

# TURNER

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County for three years and his last day was Jan. 1.

Turner's contract runs from May 1 through June 30, 2022. Her salary, \$120,000, is the same amount that Cheeseman got when he was hired.

James Bunch has been serving as interim superintendent in Perquimans and will remain in that role until Turner takes over on May 1.

Turner will no doubt know many of the people she will be working with in the Perquimans system. She will have something special in common with at least two of them.

When Turner was teaching fifth grade at Central, Melissa Fields was teaching fourth grade. Fields is now principal at Central, but when she was at Perquimans County High School, she was principal to Turner's son Cole.

When Turner left Chowan Middle School to become assistant superintendent, she was replaced by John Lassiter who at the time was working in Currituck County as assistant principal, a role he had served for two years. But Lassiter too is a prod-



STAFF PHOTO BY PETER WILLIAMS

People applaud the appointment of Tanya Turner as the new Perquimans County Schools superintendent Monday night.

uct of the Perquimans County School system. He began his teaching career at John A. Holmes High School in 2009 as a math teacher and later moved to Perquimans County High School to teach before entering into school administration.

"As a principal in Perquimans County I am thankful for the leadership and knowledge that Ms. Turner brings with her," John Lassiter said. "Her ability to set and execute a vision is something I have always admired about her. Among her many accomplishments, she has presented on student growth data at The SAS Institute in Cary. She believes in making students first and data driven decisions. But most importantly, as a par-

ent, I am excited that Emily will be starting Kindergarten with Tanya as her superintendent."

Lassiter and his wife have two daughters.

Before the announcement, White said she was glad to let the secret out of the bag. The board had met the previous week and considered their choices and pretty much made the decision but needed the attorney to write up the contract.

White admitted she's bad at keeping secrets.

"I have almost let it slip 10 times," she said. "I've also used pronouns that I shouldn't have been using."

White also credited the Masonboro Group, the consulting firm the school system used to screen and vet

the candidates for their effort. They were able to get the process done in just a little more than three months. She also credited the school system's law firm for getting the contract ready for Tucker to sign on Monday night.

White also credited Bunch for his role as interim superintendent, and said later this month the board would take more time in thanking him.

Turner is currently enrolled in the Educational Leadership program at Wingate University completing the requirements for a doctorate degree. She holds a Masters in Supervision and Administration from East Carolina University and has completed the N.C. Aspiring Superintendent's program in 2017.

# Local dropout rate shows large drop

From Staff Reports

The high school dropout rate for Perquimans County fell to 1.48 percent in the 2017-18 school year, the lowest rate of five counties that make up the Albemarle area.

The rate was down from 2.58 percent in 2016-17.

Two area school districts — Elizabeth City-Pasquotank and Currituck County — saw their dropout rates increase to higher than the state average of 2.18 percent last year.

The latest ECPPS rate was 2.61 percent, up from 1.62 percent. The Currituck rate was 2.58 percent, up from 1.72 percent.

The rate in Camden increased from 1.78 to 2.14 over the same period, while the Edenton-Chowan rate decreased from 1.77 to 1.65.

The state rate is based on

10,523 dropouts recorded in grades 9-13 in North Carolina in 2017-2018. It represented a 5.2 percent decrease from the 11,097 dropouts reported in 2016-17.

The report from the N.C. Department of Public Instruction emphasized that the dropout rate is different from the four-year cohort graduation rate. The annual dropout rate refers to the percentage of students who drop out during one year's time.

"Some of these students may return to school the following year and complete high school while others may drop out multiple times," according to the DPI report. "The four-year cohort graduation rate is considered a more comprehensive picture of the issue of students' persistence and high school completion."

# EJECTED

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talk to the umpire.

"They (assistant coaches) can ask if the kid's foot came off the bag," Leicester said.

Winslow spoke up about the batter outside the box, and Leicester said he let it slide.

"So the kid hits a pop fly and Leary comes out from the dugout and draws a line in the dirt to show me what the parameters were," Leicester said. "I told him that was inappropriate and if he did it again he'd be ejected. He said 'Matt you can do better than that,' and I had enough."

"I perceived him trying to show me up. Coaches are not allowed to come out and embarrass you. He was fussing and hollering."

The situation continued after the game and the stories differ somewhat.

"I went back to my truck and I had taken off part of my gear and left half of my gear on," Leicester said.

"He came up from me and started in again that it was an unfair ejection and I told him 'we're done, the game is over and I'm not going to keep arguing.'"

Leicester said Winslow was holding his truck door and he told him to leave it alone.

"I kept on telling him to leave it alone," Leicester said. "Finally as he got more agitated and mashed the door closed and locked it and he proceeded to snatch the door back open."

That's apparently when the door handle broke off. Winslow tossed it in the back of Leicester's truck and said he would pay for the repair. Leicester said the cost, including some painting near the lock would be about \$400.

Winslow said when the game was over, he had his bag and was heading out to his truck and he saw Leicester there at his.

"I figured he was hanging around to talk to me and that is when he got really defensive with me."

As for the door handle, Winslow said it's easy to pull one off. He had one of his children do it once when they were 6-years-old.

"It's a piece of plastic. You don't have to be the Incredible Hulk."

Winslow said when the handle came off he offered to let Leicester drive his truck until Leicester's could be fixed.

Winslow owns a turf farm and has donated and installed sod on the PCMS field and is donating the sod for the new high school football field. In addition to his role as an unpaid assistant on the PCMS baseball team he works with other youth teams.

"This is my busy season, our sales have tripled and I don't have time to do this (volunteer) but I do it."

"This is my first year umpiring and that one was my third one overall," Leicester said. "I am not perfect. I make mistakes. I didn't want to eject him. I've known Leary my whole life."

# DONATION

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scholarship. According to Michael Hurdle, the president of the local DU chapter, one of them was a 1987 edition of the Perquimans Weekly that featured Jimmy Hunter's induction to the Major League Baseball Hall of Fame.

Lassiter said both the Beech Springs/Bear Swamp Ruritan Club and the Parksville Ruritan Club are planning fundraisers in the near future that could push the total to the \$10,000 mark, she said. Dr. Linda White,

who graduated with Daugherty from Perquimans County High School, has also reached out to members of that class to raise funds, Lassiter said.

"When we reach that point (\$10,000), I plan to meet with Miss Helen and Steve (Daugherty, Kim's husband) to see what the family wants to do," Lassiter said.

One option would be to fund a traditional scholarship for a Perquimans County High School senior. The other would be to create a source of money for mini-grants for Perquimans County teachers.

In either case, the first payments wouldn't happen until the 2019-20 school year, Lassiter said.

If \$20,000 can be raised, it would produce \$1,000 a year in earnings.

"Whatever is raised from the efforts of the community will remain untouched and only the earnings will be used each year," Lassiter said.

Lassiter said Daugherty had a passion for what she did and had a natural gift to turn a quiet student into being a student able to socialize and feel comfortable with others.

"Her ability to do that

through her kindness, laughter and dedication was remarkable," Lassiter said.

"She put her heart and hands into every task she was given and because of the love she poured into her community — her community is now rallying to endow the fund recently set up in her memory."

"This is a great way to honor her memory," said Foundation President Antoine Moore.

Donations can be made to the Perquimans Schools Foundation at PO Box 337, Hertford, NC 27944, and are tax deductible.

# GUNS

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Hertford PD. I was made aware of this request in December 2018. As a result of the SBI investigation, two of the firearms were located and returned to the Hertford Police Department in February 2019. They were improperly surplused but had corresponding paperwork and has not been located."

The SBI had virtually the same response. Anjanette Grube, the public information director, provided this

e-mail.

"The Hertford Police Department requested SBI assistance with attempting to locate three firearms that were the property of the police department," Grube wrote. "Two of the firearms have been located and are now in the possession of the Hertford Police Department. One firearm has not been accounted for. Any additional questions concerning this investigation should be directed to the District Attorney's office."

Laura Brewer, a spokesman for the Attorney General's office said "I'm not aware of our office being

asked to conduct an investigation into this. I'm also not aware of any investigation."

Jackson responded by saying he stands by his comments and ended with saying "stay tuned."

The Attorney General's office had no immediate response for a request to comment on any pending or ongoing investigation.

While Jackson said he was speaking on behalf of the board, not himself as an individual council member, two of the five members on the board have been recused from the investigation.

They are Mayor Horace Reid and Councilman Sid Eley. Also recused are Town Manager Pam Hurdle and Town Administrator Sarah Mills.

In his letter to Womble, Jackson said the four were recused "not because they have done anything wrong, or have believed to have committed a crime (but) simply for integrity purpose."

Jackson said Chief Brown is the point person for all contact on the investigation and "as the Mayor Pro Tem I will be the head of the administration in this investigation."

# ISSUES

Continued from 1

address.

Benton said he will make recommendations on what needs to be done when he submits his proposed budget this spring. What gets funded and what doesn't is beyond his control.

"Somebody else some-

body can decide. There will have to be hard decisions made."

One of the issues Benton cited was signs for traffic control. The town got a grant from Golden LEAF, Benton said the town doesn't have enough signs to cover the work.

When it comes to disasters, Benton realizes the town current staff can't

tackle everything so he's soliciting for licensed contractors interested in doing work for the town. If no work is required, the contractor isn't paid, but if there is an emergency, the town will have manpower available at a price that has already been locked in. Each contract will be good for one year.

"If they have a contract, they will have some obliga-

tion to respond if we call," Benton said.

The contracts aren't meant to circumvent the bid process, but instead to provide manpower and equipment in a hurry in the event of an emergency.

Without such contracts in place, if there were a massive emergency, the town would have to start the bid process from scratch.

# FIRE

Continued from 1

church services, but Woodard said there has been no power or water to the building for the past 10 years. In earlier years, the building was used as a nightclub. There was a 950 square foot metal building and a 418 square food cir-

der block building attached to the main structure in the back, according to Perquimans County tax records.

The land value for the parcel was estimated at \$6,000 and the buildings were worth about \$500, according to the property records.

Firefighters were able to keep the fire contained to the original structure and

saved a small wooden building next door and the former Harvey Funeral Home building on the corner of Edenton Road Street and Market Street.

Jonathan Nixon, Perquimans County's emergency management director, referred questions to Chief Brown. Brown could not be reached for comment.

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