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Schools extend hours to help students

SUSAN R. HARRIS
Editor

Three Perquimans County Schools are extending hours to allow students access to computers and additional time for reading, study, and remediation.

"Because we recognize that all students do not have computers at home, the school system feels it is important to provide additional opportunities for our students," said Perquimans County Schools Public Information Officer Brenda Lassiter. "We hope that parents will encourage students to stay and use the

school's resources."

The media center at the high school will remain open until 5 p.m., Monday—Thursday. Students may work, study, read, or access the internet, Microsoft Word or other resource materials for projects and reports during the additional hours.

Also offered at the site is a homework/remediation program known as seventh period. Students may get after-school help in all subject areas. Students should see the teacher in any class for a seventh-period schedule.

Bus transportation is provided at 4 p.m. Students who stay until 5 o'clock need to be

picked up.

The middle school also extends hours through its SOS program. The program operates Monday—Thursday until 4 p.m. Students may stay at school to work in the media center or get help in specific subject areas. Transportation is provided immediately following SOS.

Beginning Sept. 11, Hertford Grammar School will keep its computer lab open Monday—Thursday until 5 p.m. Students may work, read, or use the internet, word processing programs and other resources. Parents need to provide transportation.

In addition to extended

hours for computer use and remediation, the school system has implemented another approach to offering increased opportunities to students this year. Days were built into the school calendar to offer additional instructional time for students who need or desire to strengthen skills.

Superintendent Gregory Todd said when he proposed the additional class days that the time would allow students to get extra help before they fell too far behind. With days built in each six weeks, students having a difficult time grasping a concept can get help, hopefully understand the concept, and move on in the

subject with classmates.

Lassiter said personnel at the schools are preparing for the first additional days, set for Sept. 21 and 22. The processes and methods used will evolve as school personnel, students and parents become more familiar and comfortable with the program.

Todd and other school officials believe the extra days can positively impact student achievement, Lassiter said. Test scores and other benchmarks of learning have improved as students have taken advantage of programs like SOS and seventh period. The extra class days are one more way to help students

learn and progress on grade level.

For information on extended hours for computer/resource use, SOS, seventh period, remediation days, volunteering, or other programs in the schools, contact your child's teacher, the individual schools or Lassiter. Phone numbers are: Central School, 426-5332, Principal Billy Stallings; Hertford Grammar, 426-7166, Principal Ed Williams; Perquimans Middle, 426-7355, Principal Anne White; Perquimans High, 426-5778, Principal Dwayne Stallings; and central office, 426-5741, Lassiter.

Todd seeks to cut bus costs

ANNA GOODWIN MCCARTHY
Correspondent

The Perquimans County School System wants to lower the cost of bus rides.

It costs \$1,000 a minute to operate the school buses in Perquimans County, Superintendent Gregory Todd said at last Monday's school board meeting.

Todd said last year the school system went over its budgeted amount for the cost of bus rides, while some surrounding counties were enjoying budget surpluses in the same area.

In order to lower the costs, the superintendent has decided to cut down the hours that bus drivers are scheduled. Todd said that this will lower costs, but it will also have a major effect on some bus drivers. By cutting hours, many bus drivers' schedules are now under 4 hours, which means their benefits will be eliminated.

Todd said he also thought many of the bus drivers are unhappy with their schedules, because it takes away some of their cleaning time.

Bus drivers who will lose their benefits are being encouraged to seek extra hours in different positions with the school system. By taking on extra hours, they can regain their benefits package. Todd said 60 percent of the bus drivers are already employed in other capacities with the schools.

Todd asked the school board to give him input on the new schedules.

School Board Chairman Walter Leigh said that the school system should work closely with the transportation supervisor to monitor the new conditions. Leigh said that the school board should also talk with other systems to find the most cost-effective transportation plan.

Currently, the bus drivers' salaries range from \$7.43 to \$10.07 per hour, based on years of experience. The county has 34 buses that run each day. Preliminary reports for this school year show that over 1,400 students ride each day.

THE FESTIVALS ARE COMING!



File photos

The 20th annual Indian Summer Festival and the Hearth & Harvest Festival will come to Perquimans County this weekend. Visitors can step back in time at the Hearth & Harvest Festival on the grounds of the Newbold-White Historic Site (above), enjoying old-time crafts, games and entertainment. Performers at the Indian Summer Festival downtown will include Brittany Perry (below left) and Step of Faith (below right), two of last year's favorites.



Darrow to sign autographs at festival

SUSAN R. HARRIS
Editor

A local celebrity will sign children's books he has written and published during the 20th annual Indian Summer Festival.

Bill Darrow, a Hertford resident with an interesting and varied professional background, will be at Riverwalk Gallery to sign copies of his unique, localized children's books. *The Adventures of CLYDE PERQUIMANS HERTFORD ALBEMARLE TURTLE*, "Little Laughing Turtle" and "The Spanish Main and The Pirates," are books written and illustrated by Darrow. The author also penned *The Legend of LoneStar Bear*, Books 1 and 2. They are also available on CD and cassette, which feature Darrow's original music.

Writing children's books is not Darrow's only claim to fame. He is also a folk singer,

song writer and recording artist, has acted in movies and commercials, worked as a movie stuntman, and served as a U.S. Marine Corps drill instructor, captain of military police and SWAT commander. He earned degrees in history and international studies from Campbell University.

Darrow as the famed Marlboro Man on TV commercials from 1973-1976, he appeared in the movie "In Harm's Way," which starred John Wayne and Kirk Douglas. He wrote all the action scenes for "High Velocity" starring Ben Gazzara and Paul Winfield.

Music collections including "My Heart's In The Highlands," "Songs of the Sea," and "Away Haul Away" have all been written and performed by Darrow. Selections include folk songs, ballads and songs of the sea.

This interesting Perquimian is only one of many you can meet during Perquimans' joint festivals 2000 Saturday.

School system sets achievement goals for fiscal year

ANNA GOODWIN MCCARTHY
Correspondent
and
SUSAN R. HARRIS
Editor

Perquimans County students will strive to attain higher achievement goals this year.

Superintendent Gregory Todd announced the Perquimans County School system goals for the 2000-2001 school year at a school board meeting last Monday night.

The superintendent's list stated:

- All schools will meet expected growth or better on state ABCs. (Goal met for 1999-00)

- 80 percent of students in grades 3-8 will be at or above grade level in reading and math. (Grammar school percentage last year was 70.5 percent; Middle school was 76.4 percent.)

- 70 percent of students in grades 9-12 will be at or above grade level in courses they attempt. (1999-00 goal was 65 percent; outcome was 66.3 percent according to end-of-course tests.)

- 70 percent of students in grade 2 will be at or above grade level in reading and math. (Met goal of 60 percent this year.)

- 50 percent of all students in grades 2-5 will be at or above grade level in writing. (Percentage last year was 55.3 percent in fourth grade, 1.7 percent in third and 22.3 percent in fifth.)

- 60 percent of all students in grades 6-8 will be at or above grade level in writing. (Percentage last year was 72.2 percent in seventh grade, 22.8 percent in sixth and 50.3 percent in eighth.)

- 60 percent of all students in grade 10 will be at or above grade level in writing. (Met goal of 50 percent last year.)

- 30 percent improvement in stakeholder satisfaction in the cleanliness and condition of school buildings and grounds.

- 10 percent fewer instructional days lost to non-attendance by staff and students

The success of the goals will be determined by performance on state end-of-grade tests, VOCATS, end-of-course tests, state ABCs, state and local writing accessions, and a

third grade pre-test in August 2001.

Todd said that teachers would no longer be pulled from classrooms during instructional time to attend meetings or staff development.

"We are staying away from staff development on instructional days," said Todd.

Since staff are counted absent on these days, this new policy will aid in the goal to decrease the amount of days lost to non-attendance.

The Gordon Black survey distributed in March 2001 will ascertain the opinion towards the conditions of the school buildings and grounds. To insure that the goal is met, the school board entered into a service agreement with Maintenance Supply Co. Inc.

According to the agreement, the "Perquimans County Schools and the Maintenance Supply Consultative Team will focus on interlocking the most-modern and efficient cleaning systems, the most technically advanced equipment along with professionally produced training, teaching and scheduling plans to create a formula that will give the partnership the desired goals."

Todd said that he spoke with officials in Currituck and Dare counties who are using the company. They were very positive about the company's effect on their schools, said Todd.

All of the system-wide goals are reasonably attainable, said Todd.

WEEKEND WEATHER

THURSDAY
High: 78
Low: 61
PARTLY CLOUDY

FRIDAY
High: 81
Low: 66
PARTLY CLOUDY

SATURDAY
High: 85
Low: 67
PARTLY CLOUDY