

Features



TOP

Nixon: A+ Big Deal; 'Go Bearcats!'

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With little fanfare or hoopla, Missouri Governor Jay Nixon visited the Bearcat Event Center, enthused about the Bearcats and enthused about an academic program to help Missouri students afford a college education.

Nixon took the podium Tuesday morning at the BEC with the entire DHS student body in the stands for a unique school assembly.

Calling Dexter “one of Missouri outstanding schools” Nixon told the students that he and First Lady Georganne Nixon were proud to be at “the home of the Bearcats.”

“As we travel the state we take photos with the schools’ logos painted by different classes,” the chief executive said. The Nixons posed for a photograph earlier with a group of DHS students at the Bearcat mural near the high school office. “That’s just a stunning Bearcat with those green eyes! That’s a great logo!”

Nixon also noted Dexter students joined students across Missouri earlier in the morning in the Great Central Shake Out – an earthquake preparedness drill.

“You all participated this morning with 468,000 other Missouri school kids,” he told the Dexter students, and said the preparedness reviewed in the drill is important. “It can make a huge, huge difference.”

But the Governor’s main purpose was really to promote the A+ scholarship program and encourage the Dexter students to take advantage of the state program. The program makes two years of free tuition at a Missouri community college available to students who complete the A+ program in high school.

'Great Schools' Don't Just Happen

“Great schools like Dexter High don’t exist by accident, “ he said. “Great schools are possible only because of strong support from every part of the community – parents, grandparents, employers, taxpayers and civic leaders. Each of us has a hand in public education. I say to Missouri – public education is a value not a political issue; it is something we share and respect.”

Nixon spoke with most of Dexter's Board of Education and top administrators standing behind him. Board President Herman Morse, Vice President Betty Keirse, and board members Rick, Williams, Kenny Pope and Kevin Bishop as well as Supt. Dr. Thomas Sharp, administrators Dr. Kim Flowers, Dr. Roger Alsup and DHS A+ Coordinator Ann Polsgrove and DHS principal Corey Mouser joined Mrs. Nixon. Board member Nancy Mayer was unable to attend.

Nixon praised schoolteachers who "have answered a call to service" to make Missouri communities stronger, more prosperous and thanked them for their commitment.

"Our public schools always have been and always will be open to all, beacons of hope, opportunity and excellence for everyone. No one is turned away from public school in our state," he told the students. "Some children come to school hungry, some homeless; some bear the burdens of poverty, neglect. But when a child of want and a child of wealth walk through the schoolhouse doors here, they enter as equals. Support for public education should not be an issue that divides us. It is an enduring value that unites us."

Nixon noted Dexter came together in recent years to fund a bond issue for school improvements for today's students and future generations, calling it a "precedent." He applauded the Dexter district for taking the necessary steps to gain A+ designation.

"These people here – the board and administrators – all had to do a lot to make this happen." He noted that Dexter was one of 50 districts in the state that joined the A+ program last academic year. The first Dexter students to graduate and able to take advantage of the A+ program graduate in May 2011.

A+ A 'Big Deal'

Nixon told the students that A+ is "big deal" for three basic reasons. The first reason was that the requirements for A+ - to attend school make solid grades and mentor other students – are all "positive steps" for the students.

Second, he told the students that A+ was a positive program because of the global economy we compete in today. He noted that they will be competing for jobs not just in the region or state, but worldwide.

The governor told the students that A+ is important because more and more jobs in the future will require a two- or four-year degree.

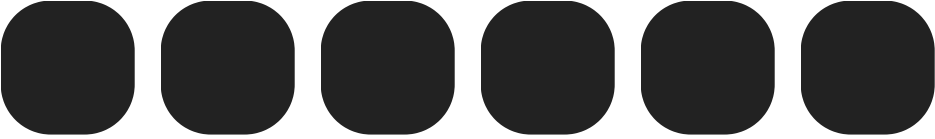
"We want more and more young folks going on to technical schools, going on to two-year and four-year schools to make sure you are armed with the greatest asset for economic independence ever invented: Education."

The A+ program isn't cheap, but Nixon said that state government in Missouri is committed to funding the program.

"You do your part of the deal and we'll do our part of the deal and that money will be there," he said. "Now it's up to you all. The teachers have done their work to build it up. The administrators have organized it, the school board has authorized it, the state school board has approved it. The first class of A+ recipients is now out at community colleges from this very community. Now the responsibility is on you. All these folks have before you have done all this work to give you an opportunity."

Before he left the BEC, Nixon told the students a phrase more commonly heard in the gym: "Go Bearcats!"

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