

Staff Recognitions at Caverna Board Meeting

Mrs. Debbie Retires After 30 Year



▲ PHOTO | KATRINA ENGLAND
The James W. Minor Outstanding Employee Award which was presented to Melissa Faulkner.

By **Katrina England**
News-Herald Reporter

The Caverna Board of Education met in regular session on Thursday, July 10 at the Caverna Central Office.

In attendance were Board Members Gina Lyon, Allison Dennison, Jennifer Briggs, Wayne Hatcher, and Jennifer Ballard, as well as Superintendent Amanda Abell.

Announcements & Presentations

Board Chairperson announced it was the first board meeting in the 2025-2026 school year.

There were no public comments, but Briggs passed out a packet given to her to share with Board Members.

Abell announced grant funding totaling \$102,800 for the new tennis courts. The amount is over 50% of the goal. \$14,000 has been received in additional donations.

She also explained that Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief (ESSER) funding will be used to purchase two new buses for the district.

Staff Recognitions included a 5 year recognition for Mr. Paul Thompson, a 30 year recognition for Mrs. Debbie Meador, the B.H. Weaver Outstanding Educator Award which was presented to Joe Wilder, and the James W. Minor Outstanding Employee Award which was presented to Melissa Faulkner.

Along with her 30 year award, it was also announced that Mrs. Debbie Meador is retiring.

“I have loved working for Caverna,” said Meador. “If it wasn’t for my (grand)babies, I would still stay until I’m 100, but my babies need me.”

Caverna Elementary Principal, Ms. Vonda Stockton, presented walkthrough data taken before the end of the school year, which showed measurable growth on all three district goals.

Lastly, Dan Orman with the Kentucky Center for School Safety presented favorable safety inspection data, pertaining to security and safety.

Consent Items & Approvals

Regarding track resurfacing, Allison Dennison questioned the extent of allowable use going forward,



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The B.H. Weaver Outstanding Educator Award was presented to Joe Wilder.



▲ PHOTO | KATRINA ENGLAND
Mr. Paul Thompson was recognized for 5 years of dedicated service to Caverna Independent Schools.

since she expressed that so many community members use the track for walking.

The plans are to repair asphalt and then rubberize the track.

“If we use that rubber you’re not supposed to have just any shoes on those tracks?” asked Dennison. “How are you going to keep your community members off? You’re shutting that track down for your community to walk, and there’s a lot in the community that uses that track to walk.”

The current information is that if the Board continues with the planned resurfacing, chairs and cleats will not be allowed on the track, which will also be surrounded by a fence.

Hunter Halfhill with Sherman Carter Barnhart agreed to look into whether regular shoes will be allowed on the rubberized track.

“I think it’s a valid concern,” agreed Abell, who said a reconsideration might be in order pending information about shoes and community use.

Discussion of bond payments was tabled until more information is known regarding enrollment numbers, monthly bond payments, and funding.

Kelly Mrsic, Managing Director with the International Financial Services Firm Baird, will be in attendance at the next meeting to answer financial questions of the Board.

The next meeting of the Caverna Board of Education will be August 7. It will be a special called working session, taking the place of the regular monthly Board Meeting.

This meeting will include discussions of student handbooks, as well as bond payments for Schematic Design and BG-1 for the roof, canopy, outdoor bathroom, and track resurfacing projects.

The Board approved:

- 2025/2026 Employee Handbook;

- Apptegy, District Email, Google Workspace for Education, and the PBIS Rewards Family App for Communication Systems;

- The use of Blackboard, Outlook, and Starfish for students enrolled in a course with KCTCS; and

- Sealing Bid for parking all lots through R. Reynolds Sealing & Striping for \$41,600.



▲ PHOTO | KATRINA ENGLAND
Mrs. Debbie Meador was recognized for her 30 years of service to the Caverna School System.

82-Year-old Stan Cottrell Completes 1000 Mile Run



By **Harold Cottrell**

It was 1979 and Stan had set the World Record for the 24-hour run. Over 200 Hart Countians attended a banquet to honor Stan’s accomplishments. No one could have predicted that 56 years later Stan would have run over 300,000 miles crossing 43 countries around the world that included the China Wall, the Andes Mountains and 3 trips across our country.

Five movies, three books and hundreds of articles later Stan decided to run a marathon a day for forty days to celebrate his 82nd birthday and to honor our veterans and men in uniform.

Stan tells his story:

I just wanted to do this because the greatness of our country depends on the men and women who fight to protect our way of living. Whether it is fighting in wars, protecting us from domestic crimes or being on call for natural disasters—these men and women risk their lives so we can have the quality of life we experience.

June 4, 2025, I left Atlanta headed south toward Macon. I would start running at 5 every morning and have most of the 26.2 miles completed by 10 a.m. when the blistering summer sun of Georgia became practically intolerable. Each day was a new adventure, running through small town after small town.

The back roads of Georgia is truly a wilderness. Hardly any houses. Just fields and trees. I often thought of a famous person who spent 40 days and 40 nights in the wilderness. Many thoughts ran through my mind. I was at 1979

again with all the Hart Countians supporting me and cheering me on. It gave me added energy to keep pushing on to the finish line.

My biggest surprise came when my nephew, Tyler, and his sons Monroe and Oliver (ages 12 and 9) arrived to join me for the final five miles of the run. Suddenly I realized this journey was not about endurance. No, it was about heritage. About the names and stories written not only in history books, but in the memory of Hart County Kentucky, a place my heart calls home.

The pastor of the First Baptist Atlanta Church encouraged me to finish the race at the church during the Sunday morning service on July 13—the 40th day of the run.

The church live-streamed the event with over 40,000 viewers around the world.

For all of us in the congregation, it was a very moving event as Stan ran into the church service carrying his American flag. Stan got a long, standing ovation. It was the perfect ending to this 40-day, 1048 mile run.

Stan has one last thing to say, “To the Hart County News, which has followed my journeys since that first run from the A&W root beer stand in 1960—thank you for carrying my story”

You can watch Stan finish the run at the First Baptist Atlanta Church by going to <https://www.youtube.com/@FirstBaptistAtlanta> and then choosing the video Faithful to the Finish July 13, 2025. Stan runs into the church at the 22 minute mark.

