

Monroe County Schools

News Release

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Monroe County's principals spoke against a proposed policy revision that would require them, at minimum, to work the number of days in their contracts by either coming to work on snow days (when school is closed) or coming to work on another day during the year to make up the time missed. Central Office employees as well as custodians with extended contracts and maintenance workers currently work on "snow days."

The policy discussion was held at the regular meeting of the Monroe County Board of Education held February 7, 2006, 7:00 p.m. at the Board Office in Union. Jim Gore, speaking on behalf of the other principals in the county, argued that coming to work on a snow day would not be productive since there were no teachers nor students in the building. He also commented that principals already work longer than they are required to work by contract and that to require them to work the days when schools are closed would be counterproductive and unsafe.

Superintendent Lyn Guy responded that the policy allowed individuals to make a personal decision about whether or not it was safe to drive to work, but that if they chose to stay home, unless the county was under a state of emergency, that day would be made up at another time. Individuals could use an unpaid day, take a personal day, or take a "dock" day (day without pay.)

Danny Lively and Frank Upton both spoke against the policy, saying that they felt a "snow day" was their day and they could choose to work at school or at home.

Ben James spoke against the policy as well, saying that he didn't want his wife (a

counselor at James Monroe) to endanger her safety by coming to work on a snow day. He argued that requiring individuals to work on snow days or to make up that day was contrary to law. Guy responded to questions, repeating that no one would be required to work on days when their school was closed, but that if their contracts were for 210 days, the individual should work 210 days to receive the full salary.

She also responded that the reason for the policy revision was to put in writing past practice with respect to the Central Office. With retirements, new employees need to see concrete guidelines for alternate work schedules, Guy said. The practice needed to be put into policy and applied to everyone with extended contracts, since there was much paperwork that could be done on those days. Guy said that employees of other businesses were required to go to work when the roads were bad, but that while the school system expected the individual to meet the terms of his or her contract, that individual got to make a choice when the weather was bad.

In the end, the written comments on the policy were to be reviewed by the Board before the next meeting, at which time the policy would receive a third reading. Guy stated that individuals would have an opportunity to see the changes made to the policy as a result of comments before the next meeting.

A policy that allows students to be excused from school to play “Taps” during military funerals was approved.

Prior to the policy discussion, the Board met briefly in executive session with a teacher and his West Virginia Education Association representative.

Under New Business, the Board approved budget supplements, transfers, and paying bills as presented. Board members rejected a bid for coolers at the Monroe County Technical School,

to allow for a more competitive rebidding on the project.

Peterstown Middle School's levy budget was approved, as was the recognition of the Fellowship of Christian Athletes as a booster group for Mountain View School.

Under Personnel, the Board approved the retirement of Roberta Reed, following 35 years of service; approved the resignation of Jill Dunn as a substitute bus operator; transferred Sarah Bowers from Peterstown Elementary to James Monroe; approved medical leave for Joetta Basile; approved the superintendent's recommendation to suspend a teacher one day without pay for neglect of duty; and approved Betty Kirk as a volunteer at Mountain View School.

Beth Roe, was named as principal, effective March 1, 2006, upon Frank Upton's retirement. Mrs. Roe currently serves as assistant principal at the school.

Under the Superintendent's report and discussion, Lyn Guy noted that the estimates on the heating units at the gymnasium at James Monroe had been completed and the information forwarded to the School Building Authority. She noted that there were two estimates, one for reconfiguring and replacing the heating units, the other for also providing air conditioning to the gymnasium. While the cost difference wasn't that high, she noted that air conditioning a gymnasium would require much regulation because of the cost involved over time.

Guy presented board members with an analysis of how much each county school system had spent educating each child in the system. Monroe County was in the bottom 1/5 of the counties, showing Pleasants County spending \$10,108.45 per child and Berkeley County spending only \$7,213.21 per child. Monroe County spent \$7,742.21 per child during the 04-05 school year.

Guy praised Monroe County Technical Center director Paul Lovett and instructor

Quinton Crawford for their work in reviewing architectural drawings for the metal building recently funded by the School Building Authority. She said the two men had thoroughly reviewed the plans and made recommendations for cuts and adjustments to better serve the modular home construction program that would be housed in the building.

Board members discussed the lawn mower at James Monroe, coaching issues with an out of county school, preschool, and reviewing rankings of each school based upon special education student performance.

Following another brief executive session, the Board adjourned the meeting at 9:20 p.m. The next meeting has been moved from Tuesday to Monday, February 20, 2006, 7:00 p.m. at the Board Office in Union. The next regular meeting, March 7, 2006, will be held at James Monroe High School for the purpose of hearing from the Local School Improvement Council.