

News Release

January 20, 2004

Giles County Public Schools Regular School Board Meeting

Dr. Robert C. McCracken

Division Superintendent

***Organizational Meeting**

- JB Buckland was appointed as School Board Chairman for 2004.
- Ronald Whitehead was appointed Vice-Chairman for 2004.
- The Board set the third Thursday of each month as Board meeting day, holding the first Thursday open in case another meeting is needed.
- Boni Kirk was appointed School Board Clerk for 2004.
- Barbara Perkins and Robert McCracken were appointed Deputy Clerks for 2004.

***School Board Approves Consent Items**

- Regular Meeting Minutes – December 9, 2003
- Payment of Bills
- Payroll
- Appropriation Request for February 2004

***Recognition**

On behalf of the Professional Advisory Council, School Board recognized Lynda Atkins for her outstanding volunteer efforts at NEMS.

***Public Comments**

There were no public comments.

***Educational Feature**

Ms. Delp, Principal of Macy McClagherty School, attended the meeting to introduce the Family Preservation Counselors along with several faculty members who presented the educational feature. Family Preservation is a program in place for students at Macy where counselors provide individual and group services for those in need. Counselors attending the meeting were Nathan Cooke, Mike Hunter, Autumn Grindstaff, Katie Dillehay, and Debbie Perez-Lopez. Other counselors unable to attend include Charla Witt, Karen Langley, and Jimmy Hurley.

Mary Cornwell presented information to Board members regarding daily tasks that are in force to increase SOL scores. She commented that she and Lawanda Robertson identify K-7 students who are at risk of failing or have failed an SOL test. They also keep a database of student information, including past test results, retentions, and Title I participation, as well as individual educational plans to review weaknesses and needs for remediation. Mrs. Robertson also attended the meeting.

April Ayers, MMS Title I teacher, shared with the School Board how students are served through remedial help in math and reading, and how the Title I Program works to help MMS reach their AYP (Annual Yearly Progress).

Stephanie Bain, MMS first grade teacher, shared handouts with Board members regarding first and third grades SOL information and how teachers work to prepare first grade students for third grade testing. She also displayed “candy houses” that were a creative arts project which allowed students to answer the question “who lives in my house” through writing and Language Arts. Mrs. Bain also explained a map that was drawn with streets and houses and the students had to identify where they lived which was part of a test. The students worked with a mapkey, which is required by SOL’s. They also talked about

directions (North, South, East and West). She reviewed a PowerPoint presentation that reflected students during activities. She highly commended Mrs. Cornwell and Mrs. Robertson for the fine job they do with remediation. The goal is to do something that the students can remember and to prepare them for testing as well as teach them something they can use as adults. First grade teachers, Jeannette Vickers and Alan Dean also attended the meeting.

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

- The Board confirmed the following employment for the remainder of the 2003-04 school year: Chris Bales – GHS Teacher Assistant/Student Specific, effective 12/12/03; Ruth Ann Moore – GHS Teacher Assistant/Student Specific, effective 1/5/04; Debbie Coker – Part-time Psychological Assessment Evaluator, effective 1/12/04 – 8/1/04; Tim Brown – NHS Varsity Girls' Softball for Spring 2004; Substitute Teachers to date to include Garland Spangler and Lisa Carbaugh.
- The Board confirmed the following resignations: Denise Osborne, effective January 15, 2004 and Bonnie Young, effective January 19, 2004.

Other approvals by the Board:

- Field Trip Request
- Professional Leave Request
- Request of Pearisburg Jr. Woman's Club/Wooden replica of NHS w/50% of profit given back to the school (GHS was done last year)

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

As a part of the Instructional Update, the Superintendent distributed handouts to Board members regarding highly qualified issues for experienced teachers. New information has been issued from the state defining "highly qualified" requirements to be met on or before July 1, 2006 for teachers "not new to the profession". These requirements are known as "HOUSSE" – High Objective Uniform State Standard of Evaluation.

***Report from Annual School Board Retreat**

The School Board announced the retirement of Robert C. McCracken, effective November 30, 2004. Dr. McCracken has accepted participation in the ERIP program for the 2004-05 school year.

The School Board announced that Terry E. Arbogast II would replace Dr. McCracken as Division Superintendent, effective December 1, 2004.

Dr. McCracken reviewed issues from the School Board Retreat:

- A survey will be distributed to employees and parents regarding beginning school before Labor Day and also the possibility of modifying report card issue dates.
- The "no smoking" policy will remain as is, but schools will be directed to announce to fans at athletic events asking them not to smoke in the bleachers.
- GTC will negotiate to sell the most recent house that students built
- GTC five year plan requests career counseling
- GHS Stadium Lights are in the works to be repaired

Next School Board Meeting

- The February 2004 School Board meeting was confirmed for Tuesday, February 17, 2004 at 7:00 PM at the School Board Office. Should a closed session be necessary, it will be held at 5:15 PM.

***Positive Comments**

- Board members were very pleased with the retreat. It was a productive day with many positive comments about what's going on in the schools.
- Sincere thanks and appreciation was conveyed to Dr. McCracken by all Board members for providing quality education during his tenure as Superintendent. It was commented that one of the best things the School Board has done was bring Dr. McCracken to Giles County.
- Congratulations were conveyed to Mr. Arbogast by all Board members for being named Dr. McCracken's replacement. Although there are "big shoes" to fill, we are all confident that Mr. Arbogast will do an excellent job.

- Congratulations to two Giles County students who attend the Governor's School, they have been accepted at West Point – Kristine Bronnenkant and Andy Houck.
- Chairman Buckland commented that the Board members have been together for the past 15 years during Dr. McCracken's tenure, along with all of the new members that have come along, have faced and can still face challenges and come out in agreement. There are not many School Boards that can do that.
- Mr. Gollehon expressed his appreciation to everyone for the kindnesses during his wife's illness.
- Dr. McCracken expressed his appreciation through comments regarding his years with Giles County Schools. He commended the folks he has had the pleasure working with including the Board of Supervisors, School Board members and dedicated employees. He was also highly complimentary of Mr. Arbogast, as he works toward the Superintendency.