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School board votes NO on Leadership Academy

By Anne Primm

The final vote was taken Wednesday at the Knox County Board of Education meeting and it was decided that Knox County schools would no longer participate in the Leadership Academy at the University of Tennessee. The vote was five "no" votes to three "yes" votes with one abstention. Board members had hashed out

the pros and cons of this academy since October of 2017 and finally decided to go forward with in-house leadership training.

In other business, the board recognized Knox County Schools as the winner of the World of Coding Competition and current record holder in the Guinness Book of World Records. Brandon

Bruce, co-founder and COO of Cirrus Insight and Caleb Fristoe of CodeTN were present to display the award. Over 6,678 Knox County students participated in this competition.

The Consent Agenda was approved without discussion and followed by a motion to approve the proposal regarding Lonsdale Elementary School and

Sam E. Hill Community Center. Public forum participant Tiffany Holmes, a teacher at Lonsdale Elementary, made an impassioned plea that this proposal only be a temporary solution to Lonsdale's overcrowding problem. Holmes related a litany of structural and environmental problems, such as mold and cockroaches to name a

few, that exist in the building. Holmes urged the board to place Lonsdale Elementary on the Capital Improvement Plan for a new school.

Third District Representative Tony Norman requested that Russ Oakes investigate the problems Holmes identified at the Lonsdale building.

The board then heard

from Griselda Sandoval who represented the Hispanic population in the Lonsdale area. Sandoval expressed that Knox County Schools has failed the Lonsdale Community. She stated that community meetings were held at such short notice few residents could arrange to

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Gresham's GLADiators!



PHOTO BY LUTHER SIMMONS

Players, coaches and fans erupt in celebration after Gresham comes back down the stretch to defeat Farragut 52-48 and capture the school's first-ever Knox County Middle School boys' basketball tournament championship Thursday night at Karns. See stories on the Gladiators' Cinderella season - and the Farragut girls' title win in Sports and Recreation, Section C.

County Mayor, Sheriff Candidates to Meet and Greet

By Mike Steely
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Want to talk to the candidates for Knox County Mayor and Sheriff? You can do that at 6 p.m. on Monday, March 5th.

The South Knox Alliance is sponsoring a "Meet and Greet" gathering of all the candidates at Dogwood Elementary. There are several men and women in both races and you'll get a chance to talk with them.

The South Knoxville Alliance is made up of businesses and organizations in the 37920 zip code area of South Knoxville and Knox County. The "South of the River" group has active business and civic leaders who promote the many assets to fellow Knoxvilleans, visitors and guests. It's a unique part of the town and county and is growing quickly.

Current candidates for county mayor include Brad Anders, Glenn Jacobs, Bob Thomas, Linda Haney, Rhonda Gallman and Rebecca Deloa.

The candidates for sheriff are Tom Spangler and Lee Tramel.

Other county and state candidates and officials may also be present.

Stage Set for May 1 Primary

By Mike Steely
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Knox County seems to be following the national trend with an increase in the number of Democrats and women filing for locally elected offices. The deadline was Thursday at noon and several new names have joined the candidate list for the May 1 primary since The Focus last reported.

In the race for Knox County Mayor former Democratic Chairwoman Linda Haney is joined

by Rebecca Deloa and Rhonda Gallman vying for that party's primary victory. The winner would face Brad Anders, Glenn Jacobs or Bob Thomas on the Republican side.

In the race for the 3rd District commission seat, Democrat Cody Biggs has filed as the lone Democrat and would face incumbent Commission Chairman Randy Smith.

Steve Hart has filed as a Democrat to oppose 7th District Commission Vice Chairman Charles Busler.

One Democrat has filed for the At-Large District 10 seat. Tori Griffin will face either Republican Larsen Jay or Ronnie Rochelle.

Daniel Gerke is the lone Democrat to qualify on time in the 11th District commission race. He will face either Republican Justin Biggs or R. Larry Smith.

Only one Democrat has stepped forward in the Circuit Court Clerk race. Sheri Ridgeway would face the winner of the five Republicans in the race.

Bo Bennett, Don Ridings, Scott Smith, Charles Susano or Tim Wheeler.

In the race for Sheriff are Tom Spangler and Lee Tramel, both Republicans.

Two Republican office holders stand unopposed in their primary and, with no Democrat in the primary, would become the only name on the August 2 General Election. They are Ed Shouse for Trustee and Mike Hammond for Criminal Court Clerk.

Republicans Nick

McBride and Steve Hall will face off in the primary contest for Register of Deeds.

Roger Kane and Sherry Witt will face off in the Republican Primary for County Clerk.

The school board race has opposition in the 1st, 6th and 9th Districts.

In the 1st, Andre Canty, Demetraus Jaggars and Evette Satterfield face each other. In the 6th, incumbent Terry Hill is opposed by Joshua Hawk.

Incumbent Amber

Rountree is opposed by Kristi Kristy in the 9th District.

Patti Lou Bounds, chair of the board, is unopposed in the 7th District race as is Virginia Babb in the 4th District. School board races are non-partisan.

Picking up petitions but failing to return them on time were Benjamin Wallace for County Mayor, William P. Sloan for the 10 District seat, Jacob Grant and Rebecca Saldívar in the 11th District.

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