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The Perquimans Weekly 35¢

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The only newspaper for and about Perquimans County people

Hertford, North Carolina 27944

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Perquimans County
an
All of Us
Community

August's theme:
Know who
you are
focusing on

Asking yourself what
you stand for;
Personal values

Incorporate these Healthy
HABITS into your daily life and
help make our community a
better place to live!

For All of Us Care
information, contact
Sandra Smith
Perquimans County
Chamber of Commerce
426-5657

School board backs superintendent

Board: Documents support decision to fire Bill Tice

By SUSAN R. HARRIS
Editor

The Perquimans County School Board issued a press release Tuesday morning supporting the decision of schools superintendent Randall Henion to recommend dismissal of former Hertford Grammar School principal Bill Tice.

After meeting in closed session for almost four hours with Raleigh attorney Richard Schwartz and another member

of his legal team at the end of Monday night's school board meeting, the press release states that the board found that Tice had been given notice of performance concerns, and that his due process rights had been protected.

"The Perquimans County Board of Education has reviewed documentation supporting the Superintendent's recommendation for the dismissal of Mr. Bill Tice," the release reads. "The documentation is substantial and reflects serious performance problems which repeatedly were discussed with Mr. Tice over the last two years. The Superintendent gave Mr. Tice appropriate time, opportunity,

guidance and resources to improve his performance, but little to no improvement was seen. The documentation evidences serious problems in communications, in the leadership of Hertford Grammar School and in other areas."

Henion said Tuesday morning that the press release was written after the board reconvened in open session and voted unanimously to support his decision.

The release also states that the board reviewed documents relating to Tice's evaluation, dismissal, and resignation and release processes, and determined that proper procedures were followed at every stage and that all legal requirements

were met and exceeded.

"Out of fairness to Mr. Tice, we do not want to leave anyone with the impression that any actions involving Mr. Tice are related to anything other than performance concerns," the release states. "Those concerns, however, were real, well-documented, and demanded appropriate action. The Board, having thoroughly reviewed this matter, believes that the Superintendent's actions were appropriate and well-considered."

"Many false statements have been made regarding these matters, which have called into question the integrity of this Board and the Superintendent," the release

continues. "In order to protect the integrity of the Board, we are authorizing the release of confidential personnel documents supporting the Superintendent's actions, as permitted by General Statute 115C-321. However if Mr. Tice objects to the release of this information then, out of respect for Mr. Tice and recognizing the many contributions that he has made to the Perquimans County Schools, these documents will not be released by the Board at this time."

Tice was suspended without pay on July 31 pending dismissal proceedings, and submitted his resignation on Aug. 15.

Board protects integrity

By SUSAN R. HARRIS
Editor

The stage was set — literally — Monday night when a crowd of about 300 forced the Perquimans County School Board to move the public hearing portion of its regular meeting to the high school auditorium.

Board members, administrators, a school board secretary and legal advisors took center stage under the lights for the meeting. At issue was the July 31 suspension of long-time Hertford Grammar School principal William D. Tice, which resulted in Tice's resignation Friday, and other concerns about personnel treatment in the schools.

Board chairman Wallace Nelson opened the meeting with a statement he said the board decided to make after Tice went public with his story in The Daily Advance newspaper Sunday and hearing rumors on the street.

Nelson said the board recognizes and appreciates citizens' concerns over the removal of



PHOTO BY SUSAN HARRIS

Former Hertford Grammar School principal Bill Tice receives encouragement and support from former staff members and the community at Monday night's school board meeting. An overflow audience caused the board to move the meeting to the high school auditorium to accommodate all those who attended. Three people spoke in support of Tice, and Tice himself was allowed to address the board and those gathered. After a later closed session, the board voted to back superintendent Randall Henion's decision to recommend Tice's dismissal, which led to Tice's resignation on Friday.

Tice, but that charges leveled at the board and superintendent had called into question

the integrity of both the administrator and board. The chairman said the

board had asked Richard Schwartz, whom he described as "the attorney who has been

helping us in this battle," to be present at the meeting.

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Citizens question Henion's actions

By SUSAN R. HARRIS
Editor

The three Perquimans County residents who stepped to the podium Monday night to support Bill Tice actually spoke more about superintendent Randall Henion than about Tice.

Hertford Grammar School PTA president Nancy Hagan told the board she was hesitant to come before them because of treatment she received in Henion's office when she visited to request a position on the meeting agenda. Hagan said Henion told her the comments she might make would have no impact on the board, but she chose to speak anyway. She said if Tice was made to feel the way she was in the superintendent's office, she would also have resigned in his position.

Hagan opened her comments by reading a letter to the editor published in The Perquimans Weekly in May 1993 written by school board member Marjorie Rayburn prior to her election to the board. At that time, concern over a personnel matter involving high school teacher Sharon Smith and the tactics used in an attempt to force three middle school teachers to resign had caused a public

outcry against Henion and the board.

Rayburn stated that while she did not know the full details of the matters, the situation had been handled "abysmally." Rayburn stated that poor handling of the situation seemed to point to

"Prove to me you have some backbone and do what's right."

Gary Stubbins
Former principal
Perquimans Cental School

Henion, and that if he could not properly do his job, the board should take action. She added that the board was composed of elected officials and could be removed by the electorate if they did not act.

Winfall mayor and community activist Fred Yates was next on the agenda. Yates first questioned the removal of Henry Felton as principal at the middle school, and his subsequent transfer.

Next, he questioned the timing of Tice's suspension so close to the opening of school.

"There is a decent way to do anything properly," Yates said. "The board may want to take a look at its leadership, for your superintendent put you in a defensive position."

Yates said he hopes the board will investigate and correct its problems.

Retired Central School principal Gary Stubbins walked to the front of the auditorium to a standing ovation before beginning his remarks.

Stubbins said he had concerns regarding board chairman Wallace Nelson's statements about Bill Tice's evaluations. The former principal said he met with Henion for an evaluation on one occasion to find that his marks in several areas had gone down from his last evaluation. When he questioned the evaluation, he said Henion told him Stubbins was "not in his corner." When Stubbins refused to sign the evaluation, he said Henion tore it up and threw the pieces over his shoulder.

Later, Stubbins said Henion delivered a second evaluation form to his office which put all his marks back to their former levels.

Because Tice was suspended and faced dismissal based on performance evaluations,

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Personnel issues bring out citizens

Usually, the Perquimans County school board deliberates with only empty chairs, administrators and a newspaper reporter present. But whenever a controversial personnel decision is made, residents show up in droves.

The first of this decade's concerns arose over what superintendent Randall Henion and board members called rumors that Henion intended to boot then-Perquimans High School principal William Byrum. Angry residents overflowed

the board room in support of Byrum in November 1991.

Next came the suspension of high school teacher Sharon Smith and the request by Henion to three middle school teachers that they resign in the spring of 1993. Again, residents flocked to the board. Issues raised during a three-month period resulted in a committee organized by Henion to give parents input and answers on school system operations.

Tice's case is the first to go public since.

Outside

THURSDAY		FRIDAY		SATURDAY	
High: 80s	Low: 70s	High: 80s	Low: 70s	High: 80s	Low: 70s
CHANCE OF STORMS		CHANCE OF STORMS		CHANCE OF STORMS	