

2004 Press Release Archive

Press Release

February 10, 2004

Re: Health Officials Reassure School System

Contact: Shelley Cantrell ph. 706-253-1700

The North Georgia Health District Director has notified Pickens County Schools officials that a recent case of bacterial meningitis that was linked to the death of a Union County Schools student was not the more highly contagious form of the illness. Dr. Thomas J. Chester informed the school system today that the illness does not require administration of preventive or protective treatment to individuals who may have come into close contact with a diagnosed case.

Pickens County Schools Superintendent Lee Shiver contacted the Pickens County Health Department after being notified by a Union County Schools official that one of their students who had participated in a basketball tournament over the weekend at Jasper Middle School had died unexpectedly. Shiver then contacted the principals of Pickens County Middle School and Jasper Middle School who had students and staff participating and attending the same tournament.

The school system will send a copy of the letter from Dr. Chester home with middle school students tomorrow.

Press Release

February 13, 2004

Re: School Board Schedules Finance Committee Meeting and Called Board Meeting

Contact: Gail Woodall ph. 706-253-1700

The Pickens County Board of Education's Finance Committee will meet Wednesday, February 25, 2004, at 5:00 p.m. at the Jasper Elementary School Media Center on D.B. Carroll Street in Jasper. The school board will conduct a called board meeting at 6:00 p.m. following the finance committee meeting.

The board is expected to meet in executive session at the called meeting to conduct the superintendent's annual evaluation. The finance committee, chaired by Mark Mitton, will hear presentations by School Finance Director Amy Burgess and Superintendent Lee Shiver regarding the preparation of the next year's budget for the school system.

The board is not expected to take any official action during either meeting. As always, the public and employees are invited to attend.

-end-

Press Release

February 17, 2004

Re: School Board to Participate in Training Workshop

Contact: Gail Woodall ph. 706-253-1700

The Pickens County Board of Education will participate in a training workshop conducted by the Georgia School Boards Association this Saturday, February 21, beginning at 8:30 a.m. at the Jasper Elementary School Media Center on D.B. Carroll Street in Jasper. The school board will not be conducting a public meeting and will not conduct any official business during the training session.

Georgia law requires that veteran board members receive at least one day of certified training annually. -end-

Press Release

March 5, 2004

Re: Called Board Meeting Tuesday, March 9

Contact: Donna Golden ph. 706-253-1700

The Pickens County Board of Education will conduct a called board meeting on Tuesday, March 9, at 5:00 p.m. to discuss pending litigation in executive session. The called meeting will be held at the Jasper Elementary School media center on D.B. Carroll Street in Jasper.

-end-

Press Release

March 16, 2004

Re: School Board to Conduct Called Meeting

Contact: Donna Golden ph. 706-253-1700

The Pickens County Board of Education will conduct a called board meeting on Wednesday, March 17, 2004, at 6:00 p.m. at the Pickens County Chamber of Commerce. The board is expected to meet in executive session and will not vote to take any official action.

-end-

Press Release

March 25, 2004

Re: Finance Committee Meeting, Monday, March 29

Contact: Donna Golden ph. 706-253-1700

The Pickens County Board of Education will conduct a finance committee meeting, chaired by Mark Mitton, on Monday, March 29, at 6:00 p.m. The finance committee will discuss elements of the FY05 budget, but no official action will be taken.

The meeting will be held at the Jasper Elementary School media center on D.B. Carroll Street in Jasper.

As always, the public and employees are invited to attend.

-end-

Press Release

April 27, 2004

Re: Finance Committee Meeting, Thursday, May 6

Contact: Donna Golden ph. 706-253-1700

The Pickens County Board of Education will conduct a finance committee meeting, chaired by Mark Mitton, on Thursday, May 6, at 5:00 p.m. prior to the regularly scheduled board meeting at 6:00 p.m. The finance committee will discuss elements of the FY05 budget, but no official action will be taken.

The finance committee meeting and the board meeting will be held at the Jasper Elementary School media center on D.B. Carroll Street in Jasper.

As always, the public and employees are invited to attend. -end-

Press Release

May 11, 2004

Re: "2003-2004 Super District for Quality Schools"

Contact: Donna Golden ph. 706-253-1700

The Pickens County Schools system was recently notified by the Executive Directors of the Commissions on Elementary, Middle, and Secondary Schools of the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACS) of receiving special recognition to those schools districts where all eligible elementary, middle, and secondary schools are accredited. The district is considered a **"2003-2004 Super District for Quality Schools,"** and was congratulated for its "...schools' accreditation accomplishments and continued success in improving educational opportunities for the young people served."

For 2003-2004, there were 512 school districts in the 11 state SACS region that qualified for this recognition. The number by state is: Alabama – 58, Florida – 41, Georgia – 61, Kentucky – 52, Louisiana – 11, Mississippi – 47, North Carolina – 52, South Carolina – 55, Tennessee – 76, Texas – 8, and Virginia – 51.

SACS accreditation is non-government and voluntary, and it helps educational institutions improve through a systematic process of evaluation that focuses on improving teaching and student learning. SACS accreditation assures not only that an institution meets minimum standards, but also that it demonstrates a commitment to continuously providing quality educational programs.

An alliance between SACS and the Commission on International and Trans-Regional Accreditation (CITA), which is comprised of the six regional accreditation commissions and several related organizations, i.e., the National Council for Private School Accreditation and the National Study of School Evaluation provides every elementary, middle, and secondary school that holds SACS accreditation the additional benefits of **national accreditation and international recognition** through CITA.

SACS accreditation ensures benefits to a school and its community,

including:

- A mission and goals focused on improving student performance and the school's capacity to improve teaching and learning.
- A collaboratively developed improvement plan that includes methods for measuring student progress and involves key school stakeholders.
- An effective framework that integrates all types of school planning and evaluation requirements.
- Qualified staffing and limited class size.
- Regular review of the school's programs by a team of outside peer professionals.
- Accountability and value for tax dollars spent.
- Regional, National, and International Recognition as an accredited school.

Founded in 1895 and headquartered in Decatur, Georgia, SACS is one of six regional accrediting bodies in the United States and as an association is comprised of three Commissions. SACS serves 11 Southern states from Virginia to Texas, as well as American-International schools in Latin America. It accredits more than 13,000 institutions (public, nonpublic, early childhood centers and kindergartens; elementary, middle and high schools; vocational-technical schools, military schools,; colleges and universities). For additional information, check the Association's web page at www.sacs.org.

-end-

Press Release

May 11, 2004

Re: School Board to Conduct Called Meeting

Contact: Donna Golden ph. 706-253-1700

The Pickens County Board of Education will conduct a called board meeting on Thursday, May 20, 2004, at 6:00 p.m. to discuss the board member vacancy vacated by Joan Locke. The called meeting will be held

at the Jasper Elementary School media center on D.B. Carroll Street in Jasper.

As always, the public and employees are invited to attend.

-end-

Press Release

May 19, 2004

Re: School Board Discloses March 17 Executive Session

Contact: Donna Golden ph. 706-253-1700

At their regular monthly board meeting on May 6, the Pickens County Board of Education provided full disclosure of their March 17 executive session which was called to resolve a dispute with Mayor John Weaver and the City of Jasper. Board Chairman Tony Young read a prepared statement that identified the participants and described the discussions that took place.

The Board also released three documents that pertained to the executive session. The first document was a list of events that the Board gave the two members of the City Council who attended the closed meeting. The list described how and when City workers under the direction of the mayor appropriated Board of Education property without the Board's authorization.

The second document was a March 10 letter written by Young to each City Council member, advising them of the Board's concerns and asking them to meet with the Board the next week to resolve the conflict.

The third document was a proposal from the City of Jasper to acquire additional property from the Board in exchange for waiving certain fees associated with school construction projects on Harmony School Road.

Near the end of his remarks, Young proposed entering into mediation

with the City Council, if necessary, in order to avoid litigation.

Following the disclosure, Chairman Young announced that the board would then answer any questions regarding the executive session. Hearing none, the chairman then asked for board action on the City's proposal.

Instead, the Board voted unanimously to offer the pumping station and sewer system at Pickens County Middle School to the City in exchange for a waiver of the fees associated with the Harmony School Road projects.

Superintendent of Schools Lee Shiver said, "I'd like to think we're getting close to an agreement on this issue. There may be a few hurt feelings at this point, but I don't think there are any hard feelings on the part of the Board or the Council. What's important for everyone to remember is that as we try to manage and plan for the growth in our county, we've got to work well together."

"This is the stuff of growing pains," he said. "It's not going to get any easier, but we've got to keep our communication lines open and good people will do that."

The Board will await the City Council's response to their offer before proceeding with any additional negotiations, according to the superintendent.

[Disclosed documents to follow (i.e. [disclosure statement](#), [events list](#), [letter to City Council](#)).]

-end-

Press Release

May 25, 2004

Re: Board of Education Vacancy

Contact: Donna Golden ph. 706-253-1700

At their called May 20 meeting, the Pickens County Board of Education decided to actively seek a new board member to fill the seat vacated by Joan Locke earlier this month. The Board will appoint a new member who will be expected to complete the unexpired term of the post 3 seat by serving through December 2006.

Interested citizens who are legal residents of the post 3 district may request consideration by writing a letter of interest to the Board. Letters will be accepted through June 18 and must be signed, dated, and include a return address. Letters of interest should be mailed to: Pickens County Board of Education, c/o Tony Young, Chairman, 159 Stegall Drive, Jasper, Georgia 30143.

Locke resigned her position on the board after moving into the Jasper city limits. She is a candidate for the post 1 seat currently held by Shirley Whitaker.

-end-

Press Release

May 27, 2004

Re: Board of Education Vacancy

Contact: Donna Golden ph. 706-253-1700

At their called May 20 meeting, the Pickens County Board of Education decided to actively seek a new board member to fill the seat vacated by Joan Locke earlier this month. The Board will appoint a new member who will be expected to complete the unexpired term of the post 3 seat by serving through December 2006.

Interested citizens who are legal residents of the post 3 district may request consideration by writing a letter of interest to the Board. Letters will be accepted through June 18 and must be signed, dated, and include a return address. Letters of interest should be mailed to: Pickens County Board of Education, c/o Tony Young, Chairman, 159 Stegall Drive, Jasper, Georgia 30143.

Locke resigned her position on the board after moving into the Jasper city limits.

-end-

Press Release

May 28, 2004

Re: School Board Meeting

Contact: Donna Golden ph. 706-253-1700

The Pickens County Board of Education will conduct their regularly scheduled board meeting on Thursday, June 3, 2004, at 6:00 p.m. at the new Pickens County Schools Transportation Facility on Harmony School Road. Citizens are invited to attend an Open House at the new facility starting at 5:00 p.m.

-end-

Press Release

June 7, 2004

Re: School Board to Conduct Called Meeting

Contact: Donna Golden ph. 706-253-1700

The Pickens County Board of Education will conduct a called board meeting on Monday, June 14, 2004, at 6:00 p.m. at the Jasper Elementary School media center on D.B. Carroll Street in Jasper. The school board will hear a presentation from a representative from the Georgia Department of Education's facilities division and will consider personnel recommendations. The board will also be given a draft of the

revised *Student Code of Conduct*.

As always, employees and the public are invited to attend.

-end-

Press Release

June 15, 2004

Re: School Finance Director Promoted

Contact: Donna Golden ph. 706-253-1700

At their June 14 called meeting, the Pickens County Board of Education approved the promotion of School Finance Director Amy Burgess to the position of Assistant Superintendent for Business Services. The promotion was part of a realignment of administrative staff at the school system's central office which was put in motion when Assistant Superintendent Mike Ballew announced his retirement last month.

Ballew will return in August in a part time position as Director of Special Projects to assist with the supervision of current and future construction projects. The board also approved Superintendent Lee Shiver's request for an additional part time position to assist with the coordination and oversight of school system operations.

The new position will be primarily responsible for coordinating and assisting with the day to day system wide operations associated with transportation, maintenance, food service, campus police, and safety.

"You've got to give credit to the board," said Shiver. "They are committed to holding the line on administrative costs while maximizing productivity by hiring experienced, accomplished administrators for less than half the cost of a full time position. This represents real savings to the school system as long as our results demonstrate that we're effective and efficient."

Burgess said she was excited about her new position and looked forward

to the challenges. "I appreciate the board's confidence in me," said Burgess. "We have a great team and our focus on the bottom lines of student achievement and fiscal responsibility is bringing the results I think our community expects and deserves."

Burgess, a native of Pickens County and a 1985 graduate of Pickens High School, has been the school system's finance director for four years and was previously employed in the banking industry as a loan officer and office manager. She holds a bachelor's degree in business from Kennesaw State University.

"She's done a great job for us," said Shiver. "Her expertise and interpersonal communication skills, along with her ability to make quality decisions and see the big picture are extremely important to us and the future of the school system."

Shiver said the new realignment of duties and responsibilities using part time administrators will save the school system well over \$100,000 in the coming school year.

-end-

Press Release

July 2, 2004

**Re: Policy/Finance Workshops and Called Board Meeting
Monday, July 12**

Contact: Donna Golden ph. 706-253-1700

The Pickens County Board of Education will conduct policy and finance workshops on Monday, July 12, at 5:00 p.m. followed by a called board meeting. The board will consider proposed policies related to personnel and the Student Code of Conduct, along with recommendations for personnel supplements. The board is also expected to discuss the board seat vacancy.

The meetings will be held at the Jasper Elementary School media center

on D.B. Carroll Street in Jasper.

As always, the public and employees are invited to attend.

-end-

Press Release

July 12, 2004

Re: Leadership Retreat at Cohutta Lodge

Contact: Donna Golden ph. 706-253-1700

The Pickens County Board of Education will participate in a leadership development retreat on July 14, beginning at 12:00 p.m. and continuing through 10:00 a.m., July 15, 2004. Board members will participate in activities and discussion coordinated by facilitators from the Georgia School Boards Association and the University of Georgia. This retreat will be for training purposes only, and the board will not vote or take any official action.

The retreat will be held in the Appalachian Room of the Cohutta Lodge, 500 Cochise Trail, in Chatsworth, Georgia.

-end-

Press Release

July 23, 2004

Re: School Board Member Apologizes for Comments

Contact: Donna Golden ph. 706-253-1700

Pickens County Board of Education member Ervin Easterwood has apologized for remarks he made at the July 1, 2004, school board

meeting in response to a presentation on standardized test scores. "I didn't mean what I said that night," said Easterwood.

Responding to parental concerns and criticism, Easterwood said, "When I looked at a reprint of my remarks I couldn't believe that I'd said what I did. Being a board member is a 24/7 job, not once a month. The people who know me know that I don't feel that way about the children who attend those schools [Hill City Elementary and Jasper Middle] and their parents."

At the July 1 meeting Easterwood responded to lower test scores at the two schools by referring to students at Jasper Middle School as "some real little knuckleheads." He also referred to the caliber of the students who attend the schools and said that they did not get much help at home.

"I know I was disappointed by the [testing] report," he said. "I was trying to point out the need for an alternative school for the system, but it didn't come out that way. We're all in this together as a team and I didn't do my part that night. I'm sorry I said it," said Easterwood.

Easterwood noted that Hill City Elementary and Jasper Middle School have great parental support. "The kids are great," he said. "I think these scores are probably more of a fluke than anything else, especially when you look at the scores from the year before last and you see that we didn't have these gaps [between the schools]. I know what we're capable of doing. I know our principals and teachers at these schools are doing an outstanding job."

Easterwood said he had received phone calls at home about his remarks reported in the July 14 *Progress* and wanted to address the concerns that had been voiced to him. Easterwood was re-elected Tuesday without opposition to a four year term on the school board and will serve through 2008.

-end-

Press Release

July 27, 2004

Re: School System Designated as Meeting Adequate Yearly Progress

Contact: Susan Reeves ph. 706-253-1700

Even though two of its schools were labeled by the state as not having met "Adequate Yearly Progress" (AYP), the Pickens County Schools system is one of only 57 school systems out of 182 in the state that have been designated as having met AYP in 2004. Jasper Elementary School and Jasper Middle School did not meet AYP, but the school system is considering an appeal of Jasper Elementary's designation. For Pickens High School and Pickens County Middle School, the latest state labels were a welcomed change. Pickens High made AYP and continued to improve its graduation, dropout, and attendance rates while anticipating another increase in SAT scores which will be released next month. Superintendent Lee Shiver said the most impressive outcome of this year's accountability assessments was the fact that Pickens County Middle School made AYP for the second consecutive year and has been taken off the state's "Needs Improvement" list for the first time in at least eight years.

"When PCMS Principal Chris LeMieux was brought in to lead the school in 2001, he committed himself to getting his school off the state's 'needs improvement' list," said Shiver. "Chris and his faculty and staff really deserve our acclaim for their work and commitment to a common vision of where their school needed to be. Their students have worked just as hard and the results speak for themselves," said Shiver. At Jasper Elementary School, the news from the state was expected, but the school system may appeal, according to Shiver. The school system successfully appealed to the state last year to change one school's (PCMS) designation.

According to the state's labeling formula, JES did not make AYP because special education students at the school did not do as well on the Criterion Referenced Competency Tests (CRCT) as expected. Shiver said he spoke with a Department of Education official who told him the school system had grounds for an appeal based on a reassessment of how former special education students who were moved into the regular instructional program were counted.

"This may boil down to a handful of students at JES, so we're going to

scrutinize our position," said Shiver.

Jasper Middle School did not make AYP for the second consecutive year, but will not be required to allow students to transfer to PCMS because the school came up short on an indicator that was different from last year's. The school was not designated as a "needs improvement" school for the same reason.

Susan Reeves, who coordinates federal programs for the school system, said that the federal law and the state's interpretation of the law are extremely confusing to the public, as well as to school officials and the media.

"It's a national issue," said Reeves. "The reason that the performance of special education students on standardized tests became a state standard was because the feds have contended for some time that public schools don't test certain students in order to achieve higher test scores," she said.

"I can't speak for other school systems," said Reeves, "but I still think most of the public is unaware that the labels often have little to do with the test scores themselves."

Shiver said a lot of school leaders and teachers are frustrated because schools can show improvement and higher student achievement levels under the state's accountability system, but be judged failing by the federal government.

"One of our greatest challenges is to use all of our available resources to help our schools avoid these labels by the end of this school year," said Shiver. "Explaining it to the public is just as important, and we're determined to do just that."

Pickens High School, Pickens County Middle School, Hill City Elementary School, and Tate Elementary School all made AYP according to the state. The state's AYP report for Pickens County and all school systems is available on the Department of Education's website: www.gadoe.org.

The federal *No Child Left Behind Act* requires states to raise standards annually in order for all students in grades 3-8 --- and all subgroups of students --- to be proficient in math and reading by 2012.

-end-

Press Release

July 28, 2004

Re: School Starting/End Times and Open House Dates

Contact: Donna Golden ph. 706-253-1700

Pickens County Schools' starting/end times are as follows: Hill City Elementary School will begin at 8:00 a.m. and end at 3:00 p.m. Jasper and Tate Elementary Schools will begin at 7:45 a.m. and end at 2:45 p.m. Jasper and Pickens County Middle Schools will begin at 8:00 a.m. and end at 3:15 p.m. Pickens High School will begin at 7:50 a.m. and end at 3:00 p.m.

Pickens County School's open house dates are as follows: Hill City Elementary School open house for Kindergarten is Tuesday, August 3, 2004, from 3:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m. and open house for grades 1-5 will be Wednesday, August 4, 2004, from 3:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m. Jasper and Tate Elementary Schools open house for grades K-5 will be Wednesday, August 4, 2004, from 3:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m. Jasper and Pickens County Middle Schools open house will be Tuesday, August 3, 2004, from 6:00 to 8:00 p.m. Pickens High School will have freshmen orientation on Tuesday, August 3, 2004, from 6:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m. and open house for grades 9-12 will be Thursday, August 12, 2004, from 6:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m.

-end-

Press Release

July 28, 2004

Re: Finance Committee Meeting, Monday, August 2

Contact: Donna Golden ph. 706-253-1700

The Pickens County Board of Education will conduct a finance committee meeting, chaired by Mark Mitton, on Monday, August 2, at 6:00 p.m. The finance committee will discuss elements of the FY05 budget, but no official action will be taken. The regularly scheduled board meeting is Thursday, August 5, at 6:00 p.m.

The finance committee meeting and the board meeting will be held at the Jasper Elementary School media center on D.B. Carroll Street in Jasper.

As always, the public and employees are invited to attend.

-end-

Press Release

August 3, 2004

Re: Finance Committee Meeting, Wednesday, August 11

Contact: Donna Golden ph. 706-253-1700

The Pickens County Board of Education will conduct a finance committee meeting, chaired by Mark Mitton, on Wednesday, August 11, at 6:00 p.m. The finance committee will discuss elements of the FY05 budget, but no official action will be taken.

The finance committee meeting and the board meeting will be held at the Jasper Elementary School media center on D.B. Carroll Street in Jasper.

As always, the public and employees are invited to attend.

-end-

Press Release

August 6, 2004

Re: Local School Board Members Work to Ensure Educational Quality

Contact: Donna Golden ph. 706-253-1700

Members of the Pickens County Board of Education were recently recognized for successfully completing board member training activities sponsored by the Georgia Schools Boards Association. Receiving certificates of recognition at the August 5, 2004, meeting of the board were members: Chairman Tony Young, Mark Mitton, Shirley Whitaker, and Ervin Easterwood.

Georgia was among the first states in the nation to require that local school board members receive training to ensure quality educational leadership. Board members receive training on topics such as: Georgia's Quality Basic Education Act (QBE), budgeting and financing, legal and policy issues, school and community relations and the roles and responsibilities of the school board.

"By participating in training and board development activities, local school board members show their dedication to improving the educational system for the students within their communities," said Jeannie M. (Sis) Henry, GSBA executive director. "Life-long learning doesn't just apply to our students, it applies to all of us-especially to those in a leadership role in public education."

The Georgia School Boards Association is a non-profit association representing Georgia's locally elected school boards.

-end-

Press Release

August 9, 2004

Re: Facilities Committee Meeting, Tuesday, August 24

Contact: Donna Golden ph. 706-253-1700

The Pickens County Board of Education will conduct a facilities committee meeting, chaired by Ervin Easterwood, on Tuesday, August 24, at 6:00 p.m. The facilities committee will discuss growth issues and possible property acquisition, but no official action will be taken.

The facilities committee meeting will be held at the Jasper Elementary School media center on D.B. Carroll Street in Jasper.

As always, the public and employees are invited to attend.

-end-

Press Release

August 10, 2004

Re: Public Invited to Submit Questions for Board Member Interviews; Called Board Meetings and Facilities Committee Meetings Scheduled

Contact: Donna Golden ph. 706-253-1700

The Pickens County Board of Education invites citizens to submit questions for the school board to consider using in their interview of candidates for the board seat vacancy. Questions must be in writing and must be submitted to the Board office no later than 4:00 p.m., Tuesday, August 24, 2004, for consideration.

The Board will conduct a called board meeting later that evening following a facilities committee meeting, which begins at 6:00 p.m., to discuss and review questions for the upcoming interviews.

The Board will conduct interviews of the candidates for the Board seat at a called meeting on Thursday, August 26, at 7:00 p.m. Questions may be submitted by mail or at the Board office at 159 Stegall Drive in Jasper and should be addressed to: Pickens County Board of Education,

c/o Tony Young, Chairman, 159 Stegall Drive, Jasper, Georgia 30143.

All meetings will be held at the Jasper Elementary School media center on D.B. Carroll Street in Jasper. As always, the public and employees are invited to attend.

-end-

Press Release

September 3 , 2004

Re: School Board Schedules Public Hearings and Called Meeting to Set Millage Rate

Contact: Donna Golden ph. 706-253-1700

The Pickens County Board of Education will conduct a called board meeting on Wednesday, September 8, at 6:00 p.m. to tentatively approve the 2004 millage rate for the school system. The Board has also scheduled three public hearings to give citizens an opportunity to respond to the anticipated notice of property tax increase and to make opinions on the increase known to the board. The public hearings are scheduled as follows: The first two public hearings will be Thursday, September 30, 2004, at 11:00 a.m. and 7:00 p.m. The third public hearing will be Thursday, October 7, 2004, at 5:00 p.m. The called meeting and public hearings will be held at the Jasper Elementary School media center on D.B. Carroll Street in Jasper.

-end-

Attachments:

[Five Year History FY 2005](#) | [FY 2005 Tentative Budget](#)

September 20 , 2004

NOTICE OF PROPERTY TAX INCREASE

The Pickens County Board of Education has tentatively adopted a millage rate which will require an increase in property taxes by 8.46%.

All concerned citizens are invited to the public hearings on this tax increase to be held at the Jasper Elementary School Media Center on D. B. Carroll Street on Thursday, September 30, 2004 at 11:00 a.m. and 7:00 p.m. and Thursday, October 7, 2004 at 5:00 p.m.

September 20 , 2004

NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING

The Pickens County Board of Education has scheduled three public hearings to give citizens an opportunity to respond to the anticipated notice of property tax increase and to make opinions on the increase known to the board. The public hearings are scheduled as follows: The first two public hearings will be Thursday, September 30, 2004, at 11:00 a.m. and 7:00 p.m. The third public hearing will be Thursday, October 7, 2004, at 5:00 p.m. The public hearings will be held at the Jasper Elementary School media center on D.B. Carroll Street in Jasper.

Press Release

September 20 , 2004

Re: Board of Education Seeks Property Tax Increase and Schedules Public Hearings

Contact: Amy Burgess ph. 706-253-1700

For the first time in five years, the Pickens County Board of Education is planning to increase the millage rate which generates local tax revenues for the school system. At a called board meeting held Wednesday, September 8, the board voted to tentatively approve a local tax rate of 15.87, an increase of less than one mill from last year.

The school board is required by state law to announce a property tax increase of 8.46% because the school system will receive more local tax

revenue than last year's millage rate would have produced had no property reassessments occurred.

In accordance with state law, the board will conduct three public hearings for concerned citizens to respond to the proposed property tax increase and to make their opinions on the increase known to the board. The hearings have been scheduled for Thursday, September 30, 2004, at 11:00 a.m. and 7:00 p.m., and Thursday, October 7, 2004, at 5:00 p.m. at the Jasper Elementary School Media Center on D.B. Carroll Street.

Board of Education Chairman Tony Young said, "We have worked hard putting a cost effective budget together, but the \$5 million in state cuts we have absorbed over the last three years has overwhelmed our local cost cutting efforts. It's a frustrating and difficult decision, especially when you consider that our tax rate was below the state average last year and we're looking at even more cuts next year from the state."

Amy Burgess, Assistant Superintendent for Business Services, pointed out that the school system will spend more out of the system's fund balance than the property tax increase will generate to meet the overall budget. "We're probably one of only a handful of school systems in the state to have reduced our tax rate four consecutive years, but we must be responsible about our planning for projected growth, improving our facilities, and property acquisition," she said.

School Superintendent Lee Shiver said, "We have worked hard to increase our cost effectiveness and lower our per pupil expenditures while improving student academic achievement rates. The board has really held this budget up to the light even though a growing school system costs more money."

The board will not vote to finalize the proposed millage rate reduction and budget until the next regular monthly board meeting to be held October 7, 2004, at 6:00 p.m. As always, the public and employees are invited to attend.

-end-

Press Release

October 8 , 2004

**Re: School Board Schedules Facilities Committee Workshop and
Called Meeting**

Contact: Donna Golden ph. 706-253-1700

The Pickens County Board of Education will conduct a called board meeting and facilities committee workshop on Tuesday, October 19, 2004, at 6:00 p.m. The board is scheduled to consider personnel recommendations at the called meeting.

The meetings will be held at the Jasper Elementary School media center on D.B. Carroll Street in Jasper. As always, the public and employees are invited to attend.

-end-

October 15 , 2004

**Advertisement For Proposals For Construction Management At
Risk For Major Building Projects During The Next Two Years For
The Pickens County School System**

The Pickens County Board of Education will receive proposals until the end of the business day on October 25, 2004 for Construction Management at Risk for building projects during the next two years. This will include a new elementary school that will begin construction in January/February 2005. The new school is located in Pickens County, Georgia. Copies of the RFP are available by contacting Mike Ballew, Director of Special Projects, Pickens County Board of Education, 159 Stegall Drive, Jasper, Georgia 30143. The phone number at the Pickens County BOE is (706) 253-1700, and the direct phone number for Mike Ballew is (706) 253-1720.

The Pickens County Board of Education reserves the right to reject any and all proposals and to waive technicalities.

Press Release

October 22 , 2004

Re: School Board Meeting Location Changed

Contact: Donna Golden ph. 706-253-1700

The Pickens County Board of Education will conduct their regularly scheduled board meeting on Thursday, November 04, 2004, at 6:00 p.m. at the Pickens High School Auditorium on Dragon Drive in Jasper.

As always, the public and employees are invited to attend.

-end-

Press Release

November 4, 2004

Re: Pickens High School Football Playoff Game Advance Ticket Sales

Contact: Donna Golden ph. 706-253-1700

Advance tickets for the Pickens High School football playoff game Friday night, November 5, will go on sale tonight at the high school beginning at 5:00 p.m. Advance tickets are all priced at \$8.00 and will be available Friday at all Pickens County Schools and the Central Office.

Ticket prices are set by the Georgia High School Association and all persons attending the game, including regular season ticket holders, are required to purchase a ticket.

Gates will open at 4:30 p.m. and early concessions will be available. Kickoff is at 7:30 p.m. Fans are reminded that there will be no reserved seating for the game.

Parking behind the school will cost \$3.00 per vehicle. Fans are strongly encouraged to purchase their tickets in advance. Personal checks should be made out to Pickens High School.

-end-

Press Release

November 9, 2004

Re: Facilities/Policy Workshops Monday, November 15

Contact: Donna Golden ph. 706-253-1700

The Pickens County Board of Education will conduct facilities and policy workshops on Monday, November 15, at 6:00 p.m.

The meetings will be held at the Jasper Elementary School media center on D.B. Carroll Street in Jasper.

As always, the public and employees are invited to attend.

-end-

Press Release

December 8, 2004

Re: Facilities Workshop Wednesday, December 15

Contact: Donna Golden ph. 706-253-1700

The Pickens County Board of Education will conduct a facilities workshop on Wednesday, December 15, at 6:30 p.m.

The meeting will be held at the Jasper Elementary School media center on D.B. Carroll Street in Jasper.

As always, the public and employees are invited to attend.

-end-

Press Release

December 13, 2004

**Re: School Board Schedules Facilities Committee Workshop and
Called Meeting**

Contact: Donna Golden ph. 706-253-1700

The Pickens County Board of Education will conduct a called board meeting and facilities committee workshop on Wednesday, December 15, 2004, at 6:30 p.m. The board anticipates discussing personnel issues in executive session at the called meeting.

The meetings will be held at the Jasper Elementary School media center on D.B. Carroll Street in Jasper. As always, the public and employees are invited to attend.

-end-