

Monroe County Schools

News Release

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WhoRAH! for Young Writers was the opening theme of the regular meeting of the Monroe County Board of Education March 21, 2006, at the Board Office in Union. Coordinator Becky Yost introduced LeAnne Ward, the 2nd grade winner from Mountain View, who read her story to board members. She also introduced April Highlander, the fifth grade winner for the annual writing competition and Tanya Turner, the 8th grade winner of the writing award. April is a student at Mountain View School; Tanya is a student at Peterstown Middle. Other Young Writer award winners were unable to attend the meeting.

Ms Yost then reviewed the process of both a financial review and a nutritional review for the food service program. She noted that the review was conducted every five years and that because of changes in the review process, school systems often required two or more visits in order to correct findings and pass the inspection. Monroe County's review was held February 7-9 and included a county-wide audit of the food service program, an audit of Peterstown Elementary and a county-wide audit of the nutritional program as well as a review of the specific nutritional program at James Monroe High. Both the individual audits and the county-wide audits yielded passing scores for the first visit. Ms Yost said she was very proud of the work of the cooks and the school secretaries who had made the high scores on the review happen.

Yost also reported that the county was one of two school systems in the state to receive a transportation grant for the summer food service program. She said that she would be working

through the grant to increase the number of students who ate breakfast and lunch at the schools over the next three years. By providing transportation from the outlying communities, she said, we can work with the 21st Century Summer Programs to increase the numbers of students both attending the camps and eating breakfast and lunch. She stated that most grant recipients were not school systems but that the federal program was trying to find ways to provide nutritious meals to a greater number of students in the summer and often the grants were awarded to churches, camps and the like.

Christy Parker, Principal of James Monroe High School, made a presentation about modified block scheduling, explaining to the board why the school became interested in it, the process they had used to learn about how it might work at James Monroe, provided information about advantages of such a change in scheduling classes, and also discussed some of the concerns with the change. Parker stated that any change was difficult but that this appeared to have the support of the majority of the faculty and it would provide many benefits for students. She said the high school was in the process of working through the details of scheduling for next year but that her team and the superintendent's office would work hard to make it a success. She also answered questions from board members about how the changes would affect students.

Under Policy Development, Board members voted to place a soft drinks and snacks sold in school policy on thirty day comment. Additionally, they reviewed proposed changes to the policy on Student/Staff Dress Code for the 06-07 school year and proposed changes to the Student Code of Conduct that would prohibit student possession of pocket knives at school. Both of these policies would come back to the Board for a second reading in April, following a brief comment period.

Under New Business, the Board approved budget supplements, transfers, and paying bills as presented. They approved the Universal PreK Plan and approved travel requests from Paulette Kirby for students involved in Work Force Investment and GEAR UP to travel to Berea College, and a request from Phoebe McGuire for ProStart students to participate in the Cast Iron Chef competition at Stonewall Resort on April 7-9.

Under Personnel, the Board approved the retirement of Patty Hancock, executive secretary, after 33 years of service. Mrs. Hancock has handled certification and a number of other duties at the central office, having been executive secretary for the past six superintendents. Superintendent Lyn Guy said she'd like to keep her as a consultant forever since while you could hire a replacement, the skills learned through experience Mrs. Hancock has in the job would take years and years to learn.

Guy said the retirement of George Munsey would also be a loss to the school system. Munsey, who has worked with maintenance for the past 30 years, assumed the role of foreman a number of years ago and has seen the renovations and improvements at the schools first hand. His experience will be difficult to replace as well, Guy said. The Board approved Mr. Munsey's retirement, effective June 30, 2006. Mrs. Hancock will retire effective May 31, 2006.

Board members also approved hiring Jonathan Crotty to work between Peterstown Elementary and Middle as a custodian; approved medical leave for Valerie Turner and Linda Terry; hired Robert Woodbury as a substitute teacher; recognized volunteers Janet Haag and Angela Ladner for Peterstown Elementary and hired Harold Bostic to assist with track at James Monroe and Susan Ryan to coach golf at Mountain View.

Following a brief executive session to discuss the assistant principal's position at

Mountain View, Board members canceled the special meeting scheduled for March 23, and moved agenda items to the March 28 special meeting. On March 28, the board will meet to approve levy rates, review the current budget, take personnel action on reduction in force, and review a proposed budget for the 06-07 school year. They will also take any routine personnel action with an eye toward canceling the regular meeting scheduled to be held on April 4, due to scheduling conflicts.

In addition to scheduling issues, the Board also reviewed a letter from Peterstown Elementary's Faculty Senate, and reviewed correspondence from the superintendent to senior parents. Guy noted that she had met with seniors about graduation and had followed it up with a letter to parents providing them with the same information. She noted the vandalism incidents at schools in both Raleigh and Greenbrier County were of serious concern since students at James Monroe who participate in any similar event would not walk in graduation. Board members had issued the decree in June of 2005, following vandalism at James Monroe. Board members had asked the superintendent to meet with seniors to make sure they understood the consequences of the behavior.

The meeting adjourned at 8:55 p.m. The next regularly scheduled meeting will be April 18, 2006, 7:00 p.m. at Mountain View School in order to hear from their Local School Improvement Council. Anyone who wishes to receive a copy of any policy on comment can call the board office at 772-3094 or check the web page at www.monroecountyschoolswv.org.