CAREER AND TECHNICAL EDUCATION NEWSLETTER

WORKFORCE READINESS SUMMIT

The CTE Workforce Readiness Summit, held October 28 at FTCC's Tony Rand Student Center, brought together educators, students, business leaders, and community partners to strengthen connections between schools and the workforce. Student and business panels shared perspectives on career readiness, while career pathway table discussions explored opportunities for guest speakers, workplace tours, job shadowing, internships, and other work-based learning experiences. Participants identified priorities and actionable next steps to support students. The summit reinforced a shared message: strong schools and strong communities depend on one another. Thank you to everyone who attended, served on a panel, and contributed ideas to help prepare our students for their futures!





WORK BASED LEARNING



CTE students from Cumberland Polytechnic and Alger B. Wilkins High Schools, accompanied by Mrs. Dawn Willis and Mr. Muriel Droke, visited Systel's Distribution & Service Center in Fayetteville on October 30. Students explored printing technology, equipment maintenance, and workplace skills, connecting classroom learning to future careers. Systel staff enriched the experience with lunch, gift bags, and opportunities to engage with industry professionals.



On October 8, CTE students from Cumberland Polytechnic and Alger B. Wilkins high schools, led by Mrs. Dawn Willis and Mr. Muriel Droke, visited Rollease Acmeda to explore manufacturing operations, workplace safety, and career skills. The visit connected classroom learning to industry expectations while highlighting teamwork, responsibility, and problem-solving.

In October, Gray's Creek High School AOIT students visited the zMAX STEAM Expo in Concord for hands-on career exploration! Students explored skilled trades through simulators, met radio and podcast professionals, tackled tire-changing and safety challenges, and connected with racecar drivers to learn about motorsports science and teamwork.Thank you to Amber House for making this exciting work-based learning experience possible!



WORK BASED LEARNING

Cape Fear's Animal Science students traveled to Hoke County for an exciting and educational visit to Ithika Acres! Students explored farm life while learning about different breeds of goats and cattle, as well as the various types of feed and hay used on the farm and how they are processed. The hands-on learning continued as students had the opportunity to make their own butter!



Cape Fear's agricultural students visited Cargill to learn more about the important role agriculture plays in food manufacturing. During their visit, students explored the soybean process and gained valuable insight into how agricultural products are transformed into materials used in food production and other industries. Thank you to Cargill for providing our students with this hands-on opportunity.



Seventy-First High Schools Early Childhood Education students enjoyed a fun-filled field trip to Marbles Kids Museum in Raleigh, NC! Through interactive exhibits and an educational IMAX documentary, students explored the importance of hands-on learning, creativity, and play-based experiences for young children.



GUEST SPEAKERS

Ms. Cox's Cape Fear DECA and Hospitality & Tourism students welcomed Andrew Rice, Chief Operations Leader for Chick-fil-A in Lumberton. He shared insights on relational customer service, the company's history, and his career journey from high school—along with tasty cookies! Thank you, Mr. Rice, for investing in our students!

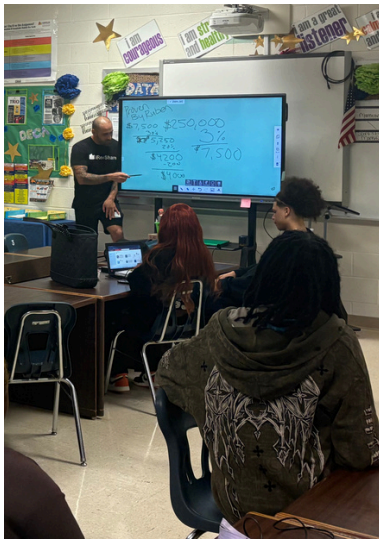




On October 1, approximately 65 Alger B. Wilkins High School students and staff attended a Universal Technical Institute presentation led by Johnson Little. Students explored automotive, aviation maintenance, welding, and HVAC careers, along with training opportunities, interview preparation, and career support services.



E.E. Smith High School students are kicking National DECA month off with guest speaker Proven by Ruben. He shared valuable insights on investing, becoming a real estate agent. He emphasized the importance of accountability and showing up. The students were locked in, engaged, asking questions, and soaking up the knowledge!



WORK BASED LEARNING

Cape Fear High School Health Science students partnered with the Regional Library for a Teddy Bear Clinic, helping children explore healthcare through stuffed animal checkups and bandaging. With a special visit from Miss Cape Fear, the event brought smiles while students practiced communication, teamwork, and patient-care skills through community service.



Mrs. Meininger's Entrepreneurship II students explored new possibilities with a visit to the Entrepreneurship Hub in Pembroke and a UNCP campus tour! A highlight was running into two Cape Fear graduates from last year who are now attending UNCP. Both shared that they would never have considered UNCP without their previous trip with Mrs. Meininger—and they're enjoying their college experience! Such a meaningful reminder of how opening doors for students can help them discover their future!



Cape Fear's NJROTC Athletic Team competed in the Clayton Iron Man Challenge against 12 teams bringing the 1st Place trophy back to Cape Fear for the second year in a row.



Gray's Creek High School students explored Criminal Justice and Public Safety programs during a visit from Fayetteville Technical Community College (FTCC). Displays featuring forensics, interrogations, and fire science helped students connect their interests to college and career opportunities. Thank you, FTCC, for supporting CTE and inspiring students to plan for their futures!





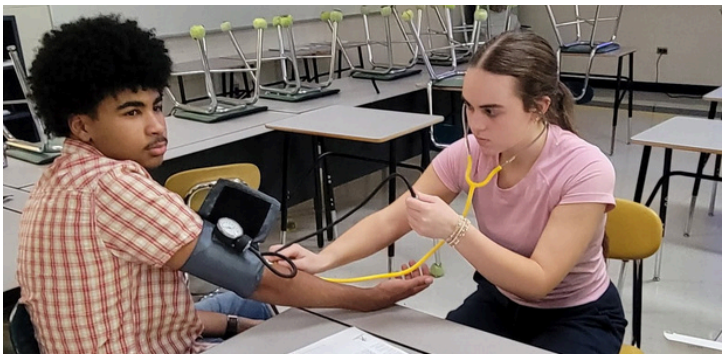
Pine Forest High School Cybersecurity students built electric cars through an Engineering Tomorrow activity, bringing classroom concepts to life. Students explored circuits, energy, and motion while using teamwork and problem-solving to create working vehicles. The hands-on experience connected STEM learning to transportation technology and skills used in engineering careers.

E.E. Smith Marketing students combined learning and service during Smithfield Foods Hunger Relief Day at the fair! Through a Scavenger Hunt, they explored marketing strategies and connected classroom concepts to real-world examples. Students also brought six canned goods to support families in need, reinforcing the importance of giving back.



CAREER AND TECHNICAL STUDENT ORGANIZATIONS

Cape Fear High School HOSA members are bringing classroom learning to life through blood pressure clinics! These hands-on experiences build healthcare and communication skills while highlighting the value of preventive care and community wellness. We're proud of our future healthcare professionals as they grow in confidence, lead with compassion, and serve our community!



JBHS Health Science/HOSA students and two advisors received vision screening training from Prevent Blindness North Carolina on September 3, 2026, at Jack Britt High School. This partnership helps students develop valuable skills while assisting school nurses with screenings and serving their community.



Jack Britt High School HOSA partnered with The Blood Connect and Ms. Tiffany Synder to host a blood drive on September 25, 2026. With 115 registered donors—40 more than the previous drive—the event collected 102 pints of blood, potentially saving up to 306 lives. Thank you to everyone who helped make a difference!The blood drive reflects Jack Britt High School HOSA ongoing efforts to promote civic responsibility and community engagement among its students.



The Cape Fear FFA Vet Science Team traveled to Lee County High School to compete in the state-level Vet Science Competition. Students spent the day competing, putting their veterinary knowledge and skills to the test, and gaining valuable hands-on experience. The team placed 30th in the state and 5th in the region! We are so proud of their hard work, dedication, and sportsmanship.



Four Gray's Creek High School AOIT freshmen participated in NCDPI's Student AI Design Challenge at the NCED Symposium, joining 101 students from 11 North Carolina schools. In just 60 minutes, they created working AI-powered applications addressing real-world community problems while demonstrating creativity, teamwork, and problem-solving. We're proud of their innovation and determination! Explore their applications and competition photos using the links below.



Cape Fear HOSA students made a tremendous impact at our first blood drive of the school year! Thanks to their hard work and dedication, they collected 57 units of blood, helping save up to 171 lives! We are so proud of our students and staff for giving back to our community and making a difference. What an incredible way to start the school year!



CAREER AND TECHNICAL STUDENT ORGANIZATIONS

Nine Gray's Creek FFA students competed in market and showmanship classes at the NC State Fair October 15–16, exhibiting goats bred, born, and raised on campus. Supported by their animal science classmates, each exhibitor invested over 200 hours in animal care and preparation. Students returned with ribbons, hands-on experience, and a deeper understanding of agriculture.





Pine Forest High School FBLA members brought creativity and school spirit to a Trunk or Treat with a Cookie Monster-themed trunk. Students practiced teamwork, planning, and communication while serving their community.

Service can look different for every chapter, and for Cape Fear DECA, it meant coming together to support breast cancer awareness through their annual PINK OUT fundraiser! From selling merchandise at the game and during lunches to hosting a week full of pink spirit days, our chapter worked together to make a difference. This fundraiser was also one of our Chapter Campaign Goals for the year! A huge thank-you to everyone who participated, volunteered, and helped make PINK OUT possible. Together, we can make an impact!



Westover High School reached record number of blood donors for our school! HOSA leadership organized an extremely successful drive - where they had over 60 student and staff volunteers!



Pine Forest High School FBLA students attended the National Fall Leadership Conference in Washington, D.C., November 5–8. Through workshops, service activities, and visits to the U.S. Capitol, Bureau of Engraving and Printing, and Arlington National Cemetery, students strengthened their leadership, professionalism, teamwork, and civic responsibility.



Congratulations to Alicen Johnson, a National Bronze Pin recipient in the Swine Production Placement Proficiency Award area! This recognition celebrates her hard work, dedication, and hands-on learning through her Supervised Agricultural Experience (SAE). We are proud of her accomplishments and the way she represented Gray's Creek Middle FFA!



CAREER AND TECHNICAL STUDENT ORGANIZATIONS

Ms. Brandon's E.E. Smith High School DECA leaders and Sport & Event Marketing I students attended Career Day in Sports at Charlotte's Spectrum Center. They explored careers with industry professionals, applied marketing skills in a real-world case study, and capped off the experience with a live Charlotte Hornets game.

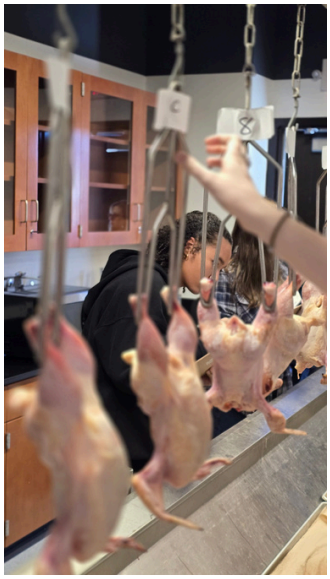


Gray's Creek High School's FCCLA chapter attended Fall Leadership at ECU, where students earned the following placements in the Career Cluster Challenge:

- Aziya Johnson: 1st Place, Financial Services
- A'Narri Copeland: 1st Place, Education & Training
- Aleigha Dixon: 2nd Place, Education & Training
- Karlyse Blake: 2nd Place, Education & Training
- Peyton Smith: 1st Place, Education & Training
- Bailey Bond: 3rd Place, Human Services
- Zoie McIntyre: 1st Place, Human Services
- A'Nyjah Brown: 2nd Place, Arts & Design
- Jaida Harrison: 3rd Place, Hospitality & Tourism
- Milan Williams: 1st Place, Public Services

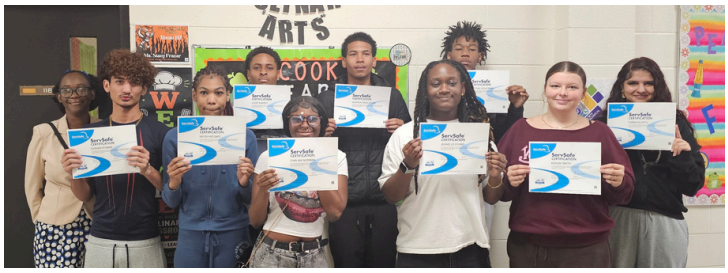


Gray's Middle FFA members participated in North Carolina A&T State University's first Poultry Clinic and mock judging contest. Through hands-on activities, students learned to identify poultry cuts, processed parts, and live birds while strengthening their public speaking skills by presenting oral reasons for their judging decisions. Students look forward to competing at the state level in February!



CLASSROOM LEARNING

South View High School's fall Culinary Arts II students achieved a 100% pass rate on the ServSafe Certification Exam! This industry credential recognizes their hard work and helps prepare them for culinary and hospitality careers.



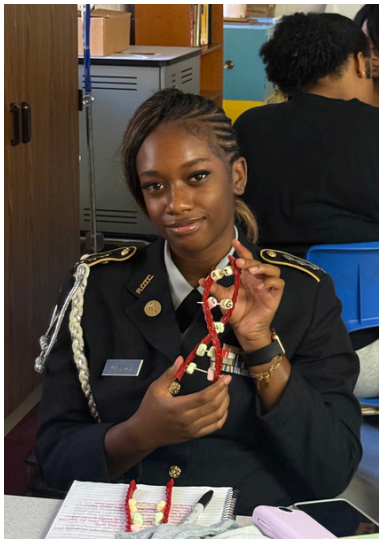
Students at Hope Mills Middle School got to participate in a STEM workshop with the STEM On The Go Bus, as part of the initiative of being a STARward STEM school. Students participated in a brief lesson on circuits, and applied their knowledge and skills by creating a flashlight.



Students participated in a service learning project to help provide support for NC families experiencing food insecurities. Students collected close to 400 canned good items to donate to Smithfield Hunger Relief.



Westover students are learning about DNA structure, sequencing, and how DNA plays an important role in diagnosing disease and guiding medical interventions. This activity gave students a fun way to visualize the structure of DNA while connecting what they are learning in the classroom to real-world applications in healthcare.



CAREER ACADEMIES

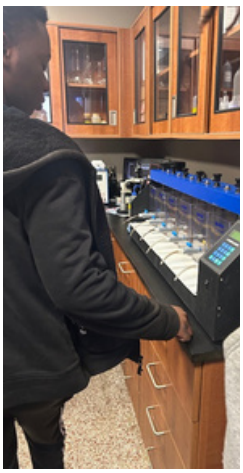
Two Cumberland County Schools Academies were recognized at NAF Next 2026. Congratulations to Gray's Creek High School Academy of Information Technology (AOIT) and E.E. Smith High School Fire Academy for being recognized as Katherine Blasik Distinguished Academies at NAF Next 2026! This prestigious national recognition celebrates their commitment to providing students with high-quality, career-focused education, meaningful work-based learning experiences, and strong industry partnerships. We are incredibly proud of both academies for their dedication to preparing students for success in college, careers, and beyond!

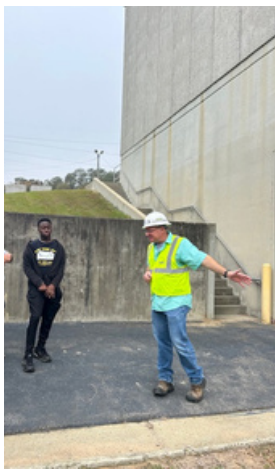


Pine Forest High School Academy of Emergency Medical Science students participated in Methodist University's Health Sciences showcase. The students were impressed by the programs and the facilities.



Academy of Green Technology students went to visit PWC's Water treatment facility to discover how municipal water technology works.





FTCC MEN IN NURSING



Cape Fear High School Health Science students took learning beyond the classroom at FTCC's Men in Nursing event! Students built real-world skills through hands-on training and earned Stop the Bleed and CPR credentials. These experiences help students build confidence, strengthen teamwork, and understand the importance of staying calm and taking action in an emergency. The event also gave our young men an opportunity to explore nursing as a career and see how they can make a difference in healthcare."

CTE students from Alger B. Wilkins High School, led by Mr. Nobles and Mr. Droke, participated in the Men in Nursing event at Fayetteville Technical Community College (FTCC). Students explored nursing career pathways, including Licensed Practical Nurse (LPN) and Registered Nurse (RN), while gaining firsthand exposure to healthcare training, clinical simulations, and patient care practices. Through interactive demonstrations and discussions with nursing professionals, students learned how technical skills, teamwork, communication, and patient safety contribute to success in the healthcare industry. The experience highlighted the growing opportunities for men in nursing and demonstrated how CTE education connects classroom learning to rewarding, high-demand careers.



