

July 27, 2010

Thomas Named Principal of Livingston Elementary School

At a special called board meeting on July 27, 2010, the Newton County Board of Education voted unanimously, 4-0 (Mr. Almond Turner could not attend), to approve Ms. Shari Thomas as principal of Livingston Elementary School. Ms. Thomas will replace outgoing principal, Ms. Wendy Hughes, who announced her resignation earlier this month.

Ms. Thomas is no stranger to Livingston Elementary. Although she currently serves as an assistant principal at South Salem Elementary School, she taught fourth and fifth grade at Livingston Elementary from 1992-2007 before attaining an assistant principal position at Fairview Elementary School in 2007. In fact, Ms. Thomas was the Livingston Elementary School's 1997 Teacher of the Year.

"I'm very excited," said Thomas. "I just can't tell you. I taught here at Livingston for 15 years prior to going into administration in 2007. When I decided to pursue administration I left thinking in my mind, if the principalship here ever came open I would apply for it. I really feel like I'm back home."



According to Thomas, getting to work on time and being at all of the school events definitely won't be a problem for her.

"I live right next door," she said. "I literally live right next door to Livingston. I drive through our subdivision right into the school parking lot!"

Although she is very excited about returning to Livingston, she indicated that she would definitely miss her family at South Salem Elementary.

"I'm very sad to leave South Salem," she explained. "I worked with (principal) Holly (Dubois) and (assistant principal) LaSharon (McClain) to open that school. And of course there are children there that I checked on regularly and I'll miss that. Leaving the faculty and the children will be hard but this is such a wonderful opportunity and I look forward to working with the faculty and children here at Livingston."

Despite having only a few short days before students report back to school, Thomas said she expected the transition to be an easy one.

"We definitely have a lot to do, the first priority of course is getting school open," she said. "But this administration worked very hard and there are lots of things in place already. The schedules and the class roles have already been done. They've definitely made it very easy for someone to come in."

As for her goals for Livingston, Thomas said they are, "right in line with the new superintendent's. We will continue to improve student achievement and focus on all kids learning. We'll use research-based strategies to get us where we need to be."

“Shari Thomas is an experienced elementary teacher, administrator, and college instructor,” said Newton County School Superintendent Gary Mathews. “Given her background, and depth of knowledge exhibited in her interview, I have no doubt that Livingston Elementary will be well-led when it comes to curriculum and instruction, parent involvement, and a focus on kids. She knows her stuff!”

In addition to teaching at Livingston, Ms. Thomas previously taught fourth grade at Fairview Elementary and also served as an adjunct professor for Teacher Education at Mercer University from 1997 to 2000. In addition to her experience locally, Ms. Thomas also taught English Conversation at Han Nam University in Taejon, South Korea in 1984.

Ms. Thomas earned her Bachelor of Science in Middle Grades Education with concentrations in Math, Language Arts, and Social Sciences, from Toccoa Falls College in 1985 and a Master’s in Education in Elementary Education from Clemson University in 1987. She earned her Education Specialist degree in Educational Leadership from Nova Southeastern University in 2007. In addition to her college degrees, Ms. Thomas earned her gifted education endorsement from Newton County Schools and Griffin RESA in 2004 and her Teacher Support Specialist from Newton County Schools and Griffin RESA in 1992. She is a member of the Professional Association of Georgia Educators and the Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development.

Throughout her career, Ms. Thomas has also used her time to help others new to the teaching profession and those aspiring to teach by serving as a mentor teacher from 1992 to 2007 and a student teacher supervisor in 1998, 1997, and 1991. She has also participated on numerous Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACS) Review Teams and was also a member of the Rising Stars Program through Griffin RESA.

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