

ADE DAILY NEWS CLIPS

March 9, 2013

Maumelle coach suspended (Arkansas Democrat-Gazette)

Lauren Brooke Buckner, head girls basketball coach at Maumelle High School, has been suspended without pay from her job pending an investigation into police accusations that led to her arrest earlier this week, a district spokesman said Friday.

According to the Arkansas State Police, Buckner, of 114 Missouri Circle in Jacksonville, was arrested about 7 p.m. Monday and charged with one count each of felony possession of a controlled substance, driving while under the influence of drugs and careless driving.

The arrest occurred during the investigation of a two-car accident involving Buckner on U.S. 67 North.

The state trooper who responded to the car accident said he noticed Buckner, 46, swaying and using her car to support herself.

The trooper questioned whether Buckner had been drinking. She said she had not but that she had taken Xanax, a prescription medication, 30 minutes before the accident, the report said.

Police also asked Buckner about the contents of her pockets. She removed two small, clear bags containing "a clear rock substance," according to the report. She also gave police the medication she had taken before the accident. That medication was identified in the police report as lamotrigine and alprazolam, both prescription drugs.

The car crash resulted in minor property damage and no injuries were reported, according to the police report.

Deborah Roush, spokesman for the Pulaski County Special School District, said Friday that Buckner is in her fourth year as a district employee.

Buckner's arrest occurred just a little more than a year after Brittany Burns was arrested Jan. 12, 2012, by Maumelle police over allegations she had methamphetamine and prescription pills in her possession as she was leaving the Maumelle High School campus. At the time, Burns was an assistant girls basketball coach at Maumelle High School.

Burns was suspended from her job and ultimately fired, Roush said.

Legislative summary (Arkansas Democrat-Gazette)

This is a summary list of bills (by bill number, lead sponsor and title) introduced through Friday in the 89th General Assembly, except for appropriation bills, which, along with other bills and resolutions, may be found at the legislative website: www.arkleg.state.ar.us

HOUSE

HB1806, Lowery - An act to create the Truth in Government Act; and to require sworn testimony before committees.

HB1807, Lowery - To provide an income tax credit for premium payments made for a long-term care insurance policy.

HB1808, Lowery - To amend the law concerning licensing of polygraph examiners.

HB1809, Lowery - To amend the law concerning the licensing of voice stress analysis examiners.

HB1810, Carnine - To repeal certain provisions of Title 6 of the Arkansas Code relating to education boards and commissions.

HB1811, Leding - To amend the public guardianship law; to require the consent of the public guardian before appointment; and to authorize the employment of deputy public guardians.

HB1812, Leding - To clarify the Adult Maltreatment Custody Act; and to add definitions and describe the process for less-than-custody orders.

HB1813, Leding - To clarify the Adult and Long-Term Care Facility Resident Maltreatment Act; and to add definitions and to describe the procedures of the Department of Human Services.

HB1814, Leding - To require state agencies to create a compensation equality policy; and to require state agencies to be transparent concerning equal compensation for equal services.

HB1815, Leding - To permit parental leave due to the birth, adoption or foster placement of a child.

HB1816, Fielding - To revise the laws on use of a wireless interactive device while driving and on distracted driving; and to increase penalties for distracted driving and for use of a wireless interactive device while driving.

HB1817, Catlett - To amend the purposes for which school districts may expend national school lunch state categorical funding.

HB1818, C. Douglas - To provide procedures for the filing, hearing, determination, and disposition of petitions of interested parties to alter and maintain lands adjacent to highways and interstate highways; and to declare an emergency.

HB1819, C. Douglas - To remove from the governor's disaster emergency responsibilities the power to suspend or limit the sale, dispensing or transportation of firearms.

HB1820, Hobbs - To update the Arkansas school recognition program.

HB1821, E. Armstrong - To require that parking lot signs indicating spaces dedicated for individuals with disabilities display the term "reserved."

HB1822, Copenhaver - To allow a county sheriff to issue debit cards to released inmates in order to clear the inmate's commissary trust account.

HB1823, Ballinger - To regulate the administration of real property of the state and political subdivisions of the state.

HB1824, Lea - To ensure that a residential address be used to determine population for apportionment purposes; and to require the Department of Correction to collect and maintain residential address information of incarcerated persons.

HB1825, Lea - To require certain data to be collected from persons in the custody of the Department of Correction.

HB1826, D. Whitaker - To amend the law concerning appeals to circuit court in certain municipal planning matters.

HB1827, D. Whitaker - To modify the definition of a quorum in civil service matters in cities of the first class.

HB1828, Kizzia - To amend the ethical guidelines and prohibitions for school district boards of directors, administrators and employees.

HB1829, Vines - Concerning bail bond fees.

HB1830, J. Edwards - To make the director of the Department of Arkansas Heritage a nonvoting ex officio member of the Arkansas History Commission.

HB1831, Williams - Concerning reimbursements to county jails for holding a person in the custody of the Department of Community Correction.

HB1832, Williams - The New Markets Jobs Act of 2013.

HB1833, Williams - To revise the current laws governing scrap metal transactions and concerning the theft of scrap metal.

HB1834, Westerman - To establish the Certified Natural Gas School Bus Program.

HB1835, Westerman - To make participation in the Teacher Excellence and Support System optional. HB1836, Westerman - Concerning lobbying by employees of a public school district.

HB1837, Westerman - To allow diplomas to be granted to students who complete high school education through an online education provider.

HB1838, Carnine - To enhance college and career readiness and post secondary completion in Arkansas.

HB1839, Baine - To create statutory charitable immunity for churches or other places of worship under certain circumstances.

HB1840, Wright - Concerning exemptions to the Private Investigators and Private Security Agencies Act.

HB1841, Wright - Concerning fees for bail bonds.

HB1842, D. Meeks - To amend the law regarding the Arkansas Medicaid Program Trust Fund.

HB1843, D. Meeks - To amend the Arkansas Soft Drink Tax Act.

HB1844, Nickels - To reform residential mortgage foreclosure procedures and practices; and to require that circuit clerks as part of their official duties conduct judicial sales and statutory foreclosure sales.

HB1845, Nickels - To create the Small Business Tax Fairness Act; to require combined reporting for income tax purposes; and to levy a?at income tax on corporations.

HB1846, Nickels - To repeal the exemption of real estate agents from the Workers' Compensation Law.

HB1847, Nickels - To reform mortgage foreclosure procedures and practices; to require circuit clerks to conduct judicial sales; and to abolish the authority and procedures to perform statutory foreclosures.

HB1848, Broadaway - To amend provisions of the juvenile code.

HB1849, Broadaway - To amend provisions of the Interstate Compact on the Placement of Children.

HB1850, Perry - To amend the law concerning commissioners of waterworks commissions.

HB1851, Love - To allow attorney's fees in actions arising from civil service employment.

HB1852, Love - To allow for the creation of the Arkansas Credit Reserve Program; and to allow for alternative methods of paying fees under the Arkansas Capital Access Program for small business.

HB1853, Wardlaw - To clarify the law concerning recoupment of payments for health-care providers; and to declare an emergency.

HB1854, Baine - To amend the Equity Investment Incentive Act of 2007.

HB1855, Shepherd - To establish the office of prosecuting attorney as a nonpartisan office; and to amend the law concerning the dates of certain elections.

HB1856, Shepherd - Concerning the criminal offense of theft by receiving.

HB1857, Shepherd - To amend the Special License Plate Act of 2005 concerning the authorization and issuance of special license plates for and in support of law enforcement.

HB1858, Lowery - To establish the Higher Education Remediation Student Protection Act.

HB1859, Leding - To encourage the efficient administration of state agencies; and to require state agencies to review old rules.

HB1860, Leding - To provide increased accessibility to state government regulatory data; and to require the secretary of state to create and maintain a database of regulatory data for each state agency.

HB1861, Williams - To create the Minority Business Loan Mobilization Act to guarantee loans to small minority business enterprises and to repeal as obsolete the Jobs Creation by Stimulating Small Business Growth Act of 1985.

HB1862, Lea - To amend teacher licensure requirements for public school early childhood programs.

HB1863, Alexander - Arkansas Teacher Preparation Quality Act.

HB1864, Alexander - Concerning educator membership in labor organizations.

HB1865, Alexander - To amend the Arkansas School Recognition Program and related laws.

HB1866, Kerr - To adopt current Internal Revenue Code provisions concerning the computation of income tax when a taxpayer restores an amount held under a claim of right.

HB1867, Hammer - To promote the integrity of a public servant or public official; and to require that a public servant or public official found guilty of certain offenses repay his or her debt and a certain amount of his or her salary.

HB1868, Hammer - To create the Medicaid Mental Health Restructuring Act.

HB1869, Hammer - To review the law regarding the State Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program.

HB1870, Hodges - To authorize economic development incentives and the issuance of general obligation bonds in connection with a steel mill project under Amendment 82 to the Arkansas Constitution; and to declare an emergency.

HB1871, Word - Concerning funding provided by the Division of Aging and Adult Services of the Department of Human Services.

HB1872, Williams - To amend Arkansas law to revise certain ethics laws of the state of Arkansas.

HB1873, J. Edwards - To amend provisions of Title 6 of the Arkansas Code; to improve education in Arkansas.

HB1874, Gillam - Concerning insurance fraud by certain persons; and concerning chiropractic physician practices and the Arkansas Board of Chiropractic Examiners.

HB1875, Slinkard - To allow a county with electronic voter registration records to designate vote centers; and to allow voters in certain counties to vote in one site regardless of precinct.

HB1876, Lowery - To eliminated the fee charged for a covenant marriage license.

HB1877, H. Wilkins - To establish the Team Arkansas System; to authorize an award to a state employee or group of state employees who makes a suggestion that results in savings to the state under certain circumstances.

HB1878, H. Wilkins - To clarify that the Arkansas Claims Commission has no jurisdiction over claims against the Division of Youth Services of the Department of Human Services for acts committed by juveniles.

HB1879, H. Wilkins - To authorize the issuance of the Martin Luther King, Jr. license plate.

HB1880, H. Wilkins - To authorize for issuance a Hispanic-Americans license plate.

HB1881, Magie - To clarify the regulatory responsibilities for physician office-based surgery by assigning the regulatory authority to the Arkansas State Medical Board.

HB1882, Scott - To amend provisions of law concerning Arkansas public charter schools.

HB1883, Scott - To amend provisions of law concerning Arkansas public school choice.

HB1884, Linck - To amend Arkansas law concerning permits for the privilege of fishing for trout.

HB1885, Linck - To amend Arkansas law concerning funds of the Arkansas Game and Fish Commission derived from mineral exploration and production.

HB1886, Lea - To amend the law concerning certain fees under the Arkansas Hazmat Emergency Management Act.

HB1887, E. Armstrong - To provide for a Type 3 transfer of the Weatherization Assistance Program (WAP); and to declare an emergency.

HB1888, E. Armstrong - Concerning planning for an absentee mayor in cities of the first class, cities of the second class and incorporated towns.

HB1889, Ballinger - To provide for the marketability of title to unrecorded mineral interests.

HB1890, Ballinger - To create the Claim of Unrecorded Mineral Rights Act; and to provide a procedure for claiming ownership of unrecorded mineral rights.

HB1891, Barnett - To amend Arkansas law concerning the Residential Contractors Committee.

HB1892, Bell - To allow the Governmental Bonding Board to seek civil remedies on behalf of a public official, officer or employee and to clarify the law concerning the available remedies and the Governmental Bonding Board's responsibilities.

HB1893, Copenhaver - Concerning the participation of state-supported institutions of higher education in activities for the benefit of veterans' affairs in Arkansas.

HB1894, Copenhaver - To require licensed child-care facilities and school districts to file a copy of their facilities' floor plans with local law enforcement.

HB1895, Catlett - To allow certain employees to donate accrued sick leave or accrued annual leave to another employee who is employed by the same state employer and has a severe illness or has an immediate family member who is severely ill.

HB1896, Clemmer - To amend various provisions of Title 6 of the Arkansas Code concerning public schools, institutions of higher education and remediation.

HB1897, Alexander - To establish the Parental Choice Scholarship Program.

HB1898, D. Meeks - To create the Healthcare Freedom of Conscience Act.

HB1899, Payton - To amend the law regarding the sale of alcoholic beverages by a private club; and to amend the law regarding the sale of alcoholic beverages.

HB1900, C.Armstrong - Concerning the criminal justice system for first-time or nonviolent criminal offenders.

HB1901, Steel - To prohibit an employer from requiring or requesting a current or prospective employee from disclosing his or her username or password for a social media account.

HB1902, Steel - To prohibit an institution of higher education from requiring or requesting a current or prospective employee or student from disclosing his or her username or password for a social media account.

HB1903, Wright - To amend the law concerning the removal of unattended or abandoned vehicles; and to establish qualifications for eligibility for non-consent towing rotation lists.

HB1904, Steel - Concerning the use of unmanned aerial vehicles.

Notable Resolutions HR1035, Carnine - To support the growth of quality, affordable, online education in the University of Arkansas System.

HR1036, Williams - To commend the Arkansas Aging Initiative for its continuing commitment to Arkansas' senior citizens.

HR1038, C. Armstrong - To commend the Memory Project team at Little Rock Central High School for their outstanding accomplishment in publishing "Mapping the Road to Change."

SENATE

SB855, A. Clark -An act to stop copper theft in Arkansas and to impose and enforce rules on buyers of copper.

SB856, Elliott - To amend statutory provisions regarding state Board of Education authority to coordinate implementation of state and federal laws; and to amend laws concerning school improvement and school recognition.

SB857, A. Clark - To clarify the duty of the Department of Workforce Services regarding unemployment ineligibility for failure to accept or seek suitable work; and to require quarterly reports to the legislative council.

SB858, Rapert - Concerning the recognition of other states' licenses to carry a concealed handgun.

SB859, Rapert - Concerning the development and governance of a health insurance exchange; and to declare an emergency.

SB860, Rapert - Concerning sanctions administered to a parole violator.

SB861, Irvin - The Annexation and Detachment Transparency Act.

SB862, Irvin - Concerning information released from the Controlled Substances Database.

SB863, B. Sample - To amend the Arkansas Administrative Procedure Act concerning administrative rules.

SB864, B. Sample - To regulate construction projects on state Capitol grounds.

SB865, B. Sample - Concerning the Arkansas Fire Protection Services Board and the Arkansas Fire Training Academy.

SB866, B. Sample - To amend the membership of the Arkansas Fire Protection Services Board.

SB867, Teague - Regarding settlement disposition in consumer protection lawsuits brought by the attorney general.

SB868, Bledsoe - Concerning the distribution of a decedent's estate upon his or her murder by a spouse.

SB869, Elliott - To provide a safe harbor for victims of certain sex trafficking and commercial sex offenses; and to declare an emergency.

SB870, J. Key - To hold nonpartisan judicial general elections with November general elections; to amend the requirements for a nonpartisan judicial runoff election.

SB871, J. Key - To revise the Fair Mortgage Lending Act.

SB872, J. Key - To establish a procedure for a nonpartisan judicial special runoff election in the event of a tie vote.

SB873, J. Key - To regulate regional solid waste management districts.

SB874, Rapert - To amend the offense of negligent homicide.

SB875, Hester - To adjust weekly unemployment benefit amounts to the expiration of the federal nonreduction rule on benefits.

SB876, B. Sample - To repeal the sales and use tax exemption for Class Six and Class Seven trucks and semitrailers and to repeal the provisions enacted to offset the general revenue lost as a result of the exemption.

SB877, J. Woods - To amend the health benefit plan options that may be offered by insurers.

SB878, Maloch - To amend the Arkansas Orthotics, Prosthetics and Pedorthics Practice Act of 2007.

SB879, Maloch - To provide for the expiration of legislative authority to promulgate certain rules unless continued by the General Assembly.

SB880, J. Woods - Concerning exemptions for insurance producers.

SB881, J. Woods - To authorize a school district board of directors to allow students involved in extracurricular academic activities to participate in an academic competition with college students.

SB882, L. Chesterfield - To amend the Minority Business Economic Development Act.

SB883, L. Chesterfield - Concerning contracts between the Division of Youth Services of the Department of Human Services and community-based providers.

SB884, S. Flowers - To amend the Department of Workforce Services law; to clarify the definitions under Arkansas Code § 11-10-210.

SB885, J. English - Concerning the fees for the General Educational Development test for adults.

SB886, Bledsoe - To establish the Healthcare Reform Transparency Act.

SB887, Bledsoe - To establish the Arkansas Peer Review Fairness Act.

SB888, Bledsoe - To provide parity for mammography services reimbursement.

SB889, E. Cheatham - To increase the lawful length of semitrailers and trailers allowed on streets, roads and highways in the state.

SB890, Bookout - To address expansion of the state Medicaid program.

SB891, Bookout - To amend the law regarding the state Medicaid program; and to explore a state Medicaid insurance exchange.

SB892, B. King - To amend the law concerning the election of members of county boards of election commissioners.

SB893, Irvin - To establish the Volunteer Health Services Act; and to allow for licensed health-care professionals to provide volunteer services for a sponsoring organization.

SB894, G. Stubblefield - To amend Arkansas law concerning the right to engage in a lawful occupation.

SB895, J. Key - Concerning the disposition of contraband and seized property.

SB896, B. King - To provide for the ability of a church that operates a private school, K-12, to allow a person who possesses a concealed-handgun license to carry a concealed handgun on school property.

SB897, D. Johnson - To clarify the jurisdiction and regulatory authority of the Arkansas Real Estate Commission; to regulate transactions involving resale timeshare property.

SB898, G. Stubblefield - To amend the law regarding initiatives and referendums; and to amend the procedures and requirements concerning petitions for initiatives and referendums.

SB899, Hickey - To revise the corporate franchise tax filing and remittance deadline; and to declare an emergency.

SB900, J. Woods - To amend Amendment 89 of the Arkansas Constitution concerning the interest rate limit on loan contracts pursuant to Section 11 of Amendment 89 to the Arkansas Constitution; and to declare an emergency.

SB901, J. Woods - Concerning child custody presumptions in divorce cases.

SB902, A. Clark - Concerning the offense of criminal trespass; and to create the offense of removal of an animal's transmittal device.

SB903, A. Clark - To require a homeowner to document membership of a volunteer fire department before an insurer applies a rate credit or reduced rate on homeowners insurance premiums.

SB904, B. Pierce - To establish the Breakfast-After-the-Bell School Nutrition Program.

SB905, B. Pierce - To authorize the issuance of a second license plate for eligible military service members and veterans upon payment of regular licensing fees.

SB906, B. Pierce -To clarify the definition of a fence; and to make the removal of a posted sign or of a fence a Class B misdemeanor.

SB907, A. Clark - Concerning background checks for individuals who volunteer in high school mentoring programs.

SB908, A. Clark - Providing a circuit judge with greater latitude to excuse a person from jury duty.

SB909, K. Ingram - To amend provisions of Title 6 of the Arkansas Code concerning state-supported institutions of higher education.

SB910, A. Clark - To permit a quorum court to enact certain ordinances concerning animals.

SB911, L. Chesterfield - To require the Department of Human Services to conduct a study on the current resource or asset limits for the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) and the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF).

SB912, L. Chesterfield - Concerning the placement of children who have been subjected to mental or physical abuse, whether or not they are in the custody of the Department of Human Services.

Notable Resolutions SR20, L. Chesterfield - To commend Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Inc., for its service work and contributions to its communities.

Calendar (Arkansas Democrat-Gazette)

This is a calendar of public events of the 89th General Assembly for Monday, the 57th day of the 2013 legislative session.

HOUSE

10 a.m., Advanced Communications and Information Technology Committee, Room 151 1:30 p.m., House convenes

SENATE

1:30 p.m., Senate convenes After adjournment Transportation, Technology and Legislative Affairs Committee, Room 309

ALSO

10 a.m., Joint Public Retirement and Social Security Programs Committee, Room 130 11 a.m., Legislative Black Caucus, Room 149

State settles death of boy by goal post for \$375,000 (Arkansas Democrat-Gazette)

The state Department of Human Services has settled a claim brought by the family of a 9-year-old boy who was crushed to death by a soccer goal post.

The department announced the terms of the settlement in a statement Friday afternoon.

Under the terms of the settlement, the state will pay \$375,000 to the family of Jonathan Nelson, who was killed Jan. 26, 2011, after a soccer goal post tipped over and fell on him during recess at Elm Tree Elementary School in Bentonville.

“As a family, we have fought for two years to get justice for our son Jonathan. It is with a tremendous amount of relief and satisfaction that today we announce a settlement has been reached with [the department],” the Nelson family said in a statement.

The family couldn’t successfully sue the school district because it had sovereign immunity under the Arkansas Constitution.

So the family sought help from the state Claims Commission, which has the authority to award damages to those who have been harmed by the state, and asked that the department be held liable in Jonathan’s death.

According to the claim, the department was responsible for making sure the playground area at Elm Tree Elementary was safe because the department licensed an after-school program called Adventure Club, which was based at the school.

The claim was dismissed and denied in January 2012 because the commissioners found Jonathan was not enrolled in the state-approved child-care program, was not on that program’s property, was not under the supervision of the program at the time of the accident and was not using its equipment.

On Feb. 25, the Joint Budget Committee’s Claims Subcommittee reversed the Claims Commission’s ruling after two separate hearings and awarded the family \$1 million.

But the award amount did not have enough support to get out of the 56-member Joint Budget Committee. Members Wednesday voted 23-7 in favor of affirming the award amount. The claim needed 29 “yes” votes to be approved.

“When it got sent back to the subcommittee, we took that opportunity to go back to the family and [say] ‘Let’s try to work out an agreement that we all feel comfortable with,’” department spokesman Amy Webb said.

In addition to the monetary award, the settlement includes a list of evaluations and rule changes the department will undertake. The department will:

Review the rules for childcare facilities regarding identifying certified playground areas.

Review the rules for childcare facility playground safety.

Establish guidelines for placing physical barriers between playground areas and potentially unsafe areas.

Train or retrain staff in safety inspections.

The department, in a news release, said one of its officials will meet with Jonathan's parents, Nathan and Sarah Nelson, "to discuss, without limitation, playground safety," adding, "DHS extends our condolences to the Nelson family for the loss of their son, Jonathan...It is our department's hope that this settlement and compromise will further enhance child safety."

The Nelsons said they will continue to work on playground safety legislation.

In a statement, the Nelsons said: "We can think of no better way to honor our son than to protect other children in our state as they do what Jonathan loved best."

Watson Chapel School Board to discuss millage vote (Pine Bluff Commercial)

The Watson Chapel School District Board of Directors will hold its monthly meeting 7 p.m. Monday night in the Edgewood Elementary School cafeteria, 4100 W. 32nd Ave.

District superintendent Danny Hazelwood said Friday afternoon that the venue change for the meeting will allow the district to more adequately explain why the existing Edgewood building needs to be replaced and why district leaders believe the way to accomplish the project is the passage of a 2.3-mil increase to the existing 31.8 millage rate — a decision that will go to the voters in a May 14 special election.

"We want to bring attention to the need for the new building and explain how the requested millage increase must be approved by the voters for this to happen," Hazelwood said.

Hazelwood said in February that the only viable option to prevent a state takeover of the district is the construction of a new kindergarten-first grade building to replace the current Edgewood Elementary campus.

"The existing millage rate of 31.8 is less than every district around us," Hazelwood said in a Feb. 11 interview. "If the increase is passed, the new rate at 34.1 mills will still be the lowest rate in the area. The entire project is estimated at \$10 million with the state committing \$6 million of that amount, which is 76 percent of the construction cost and 60 percent of the total project cost."

Hazelwood said the building itself will cost \$8 million to construct while the additional \$2 million will go to the purchase of land to build on and equipment to furnish the school with.

"In my opinion we are at a crossroads related to the age of our facilities and the future of this district," Hazelwood said. "The first step is the construction of a new K-1 building to replace the existing Edgewood Elementary campus. The existing building is 52 years old. The state has already told us that the building needs to be replaced. The cost of maintaining a facility this old continues to rise."

Hazelwood said the existing floor plan at Edgewood is outdated from a safety standpoint because each individual classroom opens to the outside.

"In this day and age it is simply not safe for children to be that exposed," Hazelwood said. "We need a school that keeps all classroom doors centered on an inside corridor."

"In short, we are under a state mandate to get something done, so we've got to do something," Hazelwood said in a Feb. 11 interview. "If we don't, the state will look even more at creating a unified Jefferson County school"

district. [Arkansas Department of Education Commissioner Tom] Kimbrell has been talking about this. I think we only have one choice and that is the construction of a new K-1 building.”

Hazelwood said the new building as envisioned will meet and exceed the requirements of the State Board of Education.

“It will become a model to our district,” Hazelwood said Feb. 11. “I have assembled a qualified team of people to assist us in this task.”

Hazelwood said hard lessons were learned in the district’s unsuccessful bid to increase the millage rate by five mills last year.

“The 2.3-mill increase is less than half of what we asked before,” Hazelwood said. “In addition, there will be no leap-frogging of classes from one building to another as we had planned last year when we hoped to build a new fifth- and sixth-grade building. We will just be moving two classes into a new building.”

Hazelwood said part of the district’s strategy to get the millage increase passed is making sure that the plan is communicated clearly to the public.

New computers coming for Cabe Middle School students (Gurdon Times)

Cabe Middle School is taking progressive steps to equip Gurdon students for educational and career success. The Gurdon School Board recently approved a technology proposal presented by seventh and eighth grade team teachers; Tammy Shumate, Lori Capps, Susan Jackson, Deanne Davis, Anita Malcom and Valerie Free.

The approved proposal will provide the seventh and eighth grade students will 135 Mac Laptop computers and Apple I Pads. Enough computers to equip the classrooms with one on one technology for each seventh and eighth grade student beginning this fall.

Team spokesperson Shumate said, "We will utilize technology to enhance engagement, to eliminate downtime and also to expose students to web based software and improve their research skills. This will help our students compete in the 21st Century."

Shumate cited research which shows that one on one technology increases student achievement.

All the schools in Arkansas are getting closer to deadline of the mandated Common Core curriculum, which will require students to test on computers. When that happens, said Shumate, the CMS students' exposure to computers will benefit their scores and the students will achieve greater success.

"They love to work on them," said Shumate, "They are plugged outside of the classroom and unplugged at school." She added that students feel that lack of technology in the classroom.

"We are excited, excited for the students."

Each child will be assigned a computer however, that computer will stay at the school. The proposal includes a four year warranty and lease for repair or replacement of the computers.

All of the teachers will include technology into the lessons and assignments, including math, history and language arts.

"These computers will be a tool for instruction, they will not replace teachers," said Shumate, "The lessons will be teacher led not student led. We will use the computers as an enhancement tool to keep the students engaged."

School Superintendent Alan Blackwell said, "Common Core requires the integration of technology into the classroom. Coming down in 2014 and 2015, Parrc Assessments will replace Benchmark Testing. These computers will allow students to use technology on a daily basis and get them prepared for online testing. This begins a process and we will try to continue achieving advancements in technology for our students."