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# THE CHRONICLE

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## Chief Justice Cheri Beasley visits students at Mineral Springs

BY TEVIN STINSON  
THE CHRONICLE

Earlier this week, North Carolina Supreme Court Chief Justice Cheri Beasley spent time with students from Mineral Springs Elementary and Middle Schools. The visit was part of Beasley's statewide tour to ensure that the state's justice system reflects the values of the citizens, including students.

Beasley, the first African American woman to serve as Chief Justice, participated in a panel discussion at Mineral Springs,

where a select group of students from both schools had the opportunity to ask questions. Other participants in the panel included Sheriff Bobby Kimbrough, Police Chief Catrina Thompson, District Court Judge Carrie Vickery, Tembila Covington, president of the Ministers' Conference of Winston-Salem and Vicinity, Julie Childress, assistant district attorney, Susan Frye, retired Forsyth County Clerk of Court, and Bishop Todd Fulton, social justice chair of the Ministers' Conference of Winston-Salem and Vicinity.

The students from grades fifth through eighth didn't hold back when it came time to ask the guests the tough questions. The students asked questions about gang violence, gun laws, the spread of violence throughout the community, and several others. They also asked questions about their inspirations growing up and what made them pursue their careers.

Following the panel, Chief Justice Beasley stuck around to mingle with the students. Beasley said the visit to Mineral Springs was a wonderful opportunity to have mean-



Photos by Tevin Stinson  
N.C. Supreme Court Chief Justice Cheri Beasley speaks with students from Mineral Springs Elementary and Middle Schools during a panel discussion on Monday, Sept. 9.



Students from Mineral Springs Middle School enjoy their discussion with N.C. Supreme Court Chief Justice Cheri Beasley and other special guests on Monday, Sept. 9.

ingful conversations with young people who are aware of the issues that are plaguing our communities.

"They had great questions and really sparked some wonderful conversations," Beasley said. "I think it's important for young people to know that the people who lead their communities care about some of the challenges they're facing. And I think it's important that leaders serve as role models."

Beasley said she was impressed by the knowledge the students had on some very important topics

and issues that plague their communities, but was also concerned. She said, "For them to be fifth through eighth graders, to have a handle on these is very inspiring on one hand, but they're also issues that you don't want young people to be thinking about."

Lisette Choate, a parent, thanked Chief Justice Beasley and the other panelists for taking the time to sit down with the students. Choate said students hear about police and judges but it's not often that they get to actually sit down and talk to the people in

these positions.

"They may hear things like this in the classroom, but hearing it like this, I think, is eye opening. It makes it more real for the kids, I think. As a parent, I appreciate each and every one of you for coming and sharing your perspective," Choate said.

While in Forsyth County, Beasley also met with local lawyers and judges in the area. She will return to the area next month when the North Carolina Supreme Court is scheduled to hold court here in Forsyth County.

## Winston-Salem Chamber hosts inaugural State of Education luncheon

BY TEVIN STINSON  
THE CHRONICLE

In an attempt to bring the community together for an important conversation on workforce opportunities and the role institutions of higher education play in building those opportunities, last week the Winston-Salem Chamber invited all six CEOs from the colleges and universities in the city to participate in a panel discussion.

The panel included: Janet Spriggs, President of Forsyth Tech Community

College; Elwood Robinson, Chancellor of Winston-Salem State University; Charles Pettit, President of Piedmont International University; Nathan Hatch, President of Wake Forest University; Sandra Doran, interim president of Salem College; and Brian Cole, interim president of UNC School of the Arts. The chamber's inaugural State of Education luncheon was held at the Beaton Convention Center on Sept. 4.

While addressing the room during the luncheon, Mark Owens, president of the Winston-Salem Chamber, talked about the importance of businesses having working relationships with the colleges and universities in the city. He said, "With the changing economy, communities must focus on recruiting and retaining talent in order to provide the greatest asset of all to your company - good people."

"In this new era, we have to ask a lot from our

colleges and universities, because in order to be successful, we need our unity, we need our universities' help to develop talent. We also need their help to recruit and retain talent in our community." Owens continued, "The collective impact of building our knowledge around retaining graduates equals billions of dollars in economic impact for Winston-Salem and Forsyth County."

Following lunch and individual introductions, Owens kicked off the discussion by asking the panelists about some of the gaps in workforce programs in higher education and some courses that may need to be added to the curriculum.

President Hatch called all universities to offer courses that teach technical skills. He also suggested taking a closer look at the job market and create courses based on need and the need for more internships for students.



Photos by Tevin Stinson  
Last week the Winston-Salem Chamber invited all six presidents and chancellors from the colleges and universities in the city to participate in a panel discussion on their relationship with the business community.

"I think technical fields are growing so much and I think at every level, whether it's community college or whether it's undergraduate or graduate, they should be technically competent, producing more engineers so companies can hire more people, or even sophisticated technicians. I think seeing what the market is and making sure we're providing an

open invitation for what's needed," Hatch said. President Pettit said there's a need for more collaboration between businesses and colleges because industries are rapidly changing. He said, "Having close collaboration between industry and the colleges is required because they're changing more quickly than we can even notice."

Chancellor Robinson raised concerns about the growing gap between the "haves and have-nots" and keeping costs affordable so every student has the opportunity to further their education after high school.

"I worry about this growing gap between the haves and the have-nots"

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