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Hive serves at-risk students

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By Thadd White

WINDSOR - Bertie County Schools has made a habit of taking former school structures and making them useful again.

One Economy and the Bertie County Family Resource Center are following that lead and the school district will again be one of the beneficiaries. The former Serendipity School, now known as the Bertie County Hive, is being transformed into a community resource center and alternative setting for students.

“We always work with at-risk high school youth,” Sonja Murray, the Senior Vice President of One Economy Corporation, told the Bertie County Board of Education Monday night. “Under the direction of certified teachers, we want to go back to the basics.”

Murray said the Hive would operate under the auspices of Bertie High School and report directly to BHS Principal Calvin Moore. The goal of the program is to take ninth grade students who are at-risk, discover their math and reading levels, teach them and eventually return them to the traditional high school setting.

“Our goal is to put them back in the ninth grade at the ninth grade level,” Murray said.

Murray said the Hive would also strive to provide development for the character of the students who were at the center.

“We also know the kids we are dealing with are struggling with behavior as well as in the classroom, so we will offer a lot of character development,” Murray said. “While they spend time at the Hive, we want them to learn self-discipline.”

Murray said as part of the program each student would receive a refurbished computer which they would take to their homes.

The goal of the program is to return students to Bertie High School as soon as they are ready.

“We hope to have the kids for six months, but it could be a year before they return to the ninth grade,” she said.

After Murray’s presentation, Vivian Saunders talked about the general operation of the Hive.

“The Hive will be open from 8 a.m. until 9 p.m. each day,” said Saunders, who serves as director of the facility. “It will provide an opportunity not just for students, but for people in the community.”

She said the Hive would offer all the same services as the Bertie County Resource Center in Lewiston Woodville and said it was located between a mobile home park and Windsor Oaks and was within walking distance for residents of both places.

Board of Education member Melinda Eure asked how many students would be in the program and Murray said probably 20, but it could go as high as 25.

The board also received a schedule for students that would be based at the school showing a regular schedule for Monday and Wednesday, another for Tuesday and Thursday.

The program calls for measurable successes such as:

- * Students complete the necessary work to be successful in a regular high school environment;
- * School environment impacts how the students view themselves and the world around them;
- * Students succeed in aspects of their life plan; and
- * Students gain marketable technology skills.

The goals include having a higher number of at-risk students receive high school diplomas and an increase in the number of those students receiving a secondary education.

Following the presentation, Board of Education Chairman Rickey Freeman said he appreciated the effort.

“Thank you so much for what you are doing for our students,” he said.