

Medicaid

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because it did not raise teacher pay enough and did not expand Medicaid. According to statistics, the expansion of Medicaid would provide affordable health care to 12,809 people in Forsyth County and create more than 2,000 jobs.

According to Elyse Powell, state opioid coordinator for the N.C. Department of Health and Human Services, the expansion of Medicaid would also close the coverage gap necessary to fight the opioid epidemic. She said although the state has made great strides when it comes to fighting the opioid epidemic, there is still a lot of work to be done and expanding Medicaid would provide hundreds of uninsured people with substance abuse disorders with treatment.

Powell said about half of the people who show up at the hospital suffering from an overdose in N.C. don't have insurance. She said, "That really demonstrates both how necessary Medicaid expansion is and it's the most important tool in our tool box to fight the opioid epidemic."

Because there isn't currently a budget in place, the N.C. Department of Health and Human Services announced earlier this week that open enrollment for Medicaid has been closed. N.C. Medicaid will continue to operate under the current fee-for-service model. Nothing is expected to

change with Medicaid beneficiaries.

The budget, or lack thereof, has left local school districts in the dark as well.

Not having a state education budget limits the spending of districts across the state. Several reports published in recent weeks have noted that construction projects at several schools have been held up by the uncertainty of a budget, as well as the possibility of increasing teacher and supplement worker pay across the state.

When discussing the budget, Godwin said there will not be a lot of movement before the end of the year.

Other topics discussed during the event sponsored by the Governor's Office of Public Engagement included education, environmental issues, severe weather preparation, workforce development, and tourism. After each presentation, those in attendance had the opportunity to ask questions. Many people raised questions about the budget and when state lawmakers would come to a conclusion.

Godwin also discussed the importance of the upcoming 2020 Census scheduled for April 1, 2020. Census information is used to determine the number of seats each state has in the U.S. House of Representatives. It is also used to distribute federal funds to states and local communities. For more information on the 2020 Census visit www.census.gov.

Superintendent calls on community to help turn things around in local schools

BY TEVIN STINSON
THE CHRONICLE

Over the past three months, Angela Pringle Hairston, the superintendent of Winston-Salem/Forsyth County Schools (WS/FCS), has been on a district-wide tour speaking with those in the community with vested interest in the school system and the future of our children. And earlier this week Hairston made a stop at Emmanuel Baptist Church to speak with members of the Ministers' Conference of Winston-Salem and Vicinity (MCWSV).

Before joining WS/FCS earlier this year, Hairston worked more than 30 years in public education as a superintendent, principal, assistant principal and a math teacher. Her most recent stop before relocating to N.C. was in Augusta, Ga., where she served as superintendent for Richmond County Schools. Before that she served as a region superintendent for the Dekalb County School District in Georgia as well.

While giving Hairston's introduction on Tuesday, Dec. 2, Pastor Tembila Covington, MCWSV president, said although they've waited some time to have

the sit-down with the superintendent, it was well worth the wait.

"We waited a long time, but it's never too late to learn more so we can help our children grow and become more successful," Covington said. "I believe she will share more that she's already doing to ensure there is equity being served in our school district."

To begin her presentation, Pringle Hairston talked about how the education system has changed over the years and how No Child Left Behind (NCLB) and the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) placed more emphasis on accountability.

She said in 2002 when President George W. Bush signed NCLB into law, we started to see the segregation of data by subgroups that led to more segregated and more failing schools. When discussing ESSA, which was signed into law by President Barack Obama in 2015, Hairston said although it too is an accountability measure, it gave more power to individual states and put more emphasis on equity.

"When we moved to ESSA, there was a lot of language around equity because 13 years later,



Photo by Tevin Stinson
Dr. Angela Pringle Hairston makes a presentation to the Ministers' Conference of Winston-Salem and Vicinity earlier this week.

what we realized was that this accountability move led to people being segregated, moving out of neighborhoods and separating themselves," Hairston continued. "The first thing we have to do is understand what the accountability system looks like. And I don't want to say that accountability has an agenda; it just has an impact that we have to understand."

Hairston said when she joined the local school district, there were already several things in place that she will build on as superintendent, including addressing equity, creating a strategic plan, and school choice. During her presentation, Hairston also discussed third grade reading scores, high school graduation rates, the African American Infusion course, wrap-

around services for students and parents, behavior, increasing access to pre-K, and several other topics.

Moving forward, Hairston said her main focus will be moving all students forward and to do that, it will take the collective efforts of the entire community. She said, "There are very old school, basic things that have to happen on our part and we have to own it. And then there are things that must happen in the community."

"The school system is going to do the work it has to do. We're going to get it right; this board is serious and they have the potential. But at the same time, we as a school district cannot do it alone because the school does not live apart from the community."



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The Chronicle (USPS 067-910) was established by Ernest H. Pitt and Ndubisi Egemonye in 1974 and is published every Thursday by Chronicle Media Group, LLC, 1300 E. Fifth St., Winston Salem, N.C. 27101. Periodicals postage paid at Winston-Salem, N.C. Annual subscription price is \$30.72.

POSTMASTER: Send address changes to:
The Chronicle, P.O. Box 1636
Winston-Salem, NC 27102-1636