

NEWS RELEASE

December 12, 2001

***School Board Approves Consent Items**

- Regular Meeting Minutes – November 15, 2001
- Special Meeting Minutes – November 1 & 8, 2001
- Bills in the amount of \$1,559,637.10
- Appropriation Request for January, 2002
- Approval of School Biennial Plan Evaluations/Six Year Plan
- Approval of Certain Field Trips (Overnight)

***Pledge of Allegiance**

The School Board Chairman led the group in the Pledge of Allegiance.

***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 School Board Chairman:**

Student Recognition: 2001 Christmas Card Contest Winners – Helen Perdue – NEMS and Giancarlo Massaro – EEMS; Courtney Olson and Shelley Devereaux – GHS Students for Academic Excellence. Mrs. Pat Duncan, SWVA Governor's School for Student Support; Rebecca Weiss – NHS Health Assistant – Student Support; Tommy and Betty Hudson – NHS Volunteers.

***School Board Hears Educational Feature from Eastern Elementary/Middle School**

Three kindergarten teachers from EEMS attended the meeting to share information on the new Sing, Spell, Read and Write program that is now implemented for kindergarten students. Mrs. Toma Eaton reviewed the process that is used to help 5 and 6-year old students to become readers. The process included fundamental components such as Alphabet Knowledge which helps students to learn the alphabet, Phonological Awareness which gives students the ability to recognize sounds, Concept of Words which consists of reading sentences allowing students to touch each word. Hand movements are used to help students sound out, break down and identify words. Mrs. Eaton also reviewed skills that help to stimulate various parts of the brain, such as listening, speaking, reading and comprehension. Ms. Ann Harman presented a music sing along and a fine solo for the School Board. It included the A-Z alphabet with sounds and pictures to music with words. Mrs. Toni Robertson reviewed the Ferris Wheel activity, which helps students to learn their vowel sounds by adding consonants to the vowels in song. Once students learn they become the leaders and help with class demonstrations. They also shared the marching parade which allows students to look at their paper and say what's on it. The School Board enjoyed the presentation very much and commended EEMS for implementing such a fine program to prepare students for the primary grades. Mrs. Higginbotham, EEMS principal, also attended the meeting on behalf of the educational feature.

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

- The Board confirmed the following employment for the remainder of the 2001-02 school year: Continuation of employment for Jack McCall, as part-time Administrative and Curriculum Assistant at the School Board Office; Michael Etzler as Giles High School English Teacher; Susan Bowles as NEMS/MMS Music Teacher, effective January 2, 2002; Shana Midkiff as NHS Volunteer Coach/Volleyball Assistant; and Sherry Stump as part-time bus driver for student specific position from Pembroke to Minnick School.

- The School Board approved the employment of Jane Crank as GHS Special Education Teacher Assistant for the remainder of the 2001-02 school year.
- The School Board approved accumulated sick leave days for Howard Spencer to remain valid during his five years of employment as the Science and Technology Coordinator.

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

- The Superintendent shared with the Board accreditation information in the Instructional Update. He commented four school divisions are fully certified, those being Giles, Wise, Wythe, and Bristol City. As he reviewed the status of various school divisions, he found that many of the large school divisions are not certified. All Virginia school divisions received the same amount of money and other benefits, and Giles County is to be commended for being a rural school division that has become fully certified. We can all be proud of that! He also informed the Board members that there is a recent revision in cut scores for Social Studies, which is a difficult area for students at the secondary level. This will assist in setting reasonable expectations for students.
- The Superintendent shared a legislative update with the School Board that consisted of synopsis from the VCARES and VASS Legislative Committee. It consisted of legislative recommendations regarding education. He asked that the School Board review the document, which will also be shared with legislators.
- The Board approved policy revisions as recommended by administration and the VSBA Policy Services. Included was a revision to Policy GCI and IGAJ-R.

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

- The School Board approved a resolution requesting that the Sheriff's Department again review traffic congestion at the entrance of Eastern Elementary/Middle School. This congestion occurs during the morning when school is taking up and afternoon when school is being released. This request was brought forth by Mr. Whitehead. He had received concerns from individuals in the Eastern district.
- The School Board approved a professional leave for Ellen Jones to travel to Belize with a community group January 24 & 25, at no expense to the School Board.
- The School Board approved the donation of a computer from ReMax to Macy McClaugherty School.
- The School Board approved a resolution to adopt the Eligible 457B Deferred Compensation Plan, which allows vendors to sell a new product, which is another type of TSA for employees with no penalties.
- Provided that the Giles County Partnerships for Excellence, Inc. can provide space and support, the School Board approved the submission of grants for funds regarding a possible Hamm Radio Club for students before and after school.
- The School Board confirmed, by consensus, Thursday, January 17, 2002 as the date for the next regular School Board meeting. The annual School Board Retreat will be held at 1:00 PM at the School Board Office, followed by the regular January meeting at 7:00 PM. Should a closed session be needed, it will be held prior to the regular session.

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

Accomplishments

- All Board members were deeply appreciative of Mr. Morris and his fourteen years of dedicated service. Each member stated the sorrow they feel in seeing him leave. In 14 years, a lot of progress was made and Mr. Morris was a big part of it all. He will certainly be missed!
- The quarterly meeting with administrators was held prior to the regular Board meeting. It is nice to meet with administrators and talk about school concerns and positive things that are happening.
- EEMS was commended for the outstanding educational feature. It is always a pleasure to see new instructional activities that help students to learn.
- The Christmas Card Contest winners were commended for their fine artwork. It's a big task for third graders and reflects the outstanding talents of our students.
- Thanks were conveyed to all others that were recognized. All of the hard work is deeply appreciated.
- It was good to have Ms. Pat Duncan with us to be recognized. Thanks were conveyed to her for her continued support and concern shown for Giles County students.
- Ms. Duncan commented how proud she is of Giles County students and their efforts in the Governor's School. She stated that Giles County has an excellent school system and she is proud to be affiliated with our division. She conveyed appreciation to Mr. Whitehead for his role as a Board member for the Governor's School. She invited all of the School Board members to a ten year reunion Monday night, December 17th at Edwards Hall, NRCC, from 3-5 PM.
- The University of South Carolina recently recognized Ms. Duncan for her efforts as a contributor to academic development. Congratulations!
- The Governor's School has received a grant to build a robot, along with 825 teams across the United States. Students will travel to Richmond to receive their kit, come back and build the robot and return to Richmond for competition. They have six weeks to complete the project. The winner will then go to Epcot Center in Florida for national competition. Good news – no cost to the participants. Good luck!
- The Superintendent informed the Board of a State Superintendent's Memo that refers to grants for urgent school renovations and technology. It is possible EEMS may be eligible for grant monies under the guidelines.
- The Superintendent conveyed his appreciation to Mr. Morris for all he has done for the school system and students, as well as for the Superintendent's family when they came to the area.
- The Superintendent shared a note of appreciation from the Narrows Chief of Police regarding the recent NEMS Character Counts Assembly for community service folks. He stated how proud we can be of NEMS faculty and staff and how proud and thankful he is as a parent.