

THE PERQUIMANS WEEKLY



Barbershop quartet will be delivering singing Valentines on Feb. 13, 3

"News from Next Door"

FEB 0 REC'D

FEBRUARY 4, 2015 - FEBRUARY 10, 2015

50 cents

Schools athletic policy questioned

BY PETER WILLIAMS
News Editor

A youth coach asked the Perquimans County School Board last week to relax its standards when it comes to student athletes.

Tony Riddick said the current policy excludes some students who may be struggling academically or had a brush with the law.

The board listened to Riddick's request Jan. 26 but took no action and did not discuss it.

Chairman Susan Cox said that doesn't mean the issue won't come up.

"We will discuss it again," Cox said Wednesday. "Athletics is always a continuing topic. We are open to any discussion from anybody about anything."

Superintendent Dwayne Stallings said the school system is looking at the policy it has now and considering if it's still the best.

"One big thing that is being done is ensuring that everybody understands what procedures or policies we're going forward with," Stallings said.

Stallings said it's possible that a new policy could be in place by the start of the spring sports schedule. It's equally possible it might be the fall of 2015 before a new policy is in place.

"There are some language issues that need to be addressed. If a student in their ninth grade year does something wrong, does that mean their high school career is over with?"

Without naming them, Riddick mentioned two football players who were kicked off the team last year. Senior receivers Raheim Kee and Trevon Coleman, had been among the area's leaders to that point - had been involved in an altercation in the spring of 2014 and were convicted on misdemeanor assault charges in July.

Under the rules set by the North Carolina High School Athletic Association, both players would still be eligible to play sports. The NCHSAA only sanctions players who are convicted on felony charges.

However Perquimans County High School has

See POLICY, 2

CHEERING FROM THE SIDELINE



PHOTO BY CHUCK PAGELS
Amber Stallings stands on crutches to cheer her team in a game against Plymouth last week. An injury sidelined her from playing but she's still doing her duties as team captain.

Stallings wants to make comeback

BY PETER WILLIAMS
News Editor

Perquimans County Senior Amber Stallings suffered a serious knee injury last month in a basketball game at Plymouth.

A torn ALC can sideline some athletes for a year. For some, it can mean the end of sports altogether.

But volleyball Coach Kristie Thach says Stallings isn't your average athlete and nobody should count her out just yet.

"If anybody can work hard and do it, she can," Thach said last week.

At first Stallings thought she might have just dislocated her knee.

"I heard two 'pops' the first when I fell and then a second one," Stallings said. She hoped the second "pop" was the joint coming back together.

An MRI on Jan. 20 confirmed it wasn't that simple and she underwent surgery on Jan. 26 in Ahoskie.

See COMEBACK, 2



PHOTO BY DAVID LAWSON

Perquimans volleyball players Haley Cooper (left) and Amber Stallings were recognized as two of the area's best during the All-Area banquet on Saturday at the Northeastern cafeteria. Stallings was named the Area Player of the Year for a second-straight season.

Schools looking to the future

BY PETER WILLIAMS
News Editor

A dozen school officials sat down last week with a like number of community and local officials to hammer out a strategic plan for the next five years.

The last plan for the Perquimans County Schools was adopted in 2009 and runs through this year. The 2009 plan replaced one that was done 10 years earlier.

"We took a different approach," said Teresa Beardsley, a spokeswoman for the school system. "The group wanted to burrow in and focus and make it into something everyday people and parents could read and understand."

The 2010-15 plan set some high goals. The plan would have 100 percent of students graduate, be proficient in state tests, participate in community service, have the skills to be successfully competitive and graduate high school with an associate's degree or eight college transfer credits.

The school system came close on meeting first goal. Last year 92.1 percent of students graduated within four years. That was nearly 10 percentage points higher than the state average. The 2009 goal was to increase the graduation rate nine percentage points each year from June 2009 through June 2014.

Clayton Griffin, who runs a local anti-gang program, was one of the community participants. He applauded the effort of getting community input on the school improvement plan.

"I think it was great," he said. "Everybody had some great input and there was a lot accomplished."

Griffin is in favor of setting the goals high.

"If you set the goal at 100 percent you might reach 90 percent. Some people say 100 percent is unrealistic but if you set your goals high you will work to reach them. If you set them lower, you might not be as aggressive."

Beardsley said the group did go back and forth about putting a lower, more achievable goal in place.

"We talked a lot about

See FUTURE, 4

New academic grades to be released Thursday

BY PETER WILLIAMS
News Editor

Local educators are bracing for the release of new letter grade scores for each school coming out this Thursday.

And they aren't anticipating getting straight A's.

The new state grading system will focus most on how students perform on state tests. Just 20 percent of the score will be based on the growth of students

during that school year.

Educators would have rather seen the formula turned around. However letter grades of A, B, C, D or F will be issued.

Vanessa Jeter, director of communications for the N.C. Department of Public Instruction, said the way schools are graded in the future could change. The current formula was set by the General Assembly.

"We do anticipate more conversation at some point," she said last week during a on-line conference about the upcoming grades.

Gone will be titles like "School of Distinction." That was a designated where North Carolina used

the ABCs to rank schools.

Jeter said the new letter grades aren't supposed to be the ultimate word on how schools perform.

"The letter grades are one indicator of what's happening in their school," Jeter said. "I think the full scope of the School Report Card information is indicative of the many indicators that are important to parents and educators."

The report card will also be issued Thursday.

As a former classroom teacher, Teresa Beardsley is worried that low scores in February could lower the morale of teachers who are

See GRADES, 4

CHAMBER HOLDS BANQUET



STAFF PHOTO BY PETER WILLIAMS

Jake Forbes (left) calls for bids during an auction Friday night for the Perquimans County Chamber of Commerce. Also pictured is Sid Eley, director of the chamber. The annual event drew more than 200 people to Louise's Meeting Place.

