

School Watch

A look at what is happening in Cleveland and Bradley County Schools

by Ashley Murphy

The Bradley County Board of Education held their regular monthly meeting on Thursday, February 11th at 5:30 p.m. The following are highlights from that meeting.

Superintendent Johnny McDaniel had several good news items to report from different schools across the county. A large number of students from Lake Forest Middle, Michigan Avenue Elementary, North Lee Elementary and Ocoee Middle School had won in the 4-H public speaking contest.

The Bradley Central wrestling team won the State Duals Championship held recently in Franklin, TN. This win makes the 20th state championship for the Bears, and the most championships won by a team in Tennessee.

Several students also received Daughters of the American Revolution Citizenship Awards. Those recipients were: Bradley Central High School student Josh McDaniel, Lake Forest Middle School student Seth Lee,

Ocoee Middle School student Amber Houchin and Walker Valley High School student Yesenia Cruz-Pascual.

Angie Lyon of Kaatz, Binkley, Jones and Morris gave an update on the construction projects at Valley View, Parkview and Bradley Central. Valley View is now completed and they are awaiting the removal of an old portable. The Fine Arts facility at Bradley is moving along. Lyon stated they recently met with the Fire Marshall and are wrapping up drawings so that those can be passed along to Tri-Con, Inc.

Parkview is moving forward, weather permitting. Lyon has been working with the principal to pick colors and finishes so that everything will be organized and ready when the time comes. Derek Martin of American Constructors added that weather is a serious issue when it comes to the completion date for Park View. Recently, during a 10 day period, masons were only

able to work 5 days due to weather.

Board member Terry McGuire asked for an estimated completion date of the school based on all of the information that was at hand. Martin stated that the building could be completed by June, but site work would be closer to October of this year.

Rick Smith, Bradley County Schools Business Manager, also requested an executive approval for a Valley View roof project. On a recent visit, Smith noticed that in one section of the building the roof was in terrible condition and multiple buckets had been placed around the rooms inside to catch water from roof leaks. Board member Christy Critchfield added that this project was much needed, because this particular building currently housed the school's Pre-Kindergarten classes and that health and safety were two major concerns.

This particular section of roof is 4,700 square feet.

Smith stated that based on the Hopewell roofing project, estimates are close to \$6 a square foot. This would bring the total a little over \$28,000. After the board was assured of the funds for this project, plus additional monies to finish out the year, the approval was passed unanimously.

Also on the agenda was an update from the Ethics Committee. Board member Terry McGuire, who also Chairs the Ethics Committee, introduced Judge Van Deacon, who revised the ethics policy and was coming before the board to update them on changes that have been made. All revisions made were approved by the School Board's Attorney, Chuck Cagle, before copies were sent out to each board member.

Board member Troy Weathers had questions about the new policy and sent a copy over to a Tennessee School Board Association (TSBA) representative who found several items that weren't in agreement. Weathers stated he would

like to see this come to a work session so questions could be answered before a vote took place.

Van Deacon explained that the policy is easier to understand now that it has been revised, versus the current policy. He went on to say that most revisions were taken directly from TSBA handbooks and policies, so how a TSBA representative could disagree with their own wording was beyond him.

Weathers insisted that his questions be answered now since no one seemed to find it necessary for a work session. Board member Mark Grissom called for question and a vote was taken to end the discussion. Christy Critchfield and Troy Weathers voted no, however, the vote received a majority 5-2 and vote was taken to approve the new revised Ethics Policy. Everyone was in accordance, except for Weathers. The vote passed 6-1.

Highways, Inc. received their final approval from the school board for the use of

land near Waterville Elementary School. A "base" station is needed for an office and storing some materials. The project is expected to be completed in the summer of 2012 and use of the land would be up until that time. Johnny McDaniel recommended the use of the land and the vote passed unanimously.

Johnny Mull, Bradley County Schools Energy Management Supervisor, came before the board to announce an Energy Efficient Schools Initiative Incentive Grant of \$183,500. The grant will be used to install energy efficient HVAC at Parkview Elementary. A vote was needed to accept this grant money and the motion passed unanimously.

The Bradley County School Board meets on the second Thursday of the month at 5:30 p.m. at the administrative office on South Lee Highway on the Bradley Central High School campus. All meetings are open to the public.

School Watch - Cleveland City Schools

by Tonya Brantley

The Cleveland City Board of Education held their regular monthly meeting on February 1, 2010. The following are highlights from that meeting.

Autumn O'Bryan, Cleveland High School principal, presented the Cleveland High School (CHS) compliance proposals for graduation requirements starting with the Class of 2013. The Tennessee Diploma Project has been approved by the State. According to O'Bryan, the State only requires 22 credits, however, most places will not accept State diplomas anymore. CHS requires 28 total credits to graduate. The proposal requires freshmen students to take four credits of English, Science, including Biology, and either Physics or Chemistry, and Math, including Algebra I, Algebra II and Geometry.

Students must also take two credits of a Foreign Language, three credits of History, one and a half credits of Physical Education / Wellness and a half credit of Personal Finance. Much like college, O'Bryan stated, students must decide on a focused area of study requiring three credits in their chosen study. Board member Tom Cloud is concerned about graduation rates due to the required math courses. Board member Steve Morgan said, "Once again, we have something here the government is pushing on us." Director of City Schools, Rick Denning replied, "The government is here to help you." O'Bryan indicated over the course of the next two years, an additional two to three teachers will potentially need to be added. Board member Dawn Robinson made the motion to accept the proposal. With a second from board member Evelyn Rockholt, the

motion passed unanimously.

The board discussed the revised long range facilities plan. Dr. Denning recommended the board designate 10 percent of the annual sales tax revenues for a capital reserve fund and an additional 10 percent of annual sales tax revenues for technology to be expended annually.

An extensive list of items was included with the meeting packet. Among those were several projects to be done at many schools across the city. Parking lots and roads need to be repaved and resurfaced. Several schools need carpet and flooring replacements. Teacher and student desks have been well-used and need to be replaced. Several of the classrooms, hallways and bathrooms systemwide need repairs, renovations and new paint. The need for three new buses was also included in the list.

The board had many questions and concerns regarding the long range facilities plan budget. Robinson recommended a special meeting devoted to the plan's budget and mentioned more dialog is needed between the board and the city council.

A special called meeting to discuss next year's budget is scheduled for March 9, 2010 from 4pm-6pm. Several board members recommended the budget be placed on the city school system web site for the public to view.

Dr. Denning recommended that the board approve a system-wide Title I school system. The U.S. Department of Education set up Title I to distribute additional funding to schools who qualify. If 40 percent or more of a school's students qualify for free or reduced lunches, they are eligible. As of December 2009, the system average for students receiv-

ing free or reduced lunches in Cleveland City Schools was 60.43 percent. Title I schools receive additional funds for personnel and resources and have the ability to distribute technology equipment system wide. For the current school year, all Title I personnel will remain where they are. With a motion from Morgan and a second from Cloud, Title I restructuring passed unanimously.

On the Good News side, 9 students from the Cleveland High School Band Program were selected from a group of approximately 1,500 others who auditioned from all over East Tennessee to participate in the All-East Honor Band early in February.

Those students were: Jacob Abbott, Dylan Aikens, Joey Archer, Emily Reed, Adam Spivery, Erica Tipton, Madison Vaughn, Zach Welz and Kelsey Wynkoop.

Erica Tipton and Zach

Welz were also selected to the All-State Band, an honor only given to 120 students from across the entire state.

School Board Chair, Peggy Pesterfield announced the appointment of committee members. They are as follows: TN Legislative Network (TLN) - Dawn Robinson, Sick Leave Bank - Tom Cloud and Steve Morgan, Insurance Committee - Evelyn Rockholt, Site Committee - Murl Dirksen, Tom Cloud and Steve Morgan, Board Policies - Evelyn Rockholt, and Dawn Robinson was appointed as a liaison to work with Dr. Rick Denning on the budget.

The Cleveland City School Board meetings are held on the first Monday of the month at 5:30pm at the administration office building located on the E.L. Ross Elementary School campus on Mouse Creek Road. All meetings are open to the public.