

**Perquimans County Board of Education**  
**Regular Session – March 25, 2024**

The Perquimans County Board of Education met in regular session on Monday, March 25, 2024, at 6:00 p.m. in the boardroom at the Central Office. Audio access was available to the public by dialing a telephone number and entering a meeting ID and passcode.

Board Chair Russell Lassiter called the meeting to order. He led the audience in reciting the Pledge of Allegiance to the American Flag and had prayer.

Board members present: Board Chair Russell Lassiter (in person), Vice Chair Arlene Yates (in person), Kristy Corprew (in person), Dr. Anne White (in person), Leary Winslow (in person), and Matt Winslow (in person).

**Approval of Agenda**

Upon motion by Dr. Anne White and second by Arlene Yates, the Board voted unanimously to approve the agenda as presented.

**Special Recognitions**

On behalf of the Board, Superintendent Dr. Tanya Turner recognized the following:

**Governor's School – Mariah Clark**

Mariah Clark, an 11<sup>th</sup> grade student at Perquimans County High School, applied for and was selected to attend Governor's School, a four-week summer residential program for gifted and talented high school students. Mariah's nomination discipline was Natural Science. In addition to meeting certain eligibility requirements, applicants had to write a general essay, an academic discipline-specific essay, and a personal readiness essay. Mariah's school and community activities and honors included: A Honor Roll, A/B Honor Roll, HOSA, FFA, SGA (has served as President, Secretary, and Treasurer), Unified Champions, Soccer team, Cheer team, and swim team.

**Aspiring Superintendents Program**

Chief Human Resources Officer Dr. Shawn Wilson recently completed the Aspiring Superintendents Program. The program prepares current school leaders to become effective superintendents who will lead North Carolina school districts in the future. The program provides participating educators with information, knowledge, skills, and understanding through experiential learning in a leadership development program.

**Approval of Minutes**

Upon motion by Dr. Anne White and second by Kristy Corprew, the Board voted unanimously to approve the minutes for the February 26, 2024 regular session and the March 4, 2024 budget work session as presented.

**Consent Agenda**

None

**Public Hearing / Requests from the Public**

Vera Riddick signed up to speak during public comment, but chose not to speak.

**Unfinished Business**

None

**New Business**

**Presentation - Albemarle Regional Health Services and PCHS students on tobacco awareness**

Gabrielle Corprew of Albemarle Regional Health Services (ARHS) thanked the Superintendent and Board for the opportunity to speak. She introduced Wanda Stallings and Teresa Beardsley as representatives of Albemarle Regional Health Services, Three Rivers Healthy Carolinians, and Healthy Carolinians of the Albemarle. Since January, they have been working collaboratively with three Perquimans County High School students to create a presentation that reflects the current tobacco policies in hopes of making Perquimans County an overall healthier and safer county for its residents. She introduced PCHS students Coley Drew, Kenley Stallings and Trinitee Smith, an Elizabeth City State University student and intern with Mrs. Beardsley. She also recognized Crishya Sellers who could not attend the meeting, but was instrumental in the creation of the presentation. The presentation, Tobacco Awareness and Regulation: Perquimans County, which was presented by the three students, included information on smoking and health, second and thirdhand smoke exposure, how smoking damages the body (cancer, heart disease, cerebrovascular disease), e-cigarette use, the NC Youth Tobacco Survey, and Tobacco 21. North Carolina has not adopted the federal Tobacco 21 law. It is one of eight states that still has a purchase age of 18. In addition, information was presented on the burden of tobacco use in North Carolina, how smoke-free policies can promote health, and what Perquimans County Schools are already doing. An explanation of the differences in smoke-free and tobacco free was provided, including the differences in policies in surrounding counties. To help enforce the policy, ARHS can provide free of charge tobacco-free signage, window clings, doormats and education on quitting. This information will be presented to the County Commissioners at their next meeting to request support for tobacco-free government buildings, vehicles and grounds, and smoke-free indoor public places, including e-cigarettes, in Perquimans County. Again, Ms. Corprew thanked the Board and the Superintendent for allowing them to speak. She also expressed appreciation to Ms. Julie Roberts for organizing the meetings with the students. Ms. Corprew responded to questions and comments from the Board.

#### Presentation – Perquimans County Branch of the NAACP on naming the track

Mr. Lassiter said last Monday morning, he and Dr. Turner met with a group of citizens who shared information with them concerning Ms. Shirley Wiggins and the new track. Mr. Lassiter invited them to share information directly with the Board because he did not want to misrepresent anything that was said. Instead of speaking during public comment, this was made an agenda item to give them as much time as needed for the presentation.

Tammy Miller-White, who represented the Perquimans County Branch of the NAACP, thanked the Board for placing this item on the agenda. She said they wanted to sum up what was discussed at the meeting and to share with the Board their concerns. They knew the track was complete and wanted to know about the naming of the track. Ms. Miller-White recognized Brenda Dillard who read Captain Wiggins' biography. Ms. Miller-White also recognized Debbie Jean Parker, the Chair of the Perquimans County Branch of the NAACP.

Ms. Miller-White provided a summary of the meeting which included several NAACP members, Dr. Turner and Mr. Lassiter. Ms. Miller-White said Mr. Lassiter expressed that the Board was still committed to naming the track after Captain Shirley Wiggins. The concern was the financial contribution they were expected to receive.

Background information provided by Ms. Miller-White – In 2018, Judie Hoffer, representing the Athletic Complex Design Committee under Mr. Cheeseman as Superintendent, prior to Dr. Turner serving as Superintendent, made a presentation to request/propose that the track be named after Commissioner Wiggins. In her proposal, Ms. Hoffer said she recognized that there would be some need for donations, fundraising, and additional support. In April 2018, the Board, of which four members are currently on the Board, unanimously agreed to name the track after Captain M. Shirley Wiggins. There were no stipulations or conditions mentioned. Mr. Lassiter said at the meeting in 2018 he was aware of policy to name facilities.

Ms. Miller-White said they did not know about the policy that was voted on November 28, 2011, the naming policy that speaks about \$200,000 to have a component named at the Athletic Complex. She expressed concern about not being able to access the policy online or in the policy manual.

Ms. Miller-White said she wasn't sure if she was on the Design Committee. Dr. White mentioned the Design Committee included Matthew Cheeseman, Susan Cox, Judi Hoffer, Dexter Jackson-Heard, Ed Muzzulin, Ed Nixon, Justin Roberson, and Leary Winslow. Dr. White said none of these persons were with Ms. Hoffer when she made the presentation and Ms. Hoffer didn't specify which group she was representing.

Ms. Miller-White said the track was completed with federal dollars. The 2011 policy was developed primarily because the school system thought it would have to seek private dollars to do the complex because there was no opportunity to get grants or other types of money. It was used as part of the fundraising tools.

Ms. Miller-White said there was no contact with anyone. Now, when they are expecting the track to be named, conditions are being discussed. In 2022, the Foundation reached out to Loretta Buggs, a family member of Captain Wiggins. The email stated they would like the family to raise \$50,000, or a substantial amount, to have the track named after Captain Wiggins or they would have to move on to the next person on the list.

Ms. Miller-White asked the Board to look at Captain Wiggins' level of service and awards. If a value were placed on her service, it would greatly exceed the dollar amount. She said there are no educational facilities in this county named after anyone of color. In going to the track, Ms. Miller-White said she saw a building, the Perry Williams Football Field House, and wondered if \$200,000 was paid. Leary Winslow responded to the question. He said Dr. Nixon built that building and it was well over \$200,000. Dr. Nixon wanted it named after his former football coaches. He said not only did he donate the land, but he also built that building.

Ms. Miller-White said their dilemma is the Board moving forward with the vote, their concerns with the policy being brought up several years later, and using federal dollars to build the track.

Board Member Leary Winslow said he admired their passion and persistence for this cause. He said he was on the Board in 2018 when the Board voted unanimously to name the track after Ms. Wiggins. At the time there were no funds to build a track. His understanding was that a track would cost roughly a million dollars. He remembers Mrs. Hoffer saying she didn't know how they would get the money but they were going to raise some money. There was potential for grants and fundraising, an assortment of things that would ultimately get the project off the ground. He was unaware in 2018 of the 2011 policy. Mrs. Yates said they had a big discussion about it that night. She said that's why they did it because at that time they didn't know how they were going to pay for it. Mr. Winslow said the superintendent at that time did not make them aware of this policy, that the superintendent may have not known about this policy. Tammy Miller-White said that Mr. Lassiter said he knew about the 2011 policy in 2018.

Leary Winslow asked if they were asking the Board to change the 2011 policy to name the track after Ms. Wiggins based on her credentials and community service. Ms. Miller-White said it was in the Board's scope of authority to look at her service to this country, her community service, and all that was recorded in Congress and recognize that it has value. Mr. Winslow asked how much money had been raised in the six years since 2018. Ms. Miller-White said if any money had been raised it would have gone through the Foundation. The Athletic Design Committee was disbanded when Mr. Cheeseman left. Leary Winslow said although his name was mentioned, he was not on that committee. Mr. Winslow said at the 2021 budget work session, Mr. Hoffer asked the Board specifically about the track and he asked Mr. Hoffer how much money had been raised. At that time, no dollar amount had been set. Mr. Winslow said if there was so much passion about naming the track after a person, why was there not passion about raising money for that cause.

Mr. Lassiter recognized Dr. Anne White who asked to speak. Dr. White said typically the Board does not respond when someone comes to and makes a presentation before the Board. Dr. White expressed her concerns about no communication and miscommunication and said she believed that is what happened in this situation. Dr. White said

when the Board voted in 2018, they already knew Ms. Wiggins' bio. Her background was never an issue. During COVID, which seemed like a long time ago, the school system had an opportunity with the ESSER funds to build a track. Dr. Turner and members of her team got permission for a large pot of ESSER funds estimated at about \$1 million to build the track. After receiving permission to use the ESSER funds, the Board met with the attorney to find out the conditions in using those ESSER funds. What the Board learned was that because these were federal funds, there could be no fundraising to do anything about the track at that time. From 2018 to December of last year when the track was complete, there could be no fundraising to build a track.

Now that the track is complete, Dr. White said that a fence, lighting, and a building to store equipment is needed which total about \$300,000. The attorney told the Board those conditions. He also told the Board the Board could change its mind. Just because they voted for it then didn't mean they had to follow through on that vote. In looking at the previous minutes, it said the committee was going to raise some funds. At that point, no funds could be raised for the track until the track was built. After the track was built and completed, funds could be raised for the lighting, the fencing and other things that were needed.

Dr. White said she volunteered to serve as the liaison between the Board, Ms. Hoffler and Ms. Buggs to get that group together to see what could be done to jumpstart fundraising. Dr. White had not heard anything about the 2011 policy, and that night nothing was said about it. Ms. Hoffler said she was going to raise some money. She didn't specify which committee, but because this was the only committee that the Board knew she was on, this is the committee the Board thought she represented. Dr. White said she talked with the Hoffler's about spearheading fundraising. Foundation Director Brenda Lassiter took on the charge of fundraising money for the track. That was long before the Board knew that it would get the ESSER funding. Dr. White said she pledged \$1,000. She knew that Ms. Lassiter communicated with Ms. Buggs. They set a goal of raising \$50,000. Ms. Lassiter was trying to get Ms. Buggs to join in with her to establish that goal and come up with a list of people that could be contacted that would commit to reaching that goal. Communication got mixed up. People started looking at black and white. If the Board didn't want to name it after her, it would have never voted to name it after her. There are a lot of people who will give a \$1,000. There are people who will give \$10, \$25, \$50. Dr. White said it could be done.

Dr. White spoke with Ms. Buggs and asked if they could meet to kick this off when she came into town. The meeting never took place. Dr. White was told that several factors between 2018 and December made some of the people that said they were going to do the fundraising unable to do it. (Someone in the audience said Ms. Hoffler was sick and is still sick.) When Dr. White spoke with Ms. Buggs she said she was tired of hearing all of this, because of the miscommunication she was being fed. She did not have time to meet with Dr. White that weekend. As Mr. Lassiter said, the Board has not changed its vote to name the track after Ms. Wiggins. However, because Ms. Hoffer said they were going to raise money, Dr. White said let's raise some money. No one said \$200,000. The Foundation Board said \$50,000. When Dr. White met with them, they had not set an amount of money. Dr. White said she asked that her named be withdrawn from that committee thinking that someone else would be able to communicate better because she didn't get anyone to help raise funds. The previous Board voted for the \$200,000, but this Board did not talk about the \$200,000 in relation to this.

Arlene Yates thanked the group for coming to the meeting. She said since 2018, the ball was dropped. The committee wasn't there anymore so no one could raise any money. The community did not know since the committee disbursed, but we have to step up. There was no communication. She said at this point, we can't change what happened in the past, but from this day forward we can move on. What Ms. Wiggins did for this community is not in question. She said she was glad that her bio was read for the community that didn't know what she did.

Brenda Wiggins Lee, Minnie Shirley Wiggins' niece, spoke from the audience. She said it was said that no one tried to raise any money for the track. She said her granddaughter raised \$700 for the track when she was here (Senior Project) and gave the money to Mr. Michael Horwat. She said we need to find out where that \$730 went.

Leary Winslow said they were asking to change the policy or to come to some consensus to raise funds. He said it probably wouldn't be \$200,000 because that would be tough for anybody in a small community to raise regardless of color or status. It takes someone like a Charles Ward to pass away and have an estate. There would need to be some consensus of raising the money or some consensus of changing the policy.

Someone from the audience asked is raising money going to solve the issue of naming the track.

Leary Winslow said the Board stands by the 2018 decision, but they were led to believe that some funds would be raised. Ms. Corprew and Mr. Winslow weren't on the Board at that time, but the other four board members were. There was no dollar amount specified, but an effort to raise the funds would go a long way. Mr. Winslow said if it wasn't for Mr. Charles Ward who presented this idea, we wouldn't have any of that across the street. We would still be playing football on the baseball field and the track wouldn't be a possibility. There was a policy put in place in 2011. Even though he wasn't on the Board, he has to respect that policy. He said there are tons of needs over there. There is no asphalt in the parking lot. There is no lighting. He said the district had to scrape to get lighting in the parking lot for safety issues. There are so many needs. There is still \$50,000 of fencing needed there.

Tammy Miller-White said the conversation was very valuable. They needed needed to share their concerns and wanted to hear what the Board had to say. What got the Board caught up about the naming rights were the comments that Ms. Hoffler made about raising some funds. A dollar amount wasn't set. Leary Winslow asked the student's name that raised the money. Several people responded that the student's name was Leroya Banks. Ms. Miller-White said there had been \$1,700 raised then. Dr. White said her \$1,000 was a pledge. She said she would match anyone's \$5,000. She said it was effort, effort, effort. There were several comments made following Dr. White comments about her pledge and willingness to match. Leary Winslow said he would match the next \$5,000. Tammy Miller White also pledged \$1,000.

Mr. Lassiter said he had listened to everyone tonight and participated in the meeting last Monday for an hour and a half. He shared the following comments with a great deal of respect. He said he would like these comments to conclude this session. He said he agreed with Dr. White that what had been missing in this whole process was thorough and fair communication. Mr. Lassiter said that Shirley Wiggins' life time achievements are honorable. Here are facts:

- In November 2011, the Board of Education, chaired by Mrs. Yates, adopted a Naming Rights Policy that pertained to school properties. Fast forward to 2024, this policy remains in effect. It passed unanimously. The only sitting board member on that board in 2011 who is currently on this board tonight is Arlene Yates.
- In March 2018, Mrs. Judie Hoffler represented a group of people who requested that the Board of Education consider naming a new track in memory of Mrs. Wiggins.
- Mrs. Hoffler acknowledged in her request before the Board of Education that evening that there would be costs associated with a new track and she was prepared to organize fundraising campaign and fundraising events to support this request.
- The following month, the Board of Education responded to her request unanimously by voting to approve a future track in memory of Mrs. Shirley Wiggins. This was based on Ms. Hoffler's request and her intention to lead a fundraising campaign.
- COVID hit March 2020. Dr. Turner and Mr. Bunch asked if ESSER funds could possibly be used to build an outdoor facility for physical health in the form of a track. This is what got the funds in place for us to build a track.
- Six years have passed. Everyone has to agree that we have a nice track for our youth and our community to be able to use proudly.

- The Board of Education is still committed to naming the track in memory of Mrs. Shirley Wiggins, but the financial pre-requisites of naming rights are still in place.

Mr. Lassiter thanked everyone for the presentation and their presence. He said the Board will take into account the information shared tonight and at other times. This was not an action item on the agenda; it was an information item. It was done by Mr. Lassiter's invitation to Ms. Tammy Miller-White so as not to restrict her comments to three minutes. He said a lot of information was shared and everyone learned a lot. The information shared will be used in further discussions. The Board will be in touch with any further action that is taken. Mr. Lassiter thanked everyone for coming and expressed his appreciation for their presence at the meeting.

#### Quote for Greenhouse at PCHS

CTE Director Missy Swain said she was excited to inform the Board that Perquimans County Schools was awarded a grant titled, "Growing Success," in the amount of \$98,797.43, from the North Carolina General Assembly. Perquimans was one of thirty-five districts that received this grant. She asked the Board for their consideration of the quote for the greenhouse for PCHS from Stuppy Greenhouse. She shared some pictures so the Board could see what they are planning to get, which is the Rainbow Educational Greenhouse, a top-of-the-line educational facility for horticultural students. The greenhouse, which will be ADA compliant, will be 30'x60', with 8' side walls, 8 mm polycarbonate, heating, ventilation and cooling pad. It has six zones for watering, overhead watering for hanging baskets, and a fertigation system to fertilize as the water goes out to the plants. Students will be able to calculate how much fertilizer and how to calibrate the dosatron to make sure they are getting the right parts per million. When asked about where the greenhouse would be located, Ms. Swain said right now they are discussing that as the CTE program continues to grow and more facilities and structures are added, that the structures are all located together. They also are considering access for the public for fall and spring plant sales. When asked about going through the county for permits for permanent structures, Ms. Swain said that Stuppy Greenhouse is a North Carolina general contractor. They will pull all permits and make sure everything is in compliance. She said the site has not been decided yet, but possible locations include behind the baseball field or by the automotive program. If they build a space for the fire truck and write a grant at some point to possibly add an ag/mechanic shop, they need to look long-term at where they're going so they are intentional about their growth. Upon motion by Leary Winslow and second by Dr. Anne White, the Board voted unanimously to enter into a contract with Stuppy Greenhouse for Perquimans County High School Greenhouse Project in the amount of \$98,797.43, contingent upon review of the contract by the school board attorney as presented.

#### School Nutrition Procurement Plan

School Nutrition Director Kimberly Cullipher presented the Perquimans County Schools Procurement Plan for the School Nutrition Program. Ms. Cullipher said there will be a federal five-year administrative review next school year, 2024-2025. She recently attended a procurement meeting sponsored by DPI and learned that there should be a procurement plan on file. The procurement plan was reviewed by Chief Finance Officer Mr. Rube Blanchard to make sure the financial portions looked good. The federal government wants to make sure the district is practicing open and free competition and the proper methods of procuring are being used when purchasing. Ms. Cullipher stated these procedures are being followed and now there is a board-approved document in place. Upon motion by Kristy Corprew and second by Matt Winslow, the Board voted unanimously to adopt the Perquimans County Schools School Nutrition Procurement Plan as presented.

#### Finance

##### Budget Amendments

Chief Finance Officer Rube Blanchard presented budget amendments for the Board's consideration, explained in detail the reason for each amendment, and asked for questions from board members. Upon motion by Kristy Corprew and second by Arlene Yates, the Board voted unanimously to approve State (Fund 1) Budget Amendment #3, Local

(Fund 2) Budget Amendment #2, Capital Outlay (Fund 4) Budget Amendment #3, Child Nutrition (Fund 5) Budget Amendment #1, Local (Fund 8) Budget Amendment #2 as presented.

### Monthly Financial Report

Mr. Blanchard presented the Expense-Budget Analysis (YTD) for March 2024. The benchmark was 75%, with 64% actually spent YTD (excluding new school construction). The report was run on March 19, 2024, and did not include the March payroll or expenditures paid after that date. He also showed the budget summary sorted by 2-digit purpose code with the same information. There were two line items over budget in federal funds due to the timing of submitting the reports to DPI for their approval. For the Capital Outlay report, in the righthand column, Budget Remaining, there were items with budget funds remaining for projects that haven't been done yet that are expected to be completed by June 30th or those that are not completed to be carried over to next year. The balance of the Public School Building Capital Fund Lottery Fund was \$703,905.34, which included lottery revenue for February 2024. The balance of the Public School Building Capital Fund School Building Repair & Renovation Fund (PSBRRF) was \$1,107,946.85, which included lottery revenue for February 2024. The balance of the Public School Building Capital Fund Needs Based Lottery Fund Project Allocation, the funding source for the new school, was \$36,431,830.16. He noted the year-to-date expenditures that have been submitted to the County for payment. There may have been others, but these are recorded after the money is received and the bill is paid.

### Addendum to Presentation of Local Current Expense Budget Information for 2024-2025

Accounting Specialist Jamie Ayscue presented an addendum of \$65,000 to the Local Current Expense Budget Information for 2024-2025 that was presented at the budget work session. In order to bring our salary scales in line with the current DPI salary scales, an additional \$65,000 would need to be requested from the County. This presentation was for information only.

### Intergovernmental Agreement between Perquimans County Board of Education and Perquimans County

During closed session at the September 25, 2024 board meeting, Dr. Turner said the Board discussed the intergovernmental agreement between the Perquimans County Board of Education and Perquimans County. The proposal included exchanging Hertford Grammar School and Perquimans County Middle School for funding from the County for the new intermediate school. The Board was in consensus that evening. The County attorney worked with the attorney the district had been using through DPI on what this agreement should look like. After the Board of Education takes action, the agreement will be sent to the County Commissioners for action at their next regular meeting. Upon motion by Matt Winslow and second by Leary Winslow, the Board voted unanimously to enter an intergovernmental agreement between the Perquimans County Board of Education and Perquimans County regarding the exchange of the School System's real property for the County's commitment to build a new consolidated Intermediate School as presented.

### Superintendent's Report

Dr. Turner provided the following report.

- Enrollment has remained about the same.
- A Community Resource Fair will be held on March 26<sup>th</sup> at 5:30 p.m. at PCHS. Dr. Griffin and Mrs. Parker organized this event. Teachers and staff will be presenting on topics that parents selected in a recent survey. Food will be provided.
- The Addams Family musical will be held on March 27<sup>th</sup> and 28<sup>th</sup> at the PCHS auditorium.
- The ribbon cutting for the new facility at the softball field has been rescheduled to Thursday, April 19<sup>th</sup> at 5:30 p.m.

- The PCHS Hunter Safety Team placed 1<sup>st</sup> Place overall in recent competition: 1<sup>st</sup> in Rifle, 1<sup>st</sup> in Hunter Skills, and 2<sup>nd</sup> in Archery. A Senior, Luke Williams, placed 1<sup>st</sup> overall in Archery and Hunter Skills. A Junior, Garrett Christian, placed 1<sup>st</sup> overall in Rifle. They will be attending the state tournament on April 27<sup>th</sup> in Ellerbee, North Carolina.

### **Board Chair's Comments**

Mr. Lassiter thanked the Board for its help during this meeting. He said they answered questions and made progress.

### **Announcements**

- Joint Budget Work Session with County Commissioners – Monday, April 8, 2024 at 6:30 p.m. at Central Office
- Regular Board of Education Meeting – Monday, April 22, 2024 at 6:00 p.m. at Central Office

### **Closed Session**

Upon motion by Arlene Yates and second by Matt Winslow, the Board voted unanimously at 7:59 p.m. to enter closed session pursuant to N.C. General Statute 143.318.11(a)(1) and (6) to consider closed session minutes, student transfer requests, and personnel matters; and pursuant to N.C. General Statute §143-318.11(a)(3) in order to consult with the Board attorney regarding matters within the attorney-client privilege and to preserve that privilege; and pursuant to N.C. General Statute §143-318.11(a)(2) to prevent the premature disclosure of an honorary degree, scholarship, prize, or similar award.

### **Return to Open Session**

Upon motion by Kristy Corprew and second by Matt Winslow, the Board voted unanimously at 8:58 p.m. to return to open session.

### **Personnel Summary Report**

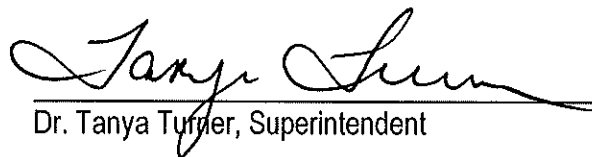
Upon motion by Leary Winslow and second by Matt Winslow, the Board voted unanimously to approve the Superintendent's recommendations regarding personnel items as presented.

### **Adjournment**

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 8:59 p.m.



Mr. Russell Lassiter, Chairman



Dr. Tanya Turner, Superintendent