PGHS on track for agriculture degree program

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ASHEBORO — Assistant Superintendent Catherine Berry presented a plan at the Randolph County Board of Education meeting, held Monday, for the development of a pilot program at Providence Grove High School that would allow juniors and seniors to work toward an Associate of Science degree in Agriculture through The University of Mount Olive (UMO).

The program involves a collaboration between UMO, Randolph Community College (RCC) and the Randolph County School System (RCSS). It would allow Providence Grove students to access UMO and RCC courses.

Nancy Cross, director of career and technical education and innovative school design, is working with each agency to launch the program. The idea for the program began with Amy Kidd, agriculture teacher at Providence Grove, after she attended the Career Technical Education Summer Conference in July 2016.

Berry reported that officials from UMO visited Providence Grove on Aug. 9, 2016, to discuss the general framework currently being implemented at South Johnston High School and the Northeast Regional School of Biotechnology and Agriscience.

On Oct. 26, 2016, a meeting was held at UMO to expand on earlier conversations and chart a course for continued planning. UMO representatives joined RCSS staff and RCC staff for a meeting on Dec. 13, 2016, to explore how all three educational institutions could be involved in creating a post-secondary agricultural experience for students in Randolph County. Three additional meetings held this year focused on course layout and criteria for student qualifications.

Current work on this project involves establishing an articulation agreement, determining a fee structure and exploring personnel options. Additionally, a calendar of events is being developed to align start and end dates, registration dates, holidays and other important dates during the shared semester. Additional details will be available in June.

Uwharrie names

Marty Trotter, assistant superintendent of operations, submitted for board consideration two names for the expanded Uwharrie Middle School on behalf of the Uwharrie School Project design team.

The project, which garnered financial support from the Randolph County Board of Commissioners during its February meeting ahead of June budget approvals, will expand the middle school to serve students in grades 6-12 over the next four years.

The proposed names are Uwharrie 6-12 and Uwharrie Ridge 6-12. Along with the names, logo designs were presented. Each design included three mountain peaks, which represent the three career clusters at Uwharrie.

The board will take action on the naming request at its next meeting.

Budget proposal

Superintendent Dr. Stephen Gainey’s 2017-18 proposed budget was approved at Monday’s meeting. The budget proposal included an expense budget of $21,823,741, which is an $1.8 million increase over the 2016-17 budget. It also included a capital outlay budget of just over $3 million, a child nutrition budget of $11.6 million, an Archdale-Trinity budget of $2.2 million and a Fund 8 budget just shy of $1.7 million.

A 10-cent increase for school lunches was also approved during the meeting for the 2017-18 school year.