# News Release February 18, 2010 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

Ms. Gloria Hurt, GEA President, attended the School Board meeting to speak on behalf of the GEA. She began by thanking the board for the opportunity to speak with them. Ms. Hurt stated that as the severity of the budget cuts are finally hitting home, she once again wants to appeal to them to maintain the standards for Giles County as they did last year. The School Board successfully avoided layoffs, avoided salary cuts, and they maintained the health insurance and the GEA appreciates those efforts. They ask again that layoffs be avoided and stated that a retirement incentive plan may help persuade those who are now eligible to retire to do so. She stated that cutting teaching positions would increase class sizes and decrease individualized support for the students, which would in turn decrease SOL test scores. They hope the school board will continue to pay the percentage of health insurance premiums for employees. Ms. Hurt stated that they hoped the salary scale would stay intact and they want to encourage the school board to reinstate the earned steps as soon as money is available. In closing, Ms. Hurt stated, "Good teachers are essential for the kinds of schools that we need and want. It is even more important in these hard times that our system remains one of high quality and will attract and keep experienced and effective teachers."

The board chairman thanked Ms. Hurt and stated that he has been around here for 30 years and has never seen times like this. It is very disheartening when looking at the budget and the cuts. Right now, we are looking at 2.6 million dollars in cuts here. He feels very fortunate to have the school system that we have here. The board has a lot to do over the next month or so in preparing the budget. Ms. Hurt then discussed VRS benefits and the proposed changes from the governor. She stated that several teachers that have over 30 years of experience really love their jobs and want to stay, but are concerned about the retirement benefits. Ms. Hurt then discussed the insurance that is offered to retirees with 30 years of service and questioned whether that was something the school board would continue offering for retirees because they feel that's a big incentive to retire. The board chairman stated that it was always their intention to continue this benefit, but with these kinds of cuts, it's hard to guarantee. He hoped that the school system would continue the retiree benefits this year, but it's not guaranteed after this year. This retiree benefit would stay with the individual until they were 65 and could get Medicare. The Superintendent stated that since the release of the proposed budget in December, the cuts have continued to increase over the past couple of weeks to this \$2.6 million that was discussed earlier.

#### \*Special Presentations

On behalf of the Professional Advisory Council, the following were recognized for their Outstanding Efforts and Continued Support: Sharon Wilson – EEMS, Dorothy Williams – EEMS, Heather Frazier – EEMS, Lisa Johnston – EEMS, Debbie Poff – EEMS, Mae Wilson – EEMS, Amy Maxey – EEMS, Jean Vogler – EEMS, Melissa Williams – EEMS, Amy Cowen – MMS, Heather Waselchalk – MMS, Michelle Scott – MMS, Lisa Ratcliffe – MMS, Millie Lawrence – NHS.#

Mrs. Barbara Hobbs, Giles County Board of Supervisors Chairman, attended the meeting to distribute certificates to School Board Members in honor of School Board Member Appreciation Month.

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

#### \*Educational Feature

Mr. Greg Canaday, principal at EEMS, attended the School Board meeting on behalf of the Eastern Elementary/Middle School educational feature. He brought along Mrs. Lori Evans, Kindergarten Teacher, and Ms. Emily Ricketts, Guidance Counselor, to present to the School Board members. Mrs. Lori Evans

explained her new Wiki web page and demonstrated how beneficial this was for not only her students, but also the parents. Items that can be found on her webpage include the following: newsletters, assignment due dates, class schedule, class news, homework/extra practice, flashcards, etc. The students and parents can both take advantage of this new web page. Next, Ms. Emily Ricketts explained her new Guidance web page and demonstrated how beneficial it was for not only the students, but also the parents. The web page was established to help improve communication with the parents and the community. She also informed the School Board on how she and the staff are being creative with the character education program at EEMS. A Power Point from Ms. Ricketts explained the six pillars of education (responsibility, respect, trustworthiness, fairness, caring and citizenship) and explained how EEMS identifies one character trait to focus on each six weeks. To recognize each pillar, the school participates by putting up a banner, wearing the color associated with the pillar, having morning announcements, and having guidance lessons in the classroom. A lot of hard work and dedication is being put forth by all.

### \*School Board Approves Consent Items

- Meeting Minutes January 28, 2010
- Bills in the amount of \$ 103,142.06
- Payroll, January 29<sup>th</sup>, 2010, and February 12<sup>th</sup>, 2010
- Revenue for January 2010
- Expenditure for January 2010
- Appropriation Request for March 2010

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

The School Board confirmed the following *Retirement*: Jerry Huffman – GHS Business Teacher (effective end of 09-10 school year)

The School Board confirmed all Substitute Teachers to Date (after January 19th training).

The School Board confirmed the following *Volunteer Athletic Coaching Agreement*: Colin Munsey – GHS Assistant Varsity Boys Track

The School Board accepted the bid from Liberty for services specified in IFB #1-2010 (duplicating paper).

\*School Board and School Staff Present Comments and Mission Statement Accomplishments A board member gave an update on the Southwest Virginia Governor's School. He informed the School Board on awards from the Governor's School Science fair. Alec Frazier from Narrows High School placed third in the fair in the engineering category and Kaslin Fields from Giles High School placed third in the physics category. Alec did a project that involved designing a shelf that could be made to move down so that the items placed on it would be accessible to someone confined to a wheelchair. Alec's project was titled, "Accessible Shelving for the Disabled". Kaslin's project involved investigating the acoustical design of the auditorium at Giles High School. Mr. Kenneth Abel assisted her with the project and she also had some help from Virginia Tech. Her project was titled, "Acoustical Analysis of the Giles High School Auditorium". Jonathan Light, from Narrows High School, won second place in the mathematics category. His project was titled, "Improving the Hill Cipher Encryption System". Jonathan loves working with computers and his project focused on computer science work to improve a commonly used encryption program. Sara Stallings from Giles High School won an honorable mention in the Psychology: Social Interactions category and the judges appreciated her enthusiasm. Her project was titled, "Excavation and Analysis of an Appalachian Farm Trash Dump". The judge's comments were positive and very encouraging. In addition, the judges agreed that the students were showing good command of their subject areas and were completing well-designed projects that were increasingly more sophisticated and relevant.

Mrs. McMahon had the opportunity to help out with the Macy Academic Fair and stated that it was very enlightening! It was a very special treat to be able to help out and see all the projects.

A school board member commended the teachers for all that they do each and every day, as well as the hard work and dedication put forth after school hours each day for the students and parents.

Dr. Webb thanked Macy for the poster they created him in honor of School Board Appreciation month.

The School Board members and Superintendent commended Mrs. Evans, Ms. Ricketts, and Mr. Canaday for the wonderful educational feature!

The Superintendent commended the School Board members for all their hard work they do each and every day. He stated that this month was School Board Appreciation month.

The Superintendent commended and thanked the administrators and the School Board office staff for their work on the School Board retreat.

The Superintendent recognized the 2010 Teacher of the Year nominations as follows: Chris Trent – Narrows Elementary/Middle School, Beth Sparks – Eastern Elementary/Middle School, April Seiple – Macy McClaugherty School, Diane Jenkins – Narrows High School, and Diana Blanton – Giles High School.

Dr. Arbogast commended three articles from the FFA New Horizons publication, the magazine of the National FFA Organization. The first article discussed Wyatt Hall being the Star Agriscience winner. The second article discussed Virginia's American Degree and lists Courtney Price from Giles. The third article discussed the pumpkin party at Giles on October 28<sup>th</sup>, 2009.

#### \*In Other Action

The School Board approved the following Volunteer Athletic Coaching Agreements: Steve Wilson (GHS Asst. Varsity Softball Coach) & Rusty Kelley (GHS Asst. Varsity Girls Track).

The School Board approved the following Field Trip:

Who: Kevin White (GHS Band)

When: February 26-27<sup>th</sup>

Where: Harrisonburg VA – All State Auditions

Funding: Funding from Band Accounts

#### \*Next School Board Meeting

The next School Board Meeting will be held Thursday, March 18<sup>th</sup>, 2010 at 4:00 p.m. The Quarterly Dinner Meeting with Administrators will follow at GHS at 5:30.