

DATE: March 1, 2010 PRESENT: Mary Grace Bright, Chair  
Jill Camnitz  
Michael Dixon  
Benjie Forrest  
Jennifer Little  
Ralph Love, Sr.  
TIME: 7:00 P.M. Billy Peaden  
Roy Peaden  
Marcy Romary  
Dick Tolmie  
Mary Williams

PLACE: Pitt County Office Building ABSENT: Barbara Owens

Chair Mary Grace Bright called the Board of Education to order in Regular Session at 7:00 P.M.

Ms. Mary Williams led the Board in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Chair Bright then offered the Agenda for consideration. Mr. Dick Tolmie, second by Dr. Ralph Love, moved the Agenda be accepted. Motion carried unanimously.

K-8 Director Marsha McLawhorn and 9-12 Director Chena Cayton then recognized K-12 Mathematics Instructional Resource Coordinator Connie Cheston who has been selected as the Outstanding Administrator in Science, Mathematics and Technology Education by the North Carolina Science, Mathematics and Technology Education Center. Ms. Cheston's dedication to the staff of Pitt County Schools is evidenced by her professional training standards during staff development and her commitment to the students of Pitt County. Congratulations and thank yous were expressed by Board members.

There was no one in the audience who wished to speak during Public Expression.

Under Spotlight on Teaching and Learning, East Carolina University Dean of Education Linda Patriarca shared with the Board the "Teacher Quality Partnership Grant". Dean Patriarca stated her objective tonight was to share an overview of the Grant with Board members. She began by sharing goals of this Grant including:

1. Recruit highly qualified individuals, including minorities and individuals from other occupations.
2. Improve the quality of prospective and new teachers.
3. Hold teacher preparation programs accountable for preparing high quality teachers.
4. Improve student achievement

Dean Patriarca explained that the Grant was in partnership with East Carolina University College of Education, ECU Thomas Harriot College of Arts and Sciences, Pitt County Schools and Greene County Schools.

Activities and focus areas involved in the Grant include: teacher recruitment, school and curriculum reform, clinical experience and interaction, induction program for new teachers, accountability and strengthening pre-baccalaureate programs.

Different strategies were discussed for recruitment into the program and needed changes in curriculum to lead to consistent and coherent integration of content knowledge and the knowledge of teaching were mentioned. It was reported that approximately 60% of graduates from the College of Education Program remain in the teaching profession.

Mr. Benjie Forrest stated the Grant was being used for a great cause as there is a definite need for quality teachers. He asked was personality type of an applicant ever considered in terms of making a quality teacher. She stated years of studies have been carried out in this regard, but to no definite avail. Dean Patriarca felt someone who had a positive attitude, a good disposition and was proactive for children made better teachers. Someone who accepts "old fashioned" responsibilities and has a sense of efficacy should be able to make a difference, but accessing this is the hard part she stated. Ms. Jill Camnitz asked could these values be taught to a student. Dr. Patriarca feels these traits are instilled as a person is brought up, ideal models for honesty and decency were in place and high expectations were set. Ms. Jennifer Little stated while she was attending East Carolina, she had friends who were education majors. She remembers them having to set aside study time, prepare for student teaching and then realizing that their personality or career goals did not match the teaching profession demands. She thought it might be more productive if students could rotate through different areas of this profession, i.e. counseling, speech therapy, administrative positions, etc. like doctors do in their training. Dr. Patriarca concurred with this idea and stated more clinical experience is needed by the program. She also stated if excitement in a student's face once he/she grasps the idea begin taught does not bring a sense of success to a teacher, then the educational field may not be the right career choice for that particular teacher.

Ms. Mary Williams was a Teacher Academy in place? Dean Patriarca stated a program is being piloted in a few schools where students in Early College High School and an Early Teacher Academy in middle schools are involved. These students come out of high school with college credit towards graduation at ECU, but have been involved in teacher education activities throughout their years in high school. Ms. Williams felt more activities introducing students in middle and high school grades to the teaching profession would be a real asset for these students. She has a daughter who has entered college this year with a goal of becoming a teacher, and she knows that such activities would have been helpful to her in reaching her goal of becoming a teacher. Dr. Patriarca also mentioned Project Heart through Americore where students tutor in public schools for a total of 900 hours per year. In tutoring, they have more clinical experience incorporating cultural differences between students. Mr. Michael Dixon asked where in the goals of clinical experience do you incorporate cultural sensitivity which is a major problem for many graduates coming into a multicultural school situation. Dr. Patriarca stated diversity in the work force involving first generation college students from low income families, background differences, race differences, language differences, etc. will provide students involvement with many aspects of diversification. She stated application for a Trio Grant for increased support looking at advising support, financial literacy support and academic tutoring over and above

what the university provides has been initiated. Increased support structures available to these students are important because everyone does not see the world the same way and they could identify with different types of kids. Being placed in diverse environments and reading requirements dealing with different cultures will help balance these differences.

Mr. Roy Peaden stated he was concerned with the percentage of teachers who stayed in the profession and asked what can school systems do to help keep teachers. Dean Patriarca stated the universities need to prepare teachers to be more ready for the classrooms. We have to set high expectations for them, but provide good support to reach those expectations. If students are not right for a teaching profession, the universities need to be prepared to weed them out early in the program – not after they have graduated. Schools need to improve mentoring programs within the system so the new teachers feel comfortable and well supported in their classrooms. Observations of new teachers and feedback to build their teaching abilities should be provided similar to their days of student teaching.

Under Consent Items, Ms. Jill Camnitz motioned, second by Mr. Michael Dixon, that the Board approve the February 8, 2010, February 15, 2010 Regular Session Minutes and March 2010 Personnel Report. Motion carried unanimously.

Under New Business, Community Relations Committee Chair Marcy Romary shared with the Board two names that the School Naming Committee has presented for consideration for the name of the new elementary school. These names are Briarcreek and Lakeforest Elementary School. The school mascot of frogs and school colors of green and yellow were selected for both names. After discussion regarding the two names between Board members, Mr. Dick Tolmie asked did the Committee favor one name over the other. Ms. Romary stated there was a close tie between the two names, but Lakeforest was probably the favorite of the Committee. Ms. Jennifer Little asked about the color of uniforms for feeder schools, but Ms. Romary stated this was really not considered. Mr. Benjie Forrest stated he had a soft spot in his heart for the name “Forest”. Upon motion of Mr. Michael Dixon, second by Mr. Dick Tolmie, to approve the name of the new elementary school as Lakeforest Elementary School and accept frogs as the mascot for the school with green and yellow as the school’s colors, motion carried unanimously. Superintendent Reep did ask should the words be separated – Lakeforest or Lake Forest. After discussion, Ms. Jill Camnitz stated the name is a proper name and could be spelled as one word.

Superintendent Reep then discussed schools for Open Enrollment during the 2010-11 school year. She stated this was an annual decision by the Board, and offered for consideration the same list of schools as last year with the addition of Ayden Middle School. After little discussion, Mr. Billy Peaden moved, second by Mr. Dick Tolmie, that the Board approve Open Enrollment schools for the 2010-11 school year including Ayden-Grifton High School, Farmville Central High School, North Pitt High School, Bethel K-8 School, Sadie Saulter Elementary School and Ayden Middle School. Motion carried unanimously.

Ms. Mary Williams asked were these the only schools in our system with Open Enrollment? Dr. Reep responded yes, but if a student was enrolled in a school that

was previously included in the Open Enrollment list for a different year, the student could stay in that school until its exit grade.

Assistant Superintendent of Finance Michael Cowin then shared with the Board recent information received from the State Associate Superintendent Philip Price of the Department of Public Instruction regarding the Budget for the 2010-11 school year. Mr. Cowin explained preparations already put into place for the upcoming school year from budget information received last summer regarding the economic status of the two upcoming school years. Mr. Cowin informed the Board that not only were the earlier reductions going to be made, but now there is talk of an additional 3% budget reduction across the State. For Pitt County Schools, this would total approximately \$3.9 million in budget reduction which would produce a scenario equivalent to a loss of 35 teachers, 25 teacher assistants and \$1.5 million in at-risk funding. Mr. Cowin pleaded with all Board members to let their voice be heard NOW to all legislative delegates stating how crucial these funds are to our school budget for the 2010-11 school year. He stated we cannot continue to enforce cuts in our schools impacting our students and school operation.

Ms. Jill Camnitz asked questions regarding the State class size limits and how close to these limits were our class size numbers for Pitt County Schools. Dr. Reep stated last year there was no real class size talk except for grades K-3 which have set parameters. She stated Low Wealth Funds helped us with an old formula used in grades 4-12. Superintendent Reep stated changing teacher assistant hours and the number of days worked during the year helped us retain a large majority of assistants. Mr. Cowin stated additional cuts in the budget would mean maxing out class size and other measures which have a definite impact on our children.

Mr. Roy Peaden asked to see a report regarding class size overage in Pitt County Schools and suggested sending the results to Raleigh. He feels overcrowded classrooms would eventually lead to a higher dropout rate. Ms. Jill Camnitz also felt the community needed to be informed of where we stand. Mr. Cowin stated we need to move in this direction. He commented that Mr. Price at DPI does not want further reductions in our funding. Mr. Cowin commented that most systems across the state are not prepared for the first budget cut involving the 1010-11 school year, and are definitely not ready for an additional reduction in funds. Mr. Dick Tolmie stated if we have to cut more teachers, it would certainly increase class size or force the system to eliminate non-core courses. Mr. Michael Cowin has prepared a draft letter to our legislative delegates to be signed by all Board members asking that they strongly consider the severe impact that additional State budget reductions in education will have on each school district and the students. The Board gave a consensus to sign the proposed letter to each of our five delegates.

Superintendent Reep reminded the Board members that the university system saw an overall increase in funding last year. She implored the community to get involved and speak to our legislators regarding funding for public education and our school systems.

Chair of the Facilities Committee Roy Peaden stated the Committee met at Sadie Saulter February 16 with nine Board members present. Associate Superintendent of Operations Aaron Beaulieu then led discussion regarding issues presented at the

meeting. Mr. Beaulieu stated he wanted to emphasize from the beginning that there are **no plans** to close Sadie Saulter as a K-5 school for the 2010-11 school year. He did state there was a lengthy discussion of upcoming plans for Sadie Saulter, Third Street Center and ECVC property. It was decided by the Facility Committee that future plans for using Third Street Center (maintaining the property as a facility for operation) and ECVC (purchasing the property) were not pursued. Regarding Sadie Saulter, Mr. Beaulieu stated Public Information Officer Heather Mayo was working on a community forum for March 16 and tours of the mentioned facilities.

Mr. Roy Peaden asked what progress had been made in this regard. Ms. Mayo stated it had been advertized in the Daily Reflector, the Daily Drum, Farmville Enterprise as well as the Times Leader. They are running on radio stations WOOW and WECU. Press releases have been given to news media personnel as well as being placed on PCS web site. Flyers will also be placed out in the community. An ALERT NOW message has not been sent.

Mr. Michael Dixon again emphasized that a decision has not been finalized regarding Sadie Saulter. He also stated that most of the students attending Sadie Saulter at the present time are not from the surrounding neighborhood, but most of the students who are enrolled used the Open Enrollment option for Sadie Saulter. Mr. Dixon wants to end the myths and misdirected comment of a "pseudo prison camp" when speaking of Sadie Saulter changes. Community input will be given before any decision is made regarding the future plans for Sadie Saulter School and a tour of the ECVC facility is still available. An accurate account of what is going to happen with changes for Sadie Saulter is most imperative stated Mr. Dixon.

Mr. Dick Tolmie stated the Facilities Committee did recommend eliminating Option III and Option IV plans for Sadie Saulter and asked did we need Board approval regarding the recommendation. Mr. Beaulieu stated yes, this is the usual procedure once a specific committee makes a recommendation. Therefore, Mr. Michael Dixon moved, second by Mr. Dick Tolmie, that Options III and IV involving the Third Street Center and ECVC be eliminated from further discussion and both would be closed for the 2011-12 school year. Motion carried unanimously.

The second item discussed at the Committee meeting was the size of A. G. Cox School – whether the future capacity would be 600 or 800 students.

Mr. Dick Tolmie asked if space was available and how many middle school class seats do we need to service the K-5 students two years from now? He felt with the 600 seats, at some point we may have to come up with the other 200 middle school seats whereas the 725-800 seats could be a match for future growth.

Ms. Jill Camnitz asked about the price difference in the two sizes suggested. Mr. Beaulieu stated he did not have this information as an architect had not been hired at the present time and a cost estimate was not available. Ms. Camnitz stated the costs of the Sadie Saulter, the A. G. Cox and the Chicod projects need to be considered in regards to the available money for funding this next round of construction.

Mr. Roy Peaden, Mr. Benjie Forrest and Mr. Michael Dixon felt the Board should move forward with the 800 student plan in looking to the future and in considering the

infrastructure of the school, i.e. larger cafeteria. He gave Ridgewood Elementary as an example which everyone thought was large enough but is already over capacity.

Mr. Beaulieu stated Mr. Cowin had shared there was \$23-36 million available as Mr. Jimmy Hite continues to work on the Long Range Plan. He did state again that an architect for Phase II construction had not been approved. Ms. Camnitz asked how could the Board approve this size without a known cost for construction?

Chair Bright reminded the Board that it was earlier discussed that we need redistricting information determined now that would prevent another redistricting one or two years from now with school construction changes. Superintendent Reep stated the primary issue with the size of a school right now is looking at how many students we're going to move to another setting.

Ms. Camnitz again stated her concern regarding dollars to fund all these major projects. Mr. Beaulieu stated at A. G. Cox in their current status, it would accommodate 800 students – it would be challenging, but could be done with temporary classrooms, modular units, students attending elsewhere, etc.) A. G. Cox and Chicod are the two top priorities because of the age of parts of the facilities. Ms. Camnitz then felt relieved upon hearing this information. Mr. Tolmie felt for our future needs with redistricting, 800 seats are needed at A. G. Cox.

Mr. Beaulieu stated the Phase II projects would be maintained or reduced at the current operational costs.

Mr. Roy Peaden moved, second by Mr. Michael Dixon, that the size of A. G. Cox would be set for 800 students. Motion carried unanimously.

Policy Committee Chair Jill Camnitz and In-House Attorney Rob Sonnenberg then presented a revised policy Personal Records Requests – Policy 2.302 for Second Reading. Without further discussion, Ms. Jill Camnitz moved, second by Ms. Marcy Romary, the Board approved Personal Records Requests – 2.302 as presented. Motion carried unanimously. Changes in Procedure 10.205-P Canine Searches for Drugs were also presented for information.

Superintendent Beverly Reep congratulated Ms. Connie Cheston on receiving her award and commented on how personally Ms. Cheston took on the success of every student when working with mathematics. She also congratulated Executive Director of Student Services Travis Lewis upon receiving his Doctorate. She also announced that it was National Social Worker Week and asked all to thank their school social worker for all their efforts for the students of Pitt County Schools.

Dr. Reep stated Assistant Superintendent of Human Resources Delilah Harris was absent tonight as she was attending a presentation of Farmville Middle School Principal Lionel Kato regarding his trip to South Africa this past summer studying achievement in their schools working toward his Doctorate.

Superintendent Reep stated almost 200 students attending the Link Crew Conference at South Central High School last Saturday. Excitement was in the air as they shared the memories of last year's conference and became involved in the events planned for

this year's meeting. A follow-up of these events will be presented at a later date. Dr. Reep also commented on the Youth Art Exhibit at the Greenville Mall and congratulated the Art Department, Counselors and students in the sixth grade curriculum "Walls of Tolerance" for the outstanding work demonstrated. She also expressed the joy that the "Read Across America" Program, sponsored by the PCAE, brings to those attending.

In closing, Dr. Reep congratulated the Falcons of South Central High School – both the boys and girls teams for their outstanding performance and wished them the best of luck in the basketball playoffs.

Chair Bright also reminded everyone of the Teacher of the Year Ceremony to be held at South Central High School Thursday at 5:00 p.m. She also discussed the Community Forum to be held at Sadie Saulter School March 16 at 6:30. In closing, she asked that everyone review their Committee assignments and scheduled meetings.

Mr. Roy Peaden commented on how fortunate we are to have a university at our "back door" and shared appreciation for them working with us.

Ms. Jennifer Little stated the orchestra from Sadie Saulter performed at the mall last week giving a wonderful presentation. She also expressed congrats to the South Central Teams. In closing, Ms. Little reminded everyone of the Ethics Training Tuesday night at 6:00 p.m.

Mr. Michael Dixon mentioned the Region I teaching fellows screening and stated four of the five participants were from Pitt County. He also discussed the Annual College Round Up to be held in the auditorium of Edgecombe Community College scheduled for March 13. Mr. Dixon stated 30-40 college and university administrators, including East Carolina University, would waive admission fees, arrange financial aid, housing, etc. during the meeting.

Mr. Benjie Forrest stated he had an affinity for Vocational and Technical Education and thanked local newspapers for their recent articles promoting these programs. He also thanked County Commissioner Smith for his positive comments in support of these classes. Mr. Dick Tolmie commented he was happy to see the editorial challenging the Commissioners to fund these programs. He also announced a Finance Committee Meeting Wednesday at 4:30 on the fourth floor.

Ms. Marcy Romary also commented on the outstanding performance by the orchestra from Sadie Saulter at the "Pennies for Peace" concert. She also shared with each Board member a subscription for the Rose Newspaper which she and her daughter had purchased.

Ms. Mary Williams stated the North Pitt High School Future Community Leaders Association held a talent show, and the teachers/students participating did a really great job which was enjoyed by all attending.

Mr. Dick Tolmie then moved, second by Ms. Jill Camnitz, that the Board go into Closed Session to: consider the qualifications, competence, performance, condition of appointment of a public officer or employee or prospective public officer or employee;

or hear or investigate a complaint, charge, or grievance by or against a public officer or employee. [N.C.G.S. §143-318.11(a) (6)] Motion carried unanimously.

Upon returning to Open Session, a brief discussion was held regarding the recent OCR complaint presented to the media.

Mr. Michael Dixon moved, second by Dr. Ralph Love, that the Board adjourn at 9:55 p.m. Motion carried unanimously.

Respectively Submitted,

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Ms. Mary Grace Bright, Chair

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Dr. Beverly B. Reep, Superintendent