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Project L.I.F.T.'s Statesville Road Elementary celebrates Olympian Simidele Adeagbo

Elite athlete visited students, thanking them for support, encouragement during PyeongChang journey

CHARLOTTE, N.C. – Students from Statesville Road Elementary School met Olympic skeleton competitor Simidele Adeagbo at a school-wide assembly held Friday, April 27, 2018. Adeagbo is Nigeria's first winter Olympian, Africa's first female skeleton Olympian and the first black female skeleton Olympian. Statesville Road Elementary School students have been cheering for Adeagbo since her journey to PyeongChang started; Adeagbo's sister, Busola A. Stackhouse, M. Ed, NBCT, is a Multi-Classroom Leader supporting teachers in third through fifth grade math at Statesville Road Elementary.

Nearly 600 students packed the school gym to ask Adeagbo questions about the sport of skeleton. (Skeleton is a single rider winter sport in which an athlete rides a skeleton sled down a frozen track at high speeds while lying face down.) The children asked her about her personal journey, and all were inspired and challenged to work hard to try to be first at something for which they are passionate. Adeagbo shared pictures and videos from the Olympics and showed scholars the practice drills she used to train. The assembly concluded with a race that demonstrated the skills needed to be a champion.

Adeagbo finished her Olympic debut in Women's Skeleton with the third best start time and 20th place overall. She was selected to lead Team Nigeria as the flag bearer in the closing ceremonies. Adeagbo lived in Nigeria as a child before moving to Canada and eventually settling in Louisville, K.Y., where she attended the University of Kentucky. She moved back to Africa in 2013, and is currently living and working in Johannesburg, South Africa.

"It was a great honor to visit with the scholars at Statesville Road Elementary School and personally thank them for their support throughout my Olympic journey," said Adeagbo. "I hope I've inspired them to dream big and helped them understand what being first truly means. It's all about character, integrity and limitless possibilities."

"We are so thankful for the energy and inspiration that Simi brought to the entire Statesville Road family," said Statesville Road Elementary School Principal Courtney Mochan. "Her message of persevering through obstacles to reach your goals was powerful and provided meaningful and effective motivation as our students are preparing for their final 'race' toward the finish line of the 2017-18 school year. We were truly in the presence of greatness and were fortunate to have been able to follow her story and witness history in the making."

Project Leadership & Investment For Transformation (L.I.F.T.) is a public/private partnership working within Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools. Our work directly impacts ten schools in the west corridor of Charlotte. Project L.I.F.T. seeks to transform the way students who traditionally perform poorly in school are educated by ensuring they are equipped and well-prepared. We are a community of mission-aligned educators with the goal of closing the achievement gap. Learn more about Project L.I.F.T. and what makes our formula for success bold, unconventional and innovative, visit us online at www.projectliftcharlotte.org.

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