

Board of Education meets in regular session

SPECIAL TO THE R-H

The Green County Board of Education met in regular session this past Thursday. Superintendent Hodges opened the meeting by reflecting on the life of Brandon Dicken. Dicken, who passed away earlier this month, was a bus driver for the district. Hodges read excerpts from letters that had been previously submitted nominating Dicken for districts awards and recognitions. "When I read these letters I see common themes and words; words like selfless, devoted, kind, caring, and compassionate. Those words are exactly who Brandon was. Brandon was a good employee and a great man. He will be deeply missed."

The school also honored three district employees with the board's Golden Apple "Above and Beyond" award.

J.T. Henderson, Bus Driver, was nominated by a fellow colleague. The nomination letter highlighted that Mr. Henderson was deserving of the award as he is very helpful to other drivers and is always striving to keep our children and school grounds safe.

Steven Thomas, GCATC Welding Instructor, was nominated by a parent. The nomination letter stated that Mr. Thomas was worthy of the award, "for numerous reasons," including supporting a student desiring to use welding as a talent in DYW, being a stellar educator, and investing in and celebrating his students.

Melissa Bright, GCHS Chemistry Teacher, was nominated by a student. The nomination letter stated that Ms. Bright is a teacher, "who really goes above and beyond for her students, but also for students she does not even have in class." The letter also indicated that Ms. Bright cares deeply for her students and does her best to help them both inside and outside the classroom.

Maylee Judd, a Green County Middle School student, was also recognized by the board of education. Judd was recognized for her efforts in starting the Green County Middle School American Sign Language (ASL) Club. The ASL club meets regularly to learn and practice signing in ASL. During the district's Veterans Day celebration members of the ASL club signed during the Pledge of Allegiance.

During items of business the board approved purchasing three new school buses. Each bus will cost approximately \$117,500 and will be purchased using federal funds allocated for vehicle purchases. Superintendent Hodges commented on the buses, "These buses will also include air conditioning. After these buses join the fleet we should have approximately half of our buses upgraded to include air conditioning." Zach-

ary Leftwich, school district finance officer also discussed the bus purchase, "It is really important to maintain a modern and safe bus fleet. Purchasing these buses will allow us to replace buses that have been in service for over twenty years."

The board also took action on a number of items related to the Green County High School construction project:

- The board voted to approve payment to G. Scott & Associates, the architectural firm for the project. Architect fee rates are set by the Kentucky Department of Education and the School Facilities Construction Commission and are based on the overall construction cost of the project. The submitted invoice for represented fees earned through 80% of professional services provided and submitted reimbursables totaled \$549,193.24.

- The board approved a request for payment from general contractor, Redlee Construction, in the amount of \$336,135.21. The payment reflects work completed on the project consisting primarily of bonding, site mobilization, and ground-work.

The board also approved payment to Hayden Materials for \$2,064.87 for stone delivered through current.

The board approved a change order for the cost of rock removal encountered thus far in the project. The construction contract includes a standard rate for rock removal of \$165 per cubic yard of rock removed. As rock is removed from the site an independent inspector measures the rock and submits verification reports. The change order reflected 226 cubic yards of rock removed for a total cost addition of \$37,290.

The board approved a school beverage supply proposal. Clark Beverage was the only submitted proposal. The five-year agreement will include the installation of new scoreboards at the Baseball and Softball fields. These scoreboards, which will be property of the school district, will be reimbursed by Clark Beverage at an estimated expense of \$17,000. The agreement will also include new vending machines and cooling equipment at no cost to the district. In addition, Clark Beverage will provide \$5,000 to be used by the school Athletic Directors to purchase sideline equipment and supplies.

Green County Intermediate School (GCIS) and Green County Middle School (GCMS) presented their respective School Improvement Plans. School Improvement Plans are drafted and reviewed annually as part of a continuous improvement process. Each school reviews state testing assessments alongside in-house data to evaluate areas of strength and to also identify places needing additional support.

GCIS Principal, Donna Young, high-

lighted that students scored above state-average in three out of the four testing subjects. Students placed #1 in the area for the subjects of Reading, Math and Science. Principal Young highlighted Writing as an area of focus with a score of 32.4 on the state assessment compared to the state average of 39.8. Faculty/staff at GCIS participate in instructional protocols and interventions strategies to strengthen instruction and reach additional gains.

Principal Young also elaborated on a new STEM-focused career pathway being offered at GCIS. The program was enabled through a grant and will provide hands-on learning opportunities for students in the areas of Animation, Coding, Drone, Engineering Design Process, Mobile Development, and Robotics. "The kids are really excited about this program and we can already see the benefit and engagement this has enabled for our students."

GCMS Principal, Philip West, also provided a summative evaluation of testing scores. He noted that testing scores across Kentucky had a notable decline as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic and schools being closed or moved to remote instruction. "I think this really goes to show that what we are doing in our classroom matters." West commented, "Remote learning is not a substitute for our highly skilled and qualified teachers. We were very fortunate in that our district really made a push to be in-person as much as possible and I think that is reflected in our test scores" Mr. West then displayed a summary of state testing scores for ten area districts. GCMS students scored above state average and at #1 in the sample area for the testing categories of Reading, Math and Writing. In the fourth subject area, Science, GCMS students were 4th in the sample area and .7 points below the state average.

Mr. West also highlighted a new learning program being implemented for GCMS students. IXL Learning is software program that provides students with sample questions and allows them to practice in areas of need. At the same time as benefiting students directly, IXL is also providing data to the teachers on the students' progress and mastery of the skills being targeted. "This program really assists our teachers in evaluating a students' level of understanding and knowing when they need to go back and revisit a specific lesson." West added, "This does not replace the teacher. The teacher is still teaching the subject. After going through the lesson being taught, then the students will use IXL to practice the skills that were just introduced by the teacher."

The board voted to approve a one-time \$500 COVID-19 stipend for all full-time contracted employees

of the district. The cost of the stipend will be paid from federal funds the district received through the American Rescue Plan. Superintendent Hodges commented on the stipend "We appreciate our employees and their dedication during this pandemic. I'm thankful our local board has set aside these federal funds to recognize our faculty and staff for their hard work."

In items of other business the board:

- Accepted a KETS Offer of Assistance in the amount of \$13,653 to assist the district in purchasing educational technology.

- Authorized the disposal of surplus hospital beds that received no bids.

- Approved the 2021-2022 senior trip to Gulf Shores, Ala.

During the superintendent update, Superintendent Hodges provided an update on COVID-19 numbers in the district. As of Thursday night there were three students and one staff member reported as positive for COVID-19. Hodges also commented on the Veterans Day community celebration and thanked the students that led the program and the employees that helped organize it. Hodges provided some highlights from the School Funding Task Force. The task force recently made recommendations to the state legislature to include permanently funding full-day kindergarten and fully-funding transportation. "Many people do not realize it, but schools are only provided funding for half-day Kindergarten. In addition, funding for transporting students to and from school have not been fully-funded and in recent years has dropped to less than 60%. This creates a burden on local districts. By fully-funding these programs it would allow the district to reallocate resources to where there is a greater need."

Throughout the year the board routinely reviews the standards by which Superintendents are evaluated. Thursday night Superintendent Hodges presented on Standard 7 – Influential Leadership. Included in the presentation was discussion on areas of local governance, participation in civic organizations, and involvement in education policy.

The next regular monthly board meeting is scheduled for Dec. 9 at 5:30 p.m. CT.



Photos submitted

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November is National Diabetes Awareness Month

Finding the cure starts with awareness!

Warning Signs & Symptoms of Diabetes:

- Always Thirsty
- Frequent Urination
- Pool Sleep
- Extreme Fatigue
- Feeling Pins & Needs in Feet & Hands
- Frequent Yeast Infections
- Vision Changes

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