

Graduation...from Page 1A

collaborative effort to get these kids graduated. That is what's made this happen."

As Hill noted, guidance counselors play vital roles in student successes, as they work to guide students throughout their high school careers in ways that best suit post-graduation needs.

"Where are you at, what are you interested in – now, here's what you can do with this, here are your options," said Hill of his counseling department. "We're going to pick one that's right for you, and we're going to help you get there to where you want to be, that final destination, that career that you're focused on."

"And counselors help

students decide whether they need to go to a technical college or a four-year university, or join the military. They help coordinate all those different things and get those kids to that end result. They're important people."

Currently, the high school offers three courses that hone in on student interest as part of the Georgia College and Career Clusters/Pathways education program, geared toward graduating students with workplace-ready certifications like CNA licenses or welding certificates.

And when it comes to students who need extra help, high school teachers and staff do everything in their power to ensure that kids graduate

on time.

"We've added a lot of different things to help support students – opportunities for credit recovery, opportunities for remediation that prevents them from failing," said Hill. "Four days a week, the last 30 minutes of the day is called Flex Period, and kids that are behind in their classes, not performing well academically, they will stay during that 30-minute period, and they'll report to teachers for remediation time."

That remediation time has dramatically increased academic performance for students who struggle with certain subjects, while other children use that time for club meetings or to just go home early.

"The kids that are performing well, they get to leave on that first bell," said Hill. "They get to leave and go home, go to work, because they're on target to graduate on time, to perform, and the kids that are struggling, they get that time for extra help. It's an incentive to work harder to get to leave school a little early."

Students also have access to an afterschool program that runs for two hours a day, five days a week, and can even come into the math lab on Saturdays to get practice or extra instruction from a teacher that comes in also.

"We do a lot of different things to try to keep those kids on target for graduation," said Hill. "If a kid is out for two days in a row, we're picking up the phone and calling parents, bringing them in for conferences to say, hey, we just want to let you know what's going on academically with your son or daughter. So, we're bringing the parents in and getting the community involved in what's going on."

The high school also gives benchmark exams at the

six- and 12-week marks of each semester to make sure that students are progressing at a rate necessary to pass their classes and Milestones exams.

Construction...from Page 1A

said that part of the design process of the new ag center was a study of other agriculture facilities around the state, which is what the system did when designing the Fine Arts Center.

"They really did a good job," said Steppe of those behind the design of the forthcoming ag center. "They asked people, if you were doing another one, how would you do it differently? What would you change about it? We met four or five times with the architect and his team to talk about how we could do it."

"They'd bring back drawings, and we'd sit down around the table and bring other people in. We brought in some of our local folks

"Kids have to know you care about them," said Hill. "They may not agree with all the decisions you make, just like they don't always agree with their parents and

the decisions they make, but they've still got to know you care about them and you have their best interests at heart. We do pretty well here with that."

"We're in the process right now of having parent meetings and getting parents accustomed to the new reports," said Williams following the meeting.

This marks the first round of results from Georgia Milestones tests, which were first administered during the 2014-2015 school year.

Also in the meeting, Steppe and Williams introduced the board to a newly proposed funding model for Georgia's school systems, which will be voted on in the 2016 Legislative Session of the Georgia General Assembly.

Should the new funding model be approved, it will replace the Quality Basic Education model, or QBE, which has been in place since 1986.

Thank You...from Page 1A



County Courthouse.

Following Priven's presentation, VVA 1101 Chaplain Fred Freeman presented Priven with a plaque of his own in honor of his hard work and leadership in bringing the Moving Wall to Union County.

"If I could narrow the focus for a moment, we want Mike Priven to realize that Chapter 1101 did not miss the outstanding leadership, administration, organization, his outstanding ability to fundraise," said Freeman. "He just excelled, and we want to present him with this plaque from the members 1101 for his outstanding leadership."

Also present for the shadowbox presentation was Veteran Bill Kokaly, field representative for Rep. Collins.

In other business, Union County Sole Commissioner Lamar Paris accepted three affidavits swearing compliance with state law in the appointments of three individuals to the Union County Board of Elections.

"The Board of Elections was created in 2001 by Georgia Legislature HB 798," according to the Union County Government website. "The legislation requires that two appointments be made from each of the two major parties as determined by votes received in a presidential election. The county commissioner also has one appointment. Board members serve staggered terms."

The board of elections is responsible for preparing all elections materials, including the certification of qualified individuals and ballot preparation, and must conduct elections and the certification of results.

Rick Maddox was appointed by Commissioner Paris, while Board Chairperson Elizabeth Stevens was re-appointed by the Union County Democratic Party, and Merrill Prime was re-appointed by the Union County Republican Party.

Commissioner Paris expressed his appreciation for their willingness to serve, especially during an upcoming major election cycle.

The commissioner also proclaimed Nov. 11, 2015, as Veterans Day in Union County, along with Nov. 13, 2015, as World Pancreatic Cancer Day in the county.

On recreation, Commissioner Paris spoke on the upcoming SPLÖST-funded splash pad addition – a play place for younger children featuring various water activities such as timed water jets – to the Meeks Park pool area.

"I hereby accept this contract between Union County and Aqua Design Systems for the construction of a splash pad in Meeks Park," said Commissioner Paris. "The amount of the contract is \$293,049. The next lowest bid was by Waterworks for \$325,000. The splash pad will be constructed at the pool in Meeks Park. Hopefully

this will be done prior to the pool opening in the spring of 2016."

Before closing out official business and moving on to the Commissioner's Comments portion of the meeting, Commissioner Paris recognized World Polio Day, which he proclaimed at the ribbon-cutting for The Wine Shoppe on Oct. 23.

Wine Shoppe owner Bill McGlamery is president of the Rotary Club of Union County, and he spoke in the meeting.

"I was incredibly touched by the fact that, we actually put a plate out to see if anyone wanted to make donations, and almost \$200 was donated by the people that came to witness the proclamation," said McGlamery. "It shows you what people around the world can do if there's a cause worth fighting for."

After the close of official business, Commissioner Paris

spent a little more time on recreation, announcing plans to install swings at Meeks Park, to be situated next to the new playground that will be replacing the old playground.

"I was chairman of the Recreation Authority before I was commissioner," said Commissioner Paris. "Back when I was doing that for about 10 or 12 or 15 years, we struggled with it then, and that was swing sets. We've kept swing sets out of Meeks Park for the last 25 years, I guess, and we're finally going to relent and put in a set of swings."

Commissioner Paris said that the reason swings were kept out of Meeks Park was because of potential safety hazards, but he said that the county will be fencing in the new swings in order to limit the potential for any swing-related accidents.