

# Community helps send students on Washington Trip

By JASON BECK  
Staff Writer

Roughly 200 middle school students recently returned from a trip to the nation's capitol, a trip only possible thanks to the generosity of the community.

Eighth graders from both East Hoke Middle School and West Hoke Middle School participated on the trip, which was the largest out-of-state trip for students in school system history.

Chaperones from East Hoke took 90 students – about a third

of the eighth grade class – on the Washington trip. Next year, school officials plan on sending the entire class.

"The kids were great," said East principal Erica Fortenberry. "We didn't have any problems at all."

Parents paid for East Hoke students to go on the trip, with financial assistance from the school's PTO. However, West Hoke conducted several months worth of fundraisers to drive down the trip's cost and pay for some student's fare all together.

"Every eighth grade student that wanted to go was able to go," said West Hoke principal Mary McLeod. "Everything went great. We took a total of 205... that included the adult staff and chaperones."

The West Hoke students raised about \$9,000 for the trip, a large chunk of the \$55,000 total cost.

Parents and students participated in fundraisers including donut sales, dances, tailgating at football games, a black and white formal and approaching church and community business leaders.

"The parents chipped in, the churches chipped in and the community chipped in," McLeod said. "It was a great time."

Both principals are hoping to make the three-day trip an annual event for eighth graders. Students visited the White House, Capitol Building, Smithsonian and all of the memorials during their time in DC.

"For middle school we want them to experience and have a comparison between the state

and DC," Fortenberry said. "They go to Raleigh, and then they go to DC."



**Sought**  
Chief Probation/Parole Officer Percy Moore is seeking Michael Elebee for alleged parole violation. He is 42, a black male, weighs 150 pounds and is 5'8" tall. Anyone with information should call Moore at (910) 875-5081.

# Graduation summit addresses dropouts

Communities In Schools of North Carolina is hosting a regional dropout prevention event that will bring together leaders from the south central part of the state to discuss strategies for reducing the dropout rate and ensuring that youth graduate on time, college or career ready.

The South Central Regional Graduation Summit will be from 10 a.m. – 2 p.m. on Thursday, May 6, at the Richmond Community College Cole Auditorium in Hamlet.

The keynote speaker is Dr. Shelley Stewart, president and CEO of The Mattie C. Stewart Foundation.

The summit will be the first of three held in different regions across the state

"We must recognize there is no precise answer for solving the dropout crisis," said Linda Harrill, president and CEO of Communities In Schools of North Carolina. "The graduation summits will allow each region to create unique action plans

to address the most pressing needs of its youth and increase the number of students succeeding."

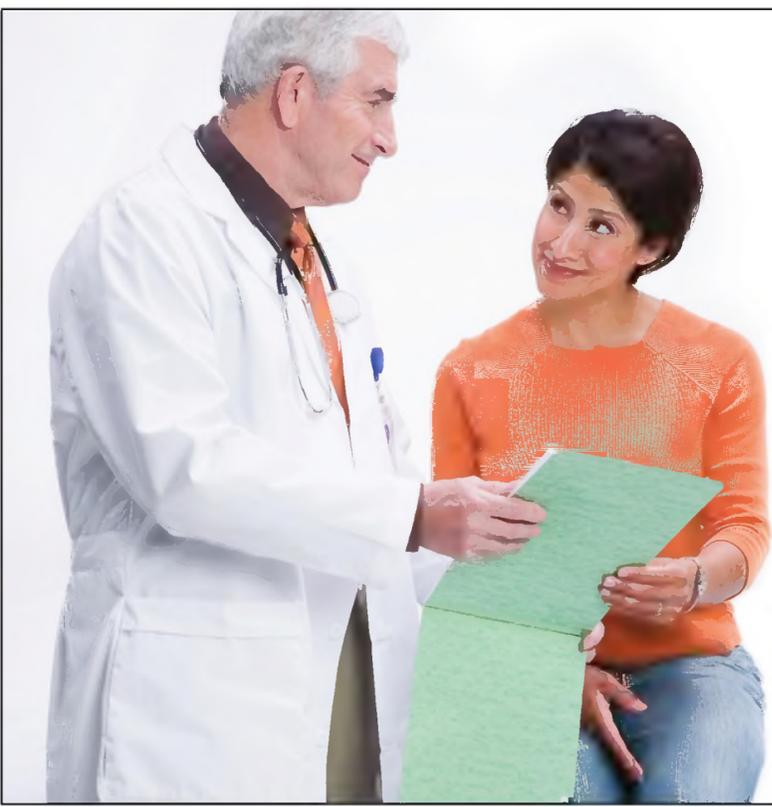
The counties participating in the South Central Regional Graduation Summit are Anson, Hoke, Montgomery, Richmond and Scotland.

The summits serve as a follow-up event to last October's statewide graduation summit, hosted by Communities In Schools of North Carolina and the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction.

Nearly 500 education, business and community leaders came together to discuss ways to solve the dropout issue in North Carolina and to create plans for implementing these strategies in their own communities.

Communities In Schools of North Carolina is part of the national CIS organization. Last school year, the CIS network in North Carolina worked with more than 90,000 children and youth across the state.

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