

Fluctuating enrollment tests school

By Kathryn Reed



ZEPHYR COVE – A transient population is something Whittell High School is learning to deal with.

Principal Sue Shannon addressed the Douglas County school board on Tuesday, saying the transient population went from 14 to 20 percent and she expects it to keep climbing. She believes it has a lot to do with the economy and people coming and going as jobs come and go.

She said the problem is many of these students are credit deficient. Eight students are scheduled to start at the school next week and more than half are lacking the credits they should have.

Bright spots in her presentation included talking about how the accreditation process went well last fall and that 92 percent of the 2009 graduates went on to a two- or four-year college.

Shannon plans to address the board again in March to ask for modifications to the four-day school week that was instituted this school year.

This is the second year the school has been a 7-12 campus. Shannon believes this is a benefit to the students and had good things to say about the K-6 Zephyr Cove Elementary being down the road.

Some students from ZCES come to WHS for band, gym and math.

Creating a culture at Whittell where students have ownership and accountability is working, Shannon said. This year's seniors were freshmen when she came on board.

Since Shannon has been at the school students now must take four years of science. If they don't want to, the student must present their case with their parent to school officials.

New classes this school year include pre-engineering, applied economics, applied algebra two and expanded science offerings.

Shannon said it's always a constant struggle for a small school to offer a variety of classes. She said with a third of the teachers not being full time, it allows for more flexibility in the schedule.