

READING

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track is because Perquimans County has a full-time literacy coach — Julie Roberts. Roberts had been a third-grade classroom teacher but now works with reading issues full-time.

“Julie has tracked all the data and she knows the students who are struggling in certain areas and has provided interventions.”

Griffin said a lot of school districts don't have a full-time literacy coach.

The four-week summer program started last week. It runs Monday through Thursday from 8:30 a.m.

until 1:30 p.m. The school system brought in three licensed teachers, two teacher assistants and a literacy coach to work with them. The cost — about \$40,000 — is being paid by the state.

Typically there are about 18 children in a third grade class. HGS had seven third grade classes last year.

Griffin believes the program is working. Third grade is the first grade where students take a standardized statewide test — the End Of Grade (EOG) exam. But he said third grade isn't the only grade where reading is being emphasized more.

“One thing the community needs to understand

is that it's not just a third grade thing,” Griffin said. “(Perquimans Central Principal) Melissa Fields is also having tighter requirements.”

“I think it helps,” Griffin said of the summer reading program. “It's all about accountability and ensuring that our students are able to read.”

Not only are the 42 students getting the help they need to improve their reading skills, Griffin said the program should also be able to help avoid the “summer slide.”

If for some reason the 16 students are still unable to read well at the end of the summer program, one option could be to create a combined third-fourth grade class next fall. Griffin said he's meeting with a representative of the N.C. Department of Public Instruction in two weeks to talk about that.

“I honestly don't think that we'll have it,” Griffin said. “I anticipate most of our students will do well when they take the Read

To Achieve test.”

The N.C. Department of Public Instruction does not yet have data on how many students in the state were required to attend a summer reading program, said Vanessa Jeter, a spokeswoman.

“There are various ways schools systems could handle this,” she said.

She does expect a report will be ready for the state board to review in September. The state offered a number of options for students who had trouble with the end of grade test. Exemptions were offered for students with special needs and students were given options to show they were reading proficient in ways other than the EOG test.

Griffin said parents have been largely supportive of the efforts since the law was passed a year ago.

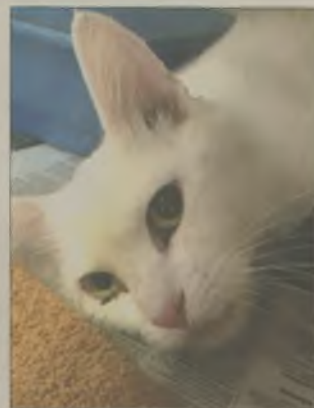
“We've tried to be proactive,” he said. “I've been out visiting churches and talking to parents about it.”

Top Pets



SUBMITTED PHOTOS

Ralph is a young male hound available at the Tri-County Animal Shelter in Tyner. His adoption fee includes having him neutered, basic vaccinations and a micro-chip implant. The shelter is at 138 Icaria Road.



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BRIDGE

Continued from 1

The pamphlet included the contact information for both Hertford and Perquimans County officials as well as Gov. Pat McCrory, NCDOT Secretary of Transportation Tata and state and federal elected officials.

A petition campaign was mounted by another group — Save Historic Downtown

Hertford” that wants to keep the bridge downtown on Church Street and favors the D-Mod option.

Downtown business supporters, including Chamber of Commerce Director Sid Eley, pointed to the job losses the town suffered as a result of the U.S. 17 Bypass bridge in the 1960s. There were more than 300 jobs in Hertford then and there are only about 70 now. Charles Woodard, the owner of Woodard's Pharmacy, also wants to keep traffic flowing on Church Street

and not divert it to Edenton Road Street. DOT's Alternative E uses Edenton Road Street and ends up at the same point on the Winfall side of the river near Larry's Drive In.

Historic district residents opposing D-Mod point out the town could lose some valuable real estate if their homes are destroyed or devalued. The property in the two blocks north of Punch Alley is valued at \$12.5 million, they say. However the recession has cut selling prices by 50

to 66 percent.

Based on the most recent town budget, Hertford has a total tax base is about \$151 million.

Since 2010 DOT has held three public meetings plus one public hearing on various bridge designs. In November, the state agency took the input from those meetings and factored in the life cycle cost and environmental damage of the final three options. DOT favored D-Mod.

Jay McInnis, the DOT project engineer on the project, made it clear Monday opening up discussion on other options wasn't the topic of Wednesday's meeting.

“We're not here to discuss one alternative over another,” McInnis said.

The next step for DOT will be to have all state and federal agencies involved sign off on the plans. Right of way acquisition is slated to start in May 2016 and the actual construction would start two years later. The federal government is expected to pay 80 percent of the cost because U.S. 17 Business is a part of the federal system. No local funds are involved.

McInnis said the construction could take 18 months and access between Hertford and Winfall from downtown Hertford could be cut off for six months of that. The 18-month timetable takes into account the spawning habits of endangered fish. No underwater work can happen during that period.

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Mike Goodman..... Publisher
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Bev Alexander..... Advertising Representative
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