

Head Start...from Page 1A

helpful for getting younger kids ready for kindergarten and the school environment.

“Head Start is for children that are 3 and 4 as of September first of the current school year,” Moss said. “We are income-based, and we have a point system base as well, based off the national Office of Head Start.”

“We have a curriculum

program basically like the pre-K program and that type of thing. We follow the calendars of the Union County School System. The only difference is, this year, Union County did virtual Fridays, and we actually have students on Fridays.”

Currently, participation in the program is down due to COVID-19, but Moss encourages families to take advantage of the resource if they meet the requirements.

“Right now, we have two classrooms, so we can have up to 34 children at the moment,” Moss said. “If there is a need, we can open more classrooms, but that is what we are funded for at the moment.”

In addition to being a great learning resource for children in the community, Head Start is helpful in other regards, like making sure parents stay up to date in terms of when their children need to get wellness screenings.

The program has been implementing COVID-19 best practices, too, to prioritize the safety of staff and students.

“Right now, we are following (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention) guidelines and taking temperatures before they get out of the car,” Moss said. “It has impacted us as far as enrollment goes, but we have not had a child with a COVID case here in our center.”

“We do screenings every day and ask COVID questions. Our staff wears masks all throughout the day. Children do not have to wear masks, but the staff do, and we monitor for any symptoms. There is a lot of handwashing and teaching them how to be safe.”

Also helping to combat COVID-19, Head Start programs all over the country have benefited from CARES Act funding to allow more resources amid the pandemic, which the CDC reported earlier this program year as being successful in keeping classrooms safe.

“Our Head Start staff have gone the extra mile these past several months to keep families safe and provide

a critical lifeline to health, mental health, early education, and nutrition resources,” said Allison Setterlind, Director of Georgia’s Head Start Collaboration Office.

People interested in signing their children up for the program may visit NDO.org or call 706-745-4200.

“We are handling most of our applications over the phone,” Moss said. “What I would need is parents to take a picture and send me or scan their income for the last 12 months.”

“The easiest way is if they have done their taxes for 2020, if they have the 1040 for their taxes, I can take the number off that. It is based off household income and size.”

“We take applications even throughout the school year if they qualify and enroll students for the current year.”

Head Start also services children with disabilities, though no transportation is provided for the program.

School Board...from Page 1A



Bus Drivers Tommy Greene and Vaughn Palmateer were among several school staff members to receive recognition last week for “Going the Extra Mile.” Also pictured: Transportation Director Kody Owenby and Superintendent John Hill.

Photo by Jarrett Whitener

“He is extremely reliable and experienced, and he has done a fantastic job serving the Middle School since 2015. We are excited to have him at the Primary School.”

“Mrs. Donaldson has served in a leadership role for years here in Union County and was very successful at the Alternative School and UCHS. She will do a great job in her new role as Middle School principal.”

“Both leaders have big shoes to fill, as Mrs. Owenby and Mrs. Stafford have been outstanding principals for the district for eight years. We will miss these veteran leaders and are thankful for their service but are also excited to see Mr. Womack and Mrs. Donaldson in their new roles.”

During his Superintendent’s Report, Hill discussed plans for a more “academically focused” summer program to get students needing it up to speed after time lost due to the pandemic.

“Many kids have been quarantined multiple times, and it will be academically focused,” Hill said. “It will not be typical summer school with a blend of academic and fun stuff. This will be to the point and focus on literacy and mathematics during that time.”

All students K-12 will have access to the summer

program, of which the School Board was fully supportive, with Board Member Julia Barnett saying, “I love it – I think it is great.”

The program will feature in-person instruction only, with a strict guideline that students may not miss more than two days or face removal from the program since its duration will be short.

While the district will not require students to attend, participation will be strongly recommended, especially for kids who are at risk of losing class credit.

Last week served as Georgia School Board Appreciation Week, and on behalf of the school district, Hill thanked the Union County Board of Education that evening for the service and dedication of its members concerning the success and safety of students and staff this year.

Hill specifically complimented board members on their leadership regarding COVID-19 decisions, highlighting the fact that the schools have not had to shut down since the start of the school year.

Additionally, Hill said the district has proven to be unique in the state, in that Union County Schools have gained more students this year at the same time many other schools have been losing students amid

pandemic conditions.

“I want to remind you the vast majority of our county is extremely appreciative of what you do and the volunteer work that you do to take care of their children and to look after the tax dollars of Union County,” Hill said.

Also in the meeting, Bus Drivers Tommy Greene and Vaughn Palmateer were recognized for their job performance and for “Going the Extra Mile” in service to students and others.

“A lot of times, the unsung heroes in the school district are our bus drivers,” Hill said. “We have done a good job talking about thanking our bus drivers, but sometimes they actually do heroic acts to keep everyone safe.”

“A few weeks ago, we had a little medical issue with another driver, and these two gentlemen went way above and beyond the call of duty to make sure that every person on that bus got home safe and the driver got home safe.”

Other Extra Mile Awards went to Amber Talton and Emily Stafford for their dedication to the Special Education Department.

An award also went to Principal C.T. Hussion in recognition of the successful expansion of the Advance Placement program at the High School during the pandemic.



(L-R) Special Education Services Director Tiffany Setzer, center, presented Emily Stafford and Amber Talton with “Going the Extra Mile” awards in the March 16 School Board meeting, honoring the women’s dedication to the Special Education Department.

Photo by Jarrett Whitener