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MAYLAND EARLY COLLEGE HIGH SCHOOL

“From a small seed a mighty oak grows...” and thus is the beginning of a new era of education in the Mitchell, Avery and Yancey County area with the beginning of the Mayland Early College High School, MECHS, located on the Mayland Community College campus. The Early College is a non-traditional high school experience for students who thrive in a smaller, nurturing, yet academically challenging environment. It compresses high school and the first two years of college into five years. At the end of the five year experience students have the opportunity to graduate with a high school diploma **and** an associate’s degree or credits that will transfer to a four year institution. There is no cost to the students or their families. Sixty-five eighth grade students from Mitchell, Yancey and Avery counties began this process this past spring by applying to be a part of the Year One group, as they are called. Ms. Angie Burleson, the principal for MECHS, notified approximately thirty-eight students in May of their acceptance to the program. On Thursday evening, July 30th, thirty-six nervous students and their parents met at Mayland for the first time to hear about bus schedules, school supply lists and the typical beginning of school information. They also heard that this opportunity, funded by grants from The Bill and Melinda Gates foundation and supported by the administrations of each county as well as Mayland Community College, had a face value of about \$13,500. On Tuesday evening, August 4th, the students came to Mayland to get acquainted, receive orientation information and to have supper together. On the following Thursday morning, August 6th, each student then boarded a bus at each of their respective counties high schools and traveled to their new high school located in the newly renovated area in the bottom of the Sam Center on Mayland’s campus to begin a journey that many had only dreamed of taking- a journey to a college education. There they were greeted by their new principal, Ms. Burleson, their School Counselor, Elaine Wyatt, their new Science teacher, Mr. Jeff LaVoie, who received his

Bachelor of Science in Biology from Wake Forest University and is completing his Masters of Science in Environmental Studies from the University of Montana at Missoula. He has worked for schools in Missoula and in Webster, NY; their new math teacher, Mr. Mike Lahm, who received his Bachelor of Science in Secondary Mathematics Education from Penn State University and has taught for a year and a half in Gaston County School system. Ms. Burleson is the acting as the English Teacher as that position has yet to be filled.

Congratulations to each of their following Year One students: from Mitchell County: Sabrina Brewer, Makayla Burse, Hattie Crader, Jeremiah Dowell, Hannah Emmett, Tito Hernandez, John Newberry, Amanda Robinson, Greg Shepherd, Laura Townsend, Rebecca Wise. From Avery County: Riley Bare, Makayla Brewer, James Carson, Tamara Clawson, Alex Cox, Kelsey Hartley, Lindsey Haun, Stevy Leininger, Ryan Oberhelman, Brandon Trivette. And from Yancey County: Myranda Aldrige, Kayla Barrus, Justin Barnett, Cory Boone, Nikki Briggs, Emry Daniel, Kira DeMeritt, Martin Gutierrez, Katie Lackey, Dulce Orihuela, Jessica Phillips, Victoria Riddle, Leia Woody, Sara Wyatt.