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Schools get \$1.5 million federal grant

After-hours programs to be expanded for students, community

SUSAN R. HARRIS

The school board celebrated receipt of a \$1.5 million federal grant Monday night.

The funds mark the first time Perquimans County Schools has received a U.S. Department of Education 21st Century grant.

According to interim superintendent James "Pat" Harrell, grant funds will allow for expansion of after-hours programs for both students and the community at all four of the county's schools. Activities will be geared toward expanding after-school, Saturday, and summer programs.

In addition, Harrell said it will allow for expansion of community programs such as this spring's popular "Seniors Teaching Seniors" computer classes. Harrell said that program paired high school seniors proficient in computer use with senior citizens who

wanted information on accessing the internet and email programs. Harrell said the class was a great success and could have been much larger had there been enough computer stations to accommodate more people.

The programs will be implemented using existing staff, Harrell said.

In the grant application written by Director of Student Services/Special Projects Jeanie Umphlett, the goal of the 21st Century Community Learning Centers is to plan and implement services at each school center to meet educational, health, social

services, cultural and recreational needs of students, educators, parents and the community.

The project will provide after-hours opportunities for learning in areas that complement regular school curriculum in reading, math, writing, technology, health, recreation, nutrition, drug education and offer adult programs in literary education, parenting skills, telecommunications and access to social services.

Extended hours have already drawn students and community residents to the schools to use computers in the media cen-

ters. Students without access to computers at home are able to access the internet and get information needed for assignments such as the senior project.

At present, transportation is provided at the high and middle school levels to drop-off points in different communities in the county.

Results school officials hope to achieve with the program include an increase in student achievement in reading, math, technology, writing and science; an increase in parental involvement and skills; and help in providing the missing links for

students.

Administrators hope to serve 450 students and about 100 adults through the program. There were 1,782 students enrolled in the schools when the grant proposal was written.

The proposal was developed in collaboration with school district personnel, community organizations, Elizabeth City State University, College of The Albemarle, town and county representatives, ministers, students and parents.

Board member Charles Cheezum asked that the board gets an ongoing report once the expanded program is operational.

Student handbooks okayed by board

SUSAN R. HARRIS

Students returning to school in August will receive the planner/handbook that has become a tradition in Perquimans County Schools.

The school board approved the handbook at their regular meeting Monday night.

In addition to a calendar on which students are encouraged to record assignments and other school-related activities, the handbook contains about 25-30 pages of school board policy as well as guidelines and regulations. The handbook covers board policies regarding student services, internet use policy, code of student conduct, confidentiality and access to records, fighting, grievance procedure and policy, and general guidelines of the schools and general information.

The general guidelines section covers areas such as athletics, attendance, emergency procedures, homework, insurance, visitors, immunizations, student records, discipline and cafeteria services.

The information section tells about matters such as supplies, dress code, conferences, special events/field trips, school calendar, medication policy, telephone use.

This coming year, parents will be required to sign and return a form to school signifying that they have read and are aware of the information in the handbook.

Board vice chairman Marjorie Rayburn asked if any of the policy language could be simplified. Both interim superintendent James "Pat" Harrell and public information officer Brenda Lassiter, who puts the books together, said the system is required to provide policies to students just as the policies appear in the policy manuals.

Lassiter said when the handbooks were first produced as wire-bound notebooks with calendars about 5 years ago, each of the four schools had different dress codes and other policies. Administrators and faculty have worked together over the years to make many of the guidelines at each of the schools identical. There are some differences, such as dress code, athletic policies and other age- and grade-appropriate areas.

There will be at least one difference at the high school in the dress code this year, Lassiter said. Hats and other headgear will no longer be allowed inside the buildings on campus.

Smart Start loses state money

Parents as Teachers program cut

SUSAN R. HARRIS

State budget cuts will decrease services in Perquimans County from the Chowan/Gates/Perquimans Partnership for Children.

The Partnership, the Smart Start implementing agency for the three counties, announced last week that the Parents as Teachers Program will be cut in Perquimans and Gates counties. Chowan will continue the program through a grant from the Governor's Crime Commission. Currently, 41 children in Perquimans are being served through the program.

Parents as Teachers, called "PAT" by those familiar with the program, works on the philosophy that parents are children's first and most important teachers.

"It has been documented that in their beginning years, children learn more and at a much faster pace than at any other time in their lives," said Wendy Jewett, Executive Director of the Partnership. "Through voluntary involvement with the PAT Program, parents enhance their skills to help make the most of these crucial early-learning years. Schools cannot compensate completely for lack of intellectual stimulation and emotional nurturing in the early years."

PAT is a voluntary program for families with children from birth through 5 years and is designed to serve all parents. The program encourages parents to take an active role in children's development and education.

PAT provides home visits, group meetings, screening and a referral network to participants. Home visits occur monthly to help parents under the stages of child development and offer practical tips on ways to encourage learning.

In group meetings, parents are able



Parents as Teachers Program participant Quiana Hodges reads to her daughter, MyNiya Harvey.

to share experiences, common concerns and successes. PAT offers periodic screening of overall development, language, hearing and vision to that potential problems can be detected early on and dealt with so that the child can enter school ready to be successful.

Through its referral component, PAT links families with any needed special services in the community.

Begun in 1981 as a pilot project in Missouri, PAT has spread to 37 states and Washington, D.C. It is poised to go international.

Evaluations of the program have concluded that the program is beneficial.

A 1985 study found that participating children were more advanced than other 5-year-olds in language development, social development, problem solving and other intellectual skills. A 1989 study of first graders found that PAT participants were ahead of their peers, and that additionally, PAT parents were more involved in education. The results were validated in a 1991 study.

Jewett said the Partnership will combine fund raising and grant writing in an effort to restart the PAT program in both Perquimans and Gates counties.

The C/G/P Partnership for Children is a private, not-for-profit organization with the mission to coordinate family support services for all children in the counties it serves, and to better prepare them for school and to help develop future productive citizens.

Donations may be made payable to CGP/PFC, 123 Dillard's Mill Road, Tyner, NC 27980.

Those interested in involvement with the Partnership through the local board or volunteering, should contact Jewett or Gail King at 221-3030.

PAT works on the philosophy that parents are their children's first and most important teachers.

Party in the park

SUSAN R. HARRIS

The Historic Hertford Business Association is sending out an invitation to everyone in Perquimans County to come party in Missing Mill Park Sunday.

HHBA has tagged the event "Picnic in the Park, Fireworks and the 1st Summer Turtle Tantrums Concert," all planned to celebrate the 4th of July.

The community celebration will get underway at 4 p.m. with carnival food, games, face painting and balloons. The Silver Spurs will entertain from 5-9 p.m.

The highlight of the evening will be the fireworks show, accompanied by the patriotic sounds of middle school musicians, playing under the direction of Director of Instrumental Music David Ziemba.

Flags will line the sidewalk at the park during the fireworks. HHBA is selling the flags, which can be placed in honor or in memory of someone, to raise money for the fireworks. The minimum donation is \$5. Flags are available at The Wishing Well.

A change in required training for those who shoot fireworks caused the celebration to be moved from July 4 to July 1, according to American Legion spokesman Julian "Little Man" Broughton. Broughton said training issues are being resolved and the fireworks show will be held on July 4 next year. The American Legion orders and helps raise funds for the fireworks.

ALS DONATION



The Old Timers homerun derby netted \$560 for the Jim "Catfish" Hunter ALS foundation. High school winner Rob Woodard (left) and open winner John Nixon (right) were congratulated by Helen Hunter (holding the ongoing winners plaque), Todd Hunter and Kim Hunter-Layne.

WEEKEND WEATHER

THURSDAY
 High: 86
 Low: 68
 PARTLY CLOUDY

FRIDAY
 High: 82
 Low: 67
 PARTLY CLOUDY

SATURDAY
 High: 82
 Low: 68
 PARTLY CLOUDY