

FORMER PRINCIPAL REQUESTS A LEAVE OF ABSENCE



The former principal for Watauga High School, Michael Wyant, made an announcement, saying that he requested a leave of absence from his position so that he could work on earning and obtaining his doctorate degree, which he will be receiving from the Appalachian State University. Because he applied for a leave of absence, Marshall Gasperson was asked to fill the position as soon as possible. This took place just a few days ago. Prior to filling in for the position of principal, Gasperson worked as the human resources director for the Watauga County School District. The Board of Education in Watauga County decided to approve Wyant's request for his leave of absence, allowing him to spend more time working on earning his doctorate. Wyant made a statement in which he talked about how the decision he made was definitely not easy. However, he says that he chose the decision because he knows that he wants and needs to complete his degree. He is hoping that the students along with parents of students and even staff members will completely understand the decision he has made. He is also thankful that he has the opportunity to take a leave of absence so that he can spend the majority of his time focusing on the goal he has set, which is to earn his doctorate. Wyant claims to have been working on the degree for many years now, since 2004 to be exact. He finished his classes in 2006 but he still needs the dissertation in order to officially complete and earn the degree he wants. He knew that he was running out of time and needed to do something about it which is why he put in the request for a leave of absence. The graduate school only allows seven years to complete the program for a doctorate and the time was coming near, to the point where Wyant needed to either earn it or start all over again, which is definitely something he did not want to have to go through. While working as the principal, Wyant earned about \$101,199 each year. Now that he is taking a leave of absence, he will be relying on the money that he has earned from all of the paid leave days that he had saved. This will help him to continue earning money while working on his degree. Wyant will have the option to come back to the system but his position is not necessarily guaranteed. He may also end up earning a different salary, it would ultimately depend on the position he is given if and when he comes back. Gasperson, who is now taking over the principal position, is still only earning \$84,842. This is considered fairly low for a principal and it is expected that his salary will be raised.