



Schools put child, staff protections in place

By CATHARIN SHEPARD
Staff writer

Over the course of the last year, Hoke County Schools administrators have made efforts to bring in more support personnel, implement safety devices and increase visibility for school security to try and keep students and staff safe. From purchasing new metal

detectors and hiring a mental health coordinator to launching an awareness campaign for students, it's all about taking a holistic approach to address any problems before they can start – but also being prepared for emergencies, officials said.

One aspect of the preparedness has been adding to its physical security measures. The school

system received several grants and some local money from the Hoke County Board of Commissioners. Administrators used those dollars in a variety of ways to update the schools' security systems and safety devices, including buying new metal detectors, Assistant Superintendent Roger Edwards said. "From the administrative part of it, I think this year we made a

lot of progress in the (hardware) things, equipment and things of that nature, the environment around (the schools)," Edwards said. "We've addressed a need we've had to update and add to our metal detectors for events and things like that."

The school system bought eight new walk-through metal detectors to replace the old ones, which

were "to the point where many of them were unreliable," Edwards said. Now there are five stationed at Hoke High and one each at the middle schools, along with some new hand-held metal detectors. Principals can use them for events or for random checks during the school day as they decide necessary.

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Faruhk Ayala-Seron (left) addresses the Class of 2019 at SandHoke Early College High School's commencement exercise Friday. The school graduated its largest class (above) in its history. (Catharin Shepard photos)

91 graduate in SandHoke Class of 2019 ceremony Friday

SandHoke Early College High School graduated one of its largest classes yet Friday during special ceremonies held at Sandy Grove Middle School.

A total of 91 students walked the stage, got their diplomas and turned their tassels while a slideshow of their photos, names and future plans played on the screen

above them. Guest speaker Lauren Cuss gave a special address to the class.

SandHoke has limited space and admits about 100 students per year, making the Class of 2019 one of the largest cohorts to stay together and go on to graduate together in the school's history.

The students included those

graduating with not only their four-year high school diploma, but also associates' degrees that will help them as they proceed into higher education or the start of their future careers.

SandHoke Early College High School has about 500 students total, including the up and coming class of ninth graders who

will join the Lions this fall. The school offers instruction for students beginning with ninth-grade freshmen to the year 13 "super seniors," who put in an extra fifth year of public schooling to earn their associate's degree – although some manage to complete both programs in just four years.

Many of the students will go

on to attend colleges across North Carolina, while some plan to enter the military or workforce.

The graduation is always held earlier than the Hoke High School's due to its unique schedule, which follows Sandhills Community College's calendar. Hoke County High School's graduation is set for June 14.

Search begins for Parks and Rec director

By CATHARIN SHEPARD
Staff writer

Hoke County is now accepting applications for the position of Parks and Recreation Director.

The county posted an advertisement Tuesday on its website

with information about the job, its requirements and salary. Hoke has been without a director for its recreation programs and parks facilities since March 19 when Kendrick Maynor resigned. Maynor served as director for about six

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Probe into break-in at Thomas' apartment stalled by computer scam

By CATHARIN SHEPARD
Staff writer

Police in Greenville are still looking into two reported break-ins at an apartment leased by Hoke Commissioner and

Lieutenant Governor candidate Allen Thomas.

Thomas brandished a shotgun to defend himself against an apparent home invasion at the apartment earlier this year. A few days later, he returned to the apartment

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Reunion

Steve Phillips opens the reunion of the Hoke County High School Class of 1965 Tuesday at Wilburn Lofts. More pictures, page 4. (Ken MacDonald photo)



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