SCHOOL BOARD VOTES FOR A NEW HIGH SCHOOL
The Staunton City School Board voted in March for the new construction of a state-of-the-art, comprehensive high school on a new site, including all necessary athletic fields. Staunton City Council will soon decide on whether to fund the project. Read the full story on page 2.

SCHOOL SECURITY UPGRADES
Two state grants totaling almost $173,000 provided new security updates and enhancements to all City schools. Staff now have greater control over who is able to enter a school, thanks to a service window positioned at entryway doors, and a more detailed identification process for school visitors.

STUDENT SELECTED FOR NATIONAL SCIENCE CAMP
Rising sophomore Mausam Mehta was one of just 20 students nationwide selected for participation in a highly competitive, week-long engineering program for blind and low-vision high school students. Mausum will attend camp at the National Federation of the Blind Jernigan Institute in Baltimore, MD, where she’ll meet and collaborate with engineers from across the U.S.

4TH GRADERS WIN STATEWIDE VIDEO CONTEST
McSwain 4th graders won first place in the Virginia Trekkers video competition after creating and entering a video about Staunton’s rich history, including the 28th President of the United States, Woodrow Wilson. The Woodrow Wilson Public Library was a valuable resource for the video. Virginia Trekkers helps educators and students prepare for social studies SOLs through video podcasts, games and activities.

ROTARY CLUB DONATES $6,000 FOR SCHOOL GARDEN
A new garden at Dixon Educational Center is providing opportunities for students to sow and nurture plants and harvest the fruits of their labor. The garden was constructed and stocked with a generous $6,000 grant from the Staunton Rotary Club. Students will sample the food they cultivated in the fall.
A NEW LEE HIGH?

3 REASONS THE SCHOOL BOARD SAID ‘YES’

It wasn’t a hasty decision.

The Staunton City School Board’s vote for a new high school constructed on a new site occurred after 18 months of deep deliberation—thoughtful research, including a facilities study; public input; multiple conversations with architects and educators; reviews of other new and renovated high schools; and many contemplative conversations.

In the end, School Board members came to the same conclusion: It’s time. Here are three factors that provided the Board with the evidence and the confidence to make its monumental decision:

1. **Economic Stimulus:**
   A community that invests in its schools attracts higher-skill industries, increases property values, and experiences increased student achievement, thereby improving the overall quality of life for all City residents, not solely residents with children.

2. **Deficient Facility:**
   R.E. Lee High School’s current infrastructure is not conducive to a fully dynamic learning environment. The building layout is segmented; the structure is declining and in need of myriad repairs; important safety features are lacking; there is insufficient space for necessary athletic fields on school property; and there are inadequate storage and operations spaces. Many of these issues have created considerable disruptions to instructional programs.

3. **Low Cost Differential:**
   The cost variance in building a new high school as opposed to overhauling the current facility is relatively minimal. So much so that the Board finds it more practical to invest in a new school that provides a 21st century learning environment for Staunton students rather than piece together a solution in an increasingly inadequate building.

Two words encapsulate the most desired features provided in a modernized school: collaborative and technology-driven. Flexible, light-filled, open spaces that are comprehensively equipped with new and essential technology for students to work in groups, and areas for teamwork among teachers in which they co-plan, co-teach, integrate curricula and share resources make for a conducive learning environment. Importantly, a contemporary high school will allow for expanded course offerings that further prepare graduates for college and a career.

Stay tuned to our website and SCS-TV Channel 13 for the latest announcements regarding the future of R.E. Lee High School.

**SCS QUICK FACT:** Division enrollment of approximately 2,700 students
GRADUATION SNAPSHOT

COLLEGE BOUND

R.E. Lee graduates will attend the following colleges in the fall:

Asbury University  Potomac State College of WVU
Blue Ridge Community College  Radford University
Bridgewater College  Randolph College
Christopher Newport  St. John's University
Coastal Carolina  United States Coast Guard Academy
Concord University  University of Alabama
Dabney S. Lancaster Community College  University of Virginia
George Mason University  University of Wyoming
James Madison University  Virginia Commonwealth University
Liberty University  Virginia Tech
Longwood University  Warren Wilson College
Mary Baldwin College  Yale University

DIPLOMAS GIVEN

180

HONORS

MAGNA CUM LAUDE 14
CUM LAUDE 35

TOP 2%

Ailec Wu Forrester Augustus Hollberg
Abigail Ella Johnson Elizabeth Cady van Assendelft

SCHOLARSHIP

DOLLARS AWARDED

$1,425,230
Academic lessons at Bessie Weller Elementary School last school year included activities you would ordinarily see in the school gym: children twirling about, hopping, skipping in place and dancing.

The reason? Active bodies make for active brains. A child’s capacity to learn is directly tied to their daily physical activity. The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services recommends that youth between the ages 6 and 17 get at least 60 minutes of physical activity each day.

Bessie Weller teachers were able to add invigorating exercises into their daily lesson plans thanks to a resource-rich toolkit provided through SPARK Activity Break Choices (SPARKabc), a pilot youth fitness program at the school funded by Augusta Health.

SPARKabc is an outgrowth of a community health needs assessment performed by Augusta Health in 2013 in which the hospital found that children in its service area struggle with obesity and related preventable diseases. Faculty from area school districts worked with the hospital to select SPARKabc because the program’s activities have been shown to benefit students’ cognitive performance and attitudes toward learning.

Bessie Weller was one of three schools chosen from the surrounding school divisions to pilot the program, and it receives both training and equipment. The hospital also used program funding to hire a part-time staff person to help teachers implement the program and to provide three years of online support.

SCS QUICK FACT: Parent surveys from 2014 reflect more than 95% satisfaction rate with SCS

Lee students demonstrate care and character

Two years ago, a group of 12 students approached the administration at R.E. Lee High School and said, “We want to change the community’s perception of Lee High students.” Their call to action was the beginning of a school-wide initiative that grew from 12 students to a group of 78 school leaders believing that they could make a reverberating impact on their school and community. Since the idea’s inception, Lee students have generously given their time and talents to the Staunton community and school by completing more than 150 community service projects—102 in the 2013-14 school year and 78 in 2014-15. Projects included visiting nursing homes to carol, deliver greeting cards and wreaths, make crafts, and eat lunch with residents; organizing successful food, clothing and blood drives for neighbors in need; assisting with landscaping projects and camp cleanup at Camp Holiday, a place for children dealing with terminal cancer; and supporting the nation’s veterans by writing thank you letters for their service.

Every Lee student has the opportunity to participate in community service projects through their PRIDE block, a 30-minute period that occurs approximately 18 times during the school year, during which teachers discuss student issues, plan service opportunities and promote school pride.

Lee students are always looking for ways to stay involved in the community! If you have a community service project idea, please contact Lee High School at the number on page 8.

“Lee students have completed more than 150 community service projects.”
Area students get tech savvy with the SCS IT Department

Summertime is crunch time for K-12 school division IT departments everywhere. Staunton is no exception. There are many improvements to initiate prior to the start of a new school year—new student devices to be prepared, others updated, hundreds of wires to be connected for various projects, new LCD projectors to be mounted in two locations and the list continues to grow. Collaboration between multiple business partners, staff, and student technicians are vital to Staunton City Schools’ preparedness for the upcoming school year.

SCS is fortunate to employ area high school and college students to work in the IT department each year. Students who excel in teamwork, show a strong commitment to the school division and community, and those who seek to help others by utilizing their strengths and knowledge of technology often find themselves offered additional work opportunities in part-time jobs during the year.

Lee FCCLA members excel at the state level

Members of Family, Career, and Community Leaders of America (FCCLA) at Lee High School are making their mark just four years into the local chapter’s formation.

FCCLA is a national non-profit and student-led organization that makes family its central focus. It has been a dynamic part of Family and Consumer Science Education in both middle and high schools for 70 years.

Since the founding of Lee’s chapter in 2011, two FCCLA members have become state officers, and other members have excelled at the organization’s state competitions, bringing home several first place trophies in a variety of categories.

Kelsey Sheffer is the second state officer to come from the Lee FCCLA chapter and serves as Vice President of Public Relations for the Virginia FCCLA.

Nutrition matters

Staunton City Schools made the summer more bearable for hundreds of vulnerable students this year by providing free meals to children ages one to 18 at three City schools. The school division partnered with the Piedmont Community Impact Organization, Inc. for the Summer Food Service Program, offering meals to children who are part of low-income, food-insecure households that receive assistance through government nutrition programs.

Dr. Linda Reviea, SCS Superintendent, said: “We know that proper nourishment and food security are directly associated with a child’s achievement in the classroom. We want to give our students every opportunity to succeed and are therefore pleased to have been a participant in the Summer Food Service Program this year.”
ATHLETICS HIGHLIGHTS

State champs

Two students took home the highest honor in their respective sports during state competitions this past school year. Jordan Plogger played his way to individual state golf champion in Group 2A, and Iyon Oravitz earned first place in the state 400 meter dash competition. Iyon also placed second in the 100 meter and third in the 200 meter. We congratulate them on their successes!

Welcome, new coaches

Lee High School extends a warm welcome to Scott Girolmo as the new Head Football Coach, and Joshua McElheny as the new Girls Varsity Basketball Coach for the 2015-16 school year.

Coach Girolmo came to Staunton from Liberty High School in Bealton, Virginia, where he taught physical education and was the assistant head football coach/offensive coordinator for four years. Previously, he coached at the collegiate level.

Coach McElheny brings more than ten years of coaching experience at the high school and collegiate level. As the head coach of girls basketball at Monticello High School for the past four years, he had a 78% winning average with an overall record of 81-22. He was also twice named Central Virginia Coach of the Year.

We look forward to exciting seasons with both coaches for many years to come.

SCS QUICK FACT: More than 50% of teachers have master’s degrees

Shakespeare in the Big Apple

R.E. Lee student Nora Oechslin had an experience of a lifetime when she performed in New York City’s Lincoln Center Theater in April. Nora first entered the Lexington, VA Branch’s English Speaking Union (ESU) National Shakespeare Competition and won, earning herself a ticket to the national ESU competition in New York, where she placed as a semifinalist. Nora and other branch winners spent a weekend in the Big Apple with other students from across the country who share a love of theater, language, and particularly, Shakespeare. They were provided with two full days of educational and cultural activities, including an exclusive acting workshop at the Tisch School of the Arts at New York University and a performance of Something Rotten! on Broadway. Nora said: “Everyone at the ESU was so supportive and kind. I felt surrounded by people who wanted me to do well. It was incredible.”

Spaghetti and Song

During a spring fundraiser, Shelburne Middle School band students creatively brought together two American favorites: spaghetti and live music. A filling spaghetti dinner was served to more than 700 attendees, who came out to support the band with their donations. During the meal, the 6th, 7th and 8th grade bands, Jazz Band and Ukulele Crew performed, in addition to renditions from soloists, duets, trios, and other small musical groups. More than 25 parents donated their time to sell tickets, prep and serve food and chaperone, while businesses and individuals provided donations for food purchases. The result was $2,465 raised to support the school’s band program.
The past school year was an exceptionally good one for our school division, and for that, we are grateful and proud.

As you’ve read in the pages of this publication, we celebrated manifold scholastic, athletic and personal achievements in the 2014-15 academic year. Our successes resulted from an infectious spirit of cooperation among our students, faculty and administration and a deep connectedness to the community—a big-hearted community that has proven time and again its attentiveness to the well-being of its youth.

It’s easy to see that care and connectivity when you have a child, grandchild, niece, nephew, or family friend who attends Staunton City Schools (SCS). What perhaps can be more difficult is pinpointing SCS’ influence when you do not have a tangible connection to our school division.

However, a real and enduring link exists between SCS and the entire community. Flourishing schools are a hallmark of thriving communities. Schools well-resourced with quality leadership, teachers, instructional tools, volunteers, and mentors provide students with their best chance of success. Successful students generate a more prepared workforce that, in turn, is a stimulus for economic growth. Industries want to set up shop in areas boasting a prepared workforce. We can all agree that economic growth is essential to the sustainment of our city. And so, the endeavors of SCS touch us all. The accomplishments of our schools are inextricably linked to the buoyancy of our Queen City.

We encourage you to join us in making a lasting impact on young lives and our community at large. Request a tour of your neighborhood school, become a volunteer, attend school board meetings, and raise your voice on the issues that matter most to you.

Providing the best education possible will continually touch us all, and the generations to come. We hope you’ll discover your connection to SCS, and the role you can play in our collective future.

Ron Ramsey, Chair
Staunton City School Board

Dr. Linda Reviea, Superintendent
Staunton City Schools

SCS QUICK FACT: Division currently employs 264 professional staff and 203 support staff

A Message from the Staunton City School Board and Superintendent

FINANCIAL SNAPSHOT
PROJECTED FY16

WE ARE ONE

YEAR IN REVIEW
POSTAL PATRON

Get Involved! To learn how you can become a volunteer for SCS, call Jon Venn at (540) 332-3920.

SCHOOL BOARD GOALS

STAUNTON CITY SCHOOLS IS COMMITTED TO:

■ INSTRUCTION
  providing a rigorous course of study for all students and ensuring that all students read on grade level and become mathematical problem solvers

■ SAFE AND SECURE SCHOOLS
  providing a safe and secure environment for all students, staff, and visitors

■ HUMAN RESOURCES
  retaining a high-quality workforce; increasing the diversity of the workforce to better reflect the student population and the community at large; and communicating effectively with and valuing the input of SCS stakeholders

■ OPERATIONS & TECHNOLOGY SUPPORT
  providing a functional and operational instructional work environment

■ BUDGET
  providing and allocating resources to sustain a high-quality educational system

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