

**News Release
November 19, 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**

Mr. Jay Williams attended the school board meeting to discuss bus routes. He would like to see another bus put back in the Eastern district, so our kids would not have to ride the bus that long. Since the last board meeting, he requested copies of all the bus routes in the county from last year and for this year. He stated that our kids are riding the buses over an hour longer a day on average. This is not only in the Eastern district, but also the Central and Western district as well. He would like to see a bus put back in each district. He realizes that things needed to be tightened up, but says that it was tightened up too much and now the kids are paying the price. Mr. Buckland says that the Board will look at that in the upcoming budget, but from what they keep hearing from the state, things will not be any better for the next budget year. Mr. Williams then stated that for the last three years, he has been trying to buy a surplus bus for a church in Blacksburg. He was told that he couldn't buy one. He sees that we have sold some to some other people. He stated that we have sold 18 school buses the last two years for less than half of what we could have gotten had we "scrapped" them. The 18 school buses were sold for less than an average of \$500 each. He says we have left almost \$20,000 on the table in the last couple years on getting rid of surplus stuff. Mr. Buckland stated that a couple years ago, the Board of Supervisors requested that the School Board not put old school buses up for surplus. Mr. Williams also questioned why we didn't bid the new buses out that were bought the last school year. Mr. Buckland stated that we bought them off of state contract, which is legal. He also stated that the drivers requested the certain type of school buses that were bought. Mr. Williams said that when money is tight, we shouldn't be paying \$15,000 more for a school bus. Mrs. McMahon asked how the decision was made to purchase the C2 buses in the 08-09 school year. Dr. Arbogast stated from what they have been told the C2 buses that have been purchased have better visibility due to the different design, better gas mileage, one piece construction, and our mechanics were trained on these types of buses.

***Recognitions**

On behalf of the School Board, Jonathan Light was recognized for placing 1st in the 2009 Virginia Educational Media Association's Media Festival. Jonathan graduated this past June from Narrows High School and was a student of Mrs. Margaret Christle's Video Journalism Class.

***Educational Feature**

Mrs. Margaret Christle, NHS Librarian, and her video journalism students attended the school board meeting on behalf of the Narrows High School educational feature. A video was shared with the board members that showed what the students do in class on a daily basis. Mrs. Christle thanked Dr. Arbogast and the School Board members for allowing them to come. Mrs. Christle came to NHS nine years ago and part of her responsibilities was to oversee the broadcast of the school's morning announcements. The news crew consisted of a handful of children. Over the course of a few years, she has seen an interest in the morning news grow, but has also seen a frustration among the kids when preparing the news programs. Due to this, she pursued and received approval from the school board to make this an elective class. Mr. Jeff Young, our Network Administrator, has helped secure new equipment for their class which has allowed the students to be more productive. In the fall of 2008, they actually stopped doing daily morning announcements, so they could more fully devote their time to their video segments. They now plan, film, edit, and produce a weekly news show that they have named "The Splash." Students and teachers can access this show from the Narrows High School website. There are two teams consisting of 5 people and each team is responsible for producing a show every other week. Mrs. Christle thanked Mr. Brady for his help and support over the years of this elective, as well as Jeff Young and Craig Johnson for their technology support.

***School Board Approves Consent Items**

- Meeting Minutes – October 21, 2010
- Special Meeting Minutes – November 2, 2010
- Bills in the amount of \$ 625,639.74
- Payroll, October 30th and November 15th, 2010
- Revenue for October 2010
- Expenditure for October 2010
- Appropriation Request for December 2010
- Additional 2010-2011 Field Trips

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

The School Board confirmed the following **Resignations**: Greg Brown – GHS Principal (effective 12/3/10), Erica Gautier – NHS Girls Basketball Coach.

The School Board confirmed the following **Supplemental Contracts**: Larry Greer – NHS Senior Class Sponsor, Larry Greer – NHS MACC Social Studies.

The School Board confirmed the following **Volunteer Athletic Coaching Agreements**: Andi Guynn – NHS Athletics.

The School Board confirmed the following **Athletic Coaching Contracts**: Todd Guynn – NHS 8th Grade Girls Basketball, Wayne Gautier – NHS 8th Grade Girls Basketball.

***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 the Janice M. Scott Memorial Scholarship. The Janice M. Scott Memorial Scholarship was established in October 2001 by the family of the late Janice Marie Scott to honor her legacy as a stunt advocate for youth and a tremendous supporter of community services within the Greater Metropolitan Area of Washington, DC. Mrs. Scott was among the 125 individuals who perished in the Pentagon during the attacks by terrorists on the morning of September 11, 2011. Her scholarship has been nationally advertised for the past three years.

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

A School Board member commended all the volunteers that have agreed to serve on all of our advisory committees that were approved at last month's meeting.

A School Board commended 7 individuals from Giles High School who competed and were selected for all district choir.

A School Board member questioned the school enrollment, wanting to know where the children were going. The Superintendent stated that children could be moving, long term suspension, homeschool, etc.

A School Board member asked the Superintendent whether we were still stopping at each and every house. The Superintendent and Assistant Superintendent stated that we have gotten away with that.

A School Board member handed out information on the governor's school, which included the following information: All three SWVGS students who completed the on-site review process with Radford University were accepted with honors. Two of the three were from Narrows: Alec Frazier and Mary Hetherington. It is anticipated that they will be offered scholarships, but are unsure of the amount. In the past, students have received \$5,000 per year through the honors admissions. Mrs. Phillips meets three to four times each year with Directors of Governor's school across the state. They usually meet at the Maggie Walker Governor's School in Richmond and discuss issues relevant to Governor's schools, share strategies, and meet with Donna Poland, Specialist, Governor's Schools & Gifted Education, Office of Standards, Curriculum, and Instruction, from the Virginia Department of Education. At the September meeting, they discussed the possibility that Virginia may require a switch from State course codes to National Course Codes. Dr. Poland had previously circulated the current list of National course codes and all Directors were in agreement that they would not appropriately fit Governor's school classes due to the specialized and advanced nature of the courses that we teach. Therefore, they are likely to develop a set of codes specifically for Governor's school courses to be used in lieu of the National codes if the Virginia DOE does decide to go forward with adopting the National codes. Over the past several years, there has been a decline in student math skills. Students have difficulty with fractions, exponents, writing an equation for a line, solving algebraic equations, factoring, simplifying units, and several other skills that would have been well-mastered by students prior to enrolling in SWVGS 10-15 years ago. The deficiency in these skills affects students in their upper level math courses at SWVGS, in their science classes, and in statistics. For instance, many students are able to work with integrals from calculus, but unable to routinely solve an entire problem because they are not proficient in the algebra necessary to complete the solution. Weakness in algebra greatly affects students in chemistry and physics and discomfort with fractions and simple equations holds students back in biology. The students seem to be terribly reliant on calculators and do not exhibit a strong sense of numbers or ability to solve mathematical problems independently. Ability to reason logically is limited and this also complicates the lack of confidence in math. This is a trend that becomes increasingly worse each year. For the past several years, Mrs. Phillips has asked Sherry Pugh, her Assistant Director, to collect data regarding student math placement test scores. Each year, more and more students fail to test to a level that would place them in Precalculus, which has been our lowest offered level of math. Students with those low placement scores struggle in math throughout their time at SWVGS. Therefore, the governor's school has decided that it will be best if they change the entry level sequence of math courses so that it begins with a course titled College Algebra with an Introduction to Precalculus and then moves on to Precalculus with Trigonometry. The College Algebra course will allow the governor's school to help students develop skills in the structure of complex number systems, polynomials, rational expressions, graphing, systems of equations and inequalities and functions, quadratic and rational equations, and

inequalities. The work will be done independent of calculators. The second semester course will allow students to transition to our upper level calculus courses by building additional skills in algebra, analytic geometry, trigonometry, and algebraic exponential and logarithmic functions. Of course, students who show proficiency above these courses on the math placement test will still be allowed to enter our upper level math courses such as Engineering Calculus in their first semester at SWVGS. The goal with the new courses is to reach the students who come to SWVGS without previous mastery of required math skills. The Virginia Tech onsite review process was completed this week. Seventeen SWVGS students applied to VT for the on-site process. The following are total numbers of accepted students from each school system: Carroll County—1 student, Galax City—2 students, Giles County—3 students: Narrows—Alec Frazier—into Physics, Giles—Melissa Squibb— into Wildlife Science, Giles---Michael Heim— into Engineering, Montgomery County—2 students, Radford City—1 student, Wythe County—8 students. Two students are on hold until their SAT (verbal) scores are improved to 500 or above, then they will be accepted.

School Board members and the Superintendent thanked Mrs. Christle, Mr. Brady and the video journalism students for the educational feature!

School Board members and the Superintendent thanked Mr. Franklin and the cafeteria staff for the wonderful Thanksgiving lunch!

The Superintendent stated that 49% of all 11th graders attend the Giles Tech Center!

The Superintendent shared information with School Board members on the Giles Tech Center open house and dedication. The dates for the open house are Nov. 30th from 10-4, Dec. 1st from 10-4 and Dec. 2nd from 10-6. These dates and times are open to the public. The dedication for those involved in the project is December 2nd at 7:00 p.m.

The Superintendent and a Board member commended the Giles High School Drama team for their recent accomplishments. They received first place honors at Districts for the third year. Elena Anderson won 3rd place and both Carly White and Hannah Blankenship received honorable mentions. For the third time in a row, Giles High won best Ensemble. Alicia Johnson designed the set for the team and Bryan Strader's 1st, 3rd, and 7th period classes built the set. They will compete for regions in Galax on November 20th. Good luck to them in this competition!!

The Superintendent commended Giles High School students Phillip Parr and Lyndsey Jackson. Phillip won 3rd place in Business Law, and Lyndsey Jackson won 2nd place in Business Math at the Concord University 17th Annual Business Challenge.

The Superintendent commended Savannah Burton for being named MED Player of the Year for Volleyball.

The Superintendent stated that renovation work at the Tech Center is being finalized and stated that all students are back in classrooms at Eastern Elementary/Middle School. Their new kitchen is now being utilized as of a couple weeks ago.

The Superintendent commended Narrows High School for their pride day. Last weekend, about 25 students came on Saturday to the school to help clean around the building.

***In Other Action**

The School Board approved an additional field trip: W.R. Johnston – GHS Model U.N./February 16-19, 2011/Norfolk, VA/12 Students (Funding-Fees & Other Funds).

The School Board approved a Volunteer Agreement – Erica Gautier /NHS JV Girls Basketball.

***Next School Board Meeting**

The next regular School Board meeting will be held Thursday, December 9th at 4:00 p.m. The Quarterly Dinner Meeting with Administrators will follow at 5:30 p.m. at Narrows Elementary/Middle School.