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# Hobgood principal leaving the team

## Sales hailed as 'remarkable leader in education'

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Hobgood Elementary principal Barbara Sales, center, is pictured with Education Consumers Foundation President J.E. Stone, left, and Tennessee Education Commissioner Kevin Huffman, right, after being honored for the school's performance on the annual state assessment. Sales plans to retire after leading the school for eight years. / SUBMITTED

Written by [Mealand Ragland-Hudgins](#)

**MURFREESBORO** — As a young girl, Barbara Sales spent hours playing school with her eight siblings.

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Influenced by the educators that made an impact on her, Sales decided she would go to college and become a teacher. But after more than 30 years in education, Sales has made the decision to retire as principal of Hobgood Elementary.

“After thinking about my next steps for a couple of years, I felt that Hobgood was at a wonderful place. There are many renovations and additions planned for the next three years and I felt that someone new could come in and be a part of the planning and really become invested in the excitement and continue the growth,” said Sales, who has been principal since 2004.

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Sales began her career in Lebanon after earning a bachelor's degree from Tennessee State University in 1978, followed by a master's in education and a second master's in administration, both from MTSU.

She taught middle school and first grade for six years with the Lebanon Special School District before moving into administration. Sales served as principal at Lebanon's Sam Houston Elementary School from 1990-99, then spent the next four years as the system's director of special projects.

Under Sales' leadership, Hobgood was nationally recognized by trimming the achievement gap between student groups. The school has made straight A's on the state's report card on education for more than a decade.

When she talks about the school's accomplishments, "we" is a word that's used.

"I am a part of a wonderful team. I am not a boss. We have accepted the challenge of exceeding expectations for student growth," she said. "We have become a collaborative school community that embraces the important role of parents in the schools."

City Schools Director Linda Gilbert called Sales a "remarkable leader in education."

"She has raised the bar in this school district and across the state — for students and for teachers. Barbara is the epitome of a principal who cares about individual children and uses data to meet the needs of those children," Gilbert said.

Sales has led the way in the Hobgood's becoming one of the most tech-savvy schools, even holding a technology fair to show principals and teachers across the district how SMART boards, iPads and iPods can enhance student learning.

Sales was named as one of Tennessee's 27 most effective principals in 2011.

Tammy Grizzard spent four years as a sixth-grade teacher at Hobgood before accepting a position at Murfreesboro City Schools' central office assisting with teacher evaluations and classroom techniques. She called Sales a "visionary who inspired the faculty, staff and students to obtain academic excellence through hard work and dedication."

"Barbara Sales led Hobgood Elementary to academic excellence, but most of all, she helped students develop into productive citizens who will one day excel in this community," Grizzard said.

— Mealand Ragland-Hudgins, 615-278-5189

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