

Communique'

A summary of the September 21, 2015 Board of Education meeting follows. Meeting agendas for each Board Meeting are posted online. For details and attachments from the September 21st Board Meeting, please click [here](#).

Superintendent's Announcements/Spotlight

Holly Springs Elementary School:

The Hawk News Network crew members were recognized. They are:

Jordan Brookens	Charity Johnson	Ryan Wilbourn
Keziah Brown	Autumn McNeill	Jill Wood
Kalaezia Collins	Maggie Padgett	Dakota Wynter
Kiersten Douberly	Jazmine Trowers	
Ezekiel Harpe	Kevin Ventura	

Olivia Jordan and Jazmine Trowers were recognized for participating in and completing the summer reading challenge.

Jennifer Camp was recognized as Holly Springs Elementary School's Media Specialist.

Meghan Rathel was recognized as the school's Teacher of the Year as well as a Douglas County Teacher of the Year Semi-Finalist.

New Manchester High School:

Jose Amador and Endyia Dumas were recognized for participating in the Research, Experiment, Analyze and Learn Project at Georgia Tech this summer.

Dia Wright was recognized for being selected to the Congress of Future Medical Leaders.

Chassey Lock was honored as a People to People Leadership Ambassador.

Skylar Martinez was recognized for receiving the Rotary Youth Leadership Award and for representing Douglas County as a future leader.

Casey Bethel, James Brooks and Lucy Phillips were recognized for working with students in the R.E.A.L. project. Mr. Bethel was also recognized for being named New Manchester High's Teacher of the Year as well as a Douglas County Teacher of the Year Semi-Finalist.

Christie Reese and Nadra Jones were recognized as PTSA officers

John Green was recognized for being selected as one of 100 alumni who have distinguished themselves in the field of teaching by the Beeson School of Education at Samford University.

Officer Chiquita Baitey and Officer Cam Brooks were recognized as New Manchester High School's Resource Officers.

STEM Education Award:

Lithia Springs High School was named the High School Category Winner for the 2015 Georgia STEM Education Awards by the Technology Association of Georgia (TAG) and the TAG Education Collaborative. Several staff members were recognized for the award. They are:

Dr. Garrick Askew	Caroline Whitt	Mark Watson
Dr. Lee Collins	Payton Millinor	Diana Moore
Cammie Tysver	Keenan Lee	Darren Rager
Dr. Robbin Washington	Robin Simmons	

Consent Agenda: Approved were: Certified and Classified personnel; Carpet Purchase for Inventory; EPIC After School Program and Summer Camp; Employee Voluntary Benefits and Surplus Mobile Classrooms.

Discussion Agenda: The following was presented for discussion: **Student Achievement & Leadership:** Alexander High School Magnet Proposal; McGraw Hill – Instructional Materials for Special Education Students; and D & H Distributing Company – Graphing Calculators; **Finance:** Audit Report for Fiscal Year 2014; **Operations:** FY 2017 Capital Outlay Program Application.

Information Only: The following items were presented for information only: Over Night Out of State Field Trips and 2015 Stakeholder Survey Analysis.

Present were Board Members D.T. Jackson, District II, Chair; Michelle Simmons, District IV, Vice-Chair; Carol Lindstrom, District I; Tracy Rookard, District III; and Jeff Morris, District V. Also present were Superintendent Dr. Gordon Pritz; Chief Academic Officer Pam Nail; Assistant Superintendent of District Operations Dr. Tim Scott; Chief Financial Officer Greg Denney; Assistant Superintendent of Personnel and Policy Dr. Michelle Ruble; Assistant Superintendent of Student Services E. Renee Davis; Community Relations Director Karen Stroud; and Secretary to the Superintendent Melanie Nicholson.

Douglas County Board of Education Statement for 9/21/15:

The members of the Board of Education take careful consideration when making all financial decisions. It is due to this care that for the first time in six years, all our teachers and employees are receiving raises. It is also important to note that during this same time the Board fought hard to protect other employee raises provided through step increases and reduced, then eliminated, furlough days. These step increase raises ranged from 7% to 18% for about 80% of employees depending on service years and degrees earned. We value our teachers and the tremendous responsibility they have to educate and inspire. They are responsible for hundreds of students as our administrators, who are equally challenged, are responsible for thousands. We believe our actions have demonstrated this respect for our employees.

Here are the facts as they relate to the contract extension of our Superintendent. When Dr. Pritz took office in 2010 he did so gladly at a salary significantly lower than the preceding superintendent. Like some staff, he has worked for the last five years with no salary increase. Each year the 26,000 students, for which we hold him accountable, have continued to excel.

Several of our schools are now nationally recognized for their academic excellence. In the next two years we will undergo our Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACS) Accreditation renewal. In addition, other critical initiatives such as IE2 implementation and an ESPLOST vote will have tremendous impact on our school system and community. We believe it to be in the best interest of our students, parents and staff to not have a “changing of the guard” at such a critical and sensitive time.

Now that our funding levels have improved finally, we are able to consider additional enhancements to our employees’ compensation and are currently conducting a salary study which we will use as a tool to address areas we may need to improve in the adoption of our next budget. Though some areas are competitive, it is always our goal to make certain that we have highly competitive salaries to attract and retain the best talent at every level.

The Superintendent salary is now in line with some districts our size but still lower than some equivalently sized districts. When it is time to select a new Superintendent we must once again attract a highly qualified person who will continue raising the bar. We have high expectations and must have a replacement that has the vision and proven track record to make Douglas County the number one school system in the state of Georgia and beyond. We know it’s possible as we are making positive, incremental gains each year in a number of areas of measure under Dr. Pritz’s leadership.

As a school board and system we need your support and encouragement. We hope that you will contact us directly to learn the facts about our system. We provided much of this information to the local paper previously but they chose not to publish our article. We are thankful to have highly intelligent staff, parents and supporters who understand. We thank you all for your support.

DOUGLAS COUNTY BOARD OF EDUCATION

DT Jackson – Chair

Michelle Simmons – Vice Chair

Carol Lindstrom

Tracy Rookard

Jeff Morris

Upcoming Meetings of the Douglas County Board of Education:

Whole Board Training on Monday, October 5, 2015 at 3:00 p.m.

Regular Board Meeting on Monday, October 5, 2015 at 7:00 p.m.

Regular Board Meeting on Monday, October 19, 2015 at 7:00 p.m.