

News Release
December 17, 2009
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**

Concerned Citizen member, Darlene Cunningham, attended the School Board Meeting to speak regarding the Giles County Partnership for Excellence Foundation. Approximately two years ago the Concerned Citizens of Giles County came before the School Board to address questions about the claims by the Giles County Partnership for Excellence that the future sale of the unlined fly ash site on the flood plains of the New River would be used to fund the Giles County Technology Center. She stated that they were pleased that the School Board had no part in that project. She described situations with the coal by product in the last few years, such as the one in Tennessee and another in Midlothian, Virginia. However, the Concerned Citizens were disappointed that the School Board would take no further action with the latest Partnership project. The School Board seemed unwilling to inform the proper Government agencies that the Partnership was not in reality a Giles County Public School Foundation. Recently they learned that the Partnership had submitted another set of bylaws to government agencies. Upon reading the newest bylaws, they indicate that the Partnership is still claiming to be a Giles County Public School Foundation without the consent of the School Board. In addition, the Concerned Citizens are worried that the new bylaws state that the Partnership is permitted to do business outside of the state of Virginia. She stated that the Partnership continues to have meetings, which are all closed to the public. According to the Partnership's bylaws, they are required to do a written annual statement to the School Board each October. In a meeting with Dr. Arbogast a few weeks ago, he stated that they have not received a report lately from the Partnership. She also stated that Dr. Arbogast said that the Giles County school system has not had contracts or financial dealings with the partnership in many years. She thanked the School Board for the reply back to their request to meet with them on December 7th. She quoted several lines of the letter and thanked the School Board for copying Howard Spencer on this letter. The letter stated that the School Board did not approve the Foundation and therefore, the Foundation cannot act on behalf of the School Board or the school system without their approval. In the letter, it also stated that the school system has no relationship with the Partnership. In closing, she stated that with the School Board's willingness to put its position in writing, the Concerned Citizens feel that the School Board has the best interest of the Giles County citizens at heart. Based on the facts, it is their hope that the Board of Directors for the Partnership will make immediate changes to their bylaws to reflect the written position of the Giles County School Board.

Gloria Hurt attended the School Board meeting to speak on behalf of the GEA. She stated that the GEA had spoken to Dr. Arbogast and he gave them approval to go into the schools and talk to the employees about the possible changes that may come down through the general assembly regarding changes to the VRS. The GEA met with Delegate Dave Nutter a few weeks ago and he encouraged them to put a face upon their opposition. Delegate Nutter thinks that this tends to make a huge difference. As GEA President, her goal is going to be that the people in the General Assembly know them. She wants them to know that the proposed changes will have a serious impact on the school system. The Board Chairman stated that the School Board would be happy to help them out in any way they needed.

***Special Presentations**

On behalf of the Professional Advisory Council, the following were recognized for their Outstanding Efforts and Continued Support: Norma Trenar – MMS, Tammy Riggs – MMS, Venita Skidmore – MMS,

Tonya Burton – MMS, Mark Hubbard – GHS, Tonya Vaden – GTC, Donnie Burton – GTC, Bud Reynolds – GTC

The following students were recognized for their outstanding artwork and winning this year's Christmas Card Contest: Emily Hart – MMS, Courtney Whitt – NEMS, Luis Mendoza - EEMS

***Educational Feature**

Sheriff Morgan Millions, Sergeant Chris Neice, Officer Teddy Vaughn, Sergeant Scott Moye, and Officer Mark Wilburn, attended the School Board meeting to present the educational feature on behalf of the School Resource Officers. The Elementary School Resource Officers discussed the programs and activities that they conduct within the schools, including Internet Safety, Code Blue Intruder Drills, Crisis Plans, DARE, Truancy Issues, High School Transition Class, etc. Officer Wilburn, GHS School Resource Officer, discussed a prescription drug program that is taught mainly by our School Resource Officer's, Sheriff's Office Drug Task Force, and Sheriff's Department members. While doing this program, they branched out to other areas besides prescription drugs, such as "bad choices". This program was designed mainly for 7th – 10th graders, but there is also a program designed for 12th graders. Zach Thompson's mother, the GHS student who lost his life approximately a year ago due to the choking game, was in attendance to share her concerns regarding the choking/hanging game. Mrs. Thompson has been trying to get the word out to all students about the negative consequences associated with this so called "game". In closing, Sergeant Scott Moye discussed the drug portion of the program that Officer Wilburn discussed. He also discussed prescription drugs, as well as regular drugs such as cocaine, etc. and their effects. Prescription drugs are a big problem in our county right now. The School Resource Officers and Sheriff's Department continuously try to keep our students and staff updated on the consequences of drugs. School Board members and the Superintendent thanked the School Resource Officers and Sheriff's Department for their time, support, and efforts to our students and staff every day!

***School Board Approves Consent Items**

- Meeting Minutes – November 20, 2009
- Bills in the amount of \$ 2,295,561.18
- Payroll, November 30th and December 15th, 2009
- Revenue for November 2009
- Expenditure for November 2009
- Appropriation Request for January 2010

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

The School Board confirmed the following **Volunteer Agreements**: Melissa Williams – EEMS Library/School Support, Mellissa Fisher – GHS Asst. Volleyball/Basketball Coach/Trainer for injuries for Girls

The School Board confirmed the following **Athletic Coaching Contracts**: Anthony Ratcliffe – GHS Boys Varsity Track

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

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

The School Board approved a contract from The EI Group, Inc. for environmental services for Giles County Public Schools. As requested by Giles County Public Schools, EI shall provide industrial hygiene and environmental consulting services that may include, but are not limited to: indoor air quality surveys; asbestos and lead based paint management services; general industrial hygiene services; radon monitoring and mitigation services; hazardous materials response, management and cleanup activities; chemical sampling, noise sampling; potable water testing with remedial design and implementation; Phase I site assessments; above ground and underground storage tank investigation, management and remediation; regulatory compliance review and consultation; and the provisions of various regulatory training requirements. This contract shall be in effect for a thirty-six month period commencing December 7, 2009.

The School Board approved a horseback riding scholarship from Harmony Hills Equestrian Center, Inc.

The Harmony Hills Equestrian Center, Inc. teaches riding and horsemanship to riders of all ages and skill levels. Instruction is specialized in balance seat riding in many disciplines including pleasure, dressage, show jumping and eventing. HHEC offers a scholarship program to the youth of the New River Valley who love horses, who want to learn about horses and riding, and who lack the resources necessary to achieve these dreams. This scholarship will include a weekly riding lesson, hands on horse management experience of at least 8 hours per month, and one week of summer camp at Harmony Hills Equestrian Center, Inc. The value of this scholarship is over \$3000 for one year.

The School Board approved to prepare a resolution to K92 radio station for their time and efforts in bringing a concert to Narrows High School for the students.

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

A School Board member thanked Betsy Wood and Millie Lawrence for the wonderful art/craft show at Narrows High School that they help to organize.

Mr. Whitehead thanked the School Board for their support of him being on the Governor's School Board.

A School Board member commended K92 radio station for bringing a concert to Narrows High School. It was a great concert and awesome experience for the kids!

School Board members commended the wonderful country breakfast at Narrows High School that they were invited to before Christmas.

The Superintendent thanked the School Resource Officers and Sheriff for all of their support and dedication to our school system.

The Superintendent discussed the "Race to the Top" competitive grant that the School Board approved him to apply for. The state of Virginia will be applying for this 4.35 billion dollar competitive grant from the federal government. It is part of the ARRA money and is intended to help drive states student achievement.

The Superintendent discussed the SOL writing scores basically for Narrows High School and stated that there was a 76.19% pass rate for Fall writing.

***In Other Action**

The School Board approved employment for Melissa Conley – GHS Special Education Teacher (effective January 4th, 2010).

The School Board approved employment for Jeff Johnson – GHS Custodian (effective December 16th, 2009)

The School Board approved employment for Melanie Garland – NEMS Speech Language Pathologist (effective January 18th, 2010)

The School Board approved an additional check run for December 15, 2009.

***Next School Board Meeting**

The next regular School Board meeting will be held Thursday, January 21st at 4:00 p.m.