



BOARD highlights

A QUICK LOOK AT THE BOARD OF EDUCATION MEETINGS OF PUTNAM CITY SCHOOLS

April 16, 2018

Seven Golden Apple Award Winners Named

The Putnam City Public Schools Foundation Monday night presented Golden Apple Awards to seven people in recognition of their service and dedication to district students. Awards went to Antinette “Cookie” Friday, a teacher’s aide at Tulakes Elementary; Becky Gooch, a school volunteer and member of the district’s board of education; Andrea Selfridge, a teacher at Hilldale Elementary School; Brittani Phillips, a teacher at Putnam City North; Paula Hardesty, the attendance secretary at Arbor Grove Elementary; Jason Hasty, the district’s PEP Grant manager; and Jeryl Lee, the crossing guard at Ralph Downs Elementary School.

The honors are given each year to employees and volunteers who promote excellence in education. Each honoree received a check for \$200.

Since 1992, the Foundation has honored more than 240 district employees and volunteers with Golden Apple awards.

Below are excerpts of comments read about each of this year’s honorees, including quotes (in italics) from some of the people who nominated them.

Antinette “Cookie” Friday Tulakes Elementary Aspire Teacher Assistant

Antinette “Cookie” Friday has worked at Tulakes Elementary for five years. She excels in building positive relationships with everyone who enters the building, and is highly respected by staff, students and parents. In addition to her regular job duties as a teacher assistant in Aspire, the district’s elementary behavior program, Cookie volunteers as a coach of intramural sports at Tulakes. She can frequently be found helping to plan and organize various activities and events in support of teachers and students.

Quotes from those who nominated Cookie:

“Cookie’s impact on the culture and morale at Tulakes Elementary is inspiring. She goes above and beyond in every aspect of her job, and even in areas that are not in the realm of her responsibilities.

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COMMENTS by Public and Board Members

Patron Jim Shields thanked teachers for teaching students, parents and the community what it means to be a citizen.

Board members thanked Golden Apple Award winners for their contributions to the district.

Jay Sherrill said that teachers advocating for adequate funding for public schools had the effect of bringing people in the state together. He added that as a parent and a board member he wants teachers supported in every way possible. He also said longer instructional days in the district are an example of the district going above and beyond.

Cindy Gibbs said watching the actions taken by teachers at the Capitol during the last two weeks brought her to tears more than once.

Gail LoPresto thanked teachers for drawing attention to education funding. She said the work done by teachers at the Capitol will make her a better researched and more informed voter. She said the time at the Capitol was productive because it started needed

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Meeting Date: Monday, April 16, 5 p.m.
Location: Administration Building
Roll Call: Four members of the board were present: Becky Gooch, president; Gail LoPresto, vice president; Cindy Gibbs; and Jay Sherrill. Also present were Dr. Fred Rhodes, superintendent; and Samantha Dawes, deputy board clerk.
Next Meeting: Monday, May 7, 5 p.m.

Putnam City Schools does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion, gender, national origin, age, marital or veteran status, or disability.

**SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT** by Dr. Fred Rhodes

▶ Today marks the first day back for students since Friday, March 30. Monday, April 2 was designated by our board of education as an Advocacy Day to allow employees the opportunity to be at the Capitol to advocate for additional funding for our schools. During this two-week period, while many student activities have been put on hold, much has been accomplished. We have seen tangible accomplishments such as additional funding for teacher and support staff salaries. But in my opinion, one of the greatest accomplishments has come in the form of something that is intangible. Today, like no other time in our state's history, we are seeing incredible public support for our public school systems. Our public is now keenly aware of our needs and they are responding!

As Oklahomans have always done, through such historical events such as the dust bowl days, the Great Depression and the bombing of the Alfred P. Murrah Federal Building, they have rallied to the cause. That is just what Oklahomans do. Oklahomans are salt-of-the-earth people who have always answered the call to help one another. Oklahomans step up when they see the need because of caring hearts, a strong sense of pride and an incredible spirit of giving. Personally, I underestimated the response from our public. Instead of waning support, it was just the opposite. The momentum of the parent and public support for our public schools increased each day and is still continuing. Our students will be the beneficiaries for years to come because of this strong support.

No doubt, many will be asking how this two-week absence from the classroom will affect our student calendar. By starting back to class today, the last day for our students will still be Thursday, May 24. One might be asking, "How is this possible?" This is possible because the student day for a Putnam City student is longer than most school districts across the state. That is a decision that was made several years ago and a very wise one, for sure. And, because each year Putnam City files a waiver with the State Department of Education to count a school year by the 1,080-hour rule, we will have met that requirement.

Employees who work directly with students will be able to fulfill their contractual requirements by adding 15 minutes to each day between now and Friday, May 25. This was one reason for personnel to report last Friday, April 13. These two factors combined are allowing these employees to complete their year before the Memorial Day holiday.

To our public, we owe a great deal of gratitude for staying with us and answering the call to make provisions for our students during this unprecedented event in our state's history. Thank you for all you have done and will continue to do for Putnam City!

▶ Oloruntoun Ogunbase, a student at Putnam City West High School, has been selected by the Oklahoma Medical Research Foundation as one of 13 Oklahoma high school and college students to be honored as a 2018 Fleming Scholar. The students spend eight weeks working with OMRF scientists on research projects on autoimmune disease, cancer, cardiovascular disease and other issues. At the end of their time as Fleming Scholars, students will author scientific papers and deliver presentations to OMRF researchers.

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Board Comments

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conversations. She also thanked Eric Winkle and the PCACT for their role in efforts at the Capitol.

Becky Gooch said the district values the instructional time it provides. She also thanked the Putnam City Schools Foundation for sponsoring the Golden Apple awards, adding that the award she received was very humbling.

Emergency Leave Granted by Board

The board on Monday night approved seven emergency leave days for the current school year: April 3, April 4, April 5, April 6, April 9, April 10 and April 11.

Emergency leave days do not need to be made up by employees.

At the board's April 2 meeting, board members approved three days of emergency leave – two for days missed due to inclement weather and one for the district's April 2 Advocacy Day.

Certified Staff Rehired

The board on Monday night voted unanimously to rehire certified employees for the 2018-2019 school year.

Board Highlights is not a comprehensive review of every item that takes place at board of education meetings. Its purpose is merely to provide information about items that seem of most interest to district employees and patrons. Complete board meeting minutes may be found at <http://www.putnamcityschools.org/BoardofEducation/BoardMeetingMinutes/tabid/565/Default.aspx>

Golden Apples Awarded to Seven People (continued from page 1)

"Cookie has a close relationship with our students and their families, as well as with every staff member in our building. She works closely with every teacher to help meet the individual needs of any student, whether they are in Aspire or not."

"She gives of herself without expecting anything in return. Our students, school, and district benefit from her presence, strength of character, and kindness every day."

Becky Gooch**Putnam City Board Of Education
Volunteer and Board President**

Becky Gooch has volunteered in the Putnam City School District for 17 years. Since her children started school, Becky's contributions to the district have been felt in a myriad of ways. Her service has ranged from volunteering in the library and at book fairs to fundraising for playground equipment, athletics and arts programs. In addition, she has held many leadership roles in district organizations, including PTA president at Will Rogers Elementary, Hefner Middle School and Putnam City North High School, as well as president and 1st vice president for the Putnam City PTA Council. Since 2008 she has been a member of the Putnam City Schools' board of education and currently serves as president. Becky is highly regarded for being a consistent advocate of the district, educators, and students.

Quotes from those who nominated Becky:

"Dedicated. Courageous. Persistent. Passionate. These are key words to describe a dedicated volunteer for Putnam City Schools ... These are key words to describe Becky ..."

"She always does what she believes is the right thing for our kids ... she fights for the weak and underserved and champions the strong and winners."

**Andrea Selfridge
Hilldale Elementary****4th-grade and 5th-grade Teacher**

Andrea Selfridge has been teaching 4th-grade and 5th-grade students at Hilldale Elementary for eight years. She is widely known for the positive and lasting influence she has on her students, whom she lovingly refers to as "Selfridge babies." Andrea was recognized as Hilldale's Teacher of the Year in 2016-2017 school year and has been named a Putnam City Excellent Educator. She has also been named Teacher of the Month by the Oklahoma City Council and Downtown Rotary Club. Andrea considers teaching a calling to impact the lives of her students.

Quotes from those who nominated Andrea:

"Miss Selfridge has taught me not only how to be smart, but also how to be a better person."

"She genuinely cares about not only the academic growth of her students but their social and emotional well-being as well."

"Supporting her students doesn't end in the classroom. She gives countless time attending students' activities outside school hours, even attending their birthday parties when invited."

**Brittani Phillips
Putnam City North High School
Leadership Teacher**

Brittani Phillips began her career as a Family and Consumer Science teacher at Putnam City North four years ago.

She is highly respected by faculty

and students for her capacity to motivate and inspire students into action, especially those who haven't been involved in activities before. Brittani currently serves as the Leadership teacher and student council sponsor, and also leads the school's philanthropic activities. She is responsible for bringing the freshman mentoring program Link Crew to Putnam City North, which has had a positive impact on the students.

Quotes from those who nominated Brittani:

"Mrs. Phillips believed in me when I didn't even believe in myself and pushed me to do things out of my comfort zone and has helped me go from the quiet, shy girl ... to the person who loves public speaking and speaks in front of thousands of people at conferences."

"She makes a difference in the lives of every person she encounters."

**Paula Hardesty
Arbor Grove Elementary
Attendance Secretary**

Paula Hardesty is the attendance secretary at Arbor Grove Elementary, where she has worked for 18 years. She is greatly appreciated by students and staff for her experience in juggling multiple responsibilities with a smile, regardless of how busy she is. Paula is known as the go-to person for questions no one else can answer. She treats everyone with kindness and compassion and is committed to creating a welcoming environment for anyone who calls or comes through the doors of the school.

Quotes from those who nominated Paula:

"She is humble, gracious, understanding, gentle but firm, sensible, trustworthy, honest, perceptive, and kind."

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Golden Apples Awarded to Seven People (continued from page 3)

“Paula has made a huge impact on the school climate and culture of Arbor Grove.”

“She has a heart for making sure EVERY student at our school is treated with respect, and this includes our students with developmental disabilities, extreme emotional needs, learning differences, or behavioral challenges.”

“Paula is the ‘glue’ that holds us together.”

Jason Hasty**Physical Education/Administration
PEP Grant Manager**

Jason Hasty has been with Putnam City Schools for 20 years. His career with the district began as a physical education teacher, and he currently serves as the district’s physical education coordinator. Most recently he is responsible for bringing action-based learning labs to our schools. It was through his efforts that the district was awarded a \$2.1 million grant that has transformed Putnam City’s elementary physical education program.

In addition, 10 years ago he founded the Putnam City Cancer Classic 5k and Fun Run. Under his guidance the number of participants has increased each year. Jason is highly regarded for his commitment to promoting health and physical education throughout the district.

Quotes from those who nominated Jason:

“The experiences, resources, knowledge, and opportunities that Jason has provided our elementary schools with over the past four years are incredible and I doubt will ever be repeated.”

“He cares about our students and wants to instill the love of staying healthy into each and every student and teacher across the district.”

Jeryl Lee**Ralph Downs Elementary
Crossing Guard**

Jeryl Lee has been the crossing guard at Ralph Downs Elementary for two years. Rain or shine, Jeryl arrives to work early and stays until the last student

is gone. He genuinely cares about the children and their well-being, including making sure students have warm clothes in winter. In addition to his crossing guard duties, Jeryl often volunteers his time and expertise on carpentry projects that make a positive impact on the school.

Quotes from those who nominated Jeryl:

“No matter how the day begins or what troubles have presented themselves, you can always count on Jeryl Lee to have a smile on his face and a snack for a hungry student.”

“I have noticed Mr. Lee going above and beyond to serve our school and the students who attend here ... when he notices a child with clothes too small or no coat, he will purchase needed items and give them to the office staff for the student to take home.”

“Jeryl Lee is a great ambassador for Ralph Downs Elementary and the Putnam City school district.”



Putnam City’s newest Golden Apple Award winners are (front row, from left to right) Becky Gooch, Antinette “Cookie” Friday, and Paula Hardesty, and (back row, from left to right) Jeryl Lee, Brittani Phillips, Andrea Selfridge and Jason Hasty.

Board President Praises District Employees, Calls for Fight to Continue

Board president Becky Gooch on Monday night spoke about what she saw and heard at the Capitol during the two weeks teacher were actively campaigning at the Capitol for more education funding. Here's the full text of her comments:

"To say that the last month has been stressful would be a gross understatement for everyone in this room. This last month has been emotional, heart-wrenching and heartwarming – all at the very same time. The last two weeks have been eye-opening, powerful and meaningful for everyone involved in public education.

"As many of you know, I work for the Legislature. I draft legislation pertaining to public safety issues and agencies within the State of Oklahoma. Professionally, I have nothing to do with education legislation or issues. However, in my heart and soul, I have everything to do with the value and sanctity of public education in this state

For the last two weeks I have watched closely from the wings of the Capitol as almost without question every single one of you have been in the building and on the lawn advocating, encouraging, yes - sometimes chanting, but most importantly, engaging in dialog that has been long overdue. I witnessed many of you talking to our elected officials about the needs of our schools, our students and our district. I heard very little talk about teacher pay raises. I heard talk about students, class sizes, curriculum needs and talks of how to better be involved in the process for positive change.

"I received a phone call from an executive assistant EA last week whose senator represents (or did, before Tuesday) our district well. She was in tears because some of our teachers had taken the time to leave her lunch and a very sweet note of appreciation on her desk. She was incredibly touched by their kindness. I talked to another EA on Wednesday last week and she commented that she had a very upset new teacher in her office and some of our teachers from Dennis Elementary overheard the remarks by this new teacher. They made sure to go back by the EA's office and apologize on behalf of that teacher and make sure that the EA realized how much they appreciated her kindness and open-door policy for the last two weeks. Last Friday, I spent time in Sen. Quinn's office (Claremore area) with teachers from Dennis, Apollo and Western Oaks as we listened to the floor debate on ball and dice and the Amazon bills. Renita White and these teachers had befriended Sen. Quinn the week before. He opened his office, provided snacks and let them hang out listening to the debate in the comfort (OK – the floor!) of his office. As I went back to work, they were writing thank you notes to pass out before they left the Capitol that day.

"I have witnessed our teachers in line to watch proceedings, waiting and talking to legislators encouraging students to reach out to their elected officials and parents at the Capitol supporting the need for adequate funding of public education.

"I know that our board members

have been involved in the campaign at the Capitol. Our Putnam City community has stepped up on every level. I am so full of pride and appreciation for the professionals and patrons of this district. It's overwhelming to see it all in motion. As a district, we are incredibly blessed.

"However, I would be remiss to say that we are finished with this fight for our district and our teachers, but most importantly, for our current students and for our future students. We must not be finished fighting the good fight. We must be engaged in the process. We must support and elect public education-minded individuals to serve in the legislature. We must continue the dialog of commitment to funding, to increasing teacher pay, to increasing support staff pay, to reducing paperwork and to quit changing the bar on testing and teacher evaluations. We need to continue to move forward as a state and ensure that our best and brightest minds want to be educators in Oklahoma. Our students deserve the very best teachers that we can provide. These are all goals that we as a district can continue to support.

"Thank you seems inadequate – but yet, it is very heartfelt. Thank you for all you do – yesterday, today and tomorrow. Your influence on the children of Putnam City will never go unnoticed or be forgotten. You truly are the best of the best!"

Board Approves Contracts for Powwow, Awards Reception

The board on Monday night approved four contracts as part of preparations for the district to host the annual Putnam City Youth Powwow that will take place from 6 to 10:30 p.m. on Friday, May 4, in the Putnam City High School gymnasium. The contracts are:

- A contract with Eddie Wilson will cover the cost for Mr. Wilson to serve as master of ceremonies at the event. Mr. Wilson will guide participants and spectators through event activities in accordance with tribal traditions of dancing and singing. He will also provide explanations for each part of the evening's activities in accordance accepted protocols of the Native American traditional powwow. The contract is for \$200.
- A contract with Brent Greenwood will provide traditional Native American Southern singing for the Native dancers at the event. The contract is for \$150.
- A contract with Courtney Yarholer, whose Native singing group will provide traditional Native American Northern singing for the Native dancers at the event. The drum group is comprised of eight singers. The contract is for \$350.
- A contract with Randy Frazier, who will serve as arena director at the event, coordinating the activities of the dancers in the circle, organizing the grand entry of dancers, and taking care of singers and dancers in an organized fashion according to Native traditions. The contract is for \$175.

The Putnam City Youth Powwow is a cultural event that serves to motivate and provide a place for Native American students to realize and appreciate their Native American culture. The event is open to all district students regardless of ethnic background, as it is an educational learning experience for all who attend and fosters good will toward Native American people and culture. The event is typically attended by more than 150 students and their families.

The cost of the four contracts is covered through the Johnson-O'Malley federal grant.

The board also approved a contract with Dwight Pickering to serve as keynote speaker at the annual awards reception organized by the district's Department of Indian Education. Pickering will also present awards and certificates to students. About 100 students and their families are expected to attend the event, which will take place from 6:30 to 8:30 p.m. on Thursday, May 10, in the main conference room at the Putnam City Center. The \$150 cost of the contract is covered through the Johnson-O'Malley federal grant.

Superintendent's Report

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The Fleming Scholar Program was founded in 1956 as a way to give Oklahoma's high school and college students "hands-on" biomedical research experience. The program is named for Sir Alexander Fleming, the famed British scientist, who discovered penicillin and in 1949 came to Oklahoma City to formally dedicate OMRF's first building.

► We congratulate Dr. Keely Frayser, executive director of Curriculum and Instruction, for recently completing all the requirements to receive her doctorate from the University of Oklahoma.