

EDUCATION

# School Board tours KMHS \$150,000 hike in school milk prices

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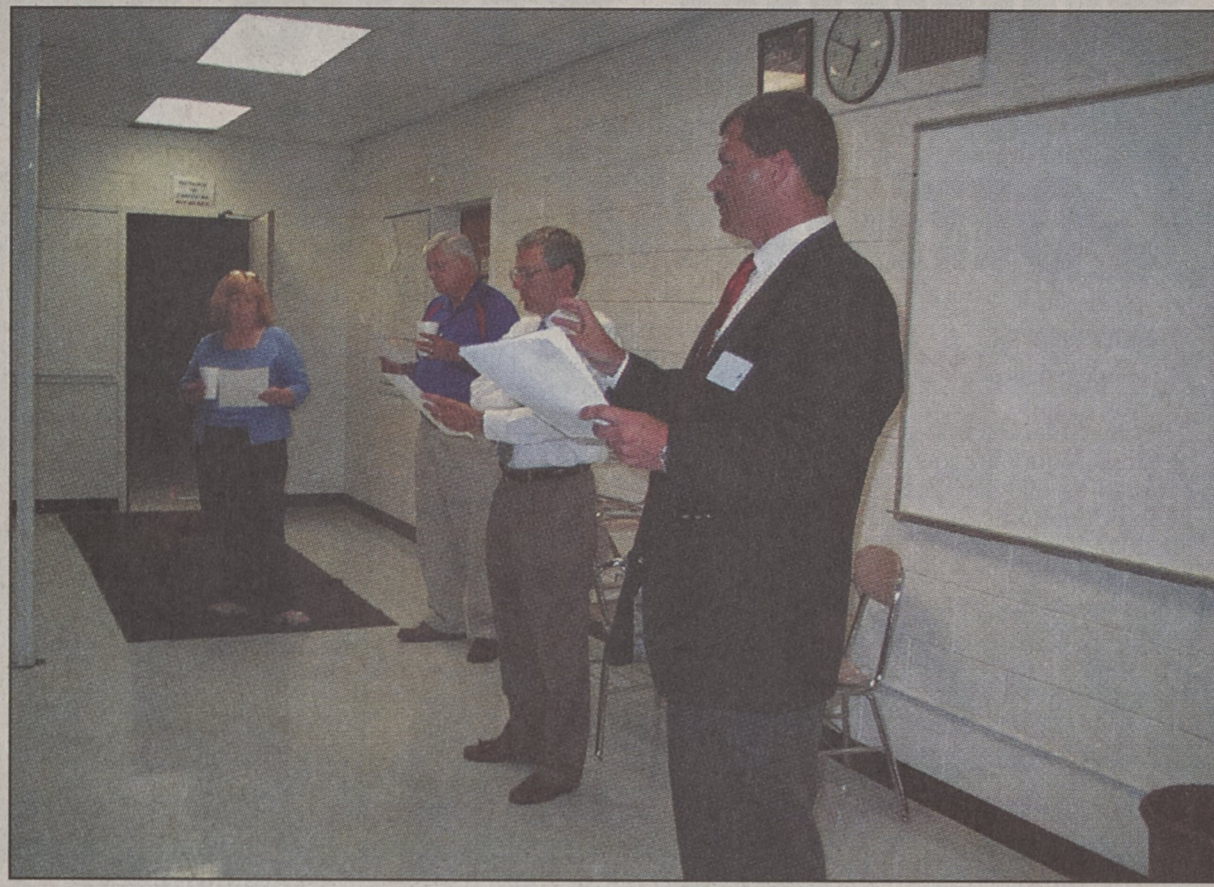
Cleveland County Board of Education members gathered at the Kings Mountain High School cafeteria around 5:30 pm on Monday for dinner and a tour of the main campus.

Board members walked through the old welding and carpentry shops that are currently under construction. New walls have been put up to transform the open shops into classrooms, which will accommodate 10 new instructional areas within the main building. Assistant Superintendent for Operations John Yarbro said that three Spanish classes and three Exceptional Children classes, all of which were formally in mobile units, will find a home in the new classrooms, along with four floating teachers. The Phifer Road Project that produced the new Business and Industry Technologies (BIT building) across from the main campus, opened up a total of 12 additional instructional areas. Fourteen teachers will be permanently housed in the BIT building and two teachers will float.

Eight mobile units will be removed from the main campus, three of which will be going across the street to the BIT building, Yarbro told members. "This will completely clean the parking lot out on that side of the campus," he said. "This leaves nine mobile units on the main campus."

Four Math teachers, two History teachers, two Drama teachers, and one French teacher will be stationed in the mobile units. "Seven of these nine teachers were in mobile units during the 2006-07 school year. The other two teachers floated," he said.

The term, "floating teachers," refers to instructors who do not



Assistant Superintendent John Yarbro (right) explains to school board members and CCS personnel some of the current renovations establishing 10 new classrooms inside KMHS' main building. Left to right: Shearra Miller, Tommy Greene, and Superintendent Bruce Boyles.

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have a permanent classroom and therefore use the instructional areas that are empty and available to them at the time. Last year, KMHS had 10 floating teachers. Only five have been predicted for the 2007-08 school year. The school is also adding another Huskins course, which offers students a chance to earn community college credits without leaving KMHS. Kings Mountain High is also offering 10 AP (Advanced Placement) courses next year, including two virtual classes from Burns and Crest high schools. Students at KMHS will be able to take an AP Government class on the KM campus that is taught at Burns and Crest. Through a live video feed they will be able to hear and see the remote instructor and be able to verbally interact with the

teachers, who are, in reality, dozens of miles away. The instructor will also be able to hear and see the KM students.

Also new this year is the opening of the BIT building, posing the question "how do the students cross the road?" The NC Department of Transportation recommended that Cleveland County Schools pay them to build an overpass or a tunnel for the children to cross. But that option is a little out of the school system's price range. They also posed the idea of rerouting Phifer Road around the BIT building. Also pricey. The DOT's concept plan for a temporary solution is a refuge island with crosswalks.

According to the plan, a crosswalk will guide the students across the first lane of Phifer

Road, into a concrete median ("refuge island") where they will then venture across the last lane of Phifer to a concrete area at the corner of Maner and Phifer. The students will make their last cross on Maner to a concrete sidewalk that leads them to the BIT building. "Our goal is for them never to cross the road without adult supervision," said Principal Ronny Funderburke. He added that whether teachers in their planning periods or the student resource officer act as crossing guards, an adult should be present.

Board member Philip Glover asked if flashing caution lights would accompany the signage recommended in the proposal. Yarbro said that the plan for the refuge island is just a draft. Nothing is set in concrete yet.

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Milk may do a body good, but Career Readiness may do a student good. Milk-supplier bids and Career Readiness Certificates were the main highlights of the Cleveland County Board of Education meeting Monday night in Kings Mountain High's Media Center.

Jada Brown, CCS' director of child nutrition, presented bids for bread, milk, foods and supplies for the 2007-08 school year to the board for approval. She received price quotes for the nutrition supplies, after the bids were sent out to companies and officially opened on April 20. For bread products, she said that they received no bid from Flowers Bakery Company, a bid of \$123,400 from Sara Lee Bakery, and a bid of \$120,750 from Interstate/Merita Bakery. She recommended that the board accept the lowest bid from Merita.

For foods and supplies, Brown suggested the lowest bid they received of \$2,164,019.94 from US Food Service.

She recommended the lowest bid they received of \$615,209.85 for milk products from PET Dairy. Board member Richard Hooker asked if the prices have gone down any from last year. "Our bread bid consistently goes down year after year," she said, adding that the competition between Merita and Sara Lee keeps the prices low. "Merita, who we've always had in the past as our low bidder, continues to be our low bidder."

Milk, however, will impact "our budget \$150,000 more than last year," she added. The cost of a carton of milk last year was 19 cents. This year, it will cost 25 cents. "Foods (and supplies) remains relatively unchanged. Milk will be the significant impact this year," she said.

Assistant Superintendent Darrin Hartness gave a presentation on the NC Career Readiness Certification program. For the first time this year, students were able to take a Work Keys test, designed by ACT to "measure real-world skills."

"It measures Applied Math, Reading for Information, and Locating Information," he said, which have been "identified by employers as the most critical (beginning assets) for employees."

But the system also profiles the basic skills needed for specific jobs, measures the skill levels of test-takers, highlights areas that need improvement, and "recognizes accomplishments with a Career Readiness Certificate at a Gold, Silver or Bronze level," he said.

"We recognize that not all of our students are college bound," Hartness added. "We thought it would be nice to give them this assessment so that they could determine 'where am I with being employable in the community?' It would also give us an idea of the skills that we need to infuse into our curriculum. It would also give current and future employers in our community an idea of the broad range of abilities within our community."

The results are promising. In the district, 728 high school students were tested in spring 2007. Most of the test-takers were sophomores or juniors, finishing up their first CTE course. Out of the 728, 74 percent (542) scored at the gold, silver or bronze levels. Sixty-eight gold certificates, 313 silver certificates and 61 bronze certificates were "personally signed" by the governor and sent to CCS to be delivered this Fall. Hartness said that students will have opportunities to see how they scored and in which areas need improvement.

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