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Of course, the 2018-2019 school year is bringing plenty of change to the school system.

For starters, Hill began the year as the new superintendent to lead the system, and two of his colleagues – Dr. Paula Davenport and David Mitchell – received promotions recently to join him as newly minted assistant superintendents at the board office.

The school system has also welcomed 22 new teacher replacements for faculty members who either retired, moved into different positions or left otherwise.

Furthermore, in July, the school board authorized the creation of the new Union County Schools Police Department, which is currently in the process of getting up and running under the leadership of Chief Chad Deyton.

Union County Sheriff Mack Mason has agreed to supplement the schools' security needs through the first week of September to give the new police force enough time to finish setting up.

"We're extremely happy with our police department, and we appreciate the sheriff for continuing to have overlapping support," said Hill.

Over at Union County High, Principal C.T. Hussion said the students seemed excited to be back, noting that "there were a lot of smiles and high-fives in the hallways."

At Union County Middle, Principal Gwen Stafford said she was thankful for the beautiful weather on the first day.

Stafford was especially thankful for the beautiful weather as she and a number of her faculty, with new



The faculty and staff of Union County High School gathered in the gym for a group photo just before students – mostly freshmen – arrived for Meet Your Teacher on Aug. 2.

Photo by Shawn Jarrard

School Resource Officer Jeff McConnell, worked to get students to cars and buses after their dismissal at the end of day.

Leading up to the first day every year, students get a chance to preview their class assignments during the "Meet Your Teacher" event.

Casey Potts was one of more than 250 educators on hand to greet students during "Meet Your Teacher," which took place systemwide on Thursday, Aug. 2.

Potts has been with the Union County School System for 24 years, and she is the librarian at Union County Primary School.

The Potts Family spent time at the beach this summer, and though they had plenty of fun on their vacation, Potts said

she was excited to get back to work.

"I like to see all the children that were here before come back, and see how much they've grown," said Potts. "And I like to see all the new faces, too. It's pretty cool."

Moving on this year from the primary school, 8-year-old David Tiu said he was both excited and nervous to be starting his first year at Union County Elementary School.

Tiu attended STEAM Camp (Science, Technology, Engineering, the Arts and Mathematics) this summer, where he enjoyed building a rocket out of a 2-liter bottle, and Tiu said he was happy to be seeing all his friends again with the return of school.

He attended Meet Your Teacher with his mom Julie, dad

Joe, and baby sister Diana.

"We've had a pretty good experience with the school system here," said Joe Tiu. "We actually live over in Towns County and pay a little extra to send our kids here because we like it over here."



Union County Middle School students load up after a good first day of school.

Photo by Shawn Jarrard



Sheila Tritt Collins instructing her class on the first day back at Woody Gap School.

Photo/Facebook – Woody Gap Dispatch



Union County Elementary School Assistant Principal Jana Hussion visits with the Tiu Family during Meet Your Teacher.

Photo by Shawn Jarrard