

DATE: November 15, 2010

PRESENT: Mary Grace Bright, Chair
Jill Camnitz
Benjie Forrest
Jennifer Little
Ralph Love, Sr.
Barbara Owens
Billy Peaden
Roy Peaden
Marcy Romary
Dick Tolmie
Matthew Ward
Mary Williams

TIME: 7:05 P.M.

PLACE: South Central High School Auditorium

Chair Mary Grace Bright called the Board of Education to order in Regular Session at 7:05 P.M.

Ms. Jennifer Little led the Board in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Chair Bright then recognized three out-going Pitt County Board of Education members and thanked them for their services rendered for the children in Pitt County Schools. The out-going members are Mr. Richard A. Tolmie with thirteen years of service, Mr. Roy A. Peaden with eight years of service and Ms. Marcy W. Romary with six years of service. Each member was presented a plaque which was read by Chair Bright.

Upon completion of Chair Bright's presentations, Vice-Chair Dick Tolmie then presented Chair Mary Grace L. Bright a plaque as an out-going Pitt County Board of Education member and thanked her for her services rendered to the students of Pitt County Schools and as Chair of the Board of Education for the past two years. Chair Bright has served on the Board for the last eight years.

Chair Bright then offered the Agenda for consideration. Bishop Ralph Loved moved, second by Ms. Barbara Owens, that the Agenda be accepted as presented. Motion carried unanimously.

Under Public Expression, Rev. Ozie Hall came forward representing the Pitt County Coalition for Educating Black Children. He stated that five years ago, we supported the Board's decision to use racial balance in student assignment and had become plaintiff in Court endorsing equal education for black children. Rev. Hall commented that several Board members had stated that race could not be used for student assignment, but that statement is wrong as there is an active Federal court case pending regarding this issue. He reported that white parents have proposed a map for middle school reassignment to prevent a lower performing middle school while the superintendent's recommended reassignment maps show four racially identifiable schools. Rev. Hall stated the most equitable proposed maps benefiting all children impacted by redistricting are the elementary map ES 4 and the middle school map MS 3. In closing, Rev. Hall asked that the superintendent's recommended maps be taken to Federal Court for approval.

Ms. Melissa Grimes stated that the elementary school plan ES 5Av1 and the middle school plan MS 2B demonstrate low proficiency scores in several schools from the onset. She commented

that these same schools will become segregated. Ms. Grimes commented that it is ironic that a group of parents developed a recent middle school map to raise proficiency between the middle schools involved. She closed by saying we should not put one parent against another or one neighborhood against another, but move forward for equity for all students using the elementary map ES 4 and the middle school map MS 3, which are part of a scientific plan designed to be fair to all students in Pitt County Schools.

Greenville City Council Member Rose Glover stated that in the 21st century, we should not create racially identifiable schools which will not provide an equitable education for all children. She favors Rev. Hall's statements – it's all about the children and we should not identify a school as having low performing children.

Ms. Caroline Sutton, Education Chair of the PCNAACP, stated she was representing Mr. Calvin Henderson, President of the Pitt County NAACP and referenced a quote by our Governor saying all children in our state should have a chance and diversity makes for a better end product for a child. Ms. Sutton stated the NAACP stands against resegregation and the group speaks with one voice.

Ms. Anne Hoyer stated she has no children in Pitt County Schools, but works in a pediatric practice with children who have attention deficit disorders and behavioral problems. She feels proficiency is the best model to adopt, not proximity to a school. Ms. Hoyer mentioned the programs Dr. Reep plans to implement to increase proficiency in low performing schools – but asks how are you sure this can be accomplished as there are already many great teachers and programs in the schools. She also questioned creating stability with many large neighborhoods involved, and thinks that what all parents really want is a strong, successful school. Ms. Hoyer ended by saying Sadie Saulter did not have increased enrollment though many programs were implemented.

Mr. Sean Kenny stated qualities of a good educator are courage and conviction. He commented that when being faced with a difficult task, he had heard Board members say they need no more maps, but wish to stick to the dates and timeline provided and it is time to move on. Mr. Kenny stated he supports Dr. Reep, the staff and Pitt County Schools, but he does not support either reassignment scenario presented or the self-imposed deadline. He challenged the Board to have courage and conviction and give reassignment the "A" it deserves.

Ms. Alice Powell lives in Canterbury and asked the Board to vote against redistricting their neighborhood. She asked why consider uprooting the children at W. H. Robinson and have parents drive several miles further to another school. Her daughter, Alyssa, also voiced her desire to stay at W. H. Robinson

Mr. Mark Lundberg stated he had stayed out of the redistricting arguments as he listened to his wife and heard different groups wanting different things. He stated the last redistricting plan did not work. Mr. Lundberg stated if money is needed to put programs in a school to make it successful, then fix the problem in that school.

Mr. Paul Kelly commented that he had been to multiple meetings and stated he bought his house in a developed community to support that community and the area school. Since then, his children have been in three different schools. Mr. Kelly stated moving children around does not fix a problem. He stated that parents create accountability for their children, and we need to make parents in all communities accountable for their responsibilities to hold their children accountable and bring up the proficiency levels in all schools.

Ms. Melinda Kane stated she lives in the Eastwood Subdivision and reported that statistics on the middle school map provided by a parent had not be accurately presented as six segments were shown by administration and only four were involved. She requested consideration by the Board regarding the four segment changes of C. M. Eppes to E. B. Aycock and vice versa.

Mr. Michael Laurin lives in Preston Trails and stated only eight middle school children are actually involved in the redistricting of his community asking that Fire Tower Road be set as a boundary line. Mr. Laurin stated they would be leaving a school less than two miles away from their house and driving to a school seven miles away.

Ms. Naomi Nicoletti resides in Emerald Park where nine students will be involved with redistricting from Ridgewood to Creekside. She stated their present school is one-half mile from home, and the new school is two miles away with traffic issues and two four-way stop signs to go through. Ms. Nicoletti said yes, children are resilient, but asked for consideration to this request.

Ms. Heather Hildebrandt moved from Kinston one and one-half years ago in search of a stable community for her children. She stated she knows holding children accountable starts at home. Ms. Hildebrandt commented that she searched for a school demonstrating high achievement and selected Emerald Park so her children could attend Ridgewood Elementary. Ms. Hildebrandt asked that the Board consider allowing these nine children to remain at Ridgewood Elementary.

Ms. Rebecca Blount stated she has a child in first grade and one that will start school next year. It will be several years before her children attend middle school, but she has spent many hours studying the redistricting process. Ms. Blount stated the community member chart was not accurately presented and urged the Board to vote for minor tweaks. She emphasized that no one wants a school to fail.

Mr. Jeff Wilson resides in Planters Walk and stated five years ago his family experienced a dreadful ordeal with redistricting. Now healing has occurred, but their neighborhood is going to be redistricted again. He asked that the Board leave Planters Walk as it is.

Ms. Sharon Evans stated Pitt County has had rapid growth over the past several years and diversity has been an issue for many years. Promoting segregation is not an option. She asked what if a majority of the Board was African American and the superintendent was African American and they wanted to move white children – how would you feel? What resources will be given? Ms. Evans asked the Board to not make mistakes that have been made in the past, but think of what is in the best interest for all children.

Chair Bright then thanked everyone for their comments during Public Expression and assured the community that their voices had been heard during the redistricting process.

For the Spotlight on Teaching and Learning, Engineer Bill McClung, Science Teacher Mamta Singh, and Students Raj Patel and Courtney Lommatzsch shared with the Board FIRST – an acronym meaning, “For Inspiration and Recognition of Science and Technology.” FIRST and the FIRST Robotics Competition (FRC) are important tools to inspire and motivate young people to pursue careers in science and technology fields. FRC is a dynamic and exciting program that develops technical and leadership skills that any student can use after graduation.

The Pitt Pirates are the local FRC Team encompassing students from all six high schools in Pitt County. The Team members present discussed FIRST including the history and future direction for The Pitt Pirates. The 2010-11 Team consists of a diverse group of over fifty students and seven adult mentors. The budget and team goals were also reviewed.

Under Consent Items, Ms. Jill Camnitz, second by Dr. Matthew Ward, motioned that the Board approve the Minutes from Regular Meeting held October 18, 2010, the Second Personnel Report for November 2010 and the Property to be Declared Surplus. Motion carried unanimously.

For New Business, Chair Jill Camnitz and In-House Attorney Rob Sonnenberg then shared the Policy Committee’s recommended First Reading for revised Policy 7.111 – Evaluation of Certified Employees. Ms. Camnitz stated the changes were mandated by State Law with the new evaluation of teachers being implemented. Bishop Ralph Love commented that Human Resources Committee members have also discussed the changes and approved them as presented. He further stated that members of the Finance Committee were present during the discussion.

Superintendent Beverly Reep then shared with the Board the second criteria regarding Unitary Status up-date – Transportation. She stated that since the TIMS Program had been implemented in Transportation, district wide data had been collected with more efficiency. Dr. Reep commented that the focus schools (as discussed during the first criteria presentation) data was compared with the district average data as shown. The concern for Transportation is long routes for the Exceptional Children’s Program and possible future budget cuts.

Under Old Business, Superintendent Reep prefaced the administrative reassignment recommendation for middle schools and elementary schools for approval by the Board of Education with several statements. Dr. Reep commented that for eight months, strong efforts have been made by the staff and the Board to seek the best solution for redistricting in order to populate a new elementary school, fill additional seats at Eastern Elementary and closing Sadie Saulter School. She stated multiple community sessions have been held, many e-mails have been received and reviewed and other contacts made in order to listen to the citizens of Pitt County.

Points to remember are that percentages seen are reading scores only – the composite scores for reading and math will look completely different and higher than those percentages presently given. Dr. Reep also added that in a school with composite scores less than 60%, significant resources will be added. The Race to the Top Grant will provide funding for many of these

resources. Lastly, changing schools is very difficult and emotional for all involved. She asked that we remember that every child has a new teacher each year rendering transition for all involved.

Superintendent Reep then recommended the Superintendent's Middle School Reassignment Plan for approval by the Pitt County Board of Education. Bishop Ralph Love, second by Mr. Roy Peaden, moved that the Board approve the recommendation as presented. Chair Bright then opened the floor for discussion.

Mr. Dick Tolmie asked why did Board members not want to see the other two maps previously discussed.

Mr. Roy Peaden stated the Board could see maps into next year and everyone will not be happy. He further commented that proficiency/proximity/capacity cannot be 50/50 in all schools. Mr. Peaden stated the staff had listened to the community, and Dr. Reep and the Board have promised to support lower performing schools.

Ms. Mary Williams stated she agrees with Dr. Reep's recommendation and that children are resilient while adults have a hard time accepting changes. She stated no matter what map was chosen, minority kids who do not have brick and mortar schools in their neighborhood will have to be bused. Ms. Williams feels we are taking a step in the process of getting Unitary Status. She hopes in the future that there will be a school in all communities looking at the socioeconomic balance and the racial balance – perhaps we could look at building a school on the Third Street site. Ms. Williams states the Board knows we are opening a school with poor proficiency scores, but busing students to the closest school feels right in her heart. She does not think schools should be all black or all white. Resources will help make a difference in low performing schools and kids can look forward to bigger and better things.

With no further discussion, Chair Bright then called for a vote from Board members regarding the middle school reassignment administrative recommendation. There were four "nays" given – Ms. Marcy Romary, Ms. Jennifer Little, Mr. Dick Tolmie and Ms. Jill Camnitz. There were 7 "ayes" given – Ms. Mary Williams, Bishop Ralph Love, Mr. Billy Peaden, Ms. Barbara Owens, Mr. Benjie Forrest, Dr. Matthew Ward and Mr. Roy Peaden. Motion passed.

Chair Bright asked for a motion regarding the superintendent's recommendation for the elementary schools reassignment plan. Bishop Ralph Love moved, second by Ms. Mary Williams, that the Board approve the superintendent's recommendation for the elementary schools reassignment plan. Discussion followed.

Mr. Dick Tolmie stated that in discussion of the middle schools, changes were suggested to achieve better balance in racial diversity and available capacity between the schools. In the elementary school recommendation, we are intentionally opening up a new elementary school with 12% white students and South Greenville Elementary will become 17% white which is disappointing to him for racial diversity. He commented with no brick and mortar schools in a neighborhood, students have to be bused. He added that his daughters were bused to South

Greenville Elementary School for better diversity in the school, and he was happy with that decision. He again feels there is a better map for diversity.

Ms. Jill Camnitz states there are several reasons why she cannot accept the recommended reassignment plan. She commented that our country depends on public schools providing every child the opportunity for a productive life. Ms. Camnitz believes the recommended plan compromise that opportunity for some of our students – which cannot be tolerated. She believes we can and should do better.

Ms. Marcy Romary shares Mr. Tolmie's and Ms. Camnitz's views regarding the recommended reassignment plan. She stated that lower proficiency scores are a fact and asked what will happen when the Race to the Top funds are gone. Ms. Romary asked are there any plans for afterwards? She also questioned this plan helping Pitt County Schools achieve Unitary Status.

Superintendent Reep stated funding will be sustained – Title I funds could also supplement resources. She also expressed the goal that in four years, all schools will be above 60% proficiency. Ms. Romary asked why had progress not been made in this area before as we have been under Court order for forty years. Dr. Reep concurred with Ms. Romary and stated she wished she had been more aggressive toward this goal sooner in her career with Pitt County Schools. She commented that she is glad we have had to face this issue and will work with the Board toward achieving this goal. But, Dr. Reep also interjected that she as superintendent nor the present Board of Education cannot wear what has or has not been done for the past forty years. Superintendent Reep stated this Board can move forward and needs to make changes for the future.

Chair Bright then asked for a vote regarding the elementary schools reassignment plan as recommended by Dr. Reep and the administration. There were four “nays” given – Mr. Dick Tolmie, Ms. Marcy Romary, Ms. Jill Camnitz and Ms. Jennifer Little. The seven “ayes” given were – Ms. Mary Williams, Mr. Roy Peaden, Dr. Matthew Ward, Bishop Ralph Love, Mr. Billy Peaden, Mr. Benjie Forrest and Ms. Barbara Owens. Motion passed.

Under comments by the superintendent, Dr. Reep thanked the young engineers who presented The Pitt Pirates Program and stated work was being implemented to grant elective credit for the many hours students put into this program.

She also stated that November 29th is the AIG-Physics Day to be held at the J. C. Park from 9:00 a.m.-1:30 p.m.

Dr. Reep thanked parents for the excellent turn out during school conferences held recently on early release days.

In closing, Superintendent Reep stated she appreciated the Board members in their thankless job of serving on the Board of Education and their many hours of time and effort they put forth. She stated they would be sorely missed and although they did not always agree, everyone worked for what is best for the children of Pitt County.

Chair Bright then stated after almost nine years of serving on the Board of Education, she knew tonight would be difficult. She mentioned redistricting and the loss of fellow Board Member Michael Dixon. Chair Bright stated the positives far out-weigh the negatives remembering receiving the SACS accreditation, several Pitt County teachers being named regional teachers of the year, building and opening new schools plus additions to older schools, scholarships and awards received by Pitt County students including Teaching Fellows and NC Governor's School, Principal and Teacher of the Year ceremonies, going tobacco free, approximately 4700 computers being placed in schools over the last three years with a five year replacement plan, National Board teachers, the Health Science Academy, dropout prevention efforts and on and on. She stated Pitt County Schools are great, and she's proud and humble to have served on the Board of Education and it's been her honor to have had her seat.

Mr. Roy Peaden stated that Chair Bright had covered almost everything. He said that at least four new schools have been opened while he's been on the Board with additions to many schools over the years. He commented that we have grown and sometimes growth is painful as redistricting usually occurs. Mr. Peaden wished the new Board members all the luck in the world in their endeavors. He did state that allowances should be made in uniforms with redistricting and commented that a "coat of many colors" was good.

Ms. Jennifer Little thanked all out-going Board members. She commented that she did not support the reassignment plan, but did support keeping neighborhoods intact. Ms. Little will continue to support all schools and students.

Dr. Matthew Ward thanked the out-going Board members for their help in his new position and particularly Chair Mary Grace Bright, who had not hesitated to help him whenever he called. He stated this is not an easy job and agreed with Mr. Roy Peaden that you cannot satisfy everyone with tweaking on many sides. Dr. Ward stated the Board needs to do a good job and accomplish goals that have been set.

Ms. Jill Camnitz expressed a thank you to the out-going Board members and stated it was an emotional time, but all knew how she feels.

Mr. Benjie Forrest stated it has been an honor and privilege to work with the out-going Board members. He commented that like James in the Bible, life is like a vapor. Redistricting required tough decisions and reflected heavily on neighborhoods with proximity playing a key role in his decision. Mr. Forrest stated there will be issues with funding, but providing resources for low performing schools should be a high priority.

Mr. Dick Tolmie commented on the Principal of the Year ceremony and a comment made by out-going Principal of the Year Seth Brown from Harry Chapin's song – *A Better Place to Be*. He stated he felt like he was living out a good/bad dream. Mr. Tolmie stated Chair Bright stole his closing remarks but it's true that Pitt County Schools are progressing and Dr. Reep initiated a lot of that progress. He commented that he had served with Mr. Michael Dixon who always thought about all children and with Ms. Jill Camnitz who also thinks about all children in the thirteen years they have served together.

Mr. Tolmie stated that the last six months of redistricting had been a bad dream culminating in the vote tonight. He hopes that Dr. Reep and the Board can get past any difficulty that may follow. To those who elected him, Mr. Tolmie stated he was sorry if he felt differently on issues from time to time, but had to take his stand regarding what he felt was the right thing to do for the children. Mr. Tolmie also commented that he was sorry he was not a better sales person for several issues over the years and it had been an honor to serve his thirteen years.

Ms. Barbara Owens stated it has been an honor to serve with the out-going Board members and that they were becoming “has-beens”, but are joining a group of elite individuals. She talked about the years the group has served the students of Pitt County with attendance, support, commitment and passion.

Ms. Marcy Romary stated she’s happy to be a “has-been” though she was glad she had served her term on the Board. She stated going through redistricting was difficult to experience twice. Ms. Romary told Dr. Reep Pitt County Schools is lucky to have her, and she hopes her plans for redistricting are all you hope they will be. She stated Ms. Christine Waters will take her seat and she will serve the district well. Ms. Romary stated there are 23,000 students to think of and what is best for them.

Mr. Billy Peaden had no comment.

Bishop Ralph Love stated he had watched all four out-going Board members come on Board and thanked God that we all have a right to use our minds and make decisions together. He asked for prayer during his probable last four years having served for a total of 19. He commented to Chair Bright that he was not sure how she would do as Chair, but stated she had done a great job.

Ms. Mary Williams thanked the out-going Board members and stated she had said several times that she’s through, but was encouraged to stay and she had learned a lot. She expressed to Mr. Roy Peaden that he would be missed but she knew he was there for her. Ms. Williams stated that redistricting was not easy, but had to be done and she has faith that we can finish the job. She commented to Chair Bright that she was a good leader. She shared with Dr. Reep that she always tried to be fair in her decisions and very much appreciated her leadership during this process.

With no further discussion, Bishop Ralph Love, second by Ms. Barbara Owens, moved to adjourn at 9:15 p.m. Motion was approved unanimously.

Respectively Submitted,

Ms. Mary Grace Bright, Chair

Dr. Beverly B. Reep, Superintendent

