

DATE: November 16, 2009

PRESENT: Mary Grace Bright, Chair
Jill Camnitz
Benjie Forrest
Jennifer Little
Billy Peaden
Roy Peaden
Marcy Romary
Dick Tolmie

TIME: 7:00 P.M.

PLACE: Pitt County Office Building

ABSENT: Michael Dixon
Ralph Love, Sr.
Barbara Owens
Mary Williams

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

Mr. Benjie Forrest led the Board in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Chair Bright then offered the Agenda for consideration. Superintendent Beverly Reep asked for two adjustments to the Agenda. The first that "B. Recognition" be added under Routine Business as out next item on the Agenda and second, under New Business, Item C also add Revisions to Systemwide Goals under IV. Engaging Families, Businesses and the Community in Support of Student Learning as follows:

1. Our schools will realize greater parent involvement and support for student learning.
2. Area businesses will continue to share resources for targeted programs.
3. Improve communication with all systemwide stakeholders.

Mr. Dick Tolmie moved, second by Ms. Marcy Romary, that the Agenda be accepted with necessary adjustments. Motion carried unanimously.

Superintendent Reep announced that we had invited a group of teachers in the audience tonight who volunteered their time this summer to help us rewrite our pacing guides in reading and math for Pitt County Schools. We celebrated before our meeting with a reception in their honor to say "thank you" for their hard work and time given during their summer break. Dr. Reep asked the following teachers to stand and be recognized by the Board: Elizabeth Barrett, Karina Diaz, Joanie Landen, Karen Stefko, Rachel Foster, Nancy Kraft, Brenna Logan, Barbara Roberts, Charlotte Sharp, Mickie Warren, Annissa White, Tammy Flynn, Doris Morgan, Brooke Kays, Mary Larkin, Karen Scriven, Beth Broadhurst-Webb, Samantha Blake, Lynette Whichard, Jorgette Mullins, Rebecca Fletcher, Patty Smith, Linda Goines, Mary Holloman, Holly Entzminger, Karen Thompson, Phillip Woolard, Jr., Joseph Sayblack, Amity Kea, Shaquana Stevens, and Diane Webster. Superintendent Reep also thanked Language Arts/Social Studies Specialist Pat Peoples and Math Specialist Connie Cheston for their extra efforts and time working with these teachers in revising our reading and math pacing guides, U.S. History/Civics and World History guides, English high school writing portfolios, updating instructional guides, and getting feedback between high school and middle school curriculum.

Public Information Officer Heather Mayo stated no one present had signed up to speak during Public Expression.

For Spotlight on Teaching and Learning, Coordinator of Instructional Technology and Media Services Tim DeCresie and Teacher Amy Mitchell shared with the Board the use of Smartboards in the classroom. Mr. DeCresie stated the Smartboard is a “cool tool” using interactive technology to engage students in the learning process. He then turned the demonstration over to Ms. Mitchell who stated the first goal was to get the students engaged in orientation of the board. As she reached a certain number or letter on the Smartboard, the students knew to say “Good Morning Smartboard” which wakes the board up for use. Ms. Mitchell stated the Smartboard can take uncertain handwriting on the board and change it to printed, readable script. She then shared a short lesson from Beatrix Potter’s Peter Rabbit demonstrating different abilities the board can perform, i.e. introduce characters using a video; hearing a different language - proper English as spoken in Brittan - as a book is read page by page; using games following the story to perform assessments of the students asking comprehensive questions, etc. Ms. Mitchell stated this process uses an interactive website to prepare these lessons.

Another unit taught on “Spiders” used a power point Ms. Mitchell had set up at home, and used the Smartboard software to import the power point for her demonstration in school. Visuals can be obtained, worksheets can be implemented using available tools on the Smartboard, links to the website are easy to pull up during the lesson, etc. Ms. Mitchell stated the students pay attention and volunteer to be a part of the lesson as the Smartboard keeps them engaged during the learning process. At the end of the present class, she erases what she had discussed and starts again with her next class.

Mr. DeCresie stated Smartboards were being used in a collaborative effort by teachers. Websites are being shared by other teachers and recently a teacher created her own sites and is sharing with other teachers in her school. Students now prefer the Smartboard over the white board, which teachers have used for years. Teaching styles are changing and Smartboards are being integrated into every part of their curriculum. Teachers using the new technology are inspiring students to use these new instruments as well.

Ms. Jennifer Little asked how many Smartboards do we have in the district with Mr. DeCresie stating 250 at this point. She asked did the principal have to find funds in their individual school or were they equally distributed? Superintendent Reep stated a large amount of Title I Stimulus money was used to purchase Smartboards for Title I schools as this investment could be used for many years to come. A local foundation gave a \$100,000 grant this summer, and this was used to place at least one Smartboard in each school. If the poor economy continues, the donor has promised another \$100,000 next summer. This grant money can be used in non-Title I schools. Schools have supplemented what the district bought, but the district has tried to create an equitable starting point. In the high schools, we have a portable Smartboard and an interwrite board. This is less expensive but does not have as many software options. The cost of the portable Smartboard used in the demonstration tonight is about \$1700, which does not include the beta projector or computer needed. The ones actually mounted on the wall in the school which replaces the white board is approximately \$4000, which includes the projector, instillation, speakers, and is a

much larger board. Mr. DeCresie stated these are expensive investments, but are worth it if they engage the students and help the learning process.

Under Consent Items, Ms. Jill Camnitz motioned, second by Mr. Dick Tolmie, that the Board approve the November 2, 2009 Minutes and the Second Personnel Report for November 2009. Motion carried unanimously.

Under New Business, Community Relations Committee Chair Marcy Romary presented an update for the Board regarding developing a comprehensive communication plan for the upcoming student reassignment. She stated Public Information Office Heather Mayo will be working on developing a matrix with timelines and setting up public stakeholders meetings for dialogues. Our plan is to present the matrix to the Committee in January, followed by presentation to the Board. The need for an overall district-wide communications plan was then discussed. Ms. Romary stated that Ms. Mayo presented to the Committee a proposal from the National School Public Relations Association for a comprehensive audit of our current communications program. This would include a detailed assessment of all our communications, as well as a three-day district visit where a team will come in and conduct focus groups, surveys, and review all of the communication materials, website, etc. They then will present a comprehensive audit of what we have in place – policies, printed materials, summarize the comments of the focus group and give practical, useful recommendations to help us in improving our overall communications plan. The cost for this type of audit is over \$17,000, but Ms. Mayo is pursuing other funding and grant opportunities to help cover the cost of an audit. This information is provided just to let the Board be aware of what we're discussing and what we are attempting to pursue.

Feedback on our new website continues to be extremely positive. Ms. Mayo provides a weekly report on site usage and just for 11/2-8/09, there were 24,973 visits to our website. Maybe in a Thursday packet, we can put the front page of that report so the Board can see the usage.

Colonel Hinton also presented an update on safety efforts in our schools and stated lock down drills for this semester in our schools are almost complete. There have been briefings for faculty and staff at schools on gang-related activities. Bomb threat signs have been revised and are being distributed to all schools. All substitute teachers and custodians are also given the safety and security briefing before beginning work in the schools. VHF radios are being replaced by UHF radios, which work better inside the buildings.

Superintendent Beverly Reep discussed with the Board the 2008-09 Student Assignment Matrix stating the 2007-08 Matrix was also included for comparison purposes. The goal in this Matrix is to put as much quantifiable data that is attached to the criteria of student reassignment as we could collect. We cannot produce this report until November because October is the first time we get updated free/reduced lunch numbers. We've given ABC and AYP growth to be fair to all schools. If a school does not have a 70% average proficiency rate, we then look to see if they've made growth in the previous two years and have had a 5% increase in their subgroups. If a school shows "no growth" in all three areas, this triggers an educational review. We look to see what issues are in place, and have in the past, had DPI come in and

perform a full instructional audit. We want to do everything we can in those schools to help them achieve. This is a very important piece of data as we move into student reassignment.

Mr. Dick Tolmie asked about schools having at least expected growth for two consecutive years – not just one year of expected growth. Dr. Reep stated to meet the standard, a school needed to see sustained growth over a two-year period. Mr. Tolmie also discussed using 90-95% as a working capacity and use this percentage as our standard.

Superintendent Reep discussed the proposed Revision of System Goals for 2009-2010. The three System Goals in place for this year are as follows:

1. 100% of our schools will meet EXPECTED GROWTH and 50% will make HIGH GROWTH.
2. The number of NCLB subgroups demonstrating improved proficiency will increase by 10% in our schools.
3. In grades K-8, we will decrease the number of students accumulating 10 or more unexcused absences from school by 5%. In grades 9-12, we will decrease the number of students accumulating 8 or more unexcused absences from school by 5%.

Dr. Reep stated that last year Pitt County Schools made progress in Goal 1, met Goal 2, but did not make any progress in Goal 3. We will strive harder to make sure our students are in school, and also need to add a dropout or graduation rate goal as we already have a year-old plan to reduce the dropout rate by 50% in five years. Thus a proposed fourth goal is:

4. We will reduce the dropout rate by 50% in 4 years.

In addition, as part of Dr. Reep's evaluation, there are Systemwide Goals in place to support the System Goals for each year. A proposed revision for Section IV Engaging Families, Businesses and the Community in Support of Student Learning is as follows:

1. Our schools will realize greater parent involvement and support for student learning.
2. Area businesses will continue to share resources for targeted programs.
3. Improve communication with all systemwide stakeholders.

Mr. Dick Tolmie stated the first four goals are measurable, but he's not sure how we could measure the last three new proposed goals. Dr. Reep stated there were district measures that relate to individual performance – attendance at listening sessions, e-mail response, etc. Monitoring volunteers at school has been difficult as no one is in

place to guide this procedure. Dr. Reep felt with all the tools available to us and the written communication plan being devised, we will devise ways to actually monitor and evaluate these three goals.

With no further discussion, Ms. Marcy Romary moved, second by Ms. Jennifer Little, that the Board approve the proposed revisions of System Goals for 2009-10 as stated. Motion carried unanimously.

Superintendent Reep presented an up-date on the dropout prevention dialogues with Pitt County Schools six high school teams consisting of the principal, counselor, data manager, guidance staff and School Improvement Team leaders. A suggestion list has been devised that may range from policy and procedure changes to a differentiated or tiered diploma to reducing graduation credits to attendance/makeup work timeline changes to tracking students, etc. Dr. Reep also stated benchmark data from the top 21 districts in the state related to graduation rates completed by Travis Lewis, Heather Mayo and Chena Cayton will be compiled and presented to the EPS Department.

Ms. Jill Camnitz stated the suggestion list was amazing and she could see tremendous thinking involved to find solutions. She stated some items involve policy, but felt some needed to be presented to EPS for discussion before being passed to the policy committee.

Mr. Roy Peaden mentioned the fourth suggestion regarding the English contingency and high school promotion standards to the number of credits earned. He felt this was like being “red shirted” in athletics. Mr. Peaden asked how long would a student be given to pass English I with Dr. Reep stating most high schools who used the English contingency would not allow a student to become a junior until English I credit has been achieved. Mr. Peaden also asked about the 15th suggestion – Give students the entire semester to makeup missing work. If the student did not complete the missing work and failed the class, how would that affect a failing student participating in ball games? He also mentioned a “Buddy System” being used to aid with suggestion 10 – tracking a student. Mr. Peaden asked regarding suggestion 13 – who was considered a full-time student in regards to participating in extracurricular activities? – with the answer being a student taking four courses per semester.

Mr. Dick Tolmie asked regarding attendance makeup days and not risk failure, but also discussed instruction being missed. Dr. Reep stated the student still had to pass the course they were making up for attendance purposes. Associate Superintendent of Educational Programs and Services Worth Forbes stated with Study Island now available, students are able to go into the math or reading instructional programs and work on those while making up missed time from school.

Mr. Benjie Forrest stated that when we reduce the number of overall credits to graduate, the area affected more than anything else would be the area of electives. A problem arises when enrollment numbers in elective courses dwindle, and the courses might not be offered anymore.

Ms. Jennifer Little mentioned the “Buddy System” and stated the J. H. Rose High School Student Government under Ms. Hanes had developed this practice during lunch, and it’s been a very positive result for the students and teachers. She also

discussed the Senior Project mentors and possibly putting this need on the PCS website asking for volunteers who would enjoy working with a student in their area of work or interest to produce a Senior Project.

Chair Bright asked about students being on a block schedule and completing high school in three years versus four years. Executive Director of Student Services Travis Lewis stated this could be an option for the individual student – fast track in three years for finishing high school early and move on to college or work, or stay in four years as a traditional high school student. Dr. Reep stated she appreciated the dialogue the Board had provided and asked all members to remember that if a student leaves us and can't be found, they are a dropout. If a student leaves us and goes to Pitt Community College for an adult high school diploma or joins the Armed Services, they are a dropout. She stated we really need to look at options we can offer our students for graduation, especially in light of the Long Range Facility Plan we are currently in. Dr. Reep stated she wanted to thank the high schools who bear the dropout rate and graduation rate in their accountability, but things happen to students way before they get to high school that have an impact on whether they will graduate or not. This is a birth to grade twelve issue, and not just something that happens to students when they enter their freshman year in high school.

Under Old Business, Chair of the Policy Committee Jill Camnitz and In-House Attorney Rob Sonnenberg presented two revised/one rescinded policies for Second Reading:

1. Code of Ethics for School Board Members-Policy 1.003 (Revised)

Ms. Camnitz stated she nor In-House Attorney Rob Sonnenberg have had any contact regarding this revision and moved, second by Ms. Marcy Romary, that this policy be approved for second reading as revised. Mr. Roy Peaden motioned that this vote be postponed until December 7th due to 33% of the Board members being absent tonight – three are attending the North Carolina Schools Board Association Conference and one is home with health issues. The motion had a second by Mr. Billy Peaden. Ms. Camnitz stated the Board had already voted on several matters tonight and questioned why this vote should be delayed. Chair Bright asked for a response of Board members regarding postponing this vote until the next Board meeting. There were three yeas for postponing the meeting: Mr. Roy Peaden, Mr. Billy Peaden, Mr. Benjie Forrest. The motion failed.

Mr. Benjie Forrest moved that policy be amended by striking out the words “and voting” from the sentence, “Additionally, all closed session deliberations and voting will remain confidential.” Mr. Roy Peaden voiced a second to this motion. Ms. Jennifer Little asked would a student or parent involved in an issue want their names revealed? In-House Attorney Sonnenberg stated a parent's consent would be needed for this to happen. Ms. Jennifer Little felt the names should remain private. Attorney Sonnenberg stated this vote could not go public without the parent's consent, and even then the Board could ask that the issue remain confidential. Ms. Marcy Romary asked did everyone want personnel issues held in closed sessions made public also? Mr. Forrest stated he wanted the Board to be transparent in all ways and manner. Ms. Jennifer Little stated the closed sessions protected personnel and sensitivity had to be considered. Chair Bright also discussed FERPA regulations. Ms. Romary stated

signing the Code of Ethics only meant that you had read the policy and asked were there Board members who had not signed the policy? Attorney Sonnenberg stated he would respond after checking his files. Chair Bright stated she thought this issue evolved following a hearing panel when a parent asked a Board member how he/she voted. Upon answering the question, the parent could figure how others on the panel had voted. She stated this issue was not about being transparent, it concerned a private, confidential matter. Ms. Camnitz stated a hearing panel could be compared to a jury deliberation – both need to be confidential.

With no further discussion, Chair Bright asked Board members who were in favor of amending the policy as stated by Mr. Forrest to respond. Mr. Roy Peaden, Mr. Billy Peaden and Mr. Benjie Forrest were in favor of amending the policy. The amendment was not implemented.

Chair Bright then went back to the original motion by Ms. Jill Camnitz, second by Ms. Marcy Romary, that the Board approve the second reading of the Code of Ethics for School Board Members Policy 1.003 with negative votes from Mr. Roy Peaden, Mr. Billy Peaden and Mr. Benjie Forrest. Motion carried.

Ms. Camnitz asked if there is a penalty for not signing the Code of Ethics Policy? Attorney Sonnenberg stated he would investigate to determine if there are ramifications for not signing the policy under the new law. He also stated that the Pitt County Board of Education has adopted the Code of Ethics Policy as part of our code, and ramifications for violation of the code would be left to the people who elected the members to decide.

Ms. Camnitz stated there had been no further comments regarding the Rules of Procedure for Board of Education Meetings-Policy 1.200 (Revised) Ms. Camnitz moved, second by Mr. Dick Tolmie, that the policy be revised as presented. Motion carried unanimously.

Ms. Camnitz further stated there had been no further comments regarding the last policy change - Juvenile Court Petition-Policy 10.304 (Rescind). Following motion by Ms. Jennifer Little, second by Ms. Marcy Romary, to rescind this policy as discussed, motion carried unanimously.

Ms. Camnitz then shared with the Board the First Reading of new/revised policies:

1. Discrimination, Harassment and Bullying Complaint Procedure-Policy (New)
2. Anti-discrimination, Harassment and Bullying-Policy 10.200 (Revised)

The new and revised policies are in response to the School Violence Protection Act that was passed in June by the Legislature. Wording became more detailed in the revision, and the Procedure Policy instructs us on how to investigate and discipline. The initial investigator will be the principal or his/her designee and could involve a student or an employee. The policy models used are recommended by the North Carolina School Boards Association with minor changes to meet unique characteristics for Pitt County

Schools. These policies have to be in place before the end of the calendar year as required by State Law.

Mr. Dick Tolmie asked was there a strong reason to have two separate policies which are so similar? In-House Attorney Sonnenberg stated he called the NC Schools Board Association looking at the Statute, and it states there has to be two policies.

In-House Attorney Rob Sonnenberg presented an update on Election of the Pitt County Board of Education Members. Attorney Sonnenberg presented a copy of a Local Legislative Act passed in 1987 which set the Board as it is with twelve members, two from each of the six districts. To change our present standards, the Board will have to decide on the number of members to serve, the length of term for the members and the time when the election occurs. Once this has been completed and a plan is made, a local elected official will need to sponsor the Bill for the House Legislature and the Senate Legislature to pass a law enacting these proposed changes.

Mr. Tolmie stated there may have been a revision since the 1987 Act as the election time mentioned in this Act is November – May is not mentioned. He also mentions that the districts may have changed. Attorney Sonnenberg stated further down in Section 4 it is stated that the time for election in 1990 and subsequent years will be set by general State Law which is the Primary Election in May. Mr. Sonnenberg stated the Board of Elections did say there is a higher turnout of voters in November than in May. Mr. Tolmie felt it would be good to get a copy of the general State Law as there are a number of counties in the state not having their elections in May. Attorney Sonnenberg stated the State Law Statute does require that the election be in May with office being taken in December. He assumes that an Amendment was implemented by a Local Act allowing it to be changed.

Mr. Roy Peaden felt it was important to follow the county voting – considering expense for one thing. Also, if there is to be a run-off, if you vote in November and take office in December, there is no time for another vote. Chair Bright stated if a run-off (no one made the 40% required votes) was needed in May, there would be the same expense involved as in November.

Ms. Jill Camnitz stated she felt it would be better to have a quick turn-around in the election than worry about a run-off in November. She questioned Attorney Sonnenberg that if the Board agreed and went to our Legislators and said we want to change the Board of Education election to November, we have the power to do that? Attorney Sonnenberg stated we have the power to request the change and the State Legislature takes the action to amend or modify the Statute as it stands currently. He also stated we need to decide exactly what we want changed – number of members, length of term and time of election. Discussion by the Board was held on how to proceed. Chair Bright asked Superintendent Reep to place the issue on the Agenda for the next Board Meeting, December 7, 2009.

Mr. Dick Tolmie asked about the three items being discussed, but suggested having some possible options to present as far as time of election. Mr. Roy Peaden stated he had no problem with the waiting period as he felt there were on-going issues throughout the year and newly elected Board members don't come in understanding all that was involved with the Board. Ms. Jennifer Little stated as a new Board

member, she tried to attend several meetings prior to her taking office, but not all newly elected Board members do that which is their choice. She also stated she didn't know of any other election where a newly elected official had seven months of preparation time. Ms. Little felt if someone was running for an office, they would have taken the duties of the office into consideration before the election was even held. She volunteered to serve on a committee to make recommendations regarding these issues if one was appointed.

Mr. Benjie Forrest stated if the election time was changed to possibly November, taking office could be changed from December to January. That would then give a two-month time period between election and taking office. It was discussed that this change could also be considered at the December meeting. Ms. Marcy Romary stated it might be helpful to look at what ten or fifteen other districts that are comparable to our size are doing. Attorney Sonnenberg stated he would research this information and report results to the Board.

Superintendent Reep thanked Associate Superintendent of Facilities Aaron Beaulieu, Transportation Director Joey Weathington, Facilities and Maintenance for lots of hours of their time last week checking the roads, parking lots, bus routes, handling school issues, etc. due to the heavy rain.

Dr. Reep stated that everyone sitting around the Board table knows there are many challenges to be faced, but there are lots of miracles and blessings out there and we need to count them at this time of the year and be grateful. She wished everyone time off for Thanksgiving to count our blessings and is grateful for the opportunity to serve this school district.

Mr. Roy Peaden remembered Ms. Barbara Owens and her health issues and asked all to keep her in our prayers. In regards to the Code of Ethics, Mr. Peaden felt his constituents are his judge; and stated he did not object to the Code of Ethics, but felt there was a hidden agenda in the policy that he did not agree with. He felt it was not the Board's right to judge, but his constituents.

Mr. Benjie Forrest stated he was looking forward to being a judge for the Spelling Bee at Chicod on Friday. Also, he mentioned Ms. Owens and also Mr. Delano Wilson, a past Board member, who are having health problems.

Ms. Marcy Romary congratulated the J. H. Rose High School Volleyball Team for being State Champions for the second year in a row.

Mr. Billy Peaden stated Pactolus School was on the early morning news Friday morning and did an outstanding musical performance with over 100 students attending. Regarding the Code of Ethics, Mr. Peaden felt people sometimes prejudged others.

Mr. Dick Tolmie then moved 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)]

Following a short Closed Session, Mr. Benjie Forrest moved, second by Ms. Jennifer Little, that the Board adjourn at 9:15 p.m. Motion carried unanimously.

Respectively Submitted,

Ms. Mary Grace Bright, Chair

Dr. Beverly B. Reep, Superintendent