

**News Release
May 20, 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**

Mrs. Drema McMahon read a retirement letter on behalf of Jay Williams that states the following:

Dear Mr. Buckland and School Board Members,

I have been driving the bus since 1972 and I have seen hundreds of kids grow up and I feel good to have been a small part of their lives each day over the years. I did not think I would ever see our kids safety compromised over money as it has been with the recent layoffs of 10 of the best bus drivers we have ever had. I agree we have some room to tighten up, but not to this extent, we've gone too far. I have seen some of the new routes and all the safety past administration and bus drivers have worked on to limit turning at dangerous intersections, keeping kids off the roads before daylight, not hauling kids further away from school before bringing them there was all thrown out the window. We have put an unfair burden on the remaining drivers. Over the years drivers learned their routes and knew their kids and parents and what concerns to look for, to upset all the county routes at one time is wrong. I have seen drivers buy lunches, clothes, help pay for Richmond trips and even once I saw a driver give a family a car because they didn't have one. Yes, I am very upset with the way this was handled and our people were treated. I am very disappointed with a lot of people, it comes a time when we must all move on and I realize my time has come, so I will retire at the end of the year, with many good memories and feeling good that in so, I saved one of my fellow employees a job.

Hopefully,

Larry Jay Williams

Mr. Williams asked Mrs. McMahon to read this letter because he did not feel like he could handle it emotionally.

Mr. Buckland stated that he understands and appreciates his concerns and if the School Board and Administration see that a mistake has been made, then they will look at it and do what they can to correct it. He stated that Mr. Williams has been a great bus driver! Jay will be missed!

***Special Presentations**

On behalf of the School Board, the following were recognized for their participation on the video entitled, "Autism – A Spectrum of Possibility": Julie Bradley, Melissa Branks, Michelle Kirk, Daniel Stafford, Dana Stafford, Malinda Tabor, Rebekah Thomas, Janice Thomas, Sarah McGlothlin – NEMS, Marcia Murray – MMS, Chris Trent – NEMS, Kay Wise – MMS, Rick Franklin – NEMS, Jared Rader – MMS

The following individuals were recognized for their participation in the 2010 Blue Ridge Regional Art Show: Chelsey Martin – GHS, Cohen Taylor – NEMS, Karisha Summers – GHS.

The following Giles County Technology Center building trades students were recognized for their hard work and efforts in building "Reading Barns" for the Farm Bureau: Elijah Parcell, Ryan Thornton, Tyler Wilson

The following teachers were recognized for their participation in the Teaching American History Grant: Jeff Bucklen – NEMS, Lindsey Carlson – EEMS, Lynn Williams – GHS. Giles County is one of seven school divisions participating in this grant, which is intended to provide programs of professional development for the participating history teachers. In addition, these participants have already completed the Fall and Spring workshops, both of which were very successful and they will be participating in the final two years of this grant as well. The Summer Institute will be held on the campus of the Woodrow Wilson Public Library from July 11th – 16th and will feature two nationally known speakers on early American history.

***Educational Feature**

Mrs. Thompson, Director of Special Education, attended the School Board meeting, as well as several teachers and parents, on behalf of the Special Education educational feature. She stated that she wanted to share a video entitled, "Autism – A Spectrum of Possibility." This video was created by parents, teachers, and administrators in Giles County Public Schools. The video has been viewed by over 400 individuals across the state of Virginia and Tennessee. The individuals in the video are all speaking specifically on children with autism; however, it speaks to parents, teachers, and communities about all students with and without an educational disability. The School Board members were given three puzzle pieces prior to the board meeting. One puzzle piece represented autism and was shared because of the video that was shown. The second puzzle piece represented all other educational disabilities and the third puzzle piece was blank. The reason it was blank was because regardless of the child's age, grade, ability, or disability, all students are a puzzle to be completed in order for them to reach their goals. Mrs. Thompson stated that any individual in the room has the potential to hold the missing puzzle piece in any child's life! In closing, she stated that she hoped the board members found the video as overwhelming as she did. She also thanked the school board members for their support of special education in Giles County. The video participants were then recognized for their hard work and efforts with the Autism video.

The School Board thanked the individuals from the Special Education department for a wonderful presentation!

***School Board Approves Consent Items**

- Meeting Minutes – April 14, 2010
- Bills in the amount of \$ 1,780,227.04
- Payroll, April 30 and May 14, 2010
- Revenue for April 2010
- Expenditure for April 2010
- Appropriation Request for June 2010
- Special Education Annual Plan
- Confirmation of Educational Technology Resolution
- Confirmation of Surplus Items

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

The School Board confirmed the following **Employment:** Re-instatement of Chris Mitchell – Title I Teacher (Due to retirement of another Title I Teacher), Re-instatement of Jeff Johnson – GTC Custodian (Due to retirement of another custodian), Re-instatement of Michelle Scott – Teacher Assistant (due to retirement of another assistant), Re-instatement of Tammy Riggs – Teacher Assistant (due to retirement of another assistant), Re-instatement of Paula Parsell – Teacher Assistant (due to retirement of another assistant), Re-instatement of Margie Burroughs – Bus Driver (due to retirement of another bus driver), Re-instatement of Charles Sanders – Bus Driver (due to retirement of another bus driver)

The School Board confirmed the following **Retirement:** Dolly Sadler – NEMS Teacher Assistant (effective end of 09-10 school year), Bobbie Skeens – NEMS Teacher Assistant (effective end of 09-10 school year), Lea Beth Bowers – EEMS PE Teacher (effective end of 09-10 school year), David Perkins – SBO Custodian (effective end of 09-10 school year), Elizabeth Shaver – GHS Teacher Assistant (effective end of 09-10 school year), Don Lowe – Current Admin. Activities Coordinator (effective end of 09-10 school year), Margaret Clemons – Western District Bus Driver (effective end of 09-10 school year), Deloris Clark – Western District Bus Driver (effective end of 09-10 school year)

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

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

The School Board approved the following authorizations for the 2010-2011 school year: The Chairman and Superintendent to accept RFP's and offer employment between School Board meetings, if needed, and Scott Meade, Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum to sign documents for the 2010-2011 school year, in the Superintendent's absence, as requested by the Virginia Department of Education.

The School Board approved a \$500 college tuition scholarship by RRMM Architects that was given to the Superintendent for being named Region VII Superintendent of the Year. The Superintendent was provided a \$500 college tuition scholarship by RRMM Architects for being named Region VII Superintendent of the Year. He plans to have each school's (Giles and Narrows High) scholarship committee choose one individual that they feel would benefit from this scholarship. Some of the criteria that he thinks should be considered are as follows: a student in good standing, has a 3.0 GPA or higher, has demonstrated a need for assistance, has been accepted to a college or university, will be pursuing a degree in education, and any other criteria the committee feels relevant when choosing the individual. The \$500 scholarship will be divided equally and given to one student at each high school.

The School Board approved a scholarship from the Concerned Citizens of Giles County. The Concerned Citizens of Giles County would like to honor a graduate from Narrows High School with a \$250 scholarship and a graduate from Giles High School with a \$250 scholarship for continued education in memory of Clark Brown and Kirk Jeyes. Their mission is to promote Democracy and to protect the Natural Resources of the County, now and for future generations.

The School Board approved the Zachary Thompson Memorial Scholarship. This scholarship is in loving memory of a former student of Giles High School, and will be awarded to a current student at Giles who is active in any of the following activities: drama, music department at GHS, art, or church activities. Applicants for this scholarship must submit two letters of recommendation from a nonrelated person, such as a teacher, employer, or pastor, as well as the application. Applicants must be graduating with a GPA of 2.0 or higher. The amount awarded to the student will be \$250.

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

A School Board member stated that Anthony Woodyard was selected to try out for all regional chorus.

A School Board member stated his first experience with a special needs child occurred while he was a band director in the early 1970's in North Carolina. He never had a special needs child until the guidance counselor came in and asked him one day to take a special needs boy because he really wanted to be in the band. He wondered how this was going to work because he always tried to work to perfection. This little boy tried with all he had and did very well!

A School Board member discussed the Virginia Junior Academy of Science for Governor's School students. This year, due to the weather, only 6 papers were submitted, but all 6 were accepted. He also stated that there are new classes that will be offered at the governor's school, which include a Science class in Astronomy & Forensics, and Trigonometry. In addition, the director is a member of an evaluation team that is evaluating the governor's school in Massanutten, VA. He always wonders whether other governor's schools offer dual enrollment classes like we do. He then gave out handouts from the governor's school regarding the Virginia Science Olympiad State Tournament, the SWVGS Regional Science Olympiad Winners, and the February/March Math League Results. Congratulations to the winners on these handouts!

A School Board member stated that he was amazed at the autism video that was shown during the educational feature. There was a lot of hard work and effort put into making this video. Each of the parents spoke from the heart in the video. He stated that there are not only expectations for students, but also expectations for teachers.

A School Board member thanked Mr. Whitehead for the gracious invitation for the governor's school banquet.

A School Board member commended the Giles High School band for their performance during the opening ceremony of the new hospital. They did such an outstanding job and several people stated that during a patriotic song from the band, they actually had tears in their eyes!

School Board members commended the educational feature from the special education department!

A School Board member commended the Giles Tech Center nursing students who were capped/pinned and graduated at their ceremony last week. What a wonderful ceremony!

A School Board member commended Giles High School, Chrissy Stump, and Kyle Quick and the youth of Virginia speak out program for the assembly at Giles High School on seat belt safety before Prom. If one child's life was saved, it was well worth it!

A School Board member commended Mr. Whitehead for being chosen to serve on the VSBA Blue Ridge Region nominating committee!

A School Board member discussed the Senate Joint Resolution No. 85, which encourages local school divisions to promote daily physical activity and reduce childhood obesity. She asked whether our school system was going to address this. Dr. Arbogast stated that we do have the wellness policy for the county and stated that we applied for a healthy fruit/vegetable grant at Narrows Elementary/Middle School. She stated that she would be more than happy to serve on a committee with principals or someone from their cafeteria to help out with this resolution.

The School Board approved the Retirement of Jay Williams – Eastern District Bus Driver (effective June 11, 2010).

The Superintendent discussed school bus purchases starting with the 05-06 school year. A handout was given to school board members regarding these purchases. There were no buses purchased this year. This handout shows the number of buses that were removed from the inventory (surplused) due to the ages of the buses. As information, DOE recommends that buses be maintained on a 10 year cycle. Starting July 1, 2010, this will be increased to a 15 year cycle. This handout shows the number and year of the current "newer" inventory, the replaced buses (removed from inventory), and the current "older" inventory. There are 7 buses that are 17 years or older. Beginning next year, there will be 22 regular buses on the road at one time. The 10 buses from the reduction in force drivers will be placed at the garage for spare buses.

The Superintendent discussed the Instructional, the Additional Material, and the SOL remediation funds that are allocated to schools each year. There were 3 documents given to the School Board members regarding the 08-09, 09-10, and the projected 10-11 allocations for instructional funds. The instructional funds are based on the enrollment at each school and approximately \$48 per student at the elementary level. The additional material funds are determined by the enrollment at each school multiplied by \$14 dollars per student. Finally, the SOL remediation money, which was a total of \$35,420, was distributed amongst the schools based on enrollment, which ended up being about \$13.72 per student. As information, the instructional account allocations were increased by \$5 per student beginning with the 08-09 school year from the previous school year. Furthermore, the additional material funds were increased by \$4 a student starting with the 08-09 school year. The amounts for the 2009-10 school year for each category were the same per student amounts as last year. Unfortunately, beginning with the 2010-11 school year, all these amounts will be decreased because of the budget cuts. The instructional account allocation will be reduced by \$3 per student. The additional material funds were decreased \$2.25 per student and the SOL remediation money was reduced to \$32,000 total. Each school has a committee designated that is supposed to meet to discuss how these funds are allocated within the school building.

The Superintendent shared information with the School Board regarding student/teacher ratios. This information distributed to School Board member's states that no full time teaching positions were lost.

The Superintendent shared information with the School Board regarding the number of cases of paper that are purchased at the school level. The information shows the amount of paper purchased at each school for the last four years. The schools are asked and they let us know the number of cases they want purchased. Unfortunately, some schools do run out of paper from time to time and need to purchase additional paper. As information, Title I purchased their own paper this year.

The Superintendent shared information with how to best contact School Board members. The Superintendent stated that each School Board member has an email account. The web address and password for each School Board member were given to them. Mr. Buckland stated that he has a problem with the email addresses. He stated that he would be happy to talk with anyone who needs to talk to him. He would be happy to give anyone his own personal email address. In addition, the School Board member's phone numbers can be found in the white pages.

The Superintendent shared information from the GEA regarding their request to change the current personal leave policy from 3 days to being able to accumulate at most 5 personal days. In addition, information was shared regarding the policy on sick leave pay at retirement. A policy has been put together regarding the personal leave day for the board to consider. The second policy document is our current sick leave day policy, with the second page containing information from other counties around us and what they pay for sick leave days at retirement.

The Superintendent shared information regarding SOL testing to date from the schools. So far, the test scores that we have received are looking great!

The Superintendent shared information from the Giles Tech Center regarding state board test results for cosmetology. All of the practical results have been received from the state board and all students passed. Therefore, the students have passed both parts and they have a 100% pass rate.

The Superintendent shared information with the School Board members regarding the GHS FFA. The FFA Livestock judging teams competed at the New River Valley Federation Contest. The Junior A team consisting of Miller Collins, Zane Martin, and Maggie Boggess placed 3rd High Overall as a team and Maggie Boggess placed 1st high overall. The Junior B team consisting of Brad Lipes, Tanner Martin and Jacob Hudson placed 1st high overall as a team with Tanner placing 2nd, Brad placing 3rd, and Jacob placing 4th individually. The senior team, which consisted of Nicole Stump, Alisha Hudson, and Logan Martin placed 2nd. Nicole Stump placed 2nd, Alisha placed 5th, and Logan placed 7th high overall individually. Congratulations to these team members!!

The Superintendent shared additional information regarding the FFA. The Hippology Team won the Appalachian Area Contest. There were 18+ teams and 70+ individuals. Alisha Hudson placed 1st, Nicole Stump placed 3rd, 8th grader Gracie Dudding placed 10th, and Brandon Bandy placed 39th. Good luck to them as they will be competing at State in June.

The Superintendent shared information with School Board members regarding the Giles High School Women's Chorus. The 22 young ladies traveled to Williamsburg, VA during the weekend of April 24th – 25th and had an extremely successful trip. They competed in the Fiesta-Val Music Festival and won first place in their division! The group received an Excellent rating from the judges and had a very professional performance. Congratulations to them on their performance!!

The Superintendent commended the special education educational feature! Thanks for all of the time and effort that was put forth in this video!

The Superintendent shared information with the School Board members regarding a Virginia Voluntary Long Term Care Insurance Program agreement with VRS. This does not need board approval, but has to be signed for our employees to be eligible and participate.

Mrs. McMahon stated that her intent was to attend the Board of Supervisors meeting this evening to address the comments from Mr. Chidester in the Virginian Leader on 5/12/2010. It is her understanding that he will not be attending this evening's meeting and she doesn't feel like it could wait until the next meeting. She read a letter that stated the following:

These are my words. I am speaking on my own behalf, not for the School Board or School Administration. I am responding to Mr. Chidester's comments published in the Virginian Leader on 5/12/2010. I replied to Mr. Chidester's email of 4/22 as I do to any other concern that is brought to me by email, phone call, or face to face. I researched his concerns to insure I had the facts and I replied to each of his individual concerns, justifying actions that had been taken. His emails continued and I replied 4 times. It was inappropriate for Mr. Chidester to choose the Board of Supervisors meeting to make his inaccurate and slanderous comments. It was inappropriate while serving as the salaried legal counsel to be allowed to make these comments in open session, with the absence of all those he was attacking. Mr. Chidester made one comment that I found to be true. We have praised the Board of Supervisors for the additional financial support given to Giles County Public Schools. We have never been anything but openly supportive and appreciative of the Board of Supervisors. Mr. Chidester's comments were inappropriate, slanderous, and insulting.

Mr. Buckland stated that the statement in the *Virginian Leader* from Mr. Chidester that states that the "School Board is the most mismanaged bunch, short of VDOT, that ever was" should be an insult to everyone in Giles County including, teachers, administrators, Board of Supervisors, etc. We've been very fortunate over the last several years to develop a good relationship with the Board of Supervisors and county officials. We have saved thousands of dollars by combining services of two groups. He also mentioned the statement from Mr. Chidester stating that "the School Board didn't ask for enough". Mr. Buckland stated that we've gotten approximately \$646,000 in additional funding from Giles County, including \$460,000 in our budget, plus they are paying the unemployment and the incentives for retirement. As far as pay increases in the last couple of years, the School Board regrets that employees did not get an increase. He can assure everyone that the County Administrator and Superintendent worked very hard to accomplish the budget that we do have and are very fortunate to have that relationship between the two. As far as the email that was mentioned from Mr. Chidester in the *Virginian Leader*, he doesn't know of any board members that have refused to answer the phone or communicate with someone. He stated that they have encouraged employees to commend the Board of Supervisors for all they have done for Giles County Public Schools. Mr. Buckland hopes the economy improves, so we can give some pay raises. All of our schools are fully accredited and we have one of the best, if not the best, fringe benefit packages.

Dr. Webb stated how inappropriate the venue was for Mr. Chidester to make his remarks. Mr. Chidester should have come to the meeting and stood at the podium to make the remarks that were made. They pride their selves in Giles County for the last several years to have such a good relationship with the Board of Supervisors and county officials.

School Board members approved the motion to rescind the Superintendent's current contract as of June 30th, 2010 at 11:59 p.m. School Board members then approved the motion for a new four year contract for the Superintendent as of 12:00 a.m. on July 1, 2010, to run from July 1, 2010 to June 30, 2014.

***In Other Action**

The School Board approved the transfer of Rick Lee from GTC to NHS – AEP & GED Teacher (effective 10-11 school year).

The School Board approved Supplemental Contracts for the following individuals: Larry Greer – NHS Senior Class Sponsor (9-10 school year), Alleta Morrison – NHS MACC Math (10-11 school year), Betsy Wood – NHS MACC English (10-11 school year), Teresa Lowe – NHS SCA Sponsor (10-11 school year), Margaret Christle & Faye Nicholson – NHS Yearbook Sponsors (10-11 school year), Sherry Miller – NHS MACC Head Coach (10-11 school year), Sherry Miller – NHS MACC All Around (10-11 school year), Gary Hinson – NHS MACC Science (10-11 school year).

The School Board approved the Employment of Timothy Woolwine – NHS Band Teacher (10-11 school year).

The School Board approved the Retirement of John Jenkins – Western District Bus Driver (effective June 11, 2010).

The School Board approved the Resignation of Rex Gearheart – NHS Principal (effective June 30, 2010).

The School Board approved additional surplus items to include the following: SBO Laminator Machine (Old-Paper not available anymore), and 8 school buses ranging in years from 1991 – 1996.

The School Board approved a Volunteer Agreement for Robyn Taylor – NHS Band Trip. This was tabled from the last board meeting to check on possible conflicts with FLSA. After checking with our attorney, this was approved because Mrs. Taylor is a student of a parent participating on a trip.

***Next School Board Meeting**

The next School Board Meeting will be held Wednesday, June 30th, 2010 at 7:30 a.m.