

NEWS RELEASE
September 18, 2008
Giles County Public Schools
School Board Meeting

Dr. Terry E. Arbogast, II

Division Superintendent

***Pledge of Allegiance**

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

***Public Comments**

Michael Etzler attended the School Board meeting because Sonya Meekins asked him to represent the GEA at this meeting. He teaches 10th grade English and a journalism class at Giles High School. He stated that yesterday, the stock market took one of the hardest hits since the Great Depression, which means bad news for everyone involved, including parents, teachers, and the school system. He stated that times are tough now and will probably be getting tougher. In addition, he stated that difficult decisions have to be made and it all comes down to what we can and can't afford. He continued by stating that last spring, he attended various meetings regarding the budgets of Giles County and Giles County Schools and there was an opportunity to give teachers a meaningful pay raise. However, the decision was made to use the money on school projects that were considered more pressing and more important. They do however realize that these projects need to be done. Giles County teachers ended up getting a lot of "thank yous" for a job well done and an increase in pay that was far lower than other surrounding counties. Everyone likes to be thanked for a job well done and he's not saying that they don't appreciate being told that they do a good job because they do, but last spring, there were many teachers who felt slighted for the decisions made by the Board of Supervisors and the School Board for the pay raise that teachers received. Many teachers hoped that they would get half a percent to a whole percent on top of the proposed raise last year. The decisions that were made by the School Board and the Board of Supervisors for the salary increase have dropped the rank of Giles County from 95 to 105 out of 136 for teacher compensation in the state of Virginia. Teachers are now wondering if they will find themselves on the very bottom at the state level for compensation. The students are one of the most important assets the county has and it is important to invest in teachers to help make it possible for our student's to better themselves. Learning needs to be fun for all students and if students cannot have fun, they will not learn as much. Teachers really need to be inspired to help children have fun while learning, but how inspired can many teachers be if they cannot pay off their bills. He urged the board to find ways to fund salary increases for school personnel this year. They need more than a thank you at this time. The GEA representatives can work with the board and the state to find ways that they can afford fair compensation for highly qualified teachers. He closed by thanking the School Board for their time.

***Educational Feature**

Mr. Rex Gearheart, Mrs. Kim Wilson-Gardner, and four of her Spanish students, attended the School Board meeting on behalf of the Narrows High School educational feature. Mrs. Wilson-Gardner and four of her students wanted to show the School Board member's pictures of their trip they took over the summer to Europe and talk about their wonderful experience. Mr. Gearheart first started off by thanking the School Board for allowing them to come to present the first educational feature of the year. He stated that it is such a wonderful opportunity for our students to be able to take a trip like they did. Mrs. Wilson-Gardner takes a group of students on a trip to places like Europe or Spain every two to five years. She thinks it's very important for the students to travel, speak the language, see the culture, and taste the food. This past summer, she took ten students to Europe. They ended up visiting four countries including Spain, France, Italy, and Monaco. When she goes on these trips, she usually takes lots of pictures and this time, she took about 300 pictures. It means a lot for the students to see pictures while they were on their trip. When she comes back, she always puts together a Power Point for the students. There were 9 students from Narrows, 1 graduate from GHS who is now a sophomore from Virginia Tech, and Jean Ann Bailey, who usually goes along on these trips to help Mrs. Wilson-Gardner. Four of her students, Alyssa Shires, Kristen Harless, Alicia Weatherly, and Samantha Wood went through the Power Point to tell about each picture and describe their experiences from their trip. They had a wonderful time and a great experience! Board members thanked and commended the students.

***School Board Approves Consent Items**

- Meeting Minutes – August 22, 2008 (Revised)

- Bills in the amount of \$ 241,728.24
- Payroll, August 28th and September 15 , 2008
- Revenue for August 2008
- Expenditure for August 2008
- Appropriation Request for October 2008
- 2008-2009 PAC & Calendar Advisory Committees
- Confirmation of Surplus Items

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

The School Board confirmed the following **Employment**: Christina Collins – GHS Special Ed. Teacher Assistant (effective Sept. 8th), Jessica Meadows – NHS Custodian (effective August 25th), Sue Perkins – GHS Central District Bus Driver (effective beg. of 08-09 school year), Heather Himes – EEMS Elementary Teacher (effective beg. of 08-09 school year)

The School Board confirmed the following **Athletic Coaching Contracts**: Dan Taylor – NHS 8th Grade Boys Basketball/JV Football Assistant, Mark Jones 0 GHS 8th Grade Boys Basketball, Maurice Milton – GHS Assistant JV Football

The School Board confirmed the following **Volunteer Athletic Coaching Agreements**: Stacy Cunningham – GHS Assistant JV Softball Coach, Brittany Stables – NHS JV Volleyball, Mandy Havens – GHS Assistant JV Volleyball Coach, Ralph Harless – GHS Varsity Softball Coach

The School Board confirmed the following **Volunteer Agreements**: Marie Church – MMS, Tammy Costner – MMS, Gretchen Carlson-Hagee – MMS PTO Volunteer

The School Board confirmed the **Substitute Teachers** list to date.

The School Board confirmed the following **Substitute Bus Drivers**: John Jenkins

The School Board confirmed the following **2008-2009 MACC Coaches**: Carolyn Painter – GHS MACC-English, Diana Blanton – GHS MACC-All Around, Diana Blanton – GHS MACC-Science, Diana Blanton – GHS MACC-Head Coach, Earl Ventry – GHS MACC-Science, Earl Ventry – GHS MACC-All Around

The School Board confirmed the following **Supplemental Contracts**: Cecilia McFaden – GHS Annual & Head Senior Class, Mitch Reed & Rhonda Colavecchio – GHS SCA

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

The Superintendent shared opening school information with board members which included enrollments for the first week of school. The enrollment for the first day of school was 2520. The enrollment for the sixth day of school was 2559.

The School Board approved policy revisions as recommended by VSBA and Administration.

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

A board member commended the appearance of Narrows High School! The custodians really take pride in their school!

Board members commended Mrs. Kim Wilson-Gardner and students for a wonderful educational feature!

A board member commended and wanted to recognize all individuals who contributed to the dedication of the Giles High football field. Those individuals involved included Patrick Enterprises, Marshall Concrete, Greg Brown, John Mills, the Athletic Boosters, and the Maintenance Department. The dedication was very well done and it looked wonderful!

A board member commended Tonya Vaden for her planning with the Reality Store again this year. This event will be held on October 15th, and will be held for students in the 9th and 12th grade.

A board member stated that the new director at the Governor's School was very pleased with the opening of school.

A board member discussed the new Governor's School technology plan that was included in each board member's packet. He wanted the School Board members to see the direction that the new director was going. The technology plan includes the statement that it is "a living plan that is able to grow."

A board member stated that the students from the Governor's School have to do a science project and the new director will not approve just any science project; it has to be done with the idea of research.

A board member commended Mrs. Wilson-Gardener in the fact that the Spanish trip was a great experience for the students. It involved lots of work, but it was a wonderful experience for them.

A board member commended each of the schools in the county for putting their new teachers in the Virginian Leader over the last couple weeks.

A board member commended Mr. Gearheart for the wonderful article that he put in the Virginian Leader prior to the opening of school!

A board member stated that they really enjoyed the program from Narrows High School!

A board member stated that they really try to do a lot for education. He just read somewhere that Giles High School just got 5 new Smart Boards.

A board member stated that Giles County has a great education system!

The Superintendent stated that overall, it was a great opening to the new school year. He also stated that Brett Leake, the opening speaker at the Pre-School Conference, did an excellent job and many positive comments were received about his remarks.

The Superintendent informed School Board members that information was shared with them previously that there were four schools that made AYP. In addition, preliminary results were received from DOE and we anticipate that all five schools will be fully accredited. This will be officially released by DOE on September 25th.

The Superintendent commended both Giles and Narrows High bands for their performances at last Friday's football game!

The Superintendent commended the Giles High School band for their performance at the competition last Saturday. They came in first in their division and 2nd in Music overall between all the schools competing.

The Superintendent commended Kim Wilson-Gardner and her students for a wonderful educational feature!

***In Other Action**

The School Board approved a milling machine from the NHS AG building to be considered surplus.

The School Board approved a Volunteer Agreement for Mary Doug McDonald – EEMS Classroom Support.

The School Board approved the Transfer of Kim Squibb to the Remedial Teacher Assistant position at MMS.

The School Board approved the Athletic Coaching Contract for Donna Akers – NHS Varsity Cross Country.

The School Board approved a field trip request for Jessica Gwaltney, NHS FFA, to take a student to Indianapolis, Indiana from October 22nd – 24th.

***Next School Board Meeting**

The next regular School Board meeting will be held Thursday, October 23rd at 4:30 p.m. in conjunction with the budget meetings.