. NES has the most dedicated staff. They actively seek ways to engage our students, encourage safe and respectful behavior, and ensure academic success,” Fulford stated. She also described “NES students are the best, and I am blessed to work with these bright, eager learners.” Her prayer is this: “By doing what you love, you inspire and awaken the hearts of others,” by Satsuki Shibuya.

## **Northumberland Middle School Teacher of the Year: Mrs. Stacey Lee**

Lee currently teaches eighth grade English. She has taught for 23 years and has served the students of Northumberland County for 20 of those years. Her responsibilities not only include working with middle school students, but also working with high school students providing reading services and assisting with on-time graduation requirements in English. Lee also serves as a mentor for new teachers, is a member of the NCPS Writing Team, and serves as a homebound instructor.

Lee’s teaching experience includes serving as an adjunct instructor for several institutions of higher learning, specifically Rappahannock Community College and the Virginia University of Lynchburg. She earned a bachelor and master’s degree in English from Old Dominion University and also earned a reading specialist endorsement from Regent University. Lee currently is a candidate to become a National Board Certified Teacher. Lee stated, “With the grace of God, I hope to achieve certification by December 2020.”

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Lee spends a great deal of time engaged in community service and is actively involved in her church, Morning Star Baptist Church. She spends her summers volunteering to speak at the local Girls' Empowerment Camp sponsored by Macedonia Baptist Church. From this experience, Lee has begun writing a book as a mentorship self-help narrative to assist girls on their journey to becoming positive women who contribute to their society. Lee stated, "Teaching is my passion. I love working with young people not only to educate them, but to also inspire them to become productive citizens".

Lee knew she wanted to be a teacher at a young age. She was inspired by her Kindergarten teacher, Mrs. Robinson: "She was compassionate, loving, and had a way of reaching us by teaching with love. She was my superhero with the power of educating her students with love. From the moment I laid eyes on her, I wanted to be a teacher." Lee said it is an honor and privilege to interact with young people who, with guidance and self-exploration, will someday change the world.

## **Northumberland High School Teacher of the Year: Mrs. Melissa Saunders**

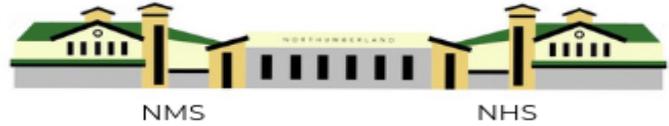
Saunders currently teaches Algebra I, serves as the Mathematics Department Chair, and sponsors the freshmen class. In her seven years of teaching, she spent four years teaching fifth grade Mathematics and Science at Northumberland Elementary School where she "learned so much about the special family bonds between a teacher and her students." Melissa stated Northumberland County Schools has been her family since the beginning of her career. Saunders believes in the philosophy of student-centered learning, dedicated creativity as her approach, and being supportive and compassionate is her commitment to students. She also works closely with students with special needs and students who are at risk by establishing a caring and stable relationship and recognizing differences in learning.

Saunders earned a Master's Degree in Curriculum Development with Technology Integration and a Bachelor's Degree in Secondary Education with an Emphasis in Mathematics from Grand Canyon University and an Associate's degree in Liberal Arts from Rappahannock Community College.

Saunders stated her philosophy of learning is simple: Teachers, students, parents and the community all contribute to the successful exploration of learning within and outside of the classroom -- from standardized skills to life skills.

Saunders stated she is honored to be part of a team of educators who have mentored and collaborated with her over the years. She stated her students inspire her to be the best teacher she can be so that she can help inspire them to find their inner superhero. It is her belief that a great Teacher of the Year

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inspires excellence, confidence, a love for learning and a desire to become more than what we ever thought we could be, in both colleagues and students.

Congratulations to Mrs. Fulford, Mrs. Lee, and Mrs. Saunders. The School Board plans to celebrate the Division Teacher of the Year Melissa Saunders at the regularly scheduled June School Board meeting.

## **Celebrating School Nutrition, Transportation, Custodian, & Maintenance & Facilities Heroes**

The School Board recognized the efforts of essential personnel during the ongoing COVID-19 crisis. Last week 680+ students continued to receive five breakfast meals and five lunch meals. Superintendent Holly Wargo stated, “That is more than half of our school population which is really special!” Meals are transported to homes each Thursday, and on May 14, the school division plans to deliver seven breakfast meals and seven lunch meals to cover weekends too.

Board Chair Betty Christopher messaged her gratitude to the school nutrition team, led by Saunee Hamlett, and the transportation team, led by Stacy Branem. The School Board also thanked all of the “helpers” including teachers and staff who volunteer tirelessly to pack and load the meals onto buses and to ride the buses to help with delivery.

The School Board also recognized the efforts of custodians and maintenance and facilities heroes. Led by Director of Facilities Jeff Brann, the custodians and maintenance staff have worked relentlessly to provide deep cleaning, sanitizing, and disinfecting in each of the buildings.

## **Coronavirus Aid, Relief & Economic Security (CARES) Act for Elementary & Secondary School Emergency Relief (ESSER) Fund**

The Virginia Department of Education (VDOE) has allocated \$412,868.17 to Northumberland County Public Schools, according to a VDOE Press Release. The allocation is based on each school division’s relative share of Title I, Part A, Federal Fiscal Year 2019 funds. CARES Act ESSER funds are emergency relief funds intended to address the impact that COVID-19 has had, and continues to have, on elementary and secondary schools in Virginia.

A list of allowable uses of funds as specified in the CARES Act is provided. As school divisions determine how best to use their funds, the Virginia Department of Education recommends that consideration be given to the priorities below: Supporting remote learning through educational technology, including hardware, software, connectivity, assistive technology, and adaptive equipment;

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Supporting the diverse needs of all students during school closure and when students return to school, which may include mental health services and supports, provisions for meal distribution, and services allowable under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act; Planning for and implementing extended learning and summer learning; and Maintaining operations and continuity of services, including continuing to employ existing staff to the greatest extent practicable. The CARES Act ESSER Fund application and instructions will be provided to school divisions shortly.

## **NCPS participation in the Pandemic Electronic Benefit Transfer (P-EBT) program**

Northumberland County Public Schools today announced it is participating in the Pandemic Electronic Benefit Transfer (P-EBT) program as part of a food assistance plan approved by the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) that is being implemented statewide by the Virginia Department of Social Services (VDSS) and the Virginia Department of Education (VDOE) authorized by The Families First Coronavirus Response Act (P.L. 116-127) (FFCRA).

The VDSS will issue P-EBT benefits to current Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) households and to non-SNAP households, which include children eligible for free and reduced-price school meals, through Virginia's SNAP EBT card system. The VDSS, in conjunction with the VDOE and local school divisions, will identify eligible children in both SNAP and non-SNAP households. Households do not have to apply for P-EBT. If a student was eligible to receive free or reduced-price meals at school before the school closure, the student will be included in the file of eligible students provided to VDSS.

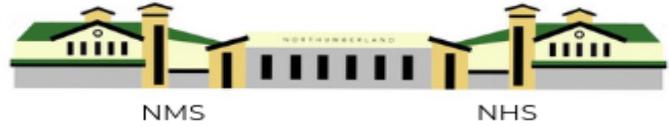
If a school participated in the Community Eligibility Provision (CEP) and all students received school meals at no cost, all students enrolled in the CEP school will also be included in the file of eligible students provided to VDSS. All schools in NCPS participate in CEP.

The purpose of the P-EBT food purchasing assistance benefit is to supplement existing food assistance and nutrition programs for low-income households during the pandemic. It does not replace meals provided through the school programs operating during unexpected closures or the summer meal programs that will begin when the school year is over. Students and families who receive P-EBT should also continue to participate in other food assistance programs, such as meals provided by schools and the summer meal programs.

## **NCPS Open Enrollment for Health Insurance & Benefits**

Finance & Human Resource Specialist Shelley Vanlandingham reviewed information for two separate open enrollments. The first Open Enrollment is for Health Insurance and the second Open Enrollment

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will be for the Voluntary Benefits. NCPS will introduce a new Benefit Counselor, Mark III, during the second open enrollment. NCPS made the decision to have two Open Enrollments in hopes to provide employees with a Benefit Counseling Fair later in the year.

The Local Choice Health Insurance enrollment for the new school year, July 1, 2020, will begin on May 1, 2020 through May 30, 2020. During this Open Enrollment period employees will have the opportunity to change or enroll in the Flexible Spending Account (FSA) for health care or dependent care. Employees may request the form to change/enroll for the FSA through Shane Kinner with AFLAC (shane\_kinner@us.aflac.com) or employees may contact Shelley Vanlandingham. Employees are eligible to make any changes to their Health Savings Account (HSA) at any time during the year.

For the 2020-2021 school year Northumberland County Public Schools has decided to partner with Mark III Employee Benefits to create some new Voluntary Benefits offerings. Because of the mandatory shutdown, NCPS is unable to have Mark III Benefit Counselors on site at this time to discuss the new offerings. NCPS hopes to host a Benefits Open Enrollment Fair with the counselors from Mark III when the 2020-2021 school year begins, if allowable. Mark III Benefit Counselors are not commissioned salespeople and do not endorse any one company. Their goal is to educate you on the available benefits and help you through the enrollment process.

NCPS and Mark III have provided a new website platform to provide employees with information on all the benefits that will be available, including health insurance. The website is located at [nucps.net](http://nucps.net), faculty and staff, human resources, Mark III Employee Benefits.

## Superintendent's Report

- Dr. Wargo shared approval of 2019-2020 Length of School Term Waiver: “The Superintendent of Public Instruction is able to approve the NCPS’ waiver request. Accordingly, there shall be no proportionate reduction in the amount paid by the Commonwealth from the Basic School Aid Fund. Further, the local appropriations for educational purposes necessary to fund 180 teaching days of 990 teaching hours shall not be proportionally reduced by any local governing body due to any reduction the the length of the term of any school or the schools in a school division permitted by such waiver.” -- letter from State Superintendent Dr. James Lane
- Director of Technology Bob Gilbert & Instructional Technology Resource Teacher Rachel Hall provided a technology update during the COVID-19 crisis. Director of Instruction Amy Lamb has been instrumental in the delivery of device requests; thank you, Mrs. Lamb!
  - NHS: 7 teachers and 27 students
  - NMS: 2 teachers and 10 students

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NES



NMS

NHS

- NES: 8 teachers and 4 students

They also provided a cost analysis for Chromebooks and Hotspots and a breakdown of school divisions who currently offer a 1:1 and school divisions who currently do not offer a 1:1.

- Director of Special Education and Student Support Services Mr. Adam Letizia summarized efforts for supporting students with disabilities and special populations during the COVID-19 school closure.
- NHS Principal Dr. Travis Burns provided information on senior awards, scholarships, and recognitions; the WRAR & WNNT Support for the Class of 2020; and the Graduation & Commencement draft plan for the Class of 2020.
- NMS Principal Javornda Ashton provided information on Continuity of Learning & COVID-19 update for NMS students and families.
- A Continuity of Learning & COVID 19 report, prepared by NES Principal Stephanie Baker was reviewed.
- Director of Facilities Mr. Jeff Brann provided an update of current custodial, maintenance and facilities projects with some extending into the summer.

## Board Comments

All School Board members extended a warm, Northumberland welcome to new School Board member Dr. Cheryl Davis!