Super Lunch—Curry touts Calvert’s schools

Posted by TBN Editor  On 01/19/2018

Calvert County Superintendent Dr. Daniel D. Curry

Prince Frederick, MD - The event was billed “Superintendent’s Luncheon,” and indeed, Calvert County Superintendent Dr. Daniel D. Curry was the host and honored guest. The noontime gathering in the atrium of Calvert High School (CHS) in Prince Frederick Thursday, Jan. 18 was attended by members of Calvert’s business, government and political community. Curry, who is in the final year of his four-year contract, unabashedly admitted he wants a new deal. He also announced the system intends to implement a new strategy for encouraging and promoting early learning within the community.

Attendees, who each ponied up $30 for the nonprofit Calvert County School Foundation, enjoyed a Tex Mex lunch catered by the Career and Technology Academy Culinary Arts students, and were entertained by the CHS Musical Theatre Group, under the direction of Kelly Combs.

Curry opened his remarks by explaining to attendees with children enrolled in Calvert County Public Schools (CCPS) why classes were cancelled the previous day. “It’s not our intention to mess up your day,” said Curry, who added the weather conditions Wednesday morning in the north end of the county were deemed unsafe due to the slippery roads in the north end of the county. “We had weather issues that seemed to get worse. We always err on the side of caution.”

In his overview of the current state of CCPS, Curry explained the strides made and challenges posed in trying to hire and retain a more diverse group of administrators, teachers and support staff. Calvert is fifth in the State of Maryland for annual salaries for Step 1 teachers ($47,522) and number one for Step 10 ($65,500). Calvert also ranks in Maryland’s top five for annual salaries paid to a teacher (Step 1 and Step 10) with a master’s degree ($50,600 and $68,100).

Data shows CCPS students are improving on Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers (PARCC) assessments, and Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT) results, which show college-bound students well ahead of their national and statewide counterparts.

Curry also updated attendees on the Northern High School rebuild project, the high costs of expanding technology within the school system and the current fiscal year (FY) 2018 budget, which is $203 million. “Financially, we are in pretty good shape,” said Curry, noting that the Calvert County Commissioners and Calvert Board of Education (BOE) have agreed on a funding formula for the county’s share (59.4 percent) of the budget.

Regarding maintenance, Curry told the audience, “we have a reputation in the State of Maryland for taking care of our schools. Based on a third party assessment of four of our schools, Calvert County Public Schools earned an average score of 96.7 percent for the 2017 Maryland Association of Boards of Education safety inspections, including a perfect score at Windy Hill Elementary School. Calvert County Public Schools continue to provide a safe and healthy environment for all our students, staff and the general public.”

Among CCPS’ priorities in Special Education is “appropriately educating more students with individualized education programs [IEPs] in general education. We’ve got to get them ready for careers.”

Curry also summarized CCPS’ efforts to address concerns raised by a recent study of the school system’s transportation services. School officials are installing school bus tracking software, hiring a senior routing specialist, reorganizing the Transportation Department and are in the process of drafting a new school bus contract.

A brief overview of CCPS’ Strategic Plan priorities was given. The priority areas are: equity, student outcomes, climate and culture, workforce and community engagement. Among the immediate challenges for CCPS, restoring employee pay steps was listed as the key to remedying teacher shortages, competition for employees from other school systems, attracting an experienced staff and sustaining superior performance. During the event’s question and answer session, Curry agreed with a comment from the floor about communities discussing policies that would result in higher salaries for teachers.

Curry also announced CCPS has purchased the franchise for a program that is designed to “increase the opportunities for more students to be successful.” The program, dubbed Calvertots and Calvert Basics is inspired by the Boston Basics Campaign, which is designed to close the achievement gap. The superintendent said the school system’s aim is to promote the program with literature available in schools, local libraries and other public places. He expressed hope that CCPS’ business partners will help pay for the campaign, which is explained at www.boston.basics.org/.

In addition to lunch and musical entertainment, the CHS Naval Junior Reserve Officers Training Corps Color Guard presented the Colors and the CHS Chamber Choir sang The Star-Spangled Banner. Dr. Victoria D. Karol, director of CCPS’ Strategic Partnerships and Community Engagement, greeted the attendees and delivered opening remarks.

More information about Calvert County School Foundation can be found here.

Contact Marty Madden at marty.madden@thebaynet.com

Copyright © 2020 thebaynet.com. All rights reserved.