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## Gayle Jackson honored for dedication, service

By *LESLIE BIXLER*  
*Staff writer*

FREMONT -- Dr. Gayle Jackson was honored Monday night for her dedication to the Fremont City School District over the years as many gathered to wish her well.

Violetta Rhea, Brenda Bilal and Ross High School junior Torrie Ruiz shared their experiences of how Jackson inspired and helped them.

"It gives me great pleasure to honor Dr. Gayle Jackson. She's a strong advocate for kids, founder of ACE Mentoring Program and African American College Club," Rhea said, noting Jackson's programs will continue to thrive in the district and community.

ACE Mentoring month is recognized in January and the goal is to help students succeed in school and improve their self-esteem. About 50 members in the community recently volunteered their time to mentor students at Ross High School.

"I was lucky enough to participate in the college tour and ACE Mentoring Program," Ruiz said.

Bilal and Rhea, who help with ACE Mentoring, said Jackson has taught them well.

"She has been the mentor to mentors," Bilal said.

Jackson said, "This is quite an honor. All the years I've worked with the young people. ... We can make a difference in children's lives."

While Jackson still lives in Fremont, in the near future she will be joining her husband Dr. Alvin Jackson, director of Ohio Department of Health, in Columbus.

School board members were also recognized with thank you letters from students and a portrait of each member which were drawn by sixth graders from Otis and Stamm elementaries.

In other news, Superintendent Traci McCaudy gave an update on the new middle school project. She said committees are being formed explained that she is keeping an open line of communication with Vanguard Superintendent Greg Edinger, who is involved with the HVAC committee and core team.

McCaudy will be meeting with a grant writer and consultant this week who will assist her with looking for grants that would benefit the district with energy and technology.

Three commissioning agents were interviewed last week, she said. The agent is mandated by the Ohio Schools Facilities Commission, and the agent's purpose is to ensure the design intent of a building is fully realized.

**The board approved the following:**

n Permanent improvement projects for Atkinson steam pipe insulation, Hayes boiler repairs, Stamm univent motors, Stamm float valve, Ross door closures, district-wide ground fault outlets, districtwide faucet replacements, Lutz trap seals and Croghan heater and air conditioning for a total of \$11,297.

n Purchase of Nova NET software and service, which will include 15 Nova NET subscription licenses for 18 months; 1 Internet configuration fee; 2 professional development days for a total cost of \$29,150.

Ross High School Principal Jose Hernandez said this online program offers a rigorous curriculum and is designed for students who have the capacity to complete a course, but for whatever reason are faced with an obstacle which prohibits them from participation in a traditional school setting.

Board members Linda Hershey and Jim Fails expressed their concerns with what types of students would use the program. Hershey was concerned about a student staying home and participating in Nova NET as opposed to actually going to school because they just don't want to go to school. Fails asked about students using the program to graduate early.

Hernandez said someone will be monitoring students' completion, and that it's aligned with the state curriculum.

However, while McCaudy said she could see the program expanding, the first priority is to help those students recover credits from failed or incomplete classes.

"This is a last resort (program). You've got to prove you're not making it in the school environment," Hernandez said.

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