

Odyssey Team Honored by Board of Education

Written by Gary Childers
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The Watauga County Board of Education held its regular monthly meeting at the Gragg Education Center Monday evening. During Superintendent Hemric's report he shared the unfortunate news that the anticipated reductions from state funds for next year appear to be accurate. Currently the budget being developed in the State legislature reflects an overall 14% reduction from last year's allocations.

Following the meeting Chairman Miller commented that the Board will continue to work hard to find support for the school system.

Good news followed during the next segment of the evening's agenda. Award winning students from Parkway Elementary and Watauga High School were recognized by their faculty sponsors. Natalie Willis, AG teacher, recognized the Parkway Odyssey of the Mind team; Regina Alford, Health Occupations teacher, recognized winning members of HOSA; Robin Isaacs, Business teacher, recognized FBLA winners; Lee Ann Williams, CTE teacher, recognized FCCLA winners; and Larry Jones, auto tech teacher, recognized his state award winning student.

In more somber business the Board passed a resolution opposing proposed House Bill 344 which would provide tax credits of up to \$6,000 per school year to parents of exceptional children enrolled in nonpublic schools. The Board's concern with this proposal is that the money used for this purpose would reduce funding available to public schools that already provide these services. The strongly worded resolution's last "Whereas" reflects the seriousness with which the Board takes this action by stating; "... House Bill 344 presents a direct threat to the fiscal health and viability of public education and the Watauga County School System."