

The News-Journal

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75¢

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Wednesday, March 21, 2012

Schools tell why teacher was suspended Officials release personnel info in hopes of quelling national nugget flap

By CATHARIN SHEPARD
Staff writer

The Hoke County Board of Education defended itself Monday against claims from state Rep. G.L. Pridgen that pre-k teacher Margaret Maynor was used as a scapegoat in

the school lunch substitution issue at West Hoke Elementary and should not have resigned from her job.

Maynor resigned February 28, five days after she was suspended with pay amid a storm of controversy surrounding three pre-kindergarten children at West Hoke Elementary

School going through the school lunch line instead of eating their home-packed lunches.

State policy requires taxpayer-funded pre-kindergarten programs to offer supplemental food items to children with home-packed lunches that appear not to meet federal nutri-

tional guidelines. However, although at least one of the children's home-packed lunches appeared to meet the guidelines, that four-year-old ended up eating just three chicken nuggets instead of the lunch her mother packed.

"This entire situation has been a

nightmare because of the inaccuracies," Pridgen wrote in a March 13 letter to the school system. At least one parent contacted Pridgen's office about the incident and the representative's office continues to speak on behalf of the

(See TEACHER, page 4A)

Voting at church approved

By CATHARIN SHEPARD
Staff writer

The state last week approved two petitions from the Hoke County Board of Elections to move the Puppy Creek voting district polling place and offer Sunday voting at the county administrative building in Raeford.

County Board of Elections Director Caroline Shook said she received an email last week informing her of the state's decision. Two members of the three-member board petitioned the state to move the Puppy Creek voting district polling place from the Puppy Creek Fire (See VOTING, page 6A)

Woods resigns

By CATHARIN SHEPARD
Staff writer



Hoke County Senior Services Director Don Woods resigned from (See WOODS, page 5A)



Parents gathered at the wreck scene to check on their children. Most of them sat on the ground, though four were taken to the hospital for treatment of minor injuries. (Catharin Shepard photos)



A state trooper investigates. The car suffered the brunt of the collision. Its driver was taken to the hospital.

Fleeing driver hits loaded school bus

By CATHARIN SHEPARD
Staff writer

A man trying to outrun authorities for the third time in his life lost control of his car and crashed head-on into a loaded school bus Wednesday on Chason Road near the Hoke-Robeson county line.

Isaac Lee Nesby, 43, of Cold Camp Road in Parkton was speeding to get away from investigators around 2:39 p.m. last Wednesday when he lost control of his 1998 Nissan and ran into a school bus that was taking children home from nearby Sandy Grove Elementary. (See FLEEING, page 5A)

Schools to lose another \$5 million next year

By CATHARIN SHEPARD
Staff writer

Hoke County Schools will start the 2012-13 school year with \$5 million less in funding than last year because of reductions and budget cuts.

Low wealth funding will decrease by \$620,346, EduJobs funding of \$1.6 million will end, and the state's dis-

cretionary cuts to the school system's funding will go up to \$2.8 million next year, School Finance Officer Wannaa Chavis said at the Board of Education's regular meeting last week.

The school system already learned it would have to give back half a million dollars in school funding this year. The \$5 million in additional cuts will factor in the planning for

the next school year.

Low wealth funding is money the state gives to school systems based on a complicated formula that factors in how much money a local school system gets from the county government and how much the county should be giving the school system.

"There's three factors that determine our low wealth and we were hit

by all three," Chavis said.

However, the state doesn't factor in a county's debt load when considering the low wealth funding allocations, school officials said.

Superintendent Dr. Freddie Williamson said the school system will deal with the cuts by enlarging class sizes by one or two students per class (See SCHOOL FUNDING, page 5A)

Raz Autry receives state's top award

By CATHARIN SHEPARD
Staff writer

As a retired school superintendent, peach farmer, author and newspaper columnist, George Raz Autry has a lot of titles to his name and now he can add one more.

Autry is the latest recipient of the North Carolina Order of the Longleaf Pine, an honor given to a select few by the Governor's Office. Recipients

are recognized for their exemplary service and commitment to their communities and to North Carolina.

United States Rep. Larry Kissell nominated Autry for the award. Autry served as principal at the Montgomery County high school Kissell attended when he was a student.

"An ambassador for education in North Carolina for more than 45 years, Mr. Autry has served in a multitude of

prominent and important roles in support of youth, farmers and our community as a whole," Kissell said in a statement. "Mr. Autry

(See AUTRY, page 6A)



Autry



Matthew Dawson (right) begins a 400-meter dash against Richmond and Pinecrest. The boys' team won its match against the Raiders and the Patriots. Story, page 5A. (Hal Nunn photo)

This Week



Big winner!
Gets NASCAR trip
page 3A

Sterilization victims
eligible for \$20,000
page 3A

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