



ECPS EXPRESS

Monthly News and Notes about Essex County Public Schools

September 2018

All Essex Schools Accredited

The results are now official and all three Essex schools are accredited, according to the Virginia Department of Education. Tappahannock Elementary and Essex Intermediate earned the status of "Accredited" while Essex High School was deemed "Accredited with Conditions."

"We are extremely proud of the hard work that went into reaching these standards," said Superintendent Scott A. Burckbuchler. "It truly took a tremendous effort from our students, teachers, parents and administrators. Everyone should feel good about this news."

The accreditation status is based on results from the spring Standards of Learning (SOL) tests as well as other data such as attendance and graduation. In the case of Essex High School, three areas were flagged as needing improvement, which resulted in the Accredited with Conditions status. The three areas were math achievement, math gap, and science achievement.

"Much of our focus will now be on improving students' knowledge and skills in those flagged areas," said Dr. Burckbuchler. "And while the SOL tests are important indicators of our success, we also know that we have to look beyond standardized tests and continue to prepare our students for the pathways that they will be entering upon graduation."

Building Robots, Shaping Futures



Students finish building and programming their first fully functioning robot "SquareBot," which they competed in an obstacle course race.

To some, robotics might be considered a course that is nice to have but not a necessary experience for students. To Essex High School teacher Robert LaFollette, robotics is a pathway to thousands of technical programming jobs right in the region.

"It's just not robotics, which is the mechanical building of robots, but the computer programming skills students need to make the robot operable," LaFollette explained.

Essex High School offered robotics for the first time last year and in doing so, LaFollette discovered he had a problem that could have been the envy of other teachers: "I couldn't get students to leave class and go to lunch."

This year, two robotics classes are offered and next year, students will be able to take a new class in electronics. Combined, these two courses will enable students to get a special seal on their diploma and industry certification right out of high school.

"These courses align with the Profile of a Virginia Graduate that encourages students to have hands-on technical skills that prepare them for college or careers," said Superintendent Scott A. Burckbuchler. "They also align with the ECPS vision of equipping students to meet the challenges of a global society."

And just to prove that learning is also fun, students are now working on building a large scale all-terrain robot that will be donning a football helmet in time to make its appearance at an Essex High School football game sometime this fall. LaFollette noted the critical support of the Essex School Board and the Essex Rotary Club that will make possible the debut of the high school's new mascot to be named Trojan Scout.

Superintendent's Message

Scott A. Burckbuchler, Ph.D.



Welcome to the first issue of ECPS Express! We are excited to bring you a monthly inside look at the great activities and programs happening in our schools. You will read about our students who are outstanding scholars, leaders, athletes, personalities, workers, artists, and musicians, and learn about our many points of pride. At ECPS, we:

- Serve the individual educational needs of our students and are committed to creating Pathways to Excellence by promoting a positive student-focused culture.
- Send our students to some of the very best colleges.
- Offer top-rated vocational training opportunities.
- Provide a rich curriculum that goes beyond the core subjects and features art, music, and foreign languages.
- Offer extensive extra-curricular activities, including performing arts.
- Serve a diverse community of learners.

I am very proud of our programs and our deep caring for each and every student. As I visit our schools, meet with faculty, and talk with our students, I feel a renewed spirit and energy within ECPS.

We invite you to help us keep this positive focus and be part of the Essex success story! There are some wonderful opportunities for our community to get involved as volunteers in our schools. Please talk with the school principal to explore the possibilities.

You can also stay involved by visiting our website at www.essex.k12.va.us and following us on Twitter @EssexSchools. It's going to be a great year!

Yours in partnership,

"Dr. B"

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