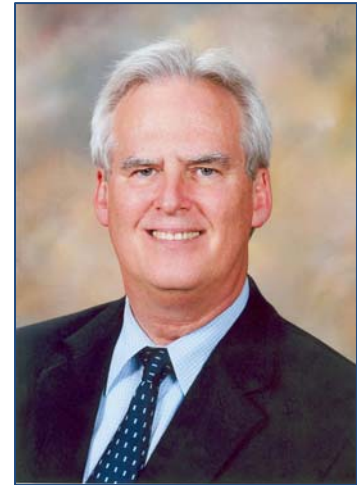


October 29, 2009

**NEWTON COUNTY SCHOOL SUPERINTENDENT
DR. STEVE WHATLEY ANNOUNCES PLANS TO RETIRE**

After serving more than 36 years as an educator, Newton County School Superintendent Dr. Steve Whatley announced at the Tuesday, October 27, Board of Education meeting that he will retire effective June 30, 2010.

“After over 36 years as an educator, almost 21 of them in the central office of the Newton County Schools and almost four of them as Superintendent, it is time for me to move on to other challenges and interests,” said Whatley, noting that he announced his retirement plans now, “so that the Board of Education can begin a thorough process of defining what it wants as a new Superintendent, post the position and interview for the impending vacancy, and employ a new Superintendent so as to have as smooth as possible a transition on July 1, 2010.”



“I have known Dr. Whatley since I started teaching in Newton County in 1997,” said Dr. C.C. Bates, Chair of the Newton County Board of Education. “He is extremely dedicated to the school system and has always been an advocate for children. He has led the district with a kind heart and with a genuine interest in our students, parents, and employees. Dr. Whatley has embraced the challenges we have faced in recent years including unprecedented growth, increased federal and state mandates, and decreased funding. He has worked tirelessly. I am privileged to have had the opportunity to work with him and it goes without saying that his compassion will be greatly missed.”

Dr. Whatley has been employed with Newton County Schools since July 1989. Prior to joining Newton County School System, he served as assistant superintendent for curriculum and instruction for Baldwin County School System from July 1987 through June 1989. He has also served as an associate superintendent for instruction in Pascagoula, Mississippi and Vidalia, Georgia. Before pursuing a career in school administration, Whatley was a mathematics and chemistry teacher in Vicksburg, Mississippi and later served as an assistant principal for North Vicksburg High School.

Dr. Whatley graduated with a bachelor’s degree in Geology from Millsaps College in 1967. He earned a master’s in education administration from Mississippi College in 1972 and his educational doctorate in curriculum from the University of Georgia in 1974.

Since joining Newton County School System, Dr. Whatley has made community service a high priority and has held numerous leadership positions in the community, including Director/President of the Newton County Community Partnership for Children and Families; Director/President of the

Covington/Newton County YMCA; and Director/President of the Arts Association of Newton County. In addition he is serving on the Library Board, the Board of Health, the Board of Directors of the Newton County Chamber of Commerce, and the Board of the Center for Preservation and Planning. He is a Director of the Georgia Federal Credit Union, and has served as President of the Covington Rotary Club.

"It is very rare these days to find someone who dedicates himself to a job with such commitment and loyalty," said Ms. Cathy Dobbs, Vice-Chair of the Newton County Board of Education. "Dr Whatley has brought his heart, soul and mind to his position as superintendent of our schools, he truly wants the best for every child and employee. We wish him the very best in his retirement."

According to Ms. Dobbs, the Board will begin a broad search for this position with the help of the Georgia School Board Association.

"This organization comes to us highly recommended by other boards in the state," Dobbs added. "We will begin our search immediately and plan to have the position filled before Dr. Whatley retires in June. I ask everyone to keep the Board in their thoughts and prayers as we begin this most important mission."
