



Gastonia, Shelby football champs of the past 25 years

SPORTS, 1B

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WARM WELCOME



Malisa Littlejohn gets a hug from 1st grader Lei'ona Smith during the first day of school on Aug. 13 at North Elementary School in Kings Mountain. PHOTOS BY MIKE HENSILL/THE SHELBY STAR

First day of school kicks off in Cleveland County

Rebecca Sitzes
Shelby Star | USA TODAY NETWORK

Summer ended for Cleveland County students Wednesday morning.

At North Elementary, parents pulled up to the car rider line clutching coffee mugs and cameras, while students with Pikachu backpacks, first day outfits and sleepy smiles tumbled out of cars, posing for photos before heading into the building for the year's first day of school.

Some parents walked their kids in. Others arrived on one of the 159 Cleveland County Schools buses.

A stereo played upbeat music outside the school and a sign, decorated with black and silver balloons, read "Welcome back North Tigers."

Staff greeted the kids with hugs and high fives, welcoming many back by name and directing them to the cafeteria or classroom.

Chelsea Webster, who is beginning her first year as principal of North Elementary, which has around 250 students, said it feels like coming home.

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Noah Wray and the rest of his first grade class take part in the Pledge of Allegiance during the first day of school early Aug. 13 at North Elementary School in Kings Mountain.

Town fires police chief following allegations

Boiling Springs officer accused of threats, physical altercation

Rebecca Sitzes
Shelby Star | USA TODAY NETWORK

A local police chief who was placed on leave in May following allegations that he had threatened two people and got into a physical altercation at the Cleveland County Fairgrounds during a demolition derby has been terminated, according to the town of Boiling Springs.



Phillips

In a letter from Town Manager Zachary Parker dated June 17, it said Nathan Phillips was being terminated effective immediately.

"This termination is due to "Improper Conduct," related to: (b) conduct unbecoming of a town employee; (f) falsifying records for personal profit, to grant special privileges, or obtain employment; (h) willful acts that would endanger the lives or property of others; (o) professional misconduct; (q) willful violations of federal/state law or town policies; (v) providing untruthful statements or otherwise attempting to impede the ability of the town to conduct an accurate and complete administrative investigation," the letter said.

It requested any and all town of Boiling Springs property to be returned immediately following receipt of the letter.

"From this point forward, you will no longer have access to any town-maintained email accounts, social media pages, service accounts, software, servers, or other data," it said. "Use of the aforementioned programs or services will result in prosecution to the fullest extent of the law."

Phillips, who was hired May 3, 1999, earned a final salary of \$83,942.71, according to the records provided by the town.

Currently, Sgt. Johnathan Gantt is serving as the acting chief for Boiling Springs Police Department.

The letter said Phillips could request a "name-clearing hearing" within five days of receiving the notice as outlined in the town's personnel policy.

Parker said that Phillips did request a hearing, although no changes resulted from the proceedings.

"Please be advised, as stated in the policy, "Information presented at the name-clearing hearing will not be used by the town to reconsider the disciplinary action," the letter said.

When *The Star* called Phillips for a comment, he

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Israelis protest to end war, secure release of hostages

Netanyahu moving forward with military plan to seize Gaza City

Rami Amichay and Lili Bayer
REUTERS

Thousands of Israelis took part in a nationwide strike on Aug. 17 in support of families of hostages held in the Gaza Strip, calling on Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu to reach an agreement with Hamas to end the war and release the remaining captives.

Demonstrators waved Israeli flags and carried photos of hostages as whistles, horns and drums echoed at rallies across the country, while some protesters blocked streets and highways, including the main route between Jerusalem and Tel Aviv.

"Today, everything stops to remember the highest value: the sanctity of life," Anat Angrest, the mother of hostage Matan Angrest, told reporters at a public square in Tel Aviv.

In the run-up to the protests, some businesses and institutions said they would allow staff to join the nationwide strike called by the hostages' families. While some businesses closed, many also remained open across the country on what is a working day in Israel. Schools are on summer recess and were not affected.

A major rally was scheduled to take place in Tel Aviv in the evening.

Israeli police said that 38 demonstrators had been detained by 2 p.m. Some protesters blocking roads scuffled with police and were carried away by officers.

On Aug. 17, Netanyahu told the Cabinet: "Those who call today for an end to the war without defeating Hamas are not only hardening Hamas' position and delaying the release of our hostages, they are also ensuring that the horrors of Oct. 7 will repeat themselves over and over again."

The prime minister, who leads the country's most right-wing government in history, said his government

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Police officers clash with protesters Aug. 17 in Tel Aviv, Israel, during a demonstration calling for a hostage release deal. AMIR LEVY/GETTY IMAGES

