

Educators working towards paradigm shift

Chamber luncheon brought business leaders to school

By Logan B. Anderson

The Banner

Paradigm shift — a radical change in underlying beliefs or theory.

On Wednesday afternoon, the Dorchester Chamber of Commerce held its regular luncheon at the Dorchester Career and Technology Center. During the gathering of business leaders and educators, Dorchester County Public Schools Superintendent Dr. Henry Wagner told the crowd about his efforts to change how everyone thinks of education in our community.

"A paradigm is the lens you see the world with," Dr. Wagner said.

He explained that how paradigms influence the world around us. When founding father George Washington was ill and nearing the end of his life, the paradigm in health care at the time was that impurities in blood is what made people sick. So the cure for many illnesses was bleeding. Under that paradigm, doctors applied leeches to a patient to suck out what they believed was harmful elements. In the paradigm in which the modern world operates, we

know that draining an already ill person of blood, just makes them weaker.

An example of a paradigm shift, Dr. Wagner said Wednesday, was when scientists discovered germs and bacteria. That discovery shifted how doctors treated patients, from that point on.

Dr. Wagner explained the current paradigm regarding education in Dorchester County by extending up and out his left arm and saying, "this is the community." He then outstretched his right arm in the opposite direction and said "this is our schools."

Like boys and girls at a middle school dance, the two communities stay on opposite ends of the dance floor. Nobody is dancing.

Dr. Wagner wants to shift that paradigm so that the community and schools come together and dance to a brighter future for Dorchester County's youth.

Since taking the reins of the school district 2010, Dr. Wagner has been working to shift the current paradigm by establishing his Superintendent's Advisory Council, developing community outreach protocols; he has conducted quarterly Superinten-



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School Superintendent Dr. Henry Wagner addressed the crowd that attended the Dorchester Chamber of Commerce's luncheon on Wednesday held at the Dorchester Career and Technology Center.



DCTC Principal Kermit Hines gave a guided tour of the school to members of the Chamber of Commerce on Wednesday. Above, Mr. Hines is pictured in the new school's state-of-the-art medical services classroom.

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dent's Roundtable discussions with area leaders and has held quarterly Superintendent's Community Forums.

Most recently, Dr. Wagner and the district held two events aimed at bringing business, community and school leaders together to work to plan how schools will interact with community partners in the future.

The gatherings called "Dorchester's Future is Now," developed Five Action Verbs to direct future partnerships and created subcommittees for each one — Teach, Tutor, Confer, Mentor and Recognize.

Do you connect with any of the five action verbs? Would you like to be more involved in the school system? Can you help Dr. Wagner with his paradigm shift? Then he wants you to let him know. You can contact Dr. Wagner at wagnerh@dcpmsd.

org or 410-228-4747, ext. 1001.

Executive Director of the Chamber of Commerce Allen Nelson, echoed Dr. Wagner's call for the community and schools to work together and praised Dr. Wagner and his staff for the job they are currently doing.

"Education is the way out of a poor economy," Mr. Nelson said. "Not only is this facility (DCTC) incredible, but the people inside of it are incredible too."

Lunch was provided by the DCTC's Culinary Arts program. The department, headed by Chef Charlene Zinnel, accomplished an impressive feat, by preparing an excellent meal even after a two hour fog delay.

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