

# Retiring Southside principal says ‘I’ve always loved what I’ve done’



JEREMY REYNOLDS, who is retiring as principal at Southside Elementary after the school year, is pictured with kindergartner Hailey Karhoff. Reynolds says he doesn’t know what he will do in post-retirement, but he expects to work full time and stay in Woodford County. Reynolds and his wife of 27 years, Keli, have two daughters, Turner and Morgan. They are both in college. (Photo by Bob Vlach)

By BOB VLACH  
WOODFORD SUN STAFF

Jeremy Reynolds began his teaching career at Nicholasville Elementary School in Jessamine County 28 years ago, but Southside Elementary School has always been home. Even when Reynolds left Southside after eight years in the classroom to be an assistant principal/curriculum resource administrator at Rosenwald-Dunbar Elementary School in Jessamine County for three years, his family lived here. So when he had an opportunity to come back to Versailles, he did. “This school has always had a great culture,” says Reynolds, who is retiring at the end of the school year after eight years as Southside’s principal. “The people here are happy to be here. The kids are happy to be here. And so it’s good to come to a place where everybody wants to be here. It doesn’t make work feel nearly as much like work when everybody wants to be in a place.” Reynolds spent two years as former Southside Principal Jason McAllister’s administrative dean before becoming principal in the 2019-2020 school year. Reynolds says he always strived to be “a servant leader and felt like that was my purpose (as principal) is to serve them (our teachers and support staff) and make their jobs easier ... whatever’s going to make their job easier so that they can better educate the kids – that’s what I want to do.” “I’m not the smartest person here. I’m not the best teacher here. I know that,” he adds. “So it’s just whatever I can do to help them (and) make their job easier.”

Reynolds says he never really wanted to do anything else after finding his career path in elementary education at the University of Kentucky. He has always enjoyed having daily interactions with students, teachers and other adults in an elementary school, and the difference he could make in the lives of students. So he feels very fortunate. “I never have dreaded getting up and coming to work,” says Reynolds, 50. While some days are better than others, he says, “I’m always ready to be here and get here early, and excited to be here. I’ve always loved what I’ve done.” Two of his professional highlights as principal came this year when Southside created a “House” system, which he says has heightened the students’ sense of belonging. He also likes a new project-based learning instructional approach because it’s more engaging for students and gives them opportunities to make a difference in their community. So why retire now? “I feel like we are heading in the right direction,” Reynolds says, “... and somebody else can come in (as Southside’s next principal) and have new ideas ... that they can just add to what we are already doing to make it even better.”

*‘The kids are happy to be here.’*



HANNAH MCCALL, an 8th grader at WCMS, was recognized by the Fiscal Court for winning the 60- and 100-meter events at the State Middle School Indoor Track Meet. As Kay pointed out, Hannah won both of these events as well when she was a 6th and 7th grader, which set a state record for three consecutive state middle school championships in two events. Hannah said, “I am really thankful for my parents, friends, coaches and teammates. My teammates and I really support each other.” Hannah is in the center, holding the resolution. (Photo by Scott White)

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(no transfer period) is we are asking folks to make a commitment and this will stop this abuse and if we tweak that, the quicker the better, then I think this wording would be good for us.”

### Regular Fiscal Court meeting

At the regular meeting, the recommendation from the ordinance committee was to keep the ordinances in their current state, request the commission to advise the court of any in-family conveyance applications at the time they are filed and send a directive to the commission to make changes to the proposed text amendment as agreed on by the court.

Following a robust discussion, the court voted to approve the recommendation. The next step is for the magistrates to send their comments to the Gill proposal in the next several days. These will then be considered by the Ordinance Committee, which will make a specific recommendation to the commission for the court to act on at its next meeting on March 25.

Following the meeting, Gentry said he voted against the proposal because the commission “gives us a step forward which allows for in-family

conveyances and we can come back and tweak later if we need to.”

### Net Recovery contract

At its last meeting, the court approved using opioid-abatement money to participate in a pilot project with the City of Versailles to use a non-invasive medical device to assist in the recovery from opioid addiction with four patients who are Woodford County residents on the condition of an agreement being negotiated with NET Recovery Corp., a for-profit corporation. The total investment will be \$11,000, or \$5,500 for two patients. Depending on the results, the court and city could consider additional investments.

George reported there have been several snags in negotiating the contract, including inconsistencies between correspondence from Net Recovery and the proposed contract language. George said he would continue to work on the contract and attempt to resolve the issues.

### Fair Board lease

The lease of the fairgrounds from the county to the Fair Board is still being negotiated. The court appointed Varner to meet with the board to go over the lease prepared by the county to resolve the issues and return to the court to approve the lease at its next meeting.

**Flood recovery**  
Woodford County Emergency Management Agency director Drew Chandler gave a status report on the flood recovery. He said he continues to work with both the Federal Emergency Management Agency, or FEMA, and the Small Business Administration, which has resulted in their upgrading the storm severity and damage which will be important for recovery grants to reimburse the county and individuals. Large dumpsters will be kept in place at the areas most severely hit for an additional two weeks for residents to use to dispose of debris.

**New and Young Farmer grants**  
The court approved the final draft of the grant contract between the recipient and the county. This means recipients will soon be able to access their funding, up to \$2,000, as soon as the contract is signed.

**Unbudgeted surplus**  
Kay reported there is an unbudgeted surplus of a half-million dollars, \$503,574.56.

**Contracts**  
The court approved a contract with Zoll Medical for the maintenance of EMS ventilators for \$2,515.00.

**Treasurer report**  
Woodford County Melody Traugott reported the current money market account balance at \$16,504,920.01.

# Woodford County students support their “home” teams



THE STUDENT SECTION at Woodford County High School athletic events is helping turn the Jackets home court/field into a fortress. This picture is from a recent home basketball game at the new Hive where a “raucous” home crowd may be an understatement! (Photo by Elaine Bailey)

By MATTHEW MITCHELL  
WCHS STUDENT JOURNALIST

Strength in numbers -- a saying that can be used in all sorts of situations. This year, the Woodford County High School student section exemplifies that saying, having the numbers and the strength to directly impact the success of WCHS athletics.

Some call it ‘The Hive,’ some call it ‘The Swarm’ and some call it corny, but whether you are a fan of the chants or look down upon the rowdy high schoolers, there’s no denying that students show out for Woodford County athletics.

Recently, the WCHS student section won Lexington television station Fox56’s ‘Home Team Hype Award’ for the best football student section in the state of Kentucky.

And while that is a high honor, the WCHS student section shows up for more than just football games and for some sporting events, they show up arguably better in both numbers and spirit than football.

Over the past few years, WCHS athletics has been on the rise. Across all sports, nearly every team has seen success.

In 2024, the WCHS lacrosse team won a state championship, boys’ soccer made it to the state tournament and boys’ and girls’ track and field both won the regional championships, with many athletes participating and placing in the state meet. Further, WCHS baseball, softball, and basketball have had great seasons. The wrestling team has had a few state champions. And, this year’s cheerleading team followed up their state championship by winning a *national championship*.

All of this success has led to an uptick in student participation. Football and basketball games traditionally have always had the most fans, whereas sports like soccer and lacrosse usually draw a smaller crowd – but WCHS students are changing this. These

teams are just as talented, just as fun to watch and support and, most importantly, they are the students’ classmates.

At the start of the 2023 soccer season, a group of three or four students showed up to the first home game. By the end of the season, the student group swelled to nearly 30. These games were special with the soccer team running toward the fans and celebrating with them after goals from time to time. For the students, it was an opportunity to show pride in Woodford County. This has continued.

Woodford County students continued to take pride in their efforts to show up for their sports and participation took off. There is now a student section at nearly every WCHS sporting event - from soccer to baseball to lacrosse.


Woodford County athletics has something special that not many schools in the area have: the support of an entire community. Fayette County, for example, has six public high schools, along with a few private schools that have good sports teams. This, inevitably, divides the Fayette County community’s support between these schools.

But Woodford County is different. Everyone in the county supports the same school, and that is the beauty of a tight-knit community.

The “Home Team Hype Award”, regardless of its significance, represents Woodford County well. Woodford County High School is the county’s home team -- and it shows.

From the entire community showing up in Lexington to pack out the stands at the lacrosse state championship to breaking attendance records in Rupp Arena for the basketball team’s final four state tournament run in 2022, Woodford has shown time and time again their support.

They show up . . . and it sure looks like this will continue.



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- Cash it out, which is subject to potential tax consequences.

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