

# SCHOOL

## Students see dangers, consequences of impaired driving

Officials staged mock DWI crash at high school Friday

BY JOHN FOLEY  
Correspondent

At first, there was no shock on the faces of the 200-plus students as Perquimans County High School Principal Mickey Drew discussed the dangers of drunk driving at the school's morning assembly.

With prom and graduation parties just around the corner, a lecture from the principal about the hazards of driving while impaired — and the toll it takes on young lives — seemed kind of expected.

"Here are some numbers to think about," Drew told students on Friday of last week. "Twenty-five percent of teenage drivers who die in car crashes have blood-alcohol concentrations of .01 or higher. One-third of all fatal car crashes in the U.S. involve alcohol. Twice as many fatal car crashes occur during the weekend and car crashes are the leading cause of death in teens. Finally, eight teens die each day in the U.S. due to drinking and driving."

Assistant District Attorney Jeffrey Moreland also spoke to the students, outlining the criminal penalties and financial costs of getting a DWI. He enticed audience participation by offering snack prizes for correct answers to questions related to drunk driving.

While tossing a snack to a student who correctly answered a question, Moreland gave this advice: "Do not drink underage, but if you do, absolutely do not drink and drive. If you call any responsible adult in your life for a ride, because you've had too much to drink, I promise you have made the right decision."

The mood in the gym throughout the presentations, even given the seriousness of the topic, seemed light. But all that changed when a 911 emergency call was broadcast in the gym.

There had been a car accident, students learned, and it appeared to involve high school students.

Students were quickly ushered to the school parking lot where an extensively damaged car, driven by student Collin Throckmorton, had collided head-on with a light pole. Three other students — DJ Levesque, Tori Williamson and Heaven Tripp — had been passengers in Throckmorton's car.

For the next 90 minutes, Perquimans County first responders — sheriff's deputies, firefighters, emergency medical service personnel and emergency management staff — worked the scene of the crash. They were joined by school staff, student members of the Perquimans County High School Fire Academy, Sentara Healthcare's Nightingale air ambulance personnel and Miller & Van Essendelft Funeral Home staff.

The "crash" in fact wasn't real: it was a mock event staged to demonstrate the horrors that can result from drinking and driving. But the first responders and other participants did their best to simulate what a real DWI accident would look like — complete with simulated blood, broken bones, open wounds, use of the "Jaws of Life" to extract victims and DWI sobriety tests.

Even though it wasn't real, students did show signs of shock as they watched Levesque being placed on a gurney in a zippered black body bag and driven off in the back of a coroner's hearse.

Simultaneously, the Nightingale helicopter landed across the parking



JOHN FOLEY PHOTO

Perquimans Emergency Medical Services personnel prepare student Heaven Tripp to be airlifted by Nightingale air ambulance during a mock driving-while-impaired vehicle crash event at Perquimans County High School, Friday.

lot, waiting for Tripp, who was "critically injured" in the wreck. Williamson, riding in the passenger seat behind Throckmorton, was taken by ambulance for treatment.

As the helicopter carrying Tripp lifted off, Drew gave students six key points to remember:

"Know who you are traveling with and ask what their plans are before leaving with them," he said. "Have a plan for how you are getting home safely before you leave. Establish an emergency contact that will not be a part of your plans unless needed.

Continuing, he said: "Make sure you can stay where you arrive if needed to avoid drinking and driving. Do not assume everyone is OK to drive. Ask before getting into a car. Have a number for a cab, Uber, or Lyft before leaving with someone else in case you need a ride. And remember, your parents would rather get a call from you than they would a visit from the sheriff at 2:30 (a.m.)"

Perquimans Emergency



JOHN FOLEY PHOTO

Hertford Fire Department firefighters and staff with Miller & Van Essendelft Funeral Home lift a gurney containing the "body" of student DJ Levesque into a waiting hearse during a mock driving-while-impaired crash event at Perquimans County High School, Friday.

### INVITATION ATTENTION PARENTS OF PRIVATE/ HOMESCHOOL STUDENTS WITH AND WITHOUT DISABILITIES IN PERQUIMANS COUNTY

A meeting will be held on Wednesday, May 18, 2022 at 4:00pm in person at the Perquimans County Schools Central Office, for private/homeschool representatives and parents of private/homeschool students with disabilities. The purpose of this meeting is to allow these parties an opportunity to consult with representatives from Perquimans County Schools about the proportionate share of federal funds that are available for regular and special education services for the 2022-2023 school year. Please contact Dr. Kanika Griffin, Chief Academic Officer of Student Services or Mr. James Bunch, Assistant Superintendent at 252-426-5741 if additional information is needed.

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## HG named Beta School of Merit

Kindergarten, pre-K registration underway at Central Elementary

From staff reports

Perquimans County Schools announced this week that Hertford Grammar School is a 2021-22 National Beta School of Merit.

The school earned the recognition by offering National Beta membership to students in all eligible grades. National Junior Beta includes grades 4-8 and National Senior Beta includes grades 9-12.

The National Beta School of Merit award is given to honor a club's dedication and commitment to academic excellence, a press release states. To qualify, a school must include members in Beta Club from all eligible grade levels. This year, only 3,380 Beta Clubs across the country received the award.

"I am extremely proud of Mrs. Rebecca Creech, our media coordinator, and Mrs. Ashley Miller, our school counselor, for their dedication to helping us build student leaders at Hertford Grammar School," Principal John Lassiter said. "The four pillars of the BETA club are service, character, leadership, and achievement. They model those attributes for our students and help our junior BETAs cultivate those skills in themselves."

According to Lassiter, Creech was the founding adviser for Hertford Grammar's Beta Club program last year and she and Miller are co-advisors this year.

The Perquimans schools also announced that registration for kindergarten and pre-K has started for the

2022-23 school year at Perquimans Central School.

To enroll in kindergarten, children must be 5 by Aug. 31. To enroll in pre-K, children must be 4 by that date.

Enrollment packets may be picked up at Perquimans Central School and at the

Perquimans County Schools Central Office. Enrollment packets are also available online at [www.pqschools.org](http://www.pqschools.org).

To schedule an appointment for a screening, call either 252-426-5741 or 252-426-5332.

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29<sup>th</sup> Annual  
*Garden Party*

of the  
*Perquimans County Restoration Association*  
spring fundraiser

*Saturday, June 4, 2022*  
*Four O'clock in the Afternoon*  
under the tent at  
*The Albemarle Plantation Clubhouse*

For more information visit:  
[perquimansrestoration.org](http://perquimansrestoration.org)  
Call 252-426-7567 or email  
[nbwh1730@embarqmail.com](mailto:nbwh1730@embarqmail.com)