

take a look at Walker
Countians and their careers.

Sanford seeking second term

By ED HOWELL
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Walker County Superintendent of Education Harvey Sanford announced last week he is running for a second term, pointing to progress in the school system over the past three years.

Sanford, 58, who will run as a Democrat in the June 6 primary, said he was proud of the schools, administration, staff and students of the county school system.



*Harvey
Sanford*

"I have to say, I've lived in Walker County all my life and I'm dedicated to Walker County. I've never wanted to work anywhere else other than Walker County. That's where I intend to retire from," Sanford said. "I'm honored I've been able to serve a term as superintendent of Walker County Schools. I would appreciate the opportunity to serve

See SANFORD, A10 ►

Riley: Give

Sanford

From A1

again.”

Sanford said he made some commitments when he took office. His first was to allow parents to vote on school uniforms, which resulted in the idea being turned down. The second, to have all the schools accredited is well on its way.

“By the end of the year, we hope to have all the schools accredited,” he said, adding he next wants the county system to become one of the first in the state to achieve systemwide accreditation, which is a new standard now available.

“I feel strongly about accreditation because it means we’re committed to minimum standards in the school,” Sanford said.

Sanford said when he took office the system was under proration, without even textbooks funded by the state, and both schools in Carbon Hill were leveled by fire and tornadoes.

“Despite all that, we paid textbooks out of local monies and we didn’t have a single layoff,” he said, adding that in fiscal 2005, “we finished with the largest reserve we’ve ever had, \$5.4 million.”

While the Carbon Hill disasters created a detour for the system’s capital improvement plan, he said the new combined Carbon Hill School is up and the Oakman High project is finishing up. Construction for welding and diesel mechanics class space is also underway at the Walker County Center of Technology.

There are plans for new schools at Cordova High and for Sumiton, as well as construction needs at Curry, Valley, Farmstead and Lupton.

Despite veering from the schedule to rebuild the Carbon Hill schools, “we’re back on track with where we want to go,” he said.

“I’m committed to strong discipline. We have no tolerance for those who bring weapons or sell drugs. I expect to support the principal who supports teachers who are maintaining well ordered classrooms,” Sanford said.

“I’m committed to upholding Christian moral values. I

don’t have any patience or tolerance of employees who try to date students or otherwise take advantage of impressionable students,” he said.

Sanford said the past year has yielded a good budget, adding the system has a chance to benefit from a strong economy to upgrade the schools. The sales tax revenue that benefits the system was up \$400,000 last year, and from October to January this fiscal year, the revenue is already up \$400,000 compared to the same period last year.

The school board has been able to look at raises for support personnel, he said.

“It’s still not where it should be, but we’ve made a start,” he said, adding the lunchroom salary schedules have also been revised.

The board is also looking at salaries for aides, especially those who are getting two-year degrees to comply with the No Child Left Behind Act.

“This year 57 local teacher units were paid out of local funds” to reduce teacher-pupil ratios, he said, adding the number of units were up last year.

Sanford said while many people think the capital improvement plan is his top priority, instruction is actually first on his list. The system has started a five-year instructional improvement plan, and he said some “tremendous” gains have already been seen. Areas such as reading, writing assessment and the percentage of

students passing graduation exams have been on the increase. Lupton has been named a banner school.

Three schools — T.S. Boyd, Farmstead and Dora High — have also been designated for intense work on the instructional level.

“We’re beginning to see a lot of good things come out of that,” he said.

Sanford said in his one term the system went from basically having no network system to having networks in most schools, having Internet access at all schools, an upgraded bandwidth and millions in grant money for technology. He also pointed to an upcoming distance learning program in Oakman High, and said he and area legislators are working on an unspecified tech project that could bring in \$500,000 to the system.

A program will also be announced later to allow students in grades 9-12 to achieve an LPN nursing certification to go with their high school diploma, in cooperation with Beville State Community College, Walker Baptist Medical Center and the Jasper City School System. Students can then go ahead to work on becoming an RN.

The SUCCESS program has been reintroduced last year to combine academic morning classes and technical afternoon classes to help eighth-grade students, and he wants to expand the program soon. He said dropout rates are improving, adding that

students have to see how school benefits their future to keep them enrolled.

He said the system has been active in purchasing buses and air conditioners before they breakdown to lower maintenance costs.

An Oakman native, Sanford graduated Oakman High in 1965. He started his career as a math and science teacher, first at Cordova High and then at T.W. Martin.

He became supervisor of county instruction for two years before serving as principal at the Sumiton School for nine years. Sanford was assistant superintendent for the county system for 17 years, mainly over instruction, finance and personnel.

Sanford said he obtained a bachelor of science degree in chemistry and math at the University of Alabama, as well as a master’s, AA and a doctorate in administration from the Capstone. He also has a law degree from the Birmingham School of Law.

Sanford also belongs to the School Superintendents of Alabama, where he is president of District 7’s superintendent group and a member of the Legislative Affairs Committee. He is also a member of the Alabama Bar, the board of directors for the Chamber of Commerce of Walker County and the Jasper Kiwanis Club.

Sanford and his wife, Vicki, have been married for 20 years and have three children, Seth, Monica and Adrienne.

‘Our War on Drugs’

We must conquer many battles before we win the war. We are conquering these battles. We are committed to the war.

- * In the last three years, our narcotics unit has averaged 8th out of 33 units in the state in the number of arrests.
- * Last year alone, the unit made 556 arrests within the county.

Welcome!