

DATE: June 4, 2012 PRESENT: Billy Peaden, Chair
Jill Camnitz
Mildred Council
Worth Forbes
Benjie Forrest
Sean Kenny
Jennifer Little
Ralph Love, Sr. (By Telephone)
TIME: 6:30 P.M. Barbara Owens
Christine Waters
Marc Whichard
PLACE: Pitt County Office Building Mary Williams

ABSENT:

Chair Billy Peaden called the Board of Education to order in Regular Session at 6:30 P. M. in the Third Floor Board Room. Roll call followed.

Mr. Marc Whichard led the Board in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Bishop Ralph Love followed with a Moment of Silence asking that we remember anyone who has suffered a tragedy, sickness or loss of a loved one in our Pitt County Schools system. He specifically asked that the Board remember himself and his health issues.

For recognition tonight, Athletic Director Ron Butler explained that the Amy Carroll and Sherry Little Award is presented annually in recognition of an individual who has gone the extra mile in supporting physical education in Pitt County. Individuals nominated to receive this award were evaluated for outstanding professionalism in their teaching and unwavering support of physical education combined with dedication, enthusiasm and love of children. Two members of the families, Ms. Samantha Whitehurst and Mr. Matt Little, were present tonight to observe the presentation.

Mr. Butler and Principal of Wintergreen Intermediate School Dawn Singleton presented the Amy Carroll and Sherry Little Award to Ms. Jennifer Gillikin, a physical education teacher at Wintergreen who goes the extra mile supporting students by improving their physical well-being as well as their academic performance. Examples of her dedication and enthusiasm include heading up countless fundraisers to purchase physical education equipment, participating in Jump Rope for Heart (usually raising over \$3,000), organizing field day, mentoring, and using recreational sports as a reward system for students with behavioral intervention plans.

Ms. Gillikin also helped last summer with creating K-8 PE pacing guides and is a very successful volleyball coach at DHC.

Chair Peaden offered the Agenda for consideration. Ms. Barbara Owens moved, second by Ms. Jill Camnitz, that the Agenda be approved as presented. Motion passed unanimously.

Because of the number of people wishing to speak during Public Expression, Chair Peaden allowed each speaker two minutes to express their opinions. Mr. Henry Trevathan, Mr. Larry Williford, Mr. Brad Johnston, Mr. Scott Gardner, Pastor Mickie Fields, Mr. Jimmy Lewis and Mr. David Boal expressed support for having the football field at Farmville Central High School named after Mr. Dixon Sauls, a former teacher, coach and athletic director. They spoke of Mr. Saul's integrity, positive influence on former students and staff, contributions to the Farmville schools and community, and his accomplishments over the years.

The next group of speakers, who were present due to employment issues, included: Ms. Emma Speight, Ms. Linda Williams, Ms. Marjorie Foreman, Ms. Carolyn Gorham, Mr. Morris Edwards, Mr. Harvey Dupree, Mr. Bernard Rogers, Mr. Adam Linker, Mr. Don Cavellini and Ms. Melissa Grimes. In-House Attorney Rob Sonnenberg interrupted several of the speakers as personnel names and specific grievances were addressed, which is not allowed in Public Session due to FERPA. Chair Peaden explained that some cases have not been heard by the Board of Education; and if a hearing results, Board members would have to be recused that are familiar with the case. Members of the Coalition for Educating Black Children spoke of racism, discrimination, unitary status and respect; and stated "It takes a village to raise a child."

For the Spotlight on Teaching and Learning, Principal of D. H. Conley High School Mary Carter and English Teacher Christy Sutton, who is also the Yearbook Advisor, shared a video involving over 90 Conley staff members who joined together to honor their graduating seniors. Their goal was to offer advice to the graduating class of 2012, which they did by writing a positive thought on their hands with a marker and displaying the messages on a video. The video was shown at the Senior Breakfast held in April with students feeling the compassion of their teachers as they prepare to cross the finish line.

Under Consent Items, Mr. Sean Kenny, second by Mr. Marc Whichard, moved that the Board approve the Minutes from the Regular Meeting held May 21, 2012, the Personnel Report for June and a Resolution Regarding a Virtual Charter School. Motion passed unanimously.

Under New Business, Assistant Superintendent of Finance Michael Cowin stated that he usually requests the last Board meeting in June be moved back to the end of the month in order to have more budget information available. He shared that the Finance Committee will not meet until after the June 18th Board meeting date, but asked the Board could he present the proposed final Budget Amendment for 2011-12 before the full Board at the June 18th meeting.

Mr. Benjie Forrest moved, second by Mr. Worth Forbes, that the Board approves Mr. Cowin presenting the proposed final Budget Amendment for school year 2011-12 to the full Board at the June 18, 2012 Board meeting. Motion passed unanimously.

Due to the illness of Chair Ralph Love, Vice-Chair of the Human Resources Committee Mary Williams reported to the Board following a Human Resources Committee Meeting held May 22, 2012. Ms. Williams stated there were three Agenda items discussed. The first item was relative to hiring incentives and ways to recruit teachers to work in

our district. Ideas mentioned were connecting with the Educational Foundation and programs such as OASIS to brainstorm collaborative ways to attract and retain teachers.

The next item discussed was a proposed policy – Employee Use of Social Media. Instructional Media Coordinator Tim DeCresie shared details of the policy and demonstrated its correlation with the Student Social Media Policy. The HR Committee approved the proposed policy with minor changes and forwarded it to the Policy Committee for further review.

The last item presented was the need for a drug-free workplace environment policy that is separate and apart from the present policy which primarily deals with safety sensitive positions such as bus drivers. A sample policy from Wake County was reviewed, and the Committee suggested researching policies from other counties similar to our district and presenting a proposed policy at our next meeting.

Chair of the Operations Committee Sean Kenny shared with the Board a report following the Operations Committee Meeting held May 22, 2012. Mr. Kenny reported that two items were discussed during the meeting. The first was related to naming the football field at Farmville Central High School in behalf of Mr. Dixon Sauls - former teacher, coach and athletic director.

Mr. Worth Forbes stated at the Operations Committee Meeting, he stated that the Board needs to be consistent across the county in naming school buildings/fields/facilities after a person. He added that he had spoken to several folks – coaches, athletic directors, a past recipient of such honorary measures – and is now in favor of naming the football field at FCHS after Mr. Dixon Sauls. Mr. Forbes moved, second by Mr. Benjie Forrest, that the Board approve naming the Farmville Central High School football field after Mr. Dixon Sauls.

Ms. Barbara Owens commented that she graduated from Farmville High School and had three children who graduated from Farmville Central High School. Ms. Owens stated that there are many worthy people in Farmville who could be honored for contributing to the community. She stated this issue has always been about policy and procedure, not a particular person being honored. Ms. Owens added that she had contacted Associate Superintendent of Operations Aaron Beaulieu asking would he research the naming of facilities that had occurred in the past. She stated the current policy and procedures (enacted in 1993) regarding naming of school facilities asks for input from the community - athletic booster clubs, PTAs, community organizations or clubs, etc. Ms. Owens stated she assumes this has been the process on this occasion and asked FCHS Principal Brad Johnston if she was correct. She closed by saying this is why we are where we are tonight and agreed that Mr. Sauls is an incredible human being having worked with him before.

Mr. Marc Whichard stated that Mr. Dixon Sauls has done great work in the Farmville Community and with students. He added that the presentation tonight regarding statements on people's hands dealing with what life is all about is information the Praxis Test or daily activities do not convey to students in the classroom. Mr. Sauls always demonstrates morality and does the right thing, which was documented by the public expressions heard here tonight, and Mr. Whichard agrees that Mr. Sauls should

receive his accolades now and not after going on to a bigger and better place. He commented that he concurs with Ms. Owens in that our policy and procedures should be followed; and feels that Mr. Sauls is worthy of the presentation, which has been ongoing for several years, with accurate procedures followed.

Mr. Worth Forbes stated that Attorney Sonnenberg will present this policy at our next Policy Committee Meeting for further discussion.

Ms. Mary Williams commented that she has no problem with the FCHS football field being named after Mr. Dixon Sauls or any person deserving of such an accolade. However, she shared that she had a very bad experience regarding a similar issue at Wellcome Middle School in that a facility was named to honor a recipient and then the decision was rescinded. Ms. Williams stated the naming was carried out to honor Dr. John Daniels with all factors in place – family members, the press, Board approval – and then, for whatever reason, the decision was rescinded. She wants to be sure this occurrence will not happen again to anyone in Pitt County. Ms. Williams firmly added that if the Board approves this request, it should be clearly stated and the decision not reversed at a later date.

Chair Peaden then asked for a vote by the Board which was unanimous.

Mr. Kenny stated the second item discussed at the meeting was the D. H. Conley practice football field. He commented that he was really impressed with Athletic Director Rob Maloney who spoke about Conley and how the community in the area pulled together to resolve issues regarding the field.

Chair Worth Forbes presented the Second Reading for revised policies:

1. Policy 2.501 – Children’s Internet Protection Policy
2. Policy 7.208 – Dismissal of Classified Employees

With no discussion rendered, Mr. Worth Forbes, second by Ms. Mildred Council, moved that Policy 2.501 – Children’s Internet Protection Policy be approved. Motion passed unanimously.

Mr. Worth Forbes stated that he had been contacted by several classified employees regarding termination. He commented that the second policy for Second Reading - Policy 7.208 Dismissal of Classified Employees does not make it easier to get rid of classified employees, but spells out for employees the process to follow if they are not happy with a decision made regarding their employment.

Mr. Forbes moved, second by Mr. Marc Whichard, that the Board approve Policy 7.208 – Dismissal of Classified Employees.

Superintendent Beverly Emory reminded everyone that this is not a new policy, but outlines due process for an employee to request a hearing which may be granted or denied. Ms. Mildred Council asked if there is a list of steps toward due process posted for the public to see regarding this issue. She feels there is a mean spirit within the system and has heard numerous scenarios from minorities feeling they move up three steps, then fall back ten steps. Ms. Council commented that all supervisors and

others in charge need to work at resolving problems and make a concerted effort to build a better school system. She stated there are lots of “isms” out there, i.e. racism, sexism, and jealousy. Ms. Council added that the superintendent needs to tell school personnel that we need to do a better job and stop acting like children when they need to work out issues. She commented that supervisors need to work through issues in their individual schools and be fair in their decisions. In school year 2012-13, Ms. Council stated the Board needs to make sure our schools are hearing both sides of an issue and treating their employees with respect. She added that when staff members are cutting up and acting out, how can we expect students to do any better.

Mr. Forbes added regarding Ms. Council’s statements, that he’s received two phone calls today – one from a custodian and one from a bus driver – and feels there is a lack of understanding between the supervisor and the employee. He commented that some of these employees don’t have the education that others have, and feel that have been treated poorly. Many are asking that their supervisors listen and help them work through situations rather than taking the easy way out by firing them.

Ms. Christine Waters stated that in a training she attended as a new Board member, School Board Member 101, it was her understanding that Board members do not interfere with personnel issues. She added that with due process, Board members cannot hear a case if they have been involved with the employee and need to recuse themselves at the hearing.

Ms. Council stated that the Board is the superintendent’s boss and feels that somebody needs to instruct the supervisors regarding this issue with follow up at a later date. Ms. Waters voiced that the chain of command needs to be followed regarding employees and the Board has no say so in these matters. Mr. Forbes stated that School Board Member Training 101, when it comes to an employee and what is good for an employee, could be thrown out the back door as he is going to listen to parents and school employees who came to him.

Chair Peaden then called for a vote regarding Policy 7.208 which passed with one nay vote by Ms. Mildred Council.

Mr. Sean Kenny updated the Board regarding the Graduation Task Force. He reminded Board members that this task force was implemented after issues from parents and the community arose following last year’s graduation ceremonies. Mr. Kenny informed members that the task force was comprised of students, parents, central office staff, school faculty and board members. High school principals and staff have recently been instructed regarding their graduation responsibilities and seating areas by Lieutenant Chris Sutton from the East Carolina Police Department. He stated that training will take place tomorrow for central office staff monitoring all six graduations, and asked Public Information Office Heather Mayo to share a video made by Ayden-Grifton seniors which will be shown just before the graduation ceremony begins for Ayden-Grifton. All six high schools each had seniors make a video to be shown at their respective schools before graduation. Mr. Kenny also informed Board members that perforated tickets will be used; pledge letters were sent out, signed and returned; and feels at each high school, all students will hear their names called in a respectful manner.

Ms. Jennifer Little asked about parking in the lower parking lot with Ms. Mayo responding that Gates 1 and 2 are affected by construction. She shared that a parking map is included in each Board member's packet placed at each seat with directions as to where parking is available.

Ms. Council commented that LaQuan Rodgers, one of the seniors speaking in the video, is President of the Greenville Youth Council, a young minister and one of the youth she has mentored.

Under Comments by the Superintendent, Dr. Emory thanked everyone involved with the Graduation Ceremonies – members of the Graduation Task Force, those assisting with parking or the ceremony, or in any other way. She added that graduation is what makes our jobs worthwhile – you witness students reaching their goal after years of hard work and stressful times.

Dr. Emory expressed sympathy to the Argomaniz family and the D. H. Conley family following the death of a daughter and graduating senior. She added that her thoughts and prayers will be with the family. Superintendent Emory commented that support from the Crisis Team of social workers, counselors, nurses and others was outstanding and demonstrated how so many come together to help those in need going way above and beyond the call of duty.

Dr. Emory then asked Student Services Director Pokie Noland to update the Board on the challenge we've had this week following a student being diagnosed with tuberculosis. Dr. Noland reported that 650 students and 100 staff members at Ayden-Grifton High School were tested for TB in approximately 30 minutes. She added that only 17 students were not tested at this time, but will be later. Dr. Noland reported that the test sites will be checked Wednesday and commented on the great work accomplished by the health department, Ayden-Grifton staff members, EPS employees and social workers. Mr. Forbes stated he had spoken with Ayden-Grifton Principal Marty Baker, and he reported that everything went as smoothly as a well-oiled machine. Ms. Mary Williams asked about the waiting period with Dr. Noland reporting that results can be read in 48-72 hours. Superintendent Emory added that if a senior was not tested and results reported, they will not participate in commencement. She also commented on the great corporation from the Ayden-Grifton Community. Ms. Christine Waters asked how the first case was detected with Dr. Emory responding that they were notified by the health department.

Ms. Barbara Owens stated that Mr. Sean Kenny had done a fantastic job with the Graduation Task Force and added that he was a joy to work with.

Ms. Mary Williams expressed concern regarding the employees who spoke tonight but added how things look may not always be the case. She stated that she has confidence in the people we have in place to address these issues, our system and the policies in place. Ms. Williams remarked that we ask so much of folks, but they are never paid enough. She added that Ms. Delilah Jackson and the HR Department stay on top of issues that arise. She knows some people feel things need to be assessed, because they are affecting her community. By that, she said many of these faces tonight look like hers.

Ms. Williams also expressed condolences to the Argomaniz family and the Lee family. She added that Ms. Argomaniz was a well thought of young lady within her community.

Ms. Jill Camnitz commented that the Conley video was awesome and demonstrated how involved the teachers are with their students and care about their academic achievement and their future achievements.

Ms. Mildred Council reiterated what she had stated earlier. She also expressed condolences for the loss of a student. Ms. Council mentioned the staff taking sensitivity training this summer and feels someone is not telling the truth. She again stated folks should not be mean to employees. Ms. Council closed by saying, "If you dig ditches for other folks, you will fall in them yourself."

Mr. Worth Forbes congratulated Ms. Gillikin on receiving the Amy Carroll/Sherry Little Award and stated the D. H. Conley video, implemented by Ms. Christy Sutton, was touching. He also stressed to parents that it's an exciting time as seniors graduate, but please practice safety in all activities. Mr. Forbes also extended condolences to the Argomaniz family with the loss of their child.

Mr. Marc Whichard stated he was grateful to see the video from Conley and added that he might use that idea with his staff. He felt it was a great way to see the softer side of a teacher. Mr. Whichard then shared that his heart is heavy as a good friend of his wife died of lung cancer six months following her diagnosis. Adding to the tragedy, she was pregnant; and though it was taken early, her child is living. Mr. Whichard commented that we have a good, compassionate school system and are blessed to have our employees.

Ms. Christine Waters was delighted with the Conley video and reported that some of those teachers were her students. She reminded everyone that it's okay to make a mistake as long as you learn from it, and cautioned seniors who are celebrating that life is fragile.

Mr. Sean Kenny stated that he has been moved by many of the comments from Board members. He congratulated Ms. Gillikin – especially as a second time recipient. Mr. Kenny thanked the Sutton family for their contributions - first to Ms. Sutton for the video and to Lieutenant Sutton who works with the ECU police and helps with our graduations. He expressed sympathy to the family who has lost a loved one and stated he's looking forward to seeing Bishop Love return to our meetings. Mr. Kenny closed by congratulating the class of 2012 and is looking forward to attending all six graduations this weekend.

Mr. Benjie Forrest congratulated all seniors and is looking forward to seeing dignified and smooth graduation ceremonies. He also spoke of the tragedy of losing a loved one. In closing, Mr. Forrest stated many years ago the University of Chicago conducted a study regarding what makes a good teacher. He commented that the study reported teachers felt a knowledge base of subject matter is important, but students felt having teachers who care is the essential factor. Mr. Forrest feels the Conley video was most impressive and demonstrates the commitment our teachers have for their students.

Ms. Mary Williams, second by Mr. Benjie Forrest, moved that the Board go into Closed Session to establish or instruct the staff or agent concerning the negotiation of the amount of compensation or other terms of an employment contract [N.C.G.S. § 143-318.11(a) (5)]. Motion was unanimous. Time 8:03 p.m.

Upon returning to Open Session and with no further business to discuss, Mr. Benjie Forrest moved, second by Ms. Jill Camnitz, that the Board adjourn. Motion passed unanimously. Time was 8:47 P. M.

Respectively Submitted,

Mr. Billy Peaden, Chair

Dr. Beverly Emory, Secretary