

LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF CATAWBA COUNTY

VOTERS SPEAK UP



MIYA BANKS PHOTOS, RECORD

Miles Siebenhar, a 16-year-old Bandys High School student, poses for a photo holding a sign that says, "I will vote because democracy is important."

Civility, book challenges, 'woke stuff' among topics raised at event

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Catawba County voter Todd Loendorf said he asked every candidate the same question on Tuesday at a meet the candidates event sponsored by the League of Women Voters of Catawba County.

"(I ask) what are they going to do to bring civility back to politics," Loendorf said. "Because nothing is going to get done if the people we elect go to wherever they're going with the mindset, 'I have to have everything or nothing at all.' There's got to be compromise."

Loendorf said he wants to see elected officials work together regardless of party.

At least 50 voters and 14 candidates were present Tuesday evening at the League of Women Voters of Catawba County event.

The event allowed voters to speak face-to-face with candidates running for national, state and local offices ahead of the March 5 primary vote.

The candidates in attendance were Austin Allran, Barbara Beatty and Eric Dunn for the Catawba County Board of Commissioners; Donna Spencer and Angela Henson for Catawba County Register of Deeds; Ronn Abernathy, Clayton Mullis, David Goforth and April Underwood for Catawba County Schools Board of Education; Mark Hollo and Nancy

Meek for N.C. Senate and Charles Eller, Pat Harrigan and Brooke McGowan for U.S. House of Representatives.

Voter concerns

Hal and Alana Matheson said, "We want to make sure we have people in our schools and our county commissioners who will stand up for the right thing. (For) godly things."

Hal, 69, is concerned about what is being taught in schools from the elementary level through college.

"We're seeing college kids out here marching for Hamas, marching for Palestine," Hal said. "What's with that? Somebody's brainwashing somebody."

Alana, 70, added that she is concerned about the prevalence of transgender issues in schools.

"All this woke stuff, that's not who America is," Hal said. "We're a Christian nation, no matter how many presidents get up there and say we're not."

Please see **VOTERS**, Page A7



Voter Kimberly Turk, right, speaks with state Senate candidate Mark Hollo.

HICKORY CITY SCHOOLS

Jump Start

Pre-K students could get early glimpse of kindergarten; summer school plans made

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The Hickory City Schools Board of Education approved several summer learning opportunities at its work session on Monday, including an opportunity for students transitioning to new grade levels to experience a school day at their new grade level.

The opportunity, called Jump Start, was introduced by Assistant Superintendent of Teaching and Learning Shelly Black. It consists of two optional work days where rising kindergarten, sixth-grade and ninth-grade students can visit their new school and participate in a shortened school day.

"Especially our (rising kindergartners) learn ... what it's like to walk down the hallway, what it's like to walk through a lunch line and carry a tray all at the same time," Black said. "It's just an opportunity to allow these students who are moving into that new level, that new school, an opportunity to acclimate to the school, the folks in the school and how the general day of the school works without others being in the school with them."

Black said it is a good time for rising middle and high school students to learn what it is like to change classes and what a semester may look like.

Breakfast and lunch would be provided for students.

Remediation and summer school

From June 3-6, eligible students can participate in remediation and take End-of-Grade (EOG) tests after the end of the school year. This option is for students from third grade to 12th grade who failed the first administration of End-of-Grade or End-of-Course (EOC) tests.

Students must commit to attending this remediation opportunity, called Second Administration, by May 31.

Remediation time is scheduled by the school and should not interfere with class and school events, according to the presentation given by Black.

Breakfast and lunch is provided for all students participating in Second Administration.

Summer school options include a reading camp for second-grade and third-grade students who are not proficient in reading. It will consist of full days from Monday to Thursday, from June 10-27.

"It will be a fun day for our students so they will see reading as not a laborious task, but truly as a fun opportunity of how to learn with games and interaction with each other in a small group setting with a teacher," Black said.

Black said the reading camp is offered every year but this year the goal is to make it fun.

Breakfast and lunch is provided for all students participating in the reading camp.

Please see **PRE-K**, Page A7

To see a clip of Shelly Black describing the Southwest Primary Reading Camp proposal, point your smartphone camera at the QR code, then tap the link. **NEWSVU**

Deaths • A8-9

- Tricia Eidson
- Agnes Lopez McDaniels
- Jackson "Jack" Luther Saunders
- Robert Bruce Cearley Jr.
- Harold Woodroe Mecimore
- Janet Drum
- Jane Ellen White

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Weather

Mostly sunny
High 64
Low 44
FORECAST • A10





Hickory City Schools Assistant Superintendent of Teaching and Learning Shelly Black goes over summer school options with the Board of Education on Monday evening, as well as a proposal for a Southwest Primary Reading Camp.

MIYA BANKS, RECORD

Pre-K

From A1

The registration window is March 11-28. Registration for transportation must be completed by April 18.

High school students will have the opportunity to recover lost credits from June 10-27.

High school students must achieve a specific number of credits to graduate. Credits are achieved by passing courses. The goal of this summer school opportunity is to help students recover credits lost from failed high school courses, Black said. Breakfast and lunch is provided for all students participating in credit recovery.

LR partnership: Southwest Primary Reading Camp

Black is working with Lenoir-Rhyne University professor Monica Campbell to create an intensive summer reading camp for

Southwest Primary School. The camp would be funded entirely by grants.

The purpose is to prevent skill loss over the summer, according to Black's statement of need. There are no dates yet for the summer camp that would provide a structured environment for students to work on their reading skill so they return to school in August with maintained or improved proficiency in reading.

Black and Campbell are still building the program. It is planned to be a six-week program that includes 15 rising first-grade students and 15 rising second-grade students. Students are chosen by looking at in-class data collected through the year, Black said.

The camp would include two meals per day and one snack. It would be four days per week and last seven to eight hours each day.

Black's written proposal states that she and Campbell have applied for the Unifour Foundation Grant.



Voter Todd Loendorf, right, speaks with U.S. House of Representatives candidate Brooke McGowan.

Voters

From A1

Hal said the U.S. is the greatest nation in the world because it is a godly nation but that it is slipping. Alana said the nation is straying from God's teachings.

"When they turn from (God) and stray to gay marriage and abortions, things that just don't line up with God's word, we're messing up," Hal said.

Kristen Siebenhar, 49, attended with her son Miles Siebenhar, 16. Both were concerned about preserving women's health care and marriage equality.

Kristen said she wants to see more transparency. She said she wants politicians who are honest and explain why they vote they way they do.

Kristen and Miles also said they are concerned about the ongoing book challenges. Miles is a student of Bandys High School in the



Voter Rick Settlemyre, left, speaks with Catawba County Schools Board of Education candidates April Underwood and Clayton Mullis.

MIYA BANKS PHOTOS, RECORD

Catawba County Schools district, he said. Kristen said she wants to make the decision about what material her child can access.

Glenn Fulbright, a former member of the Catawba County

Schools Board of Education, called the book challenges, "a total waste of funds."

Fulbright, 71, said he is also concerned about the school board's inability to agree to dis-

agree. His other top concern in this election is the county commission, he said, because of how much growth has been allowed in the eastern part of Catawba County.

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