

Press Release

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Asheboro City Schools Superintendent Selected to Speak at the Carolina Educational Leadership Summit

ASHEBORO – On Saturday, September 23, Dr. Terry W. Worrell, Superintendent for Asheboro City Schools presented to educational leaders across the state at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill’s Carolina Educational Leadership Summit.

The state-wide summit provided an opportunity for a broad array of stakeholders to come together to identify and discuss existing and emerging challenges for students across North Carolina. The goal of the summit was to develop a more committed response and coordinated approach to addressing one or two major issues facing students. High-ranking educational officials from across the political aisle and from across the state of North Carolina convened to broker partnerships, promote innovation, and strengthen leadership.

Dr. Worrell presented during the summit’s first panel which discussed "What" we know about good Reading instruction and "Why" we aren't implementing effective strategies that we know work to scale. The second panel discussed "Challenges for the State" beyond Reading and how stakeholders can work together to better to tackle one or two challenges.

During opening comments, Dr. Worrell explained how reading is defined and its importance in determining student success, “Reading for success in the 21st century means much more than deciphering words in a text. It means accessing, evaluating, and synthesizing information, and it therefore creates a foundation for learning across all academic domains, including math, science, and social studies. It is inextricably linked to overall academic success. Effective reading is at the heart of being an engaged, global citizen, who is able to grapple with complex issues. The skilled reader works in shades of gray, confronts problems that can only be solved by integrating ideas from multiple resources, and can understand a wide range of concepts to access and apply. The process of becoming an effective reader is dynamic and complex, one that must begin and continue into adulthood.”

Other members speaking alongside Dr. Worrell included: Craig Horn, North Carolina Representative; Dr. Jim Johnson, professor from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill; Venessa Harrison, president of AT&T NC; and Kimberly O’Malley, senior vice president of education and workforce development with RTI International.

Dr. Worrell was asked what strategies were being used in Asheboro to address reading challenges. She responded, "In Asheboro City Schools, our team has worked very deliberately to address the challenges associated with underperforming literacy proficiency and enhanced academic achievement. Specifically, with our strategic plan, we have developed a five-step action plan to support research-based reading instruction and adult capacity building models in our schools. The plan includes the following:

- 1) Focus our work on eye-ball to eye-ball / minute by minute instruction for each student. This also means an emphasis on "Catch up growth" (Extra 20 minutes to the school day).
- 2) Employ ongoing assessments of students and settings.
- 3) Support our teachers and principals with clear professional development in literacy.
- 4) Ensure a language-rich district with rigorous and engaging curricula.
- 5) Build stronger partnerships with families and embrace the AFTT (Academic Family Teacher Team) Model to support language and learning."

Challenging the reading panel were: Hugh Blackwell, North Carolina Representative; Dr. Ray Spain, superintendent for Warren County School District; John Denning, senior program officer for the Gates Foundation; Johanna Edens Anderson, executive director for the Belk Foundation; and Dr. Richard Schwartz, education law expert with Schwartz and Shaw, PLLC.

Keith Poston from the North Carolina Public School Forum served as the Moderator and Michael Priddy, president of UNC School of Education Alumni Council served as the Master of Ceremonies. Following the panel discussion, presenters enjoyed networking, problem-solving, and cheering on the UNC Tar Heels as they played rival team the Duke University Blue Devils Saturday afternoon.

About Asheboro City Schools

Asheboro City Schools is a medium-sized school district in North Carolina, serving approximately 5,000 students at eight schools and one five-star Early Childhood Development Center. The district's mission is to graduate responsible citizens who are prepared to succeed in higher education or the career of their choice. For more information, visit the district's website at <http://www.asheboro.k12.nc.us/>.

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