

**Giles County Public Schools
School Board Meeting
NEWS RELEASE
February 21, 2008**

Dr. Terry E. Arbogast, II

Division Superintendent

***Pledge of Allegiance**

The School Board Chairman led the group in the Pledge of Allegiance.

***Public Comments**

Ann Hively, MMS Guidance Counselor, attended the board meeting to address the School Board members to ask them to review the current pregnancy policy. The current pregnancy policy allows for 6 weeks of earned leave time for new mother's delivery. She stated that there are two reasons that this policy is not fair. Mother's who deliver during the school year are allowed 6 weeks of paid leave and mother's who deliver during the summer are not. She stated that both mothers earn their leave, so there shouldn't be any restrictions on mother's who deliver during the summer. She has spoken with all board members and Dr. Arbogast regarding this policy. She stated that at her last meeting with Dr. Arbogast, he stated that the School Board may be hesitant to change the policy because the policy may be misused. She explained that the medical leave and pregnancy policy are addressed separately, so they could be changed very easily. She stated that our current policy does not offer any time to fathers or adopted parents. Mrs. Hively stated that a comment was made from a School Board member that changing policy took a lot of time and effort, but she stated that she understood that, but she didn't think positive changes should be avoided just because they took time. It was also stated that in her meeting that she was told that the policy was unfair to her, but she stated that it wasn't just about one person, but other individuals who may be negatively affected. She urged them to think about how they want to be viewed as an administration. She stated that Giles County may attract more people by having benefits that are "family friendly". She thanked them for their time and consideration in this matter. Dr. Webb stated that he did make the comment that they didn't take policy changes lightly and it took a lot of time to change policies, but he commented that it was not the reason that it hasn't been changed.

Sonya Meekins, GEA President, attended the board meeting on behalf of the GEA. She first thanked them for meeting with the GEA throughout the year. She wanted to let them know that the direct aid is still coming that she has discussed in the past. She stated that if the money was reduced, it wouldn't be by much. The money that she discussed is benchmark money and it only comes every two to three years. She stated that if we don't take advantage of this money this year for salaries, then it's hard to say when it will come again. Also, throughout the year, they have asked for several things. The GEA is still hoping to get the longevity step up to \$2,000, a supplemental increase, bereavement days, and an increase in personal days. They are also requesting that the 7 year cap on experience on the job applications be removed. They want to be able to have teachers come in with more than 7 years of experience. She stated that she would be able to help the Board out with any information or questions that they may have.

Ms. Joan Kark spoke in opposition of the Cumberland Park Project. Her request to the School Board was to use their authority to stop the Cumberland Park Project. She stated that all projects should be approved by the School Board according to Virginia code; therefore, it was their opportunity to stop the project. Only the School Board has the power to put the project on hold and she is requesting that they do so today. After you halt the project, she also requests that they order the Giles County Partnership to prepare an estimate to see how much it would cost to deposit fill dirt instead of fly ash. She stated that the project would still provide the economic benefit that the Partnership keeps talking about, without using the fly ash as a structural fill, which is a long term liability.

Mrs. Ellen Woodyard spoke in opposition of the Cumberland Park Project. She stated that she wanted to refresh their memory by reading excerpts from previous school board minutes. She read information from the Virginia Department of Taxation regarding a list of organizations eligible for contributions, which includes the Giles County Partnership for Excellence Foundation. She read information from Governor Gilmore that announced Giles County Public Schools, along with the Partnership for Excellence Foundation, was awarded one of 15 grants from the state. She continued by reading previous school board minutes where the Partnership was discussed. The reason she was reading these minutes was to

let board members know that there has been money coming from the Partnership into the school system. She then continued to read more school board minutes from 1991-1997.

Mrs. Darlene Cunningham spoke in opposition of the Cumberland Park Project. Since the Partnership is a public school foundation, the local school board is assigned as Administrator for that Partnership. At the last meeting, the School Board stated that they don't approve projects from the Partnership. She stated that she wanted to read previous school board minutes where projects were approved by the School Board. Mrs. Cunningham concluded by stating that given this information, she wondered if the School Board still felt like they still had no part in the Partnership. She wants the project stopped until the School Board clearly defined their role. Dr. Webb stated that at no time did they ever approve any project that did not have students involved. Mrs. Cunningham agreed with Dr. Webb, but stated that the Cumberland Park Project did not benefit the students. She stated that the project has been sold as a project to benefit the Giles Tech Center, but the School Board stated at the last meeting that they were unaware of that information.

Mrs. Leigh Stoudenmire spoke in opposition of the Cumberland Park Project. She stated that the statute for public school foundations doesn't clarify whether the projects from the Partnership have to be student involved. She read an email that the Concerned Citizens of Giles County requested through the Freedom of Information Act. The email was from Pam Dunn, Partnership Secretary, to members of the Partnership, which included Mr. Scott Meade. She stated that the email sent up a few red flags for them. She also stated that she wanted to ask if it was in the School Board's best interest that our attorney uses the terminology or statements from the Partnership's attorney? The School Board claims that it has no involvement with the Partnership or their project, but as you can tell by the presentations today from the pile of FOIA documents, it clearly states that the School Board is involved. She concluded by asking the School Board members to maintain their authority and take whatever means necessary to stop the Cumberland Park Project. They do not want to contaminate the ground water that their children are drinking.

Mr. Danny Robertson spoke in opposition of the Cumberland Park Project. He stated that since the School Board has distanced themselves from the Partnership for Excellence, he is asking that the School Board pass a resolution to not accept any money from the Partnership for Excellence from this project.

Mrs. Drema McMahon stated that she continues to read material that she has received about the Cumberland Park Project and about the relationship of the School Board and the Giles County Partnership for Excellence. She stated that it has nothing to do with whether she thinks the fly ash is safe or not. Her concern, as a member of the School Board of Giles County, is that it's obvious that the Giles County School Board has not been an active member of the Partnership as mandated by the by-laws that none of them had seen before December. Therefore, her motion is to contact the Partnership to stop the project until they can investigate their legal relationship with the Partnership and see what our standing is. She stated that every time the citizens come before them, there is new information. There was no second to Mrs. McMahon's motion, so the motion died.

Mr. J.B. Buckland stated that at no time were the by-laws, or the Articles of Incorporation, ever approved by the School Board. He stated that the school system has received funds from the partnership and they were not going to deny that. He concluded by stating that the Partnership has been a great benefit to Giles County Public Schools.

***Special Presentations**

On behalf of the Professional Advisory Council, the following were recognized for their Outstanding Efforts and Continued Support: Susan Kirkpatrick – MMS, Erin Lucas – MMS, Sheri Miller – MMS, Lisa Frazier – MMS, Gail Austin – MMS, April Ayers – MMS, Kim Mills – MMS, Jared Rader – MMS, James Riffe – Community Support (NHS).

Mr. Eric Gentry, Giles County Board of Supervisors Chairman, attended the meeting to distribute certificates to School Board Members in honor of School Board Member Appreciation Month. Mr. Gentry stated that he appreciated the honor of attending the meeting to distribute these certificates. He stated that it was a well deserving group of individuals who are truly committed to the education of our students. He also stated that we had a wonderful group of teachers and support staff.

Celanese was recognized for their contribution and support by donating 100 PC's to the school system.

On behalf of the School Board, Amanda J. Price, School Board Clerk, was presented with a plaque by the School Board Members for School Board Clerk Appreciation Week.

***Educational Feature**

Mr. Rick Franklin, principal of NEMS, attended the School Board meeting, along with Maria Maddy, Carol Tawney, Michelle Robertson, Carrie Orey, Chase Lawson, and Kelcie Lowe, to present the Educational Feature. Mr. Franklin began by echoing the comments made by Mr. Gentry about the School Board members. He thanked them for the long hours that they put in and for the concern and care they show for our children. Next, the fourth grade teachers and students began a presentation on the Social Studies class, by demonstrating techniques used to teach and learn Virginia history. Chase Lawson began by reading a summary of the standards for Virginia studies. In addition, Carrie Orey demonstrated her project in Virginia history regarding the regions for the Commonwealth of Virginia. She explained exactly how she created this project, which included using plywood, play dough, and paint. Another activity that the students use to learn their regions are flashcards. The students are able to use these flashcards to quiz each other, as demonstrated by Kelcie, Carrie, and Chase. Next, Kelcie Lowe shared a flipchart she developed for the regions of Virginia to demonstrate how she learns her regions. The flipchart is color coded and includes cut out pictures for each page, which describe each region. Kelcie also discussed a "people booklet" that she created which discussed "important Virginians." Maria Maddy, along with the other teachers and students sang a song that they learned in their VA History class. The song that they sang was the Declaration of Independence, and the Board members and Superintendent sang along with them. Additionally, Michelle Robertson discussed a few pieces of technology that they use in their classrooms. The first one she discussed was Study Island, which is a new computer program that provides important information with fun information and games. Chase Lawson demonstrated this new program on the Smart Board. Another program that was discussed was United Streaming, which is an online library of video clips. Mrs. Carol Tawney also discussed other hands on activities that enhance their lessons. She showed and discussed several Velcro charts, demonstrated a flash card relay game, discussed a bingo game, and lastly, demonstrated the "chicken" game with the students, and the School Board members participated in this game.

Mr. Franklin and the teachers thanked the School Board for their continued support.

School Board members commended the presentation made by Narrows Elementary/Middle School.

***School Board Approves Consent Items**

- Meeting Minutes – January 24, 2008
- Bills in the amount of \$ 254,968.12
- Payroll, January 31st and February 15th, 2008
- Revenue for January 2008
- Expenditure for January 2008
- Appropriation Request for March 2008
- Additional Fields Trips 2007-2008

***The School Board Approves/Confirms Personnel Items**

The School Board confirmed the following **Employment**: Jerry Johnson – GHS Bus Driver (effective January 31, 2008), Josh Palmer – NEMS Custodian (effective March 3, 2008).

The School Board confirmed the following **Retirement**: Ann Harman – EEMS (effective end of 07-08 school year), Barbara Maxwell – GHS (effective end of 07-08 school year), Ellie Miller – MMS (effective end of 07-08 school year), Bonnie Neal – MMS (effective October 1, 2008), Thomas Lang – GHS (effective June 30, 2008).

The School Board confirmed the following **Volunteer Athletic Coaching Agreements**: Ralph Harless – GHS Assistant Varsity Softball Coach.

The School Board confirmed all **Substitute Teachers to Date**.

The School Board confirmed the proposal from Myers Tire Supply for services specified in RFP #1-2008

(heavy duty lift for bus garage).

The School Board completed the annual evaluation for Dr. Arbogast, Superintendent. The Board Chairman commented that the Board is extremely pleased with his performance thus far and that he is becoming a stronger Superintendent. All evaluations by the Board were above average. They were all great evaluations!

***The School Board Hears Reports from the Superintendent**

The School Board tabled the approval of the 2009-2010 school calendar due to the concern that even though school was starting earlier for that one particular year, the release date for the Summer was not any shorter than usual. The calendar committee will meet again to address these concerns.

The School Board approved a scholarship being offered by the Class of 1972. On behalf of the Class of 1972, they decided to give a \$1,000 scholarship to a 2008 graduate of Giles High School for continuing education. It is their hope to give the scholarship not to the top academic student, but an individual who has endured hardships, either at home or school, but shows leadership qualities. The decision will be made by the teachers or administration as to who receives the scholarship. The criteria includes no restriction on course of study, however, desire to award a student in need, who has endured adversity and prevailed and the student must display leadership qualities.

The School Board approved a scholarship being organized by Mitch Reed, GHS Teacher. The scholarship is from his friend Brian who lost his son to cancer and will be in the amount of \$1,500. All applications will go through Mitch and then he will pass the information on to the GHS scholarship selection committee to choose the recipient. The criteria includes that the applicant must play one sport, plan to go to school, and be a member of the Fellowship of Christian Athletes.

***School Board and School Staff Present Comments and Mission Statement Accomplishments**

Mrs. McMahon stated that she and Dr. Arbogast helped judge the Parliamentary Procedure Contest. She stated that she was very impressed with the FFA organization.

Board members stated that it was a very successful and informative School Board Retreat.

Mr. Whitehead distributed handouts of the 2008 Regional Science Fair Participants and awards of the Southwest Virginia Governor School.

Mr. Whitehead informed the School Board members about possible budget cuts for the Governor School, which is due to lower enrollment.

A board member stated that they were sorry that a representative from Celanese was unable to attend the School Board meeting to receive their plaque. The School Board is very appreciative of Celanese and the donation of 100 PC's to the school system.

Board members commended the wonderful educational feature by Narrows Elementary/Middle School.

The Superintendent read a list of names of the SkillsUSA participants from the Giles Tech Center. There were six groups/individuals who placed first, seven groups/individuals who placed second, and four groups/individuals who placed third. He commended this group of students on their achievement!

SkillsUSA District VII Competition

Cosmetology	Kristen Lucas	1st
Cosmetology - Post-secondary	Ashley Blankenship	1st
	Shaina Palmer with model	
Nail Care Technology	Brittney Lucas	1st
Precision Machining Technology	Corey Phillips	1st
Promotional Flyer	Taylor Suydam	1st
Technical Drafting	Devan Vest	1st
3D Visualization and Animation	Cody Journell & Travis	
Team	Scott	2nd

Architectural Drafting	Aaron Martin	2nd
Auto Maintenance	Steven Sessor	2nd
Cosmetology	David Pennington	2nd
	Kayla Harless with model	
Nail Care Technology	Marranda Dalton	2nd
Promotional Flyer	Stephen Collins	2nd
Related Technical Math	Stephen Collins	2nd
3D Visualization and Animation Team	Taylor Suydam & Breanna Turner	3rd
Auto Servicing	Justin Wright	3rd
Job Interview	Breanna Turner	3rd
Promotional Flyer	Breanna Turner	3rd

The Superintendent thanked the School Board members for everything that they do!

The Superintendent again thanked Celanese for their donation of 100 PC's to the school system and for everything that they do for us.

The Superintendent commended the educational feature by Narrows Elementary/Middle School.

***In Other Action**

The School Board set the graduation dates for Giles and Narrows High School. Narrows High School will be graduating June 6th and Giles High School will be graduating June 7th.

The School Board approved the transfer of Brenda Metro from EEMS Teaching position into EEMS Library position for the 08-09 school year.

The School Board approved a Volunteer Athletic Coaching Agreement for Mike Davidson (GHS Assistant Varsity Baseball Coach).

The School Board approved surplus items from Connie McCall – EEMS Library.

The School Board approved 3 vehicles to be declared surplus from garage/maintenance. These vehicles included a 1989 Ford truck, 1990 Ford truck, and a 1992 Ford truck.

***Next School Board Meeting**

The next School Board Meeting will be held Thursday, March 13th, 2008. A budget works session will begin at 3:00 p.m., followed by the regular meeting at 4:00 p.m. The Quarterly Dinner Meeting with Administrators will follow at GHS at 5:30.