

NEWS RELEASE

December 14, 2000

Giles County Public Schools
151 School Road
Pearisburg, VA 24134

Dr. Robert C. McCracken
Superintendent
540-921-1421

***School Board Approves Consent Agenda Items**

- Minutes of the November 13, 2000 meeting
- Bills in the amount of \$1,779,976.03
- Payroll for the month of November, 2000
- Revenue report for the month of November, 2000
- Appropriation Request for January, 2001
- Approval of Six Year Plan
- Professional Leave Confirmation

***School Board Recognizes the following who were nominated by the Professional Advisory Council for their hard work and dedication by being presented plaques by the Superintendent and Board Chairman:**

Patti Gaskins – Recipient of Roswell E. Round Award (Prevention of Mental Illness); Dacey Howell – EEMS Volunteer (donation of EEMS landscaping); Jarrod Midkiff and Nikki Wilburn – VFW Awards - Voice of Democracy Audio Essay Competition; and Courtney Olson – Excellence in Math/2000 International Space Olympics in Russia. Also recognized were the 2000 Christmas Card Winners: Baylee Harrell/EEMS; Cassandra Martin/MMS; Cayla Dennis/NEMS. Mrs. Edna O'Brien of Castle Rock Insurance Agency, assisted by sharing with the audience that each winner had received a savings bond from the agency.

***School Board Hears an Educational Feature by Giles High School/Courtney Olson**

Courtney Olson shared a powerpoint presentation regarding her recent trip to Korolev, Russia as a participant in the 2000 International Space Olympics. Three countries were represented – US with 10 students participating, all seniors from VA, except for Courtney, who is a junior; Greece, with 10 Seniors participating, and Russia with 100 students of all ages participating. She presented various pictures during her stay which included her housing compound, the Moscow ballet; Moscow circus; University of Moscow and the space capsule used for Russia's first man in space, as well as the "Sputnik" model. Courtney also had the pleasure of spending the weekend with a host family. Although they could not speak English, it was a very enjoyable stay. She and other students also spent time in schools in Russia, visiting with the students and helping them with the English language. Courtney's presentation in Russia involved the prevention of osteoporosis in astronauts which is an extremely major concern for astronauts. Her performance was outstanding, she placed 1st Place – US/VA Delegate – Math Competition; 4th Place – Overall; and was a finalist in Combined Math/Physics Competition. Courtney mentioned that their awards are somewhat different from those in the US. They don't give trophies, they give items such as toasters. She received some books on space as well, along with gifts from her host family. It was a good learning experience, not only for Courtney, but for her audience that she shared with! Terrific job, Courtney!!

***School Board Approves Recommendations Regarding Personnel Items**

The Board approved the employment of the following for the remainder of the 2000-01 school year: Amy Miller as part-time Special Ed. Teacher Assistant – NEMS; and Dee Meredith as part-time Speech Therapy Assistant, division-wide.

The Board confirmed the following: Retirement of Bernie McCraw, effective 12/1/00; Employment of Tressia Lambert – Full-time Tutor/Coordinator, effective 11/30; Full-time Health Assistants – Tammy Barnett/EEMS & County-Wide, effective 11/16/00; and Brenda Smith – MMS/GHS, effective 11/20/00. Also approved was an additional hour for Angela Vaught, NHS Health Assistant, for a total of 3 hours to be equivalent to other schools, effective 11/16/00; and Nedra Thorn as NHS Sponsor for Cheerleading Squad for JV Boys' Basketball Team.

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

- The Superintendent shared an instructional update with the School Board which included an explanation

of the extended testing window approved by the State Department of Education. The School Board also approved an additional 4 day extension of the testing window for Narrows High School, to assist students when they return from Christmas break, making the submission due date for testing materials January 19, 2001 as opposed to January 8, 2001, which was the original due date. The Superintendent also shared several requests by the state regarding instructional concerns, which included asking that dual enrollment to be verified as credit for students; vocational classes to count as 60% in the SOL area; and that students that are not "test-takers" at the secondary level, be verified by their teacher with a certified grade, in order to pass the class, in the event they are non-test takers.

- The Superintendent presented a legislative update to the School Board, which included handouts of VASS position statements, which are being requested legislatively by VASS, and were adopted at the legislative conference in October. The list reflected the support by VASS, including support of local scoring of SOL tests and pilot programs in electronic testing; multiple criteria to be used for school accreditation and graduation requirements; legislation which would specify that school divisions not be involved in the issuance and revocation of students' driver's license; and legislation to address the teacher and administrator shortage crisis, to name a few. A resolution was also distributed as requested by the Giles County Board of Supervisors regarding asking the Virginia General Assembly to adopt legislation to reimburse local governments for the cost of school capital construction projects. The School Board approved the resolution as recommended.
- The Board approved a new policy, KBE, "Internet Policy" in compliance with the Virginia Privacy Protection Act.
- Mr. Wheeler updated the School Board on the construction projects at NHS and GHS. The security systems at both high schools are in place and working. Monitors are in the main offices, which is a big help in school security. He mentioned some concerns that are being looked into, including noise in the GHS auditorium due to air handlers on the roof. The software is being reviewed and it is hopeful that the problem can be remedied soon. Both high schools will receive new office furniture over Christmas break. Mr. Wheeler commended the Clerk of the Works, (Roger Browning, Dickie DeBusk, and Helmut Keiner) and Jerry Albert at GHS for their hard work and efforts in continuing to see the projects through.

***School Board Takes Action on Other Items**

- The School Board approved a resolution requesting that the Board of Supervisors pursue the purchase of property on Henson Avenue as additional land for Macy McClaugherty School
- The School Board approved a resolution requesting that the Board of Supervisors authorize the School Board to establish a supplemental retirement incentive benefit program that would allow a trust fund to be set up for upcoming retirees.
- The Board set their January meeting date for Monday, January 15, 2001 at 7:00 PM at the School Board Office.

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

- It is always a pleasure to see students recognized for their achievements. It is an incentive to other students. Congratulations to all of you!
- The Board met with administrators prior to the regular December meeting, and always end those meetings feeling good about what is going on in the schools. Keep up the good work!
- Appreciation was conveyed to Mr. Wheeler and the Clerk(s) of the Works regarding the construction projects. It takes great effort to keep all areas of a construction project running on schedule.
- Mr. Morris commented on his recent tour of GHS. Renovation is a slow process, but in time, it will fall into place.
- Everyone is extremely proud of Courtney Olson and her high achievements. She did an outstanding job giving her presentation of her trip to Russia. She also shared her presentation with the Governor's

School not long ago. Congratulations!

- It was commented what a positive move it was to extend the testing calendar at NHS. It seems that the state department is starting to listen to school divisions' concerns.
- Michigan is starting a Governor's School and is using a VA model, with a portion of that model being the Southwest Virginia Governor's School. Good job!
- The "Earth Essay 2000" competition was recently held in Miami, Florida. Several of the Governor's School students participated.