

Monroe County Schools

News Release

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For immediate release - March 8, 2006

James Monroe High School was in the spotlight Tuesday, March 7, 2006, as the Monroe County Board of Education met at the school for the purpose of hearing from the Local School Improvement Council as part of the Board's effort to hear individual school concerns.

Chair Terry Utterback presented the report to the Board, which included a review of the school's accomplishments in testing, attendance, graduation rate and physical fitness. Utterback noted that the school had improved in every category, except attendance since the previous year. Students achieving master in math improved 15 percentage points over the previous year, while mastery in language arts improved 2 percentage points. Writing assessment included a 37% increase in the number of students achieving mastery. Attendance, which dropped from 97% to 96% was countered by an increase in the graduate rate from 83% in 2004 to 94% in 2005. Physical fitness showed the strongest scores in the history of the school with 66% of the 9th graders meeting standards, compared to only 33% of the 9th graders the previous year.

During "Brag Time", Assistant Principal Lisa Canterbury noted that the school would have 15 Promise Scholars this spring, and that after-school programs were flourishing, both tutoring for students in math, science, or other subjects as requested, and a Teen Leadership class being taught for students who met after schools to focus on a leadership curricula, being taught by teachers April Hobson and Brenda Bowers.

Science Department Chair David Johnson spoke to the Board regarding recommendations

for modifying science offerings to reflect the changes in state guidelines for science, as well as three different approaches that would allow students different options for the science cluster or major. Johnson said the science department would like to see advanced seniors have the opportunity for independent study if they had completed five science classes, including two advanced classes and maintained a better than 3.5 gpa in science. The proposals would require board approval at a later date.

In a final aspect of the report, Ms Canterbury shared her collection of confiscated pocket knives, pointing to the frightening size of pocket knife blades that were not considered “dangerous weapons” under the law, but could be dangerous in an accident, or a fight in which the knife was brought out as a weapon. She noted that knives were frequently used for vandalizing bathroom stalls, desks, tables and the like. She urged the board to adopt a county policy of prohibiting pocket knives at school. The school’s policy is not to search students for knives, but any knife displayed for any reason was confiscated by the administration, Canterbury said. In a related conversation with the Board, Principal Christy Parker reported that there were students who were afraid to be at school because of the presence of pocket knives.

Becky Yost, County WhoRAH! Coordinator, reviewed the accomplishments of Daniel Vaughn, a James Monroe student who had recently won a \$5,000 scholarship to Johnson & Wales University as a result of culinary competition held in Charlotte, NC. Board President Cheryl Hunter presented a plaque to Daniel honoring his achievement.

Yost then recognized County Spelling Bee Winners Erin Ellison, winner of the county spelling bee from Peterstown Middle School, who was unable to attend, as well as Amanda Cody, runner-up, also from Peterstown Middle, who was present for the plaque presentation.

Joshua Ward was recognized as the alternate in the annual spelling competition, but could not attend the meeting.

Rebecca Allen, Title I and Elementary Education Director, presented the Pre-kindergarten plan for 2006-07 to the Board. She reviewed the requirements of statewide universal preschool by 2012-2013 and the county's progress in achieving that goal. She noted that with the integration of Title I, Head Start, and Preschool Special Needs programs, Monroe County was very close to the goal of universal preschool for any three or four year old whose parent wanted to enroll them in the program. Such a program is not required for students but does provide excellent preparation for kindergarten.

Under Public Comments, Donnie Meadows, speaking on behalf of the custodians at James Monroe urged the board to address two problems at the school: the first was the mud caused during wet weather and students congregating on grassy areas near the front of the building. He noted problems with keeping the school clean when mud was tracked in, especially in stair wells where it was difficult to clean. He also asked the Board to consider additional compensation for custodians dealing with preparation and cleaning after sports events. He noted that cleaning up after ball games took custodians away from cleaning the building both before the game as restrooms, dressing rooms and bleachers were made ready for events, and then following events which involved extensive time to clean bleachers, pick up trash, and empty garbage cans as well as cleaning restrooms and dressing rooms. He suggested additional pay for custodians so that the school would not be neglected when these events occurred.

Under Policy Development, Board members approved written administrative guidelines for employees with 240 day contracts or more during days when school was canceled for

inclement weather.

Under New Business, Board members approved budget supplements, transfers and paying the bills as presented.

Under Personnel, following a brief executive session, Superintendent Lyn Guy recommended that the assistant principal position at Mountain View be filled for the remainder of the school year by an administrative substitute, and that the position be re-posted to be filled for the 06-07 school year. Board members approved the recommendation. Personnel action approved included the following transfers for the 06-07 school year: Lisa Brooks to math, James Monroe (JMHS); Deborah Buckland to social studies, JMHS; Cinda Coulter from Peterstown Middle to Science/Biology, JMHS; Lynda Lindsey from James Monroe to math 7, Peterstown Middle; Susan Ryan from social studies to math 7 at Mountain View; Deborah Sams from JMHS to Peterstown Middle science 8; Deana Sharp from grade 6 to grade 3 Mountain View; and Randall Wallace from social studies to PE/Health, JMHS.

James Dalton transferred from custodian at Peterstown Middle to evening shift at James Monroe; Danny Wilson was hired as custodian at Peterstown Middle.

The following new hires were approved: Christopher Linsin for social studies 8, Mountain View, and Bradley Lineberry, physical therapist two days a week beginning March 16. Substitute custodians David Schmidt and Lanell Hefner were employed.

Rick Bailey resigned as girls basketball coach at Mountain View; David Witt was approved as a \$1 baseball assistant at James Monroe; Angela Terry was hired as softball coach, JMHS; Doris Franklin, track, Mountain View and Richard Franklin, \$1 track assistant at Mountain View.

Tim James was approved for medical leave until March 6, 2006. The following volunteers were recognized from Peterstown Elementary: Dianne Frye, Crystal Hazelwood, Alan Reddish and Martha Reddish. The following individuals are completing student teacher requirements: Stephanie Holley, Heidi Jackson at Mountain View; Cortney Mann at Peterstown Middle; and Tabitha Young, Monroe County Technical Center.

Under the Superintendent's Report, dates for four special meetings to be held in March were discussed and approved: March 15, expulsion hearings at James Monroe; March 20, employee hearing and levy rate review; March 23, employee hearings and budget review; and March 28, action on personnel and continuation of budget review if necessary.

Guy reported that she would recommend a reduction in force involving two positions funded through the general fund and two positions funded through special projects. Letters were being delivered to individuals affected, including individuals who would be affected by transfers. She noted that a loss of student enrollment had resulted in the recommended staff reductions.

Board members went into executive session at 8:50 p.m. to discuss two investigations involving personnel and a legal matter involving a student. They returned to regular session at 9:35 p.m. and adjourned, taking no action.

The next regular meeting of the Board will be March 21, 2006, 7:00 p.m. at the Board Office in Union.