

The Hopewell News

Va. first lady stops by local school

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JAMES PEACEMAKER JR./STAFF PHOTOS First lady Dorothy McAuliffe walks with Elizabeth Scott Elementary School students at a new gravel track at the school.

CHESTERFIELD — Kids have been known to nod off in math class on occasion. That's wasn't going to happen Tuesday in Mrs. Smith's third-grade class at Elizabeth Scott Elementary School near Enon.

The kids ran in place, raised their arms up high and did various types of calisthenics as they counted out the solutions to their math problems with Jenny Long-Innis, a wellness integration specialist with the regional nonprofit Fit4Kids.

This was all part of several healthy initiatives implemented at

the school over the past couple years. On Tuesday, Virginia first lady Dorothy McAuliffe got a first-hand look at the efforts by the school and nonprofit partners.

“I am going to tell the governor how good you all are at math,” she told the kids, who were excited to see the parade of officials surrounding the class.

Other programs at the school included a learning garden and a new walking trail loop.

At the learning garden, a group of raised beds outside the school, kids got a chance to plant some kale alongside McAuliffe.

Sean Sheppard, with Backyard Farmer, explained how it was getting colder and they had to change out their plants to something that would do well this time of year. He said when it gets colder, you can’t just stop eating.

He told the kids that kale chips can be a healthy alternative to potato chips.

“Do you want to grow junk food or do you want to grow food that’s going to make you strong and healthy?” Sheppard asked the two dozen kids.

The question drew a near unanimous response: “Strong and healthy!”



Kids prepare to plant kale in the learning gardens outside of the school.

The school also offers tasting of various healthy foods to teach kids about healthy options.

Scott Elementary is one of nine schools in the region involved in a partnership with Fit4Kids, a nonprofit started four years ago by Sports Backers to promote exercise and healthy eating.

Superintendent Marcus Newsome said this school can serve as model for others.

“They educate the whole child, truly, here,” he said.

Carrie Coyner also noted that the school had around 300 people participate in their first 5k walk/run last year and there were 55 students in running club.

“Last year, we ran over 2,000 miles,” she said.

This year she said 100 students are signed up for the club.

“It’s really important to have a mind that is active in learning, is fueled by a body that is healthy and moving,” McAuliffe said. “... Keep doing what you’re doing.”