



PERQUIMANS COUNTY SCHOOLS

P.O. Box 337
Hertford, NC 27944
Phone (252) 426-5741
Fax (252) 426-4913
www.pqschools.org

Matthew F. Cheeseman
Superintendent

James R. Bunch
Assistant Superintendent

Board of Education
Dr. Anne White, Chair
Amy Spaugh, Vice-Chair
Russell Lassiter
Matt Peeler
Leary Winslow
Arlene Yates

October 26, 2018

Dr. Danielle J. Allen
Department of Public Instruction
Office of Charter Schools
6307 Mail Service Center
Raleigh, NC 27699-6307

Dear Dr. Allen:

Please receive this communication as confirmation that the Perquimans County Schools Board of Education recognizes that an application for the Elaine Riddick Charter School has been filed. The Perquimans County Schools Board of Education opposes the prospective charter school as, according to the board members' promotion of the charter school, it will directly target 120 African American students at Perquimans Central School and Hertford Grammar School in year one of operation. The charter school will directly target 325 African American students by year five of operation which will additionally impact Perquimans County Middle School. As a result, the Perquimans County Schools Board of Education projects that the Elaine Riddick Charter School will segregate the student population by race thus creating school choices that may be categorized by residents as black or white schools. According to the board members' promotion of the charter school, the Elaine Riddick Charter School is targeting 40 African American kindergarten students from Perquimans Central School in year one. Currently, Perquimans Central School has 38 African American kindergarten students enrolled. Considering, an entire demographic of students would disappear thus creating a school without diversity.

Perquimans County Schools is composed of four schools that service 1,681 students in grades PK-12. Located in rural northeast North Carolina, 75% of the schools in Perquimans County are designated as Title 1 schools. The student population is approximately 67% White, 25% Black, and 8% other. Considering, the implementation of the Elaine Riddick Charter School may consequently reduce and/or eliminate African American student populations completely across specific grade levels. As a result of the reduction in student enrollment year one, Perquimans County Schools projects a loss of \$1.2 million in a combination of direct and indirect funding streams from state, federal, and local resources. By year five of charter school operation, Perquimans County Schools projects approximate losses to total \$3.25 million. The current operating budget for Perquimans County Schools is \$19 million. A \$3.25 million loss equates to an overall budget reduction of nearly 17%. Unfortunately, a fiscal loss at this magnitude would result in a Reduction in Force (RIF). As Perquimans County has a higher unemployment rate than the state average, the consequences of the prospective charter school implementation may add to the unemployment rate.

Perquimans County Schools, in 2018-2019, has lost 48 students to the Northeast Academy for Aerospace and Advanced Technologies (NEAAAT) Charter School located in Elizabeth City, North Carolina. The loss of an additional 120 students as projected to a competing charter school will create significant hardships in service areas that require per pupil funding allotments. The transportation department will lose significant funding due to the reduction in student enrollment but will be required to travel the entire county. The 2018-2019 state funding of \$473,000 does not cover the needs of the transportation department, thus local funding was requested for support. If routes remain the same (less students riding, but covering the same area), the Transportation department's efficiency rating would suffer. This is based on miles traveled versus how many students we transport. If buses are running the same route (mileage) but transporting less students, that has a negative fiscal impact. Additionally, if bus routes get shorter, drivers would work less hours resulting in less fiscal incomes and the likelihood of not driving for Perquimans County Schools. Thus, a transportation driver shortage may occur. Furthermore, the loss of 120 additional students may require the district to drop buses which may result in a loss of positions and/or a reduction of hours per day. As a result, drivers would not earn annual leave, sick days or be paid for holidays during the 10-month calendar.

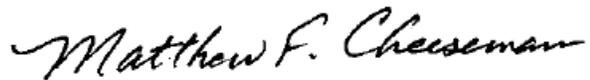
Considering School Nutrition, Perquimans County Schools would lose funding for each student who eats school meals, and this impact increases if the student qualifies for free and reduced meals. At this time, approximately 51% of students have been approved for free and reduced meals. Lunch reimbursement rates for this school year equate to \$2.99 per day for reduced-price meals and \$3.39 per day for free meals. Breakfast reimbursement rates equate to \$1.84 per day for reduced-price meals and \$2.14 for free meals. The reduction in student enrollment due to the prospective charter school increases the district's costs of meals for each student who qualifies for reduced-price meals to \$4.83 per child per day and each student who qualifies for free meals to \$5.53 per child per day. The charter school would prompt Perquimans County Schools to reinvent how meal service is conducted and ultimately push the fiscal burden to the consumer.

If a charter school was established in Perquimans County, the school system would face significant disadvantages in terms of teacher recruitment and retention. Mainly, this is because charter schools are only required to have 50% of their teachers to be licensed, while an LEA must have 100% of their teachers licensed (or on the path to full licensure). This is especially significant in light of high failure rates on the Praxis math test which has become a huge obstacle for aspiring teachers. Additionally, these teachers could also forgo the cost of completing courses on the path to licensure. These teachers might be more inclined to work for a charter school in order to avoid these factors. This grows more problematic as the HB90 law increases class size compliance over the next few years, making teacher recruitment even more critical. Meanwhile, charter schools are not required to comply with the HB90 law requirement.

Dr. Danielle J. Allen
October 26, 2018
Page 3

Perquimans County Schools provides a world-class education to students in grades PK-12. Most recently, 100% of the schools MET GROWTH and scored a “C” or higher on the North Carolina Schools Report Card. As a school organization serving 20% of its student population through the Exceptional Children program, Perquimans County Schools is committed to serving 100% of its students.

Best Regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Matthew F. Cheeseman". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'M'.

Matthew F. Cheeseman
Superintendent

MFC/mkp