

JUNE 2016

RETIREMENT REMARKS

Good afternoon and welcome to Chesterfield County Public Schools' 2016 retirement celebration!

And a special welcome to the Class of 2016, those who will be graduating from public service at the end of the June. That's your cue for your first round of applause for the evening.

My name is Tim Bullis. I am the director of Community Relations, and my staff and I have the distinct pleasure of being tonight's hosts. We're pleased that you could join us here as we honor those who have served our students, parents and community so admirably.

So ... let's be honest with a show of hands.

- How many of you were concerned you'd never make it to today – retirement, that is?
- Again, let's be honest – how many of you can't believe you actually made it to today – retirement, that is?
- And how many of you realize that the retirement papers you signed were recently declared invalid by a unanimous vote of the school board?

Settle down, we're just kidding. But you still do have another month left on the clock, you know?

Exactly three weeks from today, the first several hundred of more than 4,000 Chesterfield County students will walk across the stage at VCU's Siegel Center to receive their high school diplomas.

Whether they are the first in their family to graduate high school or they are graduating with honors and headed to an Ivy League school, all have something in common: At some point, each one of those students was impacted by someone in this room.

That impact – no matter how momentary in time or seemingly insignificant in nature – may be best defined by the following quote from the movie, "The Vow": "Each one of us is the sum total of every moment that we've ever experienced with all the people we've ever known. And it's these moments that become our history."

Our graduates' journeys are filled with many stories –some of trials and tribulations, many filled with success and some that just might leave you shaking your head wondering, "How did they make it to graduation?"

Though they may not see your role just yet, their history has been enriched because of your contribution ... your presence ... your gift. Years from now, your name will come up fondly as someone who made a difference.

You too are a graduating class of sorts – the Retiring Class of 2016. And each one of you has success stories to share next year when you come back to serve as a substitute teacher (SMILE). And, just like you did with some of those graduates, you might just be sitting there wondering, “How did I make it to this point?”

Tonight, we are here to celebrate you and the important impacts that you have had on our students.

First, let’s thank a few leaders who have played a role in today’s celebration.

We’re here tonight thanks to the support of the Chesterfield County School Board – Chair Dianne Smith from the Clover Hill District, Vice Chair Carrie Coyner of the Bermuda District, John Erbach of the Dale District, Rob Thompson of the Matoaca District and Dr. Javaid Siddiqi of the Midlothian District.

We’re also here tonight under the guidance of Superintendent Dr. Marcus Newsome, who while no longer graduating like you is attending his final Chesterfield retirement reception.

I’m confident that you have enjoyed the wonderful hors d’ouvres prepared by our baking and culinary arts students from the two Chesterfield Career and Technical Centers. Let’s give these students and their chef leaders a warm round of applause.

I’d also like to thank the school division’s Compensation and Benefits staff. Most of you have had the opportunity to work very closely with these folks during the past 12 months, and I know that you appreciate their prompt, professional and courteous service. Thank you to Kim Carter, Bobbie Ivey, Beverly Ezell and the rest of the Compensation and Benefits office – full of professional, service-oriented employees.

And finally let’s show our appreciation for VALIC. Not only do they help provide you with financial guidance heading into retirement, they’ve also been a wonderful sponsor of this annual event. At this time, I’d like to ask George Rapp from VALIC to come share his appreciation for your work.

As I said a few minutes ago, today is about celebrating. Whether you are a classroom teacher, a building administrator, an office worker, support staff, a bus driver, a custodian or any other service provider, you have played a vital role in helping make Chesterfield County Public Schools an effective, efficient leader in public education.

You noticed that we carefully selected the word “celebrating.” We are not saying goodbye, because goodbye means going away and going away means forgetting.

We can't forget you, for your work has helped us to the point in education we are today: A state and national leader in public education. We have designs on excellence, and you have helped us toward establishing the gold-standard in education.

Today we come together not only to wish you well in your retirement but more importantly to say thank you.

Looking around the room, I'm left in awe when I think about the years of service provided to students and families living in Chesterfield. We have 255 retirees who wished to be recognized this year. Together, they have provided a total of 5,889 years of service to Chesterfield County Public Schools. That's an average of almost 23 years of service in Chesterfield.

That means that many of you started your career with Chesterfield County Public Schools sometime around 1993.

If you can remember back that far – and if you're like me, you might not be able to as you sometimes forget what you had last night for dinner.

Twenty three years ago,

- The average cost of a new house was \$113,200 and gas rang in at \$1.16 per gallon.
- The Brady Bill, requiring background checks of prospective gun buyers, was signed into law.
- Jurassic Park and Sleepless in Seattle were two of the year's top movies; we all said goodbye to the Sam, Cliff, Norm and the rest of the Cheers gang; and Garth Brooks and Whoomp There It Is ruled the airwaves.
- And ... the World Wide Web was born.

And around that time, actually several years earlier, President George H.W. Bush also assembled the nation's governors in Charlottesville for a domestic summit on education. Policies growing out of that summit caused a massive shift in power over education from local to the federal government. Remember back then?

- There were no SOL's; part of that massive shift.
- Our crisis drills included stop-drop-and-roll.
- Computers were not found in every classroom – in fact, we still had to use typewriters (remember them?) and manually had to change typewriter ribbon.
- Many of you had a gradebook – not the electronic kind by Synergy; this was paper with a blue binder and required a pencil with an eraser and not a delete button.

Things have definitely changed since many of you joined the school system. While I'm sure some in the world would debate this, education has made significant progress since you joined the school system. And tonight is about celebrating your role in that progress.

To help us celebrate, we have two special guests.

First is The Honorable Dianne Smith, Chair of the Chesterfield County School Board and the Board's representative from Clover Hill District. Mrs. Smith gets you all – as a former teacher, administrator, central office leader and now School Board member, she has seen the benefits of all of the work each one of you has done.

(Mrs. Smith gives remarks)

And now, the Superintendent of Chesterfield County Public Schools, Dr. Marcus Newsome.

(Dr. Newsome gives remarks)

As the liaison to the County Council of PTAs, I've been asked to share the thanks as well.

In some people's minds, one of most underutilized phrases in the English language is "thank you." As the school division's liaison to the County Council of PTAs, I've been asked to make sure to take time tonight to say "thank you" for the time you have invested in our children. Let's take a second to personalize what each of you does on a daily basis for our students.

As parents, we are able to go to work each day comforted with the understanding that our children are:

- Delivered safely to and from school each day;
- Taught by a knowledgeable, competent workforce that in my opinion is second to none;
- Watched over by caring administrators who only want the best for our students;
- Fed by cafeteria workers who understand that a well-nourished brain is a high-functioning brain;
- Guided by support service professionals who have their best interests at heart;
- And served in a clean, safe school watched over by Facilities workers and security personnel whose goal is safe, supportive and nurturing learning environments.

So, again, from a parent's perspective ... thank you!!

So now we've reached the point in our program where we honor our retirees.

School Board members and Dr. Newsome, if you would join me up front to help us thank our employees.

As I read your name, please make your way up front and receive your gift.

Normally we would ask that you hold your applause to the end. Not tonight, however. Let's honor each and every one of our retirees!

[CALL NAMES]

We've now called forward those retirees who indicated they would be present. This next part may be perhaps the part of the evening that makes me the most nervous: Is there anyone who did not get called?

Ladies and gentlemen, I present to you our version of the graduating class of 2016. Let's give them a standing ovation!

Thank you again to each one of you. Each of you has touched many lives ... made a huge difference.

God bless, and good night.