

Parke County Non-Partisan  
Committee on Political Education  
April 26, 2008

Subject: Meeting Minutes – April 26, 2008

The April 26<sup>th</sup> Meeting was held at St. Joseph's Holy Family Hall in Rockville. The purpose of this meeting was to learn the status of Parke County School Board unification. There was also an open forum Question & Answer Session with the School Board Candidates from Rockville, and Turkey Run School Systems.

The meeting was opened at 9:00am. Following introductions and a few "housekeeping" items Greg Harbison, Parke County Commissioner and Chairman of the Parke County School Unification Committee provided an update of the Unification efforts. Greg said the Committee is working to obtain a Grant to conduct a study to detail the impact of School Board Unification. Currently they are accepting bids from consultants to help apply for the Grant. By the 3<sup>rd</sup> week of May a decision will be made and the grant request will be completed by fall. The objective of this study will be to assemble all the facts associated with the proposed Unification, and then turn the information over to the School Boards. The School Boards must first decide if they are interested in proceeding. If there is interest the proposal for Unification will go on the ballot for public vote. It was pointed out by Jim St. Clair that Consolidation has always been a "scary word" to the public. Greg said that they are only looking at unification of the School Administration, not the Schools. The individual Schools will retain their identities after the Unification is complete. The big issues are 1) going from 3 Superintendents to 1, 2) Consolidation of Debt, and 3) Consideration of future Debt. Greg offered to update the group later in the year after further progress in the grant, and study has been conducted.

Of the 10 candidates running for Rockville, and Turkey Run School Boards that were invited to the meeting only 2 were present. Wilma Wooten, from Turkey Run, and Pam Burgess from Rockville attended the meeting and answered questions. Jessica Harney-Lynk running for Turkey Run S.B. , Roger Bridges, and Jeff Gooch both running for Rockville S.B. provided written statements of their backgrounds, and visions for their candidacies. (Please go to [www.parkecountycopel.com](http://www.parkecountycopel.com) to see these statements)

Following opening introductions by the two Candidates the floor was opened for questions:

The Candidates each responded to a total of 8 questions from the audience. These questions ranged from class size, and facilities usage, Student transfers outside of the

current School boundaries, and curriculum priorities to issues with Alternative Schools. Of all the issues addressed, the Unification issues still is a big item requiring much study and discussion.

Following approximately one hour of questions and discussion the session was ended.

I would like to personally thank Wilma Wooten and Pam Burgess for attending this session. Also special thanks to Greg Harbison for his update on School Board Unification.

The meeting was adjourned at 10:15am.

The next meeting is scheduled for May 10<sup>th</sup> at the Parke County Fairground Extension Office Meeting Room @ 9:00am. The topic of discussion will be the Parke County Highway Department, current and future problems and plans.

John Anderson

Chairman

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