

DATE: December 6, 2010

PRESENT:

Billy Peaden, Chair
Jill Camnitz
Worth Forbes
Benjie Forrest
Sean Kenny
Jennifer Little
Ralph Love, Sr.
Barbara Owens
Matthew Ward
Christine Waters
Marc Whichard
Mary Williams

TIME: 7:10 P.M.

PLACE: Pitt County Office Building

In-House Attorney Rob Sonnenberg called the Board of Education to order in Regular Session at 7:10 P.M.

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

Attorney Sonnenberg called Judge David Leech forward who issued the Oath of Office to the four new Pitt County Board of Education members – Ms. Christine Waters, Mr. Worth Forbes, Mr. Sean Kenny and Mr. Marc Whichard, after which they took their seats at the Board table. Each introduced family members and friends who were present for the Swearing-In Ceremony.

In-House Counsel Rob Sonnenberg then opened the floor for nominations of the Chairperson. Mr. Benjie Forrest nominated Mr. Billy Peaden. Mr. Sean Kenny nominated Ms. Barbara Owens. There being no further nominations, the nominations were closed. Following brief discussion, Attorney Sonnenberg asked for a vote by the Board. Those voting for Mr. Billy Peaden for Chair were: Ms. Mary Williams, Bishop Ralph Love, Mr. Billy Peaden, Mr. Benjie Forrest, Dr. Matthew Ward, Mr. Worth Forbes and Mr. Marc Whichard. With this number of votes being a majority of the Board, Mr. Billy Peaden took his seat as Chair. He thanked everyone for their support and stated he would do his best to meet the challenges of this position.

Chair Peaden opened the floor for nominations for Vice-Chair. Ms. Mary Williams nominated Bishop Ralph Love and Ms. Christine Williams nominated Ms. Barbara Owens. There being no further nominations, the nominations were closed. Following brief discussion, Chair Peaden asked for a vote by the Board. Those voting for Bishop Ralph Love for Vice-Chair were: Ms. Mary Williams, Bishop Ralph Love, Mr. Billy Peaden, Mr. Benjie Forrest, Dr. Matthew Ward, Mr. Worth Forbes and Mr. Marc Whichard. With this number of votes being a majority of the Board, Bishop Love took his seat as Vice-Chair. He also thanked everyone for their support.

Instructional Technology/Media Coordinator Tim DeCresie then recognized Chicod Principal Seth Brown for being named the Administrator of the Year for 2010 by the North Carolina School Library Media Association for his work as Principal of Ayden Middle School. Mr. Brown commented that he had very much enjoyed the NC School Library Media Association Conference held in Winston-Salem as he had the privilege of seeing three past media coordinators he had worked with from Pitt County Schools. He thanked everyone for this honor.

Chair Peaden then offered the Agenda for consideration. Bishop Ralph Loved moved, second by Mr. Benjie Forrest, that the Agenda be accepted as presented. Motion carried unanimously.

Under Public Expression, Mr. Randy Stephens brought with him a coat that his child had worn to Stokes School and was told it did not adhere to the dress code. He asked the Board what was wrong with the coat with Chair Peaden stating that he could not give him an answer, but after follow-up by administration, he would be contacted.

Ms. Sarah Colby asked permission from the Board to allow East Carolina University Nutrition students teach one hour USDA My Pyramid nutrition lessons one time per week in elementary schools. She stated after approval of the Board, it would be up to the individual elementary schools whether or not they wished to participate. Pre and post evaluations would be completed by the elementary students.

Chair Peaden then introduced the new Pitt County Sheriff Neal Elks who was present in the audience and stated he hoped Sheriff Ellis could attend all the Board meetings.

Rev. Ozie Hall congratulated the new Board members and then stated that the reassignment plan voted on during the November 15th meeting was controversial. He spoke regarding the three racially identifiable African American schools of Lakeforest Elementary, South Greenville Elementary and Elmhurst Elementary – and added Wintergreen Primary and Intermediate Schools are racially identifiable “white” schools. Rev. Hall asked the Board to go into Federal Court and ask the Judge to review the student reassignment plan to see if it is legal. He restated his concerns regarding the plan when Pitt County Schools reports to Judge Howard in December of 2012 trying to reach the goal of Unitary Status. Rev. Hall stated the antagonism between all parties needs to be dropped and all three groups – Pitt County Schools, the Coalition for Educating Black Children and the Greenville Parents Association – need to unite and work together for Unitary Status. He closed stating our goal is to improve the quality of education for all students.

Chair Peaden thanked everyone for their comments during Public Expression.

For the Spotlight on Teaching and Learning, the Pitt County Arts Council at Emerge presented the Pitt County Schools Arts Education Program with \$5,500 in funding to contract artists for multicultural arts performances, programming and residencies throughout the school system. This award will remain an annual fund of at least \$3,000, and pending fundraising efforts, may be more from year to year. The Pitt County Arts Council names this in honor of Pitt County Schools Arts Director Jane Austen-Behan, who has dedicated her career to making the arts an essential and fundamental part of all Pitt County students’ education. Through this award, the Arts Council hopes to supplement the already stellar arts programming in Pitt County. Pitt County Schools is one of the few school systems in North Carolina who require an arts credit while in high school for graduation, but the State is looking into requiring a high school arts credit for graduation to be implemented across the state.

Ms. Behan responded that this was indeed quite an honor and stated that the art display and awards through the Margaret L. Blount Memorial Art Competition held just prior to the Board

meeting are a testimony of the importance of the arts for high school students. She stated that the arts are a method of reaching out to community based organizations and provides equity across the county and creative thinking for all students. Ms. Behan thanked the Board of Education and Pitt County Schools Administration for their support.

Under Consent Items, Bishop Ralph Love, second by Dr. Matthew Ward, motioned that the Board approve the Minutes from Meetings held November 1, 2010 and November 8, 2010, the Personnel Report for December 2010 and the 2010-11 Calendar Committee. Motion carried unanimously.

For New Business, Chair Peaden began discussion regarding the appointment of a new Board of Education member to fill the vacant seat for District 1, Seat A. Mr. Sean Kenny stated that Pitt County Schools has a procedure in place – Appendix 1.301-A Appointment of New Board Members – and the procedure should be followed. He felt that the Board cannot keep suspending procedures and should follow our set policies and procedures. Mr. Kenny moved, second by Ms. Christine Waters, that the Board should have a discussion regarding filling the vacant seat for District I, Seat following Appendix 1.301-A Appointment of New Board Members. The “ayes” to the motion were made by Mr. Sean Kenny, Ms. Christine Waters, Ms. Barbara Owens, Ms. Jill Camnitz and Ms. Jennifer Little. The motion did not pass.

Attorney Rob Sonnenberg stated the Board could choose to follow the procedure or not by waiving the procedure. Mr. Worth Forbes moved that the Board temporarily suspend the procedure for the Appointment of New Board Members. He further stated, “For the purposes of filling Michael Dixon’s vacancy on the Pitt County Board of Education, I move to temporarily suspend the PCS Procedure for the Appointment of New Board Members (Appendix 1.301-A), which outlines the procedures for filling vacant seats on the Board. A second to the motion was given by Ms. Mary Williams. More discussion followed. Mr. Kenny stated that we live in a democratic society and if decide to do something to suspend democracy, we have entered into very dangerous territory. He stated he had no problem with Dr. Matthew Ward and feels he’s a good guy, but we have a procedure to follow. If at the end of the procedure, Dr. Ward is elected, that’s fine. Mr. Kenny stated the only folks he had heard from in District I wanted the procedure followed. Ms. Christine Waters then asked that the appointment, by whatever process is selected, is only for a two year period and at the next general election, this seat will be posted. Attorney Sonnenberg stated this is correct. Mr. Forbes stated there are several reasons to go forth with the suspension of procedure. He commented that several candidates had been interviewed following Mr. Dixon’s death to fill the interim period before new Board members took their seats tonight. Dr. Matthew Ward was elected by the Board to fill this interim position, and he had worked diligently in the reassignment process, Board meetings, committee meetings and other activities since his election. Mr. Forbes stated that he had known Dr. Ward a long time and found he genuinely cares about children. He also commented that during the previously mentioned interview process, there was not a single negative comment made regarding Dr. Ward and feels the Board needs continuity.

Ms. Jennifer Little stated she did not have a personal difference with Dr. Ward. She commented that the point is that we have a policy in place and if we waive that policy, what will we be suspending next.

Bishop Love then called the question and Chair Peaden asked for a vote from the Board to follow procedure or temporarily waive the procedure for filling the vacant seat for District I, Seat A until the next public election in two years. Those voting “aye” to the motion were: Ms. Mary Williams, Mr. Benjie Forrest, Mr. Marc Whichard, Bishop Ralph Love, Mr. Worth Forbes and Mr. Billy Peaden. “Nay” votes included Mr. Sean Kenny, Ms. Christine Waters, Ms. Barbara Owens, Ms. Jill Camnitz and Ms. Jennifer Little. Mr. Forrest asked for clarification regarding the Chair voting to break a tie. Attorney Sonnenberg stated there are six votes counting a vote by the Chair with Chair Peaden stating there are eleven Board members voting and asked about the majority. Ms. Jill Camnitz asked why there are only eleven members voting when in an earlier vote, there were twelve votes. Attorney Sonnenberg explained that Dr. Ward could not be counted as a vote as he is involved in this motion – the remaining members of the Board would be the official count for this election. Ms. Barbara Owens stated Dr. Ward voted earlier when the Board voted for the Chair and the Vice-Chair. Attorney Sonnenberg stated that this is correct, but Dr. Ward was not voting for anything that would involve himself. Bishop Love stated six positive votes had been received and Attorney Sonnenberg stated this is a majority. Motion passed and the procedure for the Appointment of New Board Members was waived.

Ms. Mary Williams, second by Mr. Worth Forbes, moved that the Board approve Dr. Matthew Ward to fill the vacant seat for District I, Seat A for two years until the next public election is held. Further discussion followed. Mr. Sean Kenny strongly expressed to the Board that this action is wrong – asking what will we do next. He commented that you get seven folks together and stack the deck. Mr. Kenny stated that we need strong leadership and cannot suspend democratic procedure – that is wrong. Mr. Worth Forbes responded that everyone has a right to their opinion. Mr. Marc Whichard stated that Dr. Ward has served in the community and has a good standing through his efforts. Ms. Barbara Owens interjected that this is about procedure, not the person and there should not be grandstanding from the Board which is what tonight’s events has been about.

Again, Bishop Love called the question. Chair Peaden then asked for a vote from the eleven eligible Board members. “Ayes” were given by Mr. Marc Whichard, Mr. Benjie Forrest, Ms. Mary Williams, Mr. Worth Forbes, Bishop Ralph Love and Mr. Billy Peaden. “Nays” were Ms. Jennifer Little, Ms. Jill Camnitz, Ms. Christine Waters, Ms. Barbara Owens and Mr. Sean Kenny. Motion carried. Judge David Leech then affirmed Dr. Matthew Ward to fill the vacant seat for District I, Seat A. Dr. Ward’s wife stood by his side during the affirmation. Chair Peaden congratulated Dr. Ward as he took his seat at the Board table.

Assistant Superintendent of Human Resources Delilah Jackson then updated the Board following a Human Resources Committee Meeting held November 23, 2010. Ms. Jackson discussed changes in Policy regarding Teacher Dismissal, Demotions and Non-Renewals for Probationary Teachers. She stated General Statutes were changing for requesting Hearings and set timelines had to be followed. Because of these changes, Ms. Jackson stated Human Resources would begin drafting a policy regarding a Human Resources Hearing Panel to be implemented by Pitt County Schools.

Ms. Jackson also discussed the 2011-12 School Calendar stating the calendar committee had met November 30th and will meet again December 8th. She commented that there will be two options

which will be shared with staff and the community through ALERT NOW announcements, the PCS web site, e-mails and other advertisement modalities.

Assistant Superintendent of Finances Michael Cowin then presented to the Board an update on the 2011-12 Budget. He commented that in the coming school year, PCS could be moving toward the “perfect storm” he has referred to in previous communications. January will bring reality with a probable State \$3.5 billion budget shortfall. He reported that tax increases will expire and Stimulus funding will be gone. Mr. Cowin stated the State budget office has told everyone to look for anything from 5-15% budget reduction. He stated this amount of reduction will touch all aspects of public education from loss of staff, increased class sizes, and fewer resources for our at-risk students. Mr. Cowin informed the Board that the budget proposed by the House and the Senate will look different, but increased taxes has been shown not to be an option. He reported that he will be meeting with representatives from PAPA and the NCAE for support and asked that everyone start contacting our Pitt County legislators.

The question was asked what we can do internally to reduce the impact for the classroom with Mr. Marc Whichard asking about flexibility and possibly using capital money. Mr. Cowin responded that in the past, each LEA had the opportunity to decide what categories we could be flexible with, but he is not sure about capital funding. He stated the door could be opened regarding lottery funding, but this would be discussed with our County Commissioners. Ms. Mary Williams asked about the \$4.8 million already returned to the State and areas mentioned for loss of jobs with a 10% reduction in the next school year. She wanted to know about Jobs Bill funding with Mr. Cowin responding that the Jobs Bill money can be used for one year which will be of help during that year. Ms. Williams asked can we hold positions instead of letting people go and are we in good shape by using the Race to the Top funds. Mr. Cowin responded that no one is in good shape – i.e., we currently have potential for 300 positions being lost of which approximately 50% would be covered with the Federal Jobs Bill money.

Mr. Cowin reported that we are moving forward based on a 10% reduction in funding. Mr. Worth Forbes asked could the reduction be any higher with Mr. Cowin responding yes. Mr. Forbes asked had we had any update in Title I or Title II funding. Mr. Cowin stated that he had not heard anything concrete regarding these funds, but the Stimulus funding for Title I and Title 6B will expire at the end of the 2010-11 school year. Mr. Forbes commented that funding from the RttT Grant had separate initiatives with Mr. Marc Whichard mentioning the Instructional Coaches. Dr. Reep stated the coaches are covered with Title I and Title II funds. By implementing teacher leadership cohorts, professional development and instructional resources, her hope is that the money used for afterschool programs in the first and second years can be used in some other way in year three and will not be needed for afterschool programs. Mr. Whichard stated saving jobs is a priority if at all possible with Mr. Cowin commenting that some Low Wealth Funds have been saved in anticipation of budget shortfalls. He also stated that the formula for receiving Low Wealth Funds may be changed by the State which will drop funding to 90% versus the 100% previously received.

Superintendent Reep asked the Board about setting up an annual meeting with our Pitt County legislators to discuss priorities for the 2011-12 school year. She stated we can make a trip to Raleigh, or ask them to meet with us in Greenville. Mr. Whichard felt this is an excellent idea

stating the more we talk about our needs, the better the outcome. Ms. Mary Williams felt it would be good to set up a meeting at the Community Schools and Recreation Building where we have met previously. Mr. Worth Forbes concurred with Ms. Williams and Mr. Whichard. Mr. Benjie Forrest felt it will be good to get to know one another better with two new legislators and five new Board of Education members. Dr. Reep stated administration will begin to work on the Agenda.

Policy Committee Chair Jill Camnitz and In-House Attorney Rob Sonnenberg then shared the Second 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. Ms. Jill Camnitz, second by Bishop Ralph Love, moved that the Board approve the Second Reading as presented. Mr. Worth Forbes had a question regarding number ten stating that it is most important that each school administrator be held accountable for each evaluation and have repercussions if this is not followed to the fullest extent possible. He feels documentation of evaluation of every certified employee should be mandated and policy put in place supporting this with consequences implemented where documentation was not provided. Mr. Marc Whichard asked regarding principal evaluations with Ms. Jackson stating that the principal evaluations were divided among Assistant Superintendent of Human Resources Delilah Jackson, Assistant Superintendent of Educational Programs and Services Cheryl Olmsted and herself. She also informed the Board that on-line evaluations are available to be studied at any time and could be followed for each school which provides the checks and balances mentioned. Questions about how principals and teachers are held accountable were discussed. Ms. Jackson also informed Board members that there are now only two categories of teachers – career and probationary. She stated evaluation calendars are sent out stating who will be evaluated by what date and everyone should be completed before June. 30th. Ms. Jackson stated this will be State mandated July 1, 2011, but PCS has implemented the procedure for the present school year. Ms. Mary Williams asked with the feedback, is there an overall picture of how the teachers and the principals are performing. Ms. Jackson stated there is a Summary Rating Form where the Department of Public Instruction can monitor teacher proficiency, developing, accomplished or distinguished. This practice is being worked on but has not been completed in regards to pulling up data. Superintendent Reep stated the school report card will be seen with the teacher rating lining up with school placement. The district report card will provide information regarding principals and assistant principals. Mr. Forbes asked about procedure/policy being in place regarding these changes. The motion passed unanimously.

Under comments by the superintendent, Dr. Reep welcomed all the new Board members and congratulated Chair Billy Peaden, Vice-Chair Ralph Love and Dr. Matthew Ward in his appointment.

Superintendent Reep informed the Board that she had placed a Board Meeting Topic Survey at each seat asking each member to give feedback on items they would like discussed during future meetings. She also stated that D. H. Conley High School is celebrating their 40th anniversary and has requested a Resolution regarding this from the Board. Consensus from the Board was given.

Dr. Reep congratulated the student artists recognized in the Margaret L. Blount Memorial Art Competition Reception held prior to the Board meeting. She stated she is enamored with the

students' talent and creative abilities. Superintendent Reep also commented that the Pitt County Arts Council has honored Arts Director Jane Austen-Behan, who has accomplished outstanding programs within the Arts Program in Pitt County Schools. She thanked the Arts Council for this gift.

Superintendent Reep also congratulated Principal Seth Brown in being named the Administrator of the Year for 2010 by the North Carolina School Library Media Association and stated this is the fifth year in a row a Pitt County Administrator has received this honor.

In closing, Superintendent Reep wished Administrative Assistant Brenda Pippin a Happy Birthday!

Chair Peaden then recognized two County Commissioners sitting in the audience – Kenneth Ross and Ephraim Smith. He also welcomed two preachers from his area and stated he hoped they would come more often.

Mr. Peaden also discussed the various committees and panels Board members serve on throughout the year and asked everyone to contact Ms. Pippin if they desired to serve on specific committees or a certain panel.

Ms. Christine Waters stated she is looking forward to working with everyone and asked that “God keep one hand over her mouth” as she has very strong opinions. She stated she had 37 years of classroom experience and in looking at the system as a whole, the Board needs to work together as a whole. Ms. Waters stated it takes lots of fortitude to go through redistricting, SACS accreditation and achieving Unitary Status. She also mentioned Physics Day and the written description beneath each art exhibit.

Mr. Marc Whichard stated that it is a privilege to seat in the sit held previously by Mr. Roy Peaden and to be a partner to Ms. Barbara Owens. He congratulated the Chair and Vice-Chair. Mr. Whichard stated he feels it's his job to look out for all the students in Pitt County stating it is a difficult time in education for students and staff.

Mr. Whichard briefly described a time when he was a student at D. H. Conley High School with health issues and came before the Board asking for a waiver regarding taking exams. The Board stuck to their policy and would not grant a waiver. Mr. Whichard feels each child should be looked at as needed and decide what is best in that particular situation.

Ms. Jennifer Little updated the Board on the NC Athletic Association and their decision made for placement of Pitt County Schools in the present Athletic Conference. She stated PCS has appealed the decision twice (because of the distance involved in getting to their opponents' school), which resulted in denial both times. She commented that two student athletes spoke at the last appeal, but it did not help and fell on deaf ears. Ms. Little reported that they will continue to fight for what is best for the students of Pitt County Schools.

Ms. Little also encouraged all Board members to attend committee meetings and hearing panels to make them productive and give valuable input.

Ms. Little also stated that she is an independent thinker with strong opinions, but we should all be respectful of others even though we may disagree on a specific subject for the sake of the children of Pitt County Schools.

Dr. Matthew Ward thanked everyone for another opportunity to serve the students of Pitt County and asked everyone to feel free in communicating with him to help him become a better Board member. He stated he's continuing to learn the process and searches his heart as this is not about us, but about the children. Dr. Ward stated he's not a politician, but has thirteen grandchildren in the system and had five children who went through Pitt County Schools. He said he will work for the district over the next two years, and that may be enough for him – time will tell. Dr. Ward stated everyone is entitled to their opinion, and he's entitled to his. He also commented that it's not what you say, it's often how you say it. Dr. Ward stated he's a man of his word and your word is your bond. He spoke regarding Mr. Worth Forbes stating he had worked for Mr. Forbes a number of years and thought he had him in his hip pocket, but found out Mr. Forbes had his own opinions too.

Ms. Jill Camnitz expressed a need to discuss uniforms as some students will be attending different schools due to redistricting. She also requested discussion regarding the two programs now housed at Sadie Saulter School and their placements for the 2011-12 school year. Ms. Camnitz thanked Superintendent Reep and Administrative Assistant Pippin for their Christmas cheer. In closing, Ms. Camnitz asked that the Board make a resolution to take seriously the Oath of Office each member made and rededicate ourselves to the students of Pitt County with honesty, integrity and transparency.

Mr. Benjie Forrest congratulated all new Board members, the Chair and Vice-Chair. He commented that he is going to be a judge in the upcoming CTE Regional Competition. Mr. Forrest stated that we should be bringing gifts to Ms. Pippin for her birthday, but instead she brought gifts to us. He closed by wishing all a Merry Christmas!

Mr. Sean Kenny stated he didn't mention his parents during the swearing-in ceremony and he apologized for that. He thanked the art students and Arts Council for their gift. Mr. Kenny also thanked the District 5 constituents who elected him to his Board of Education seat. He congratulated Chair Peaden, Vice-Chair Love and Dr. Matthew Ward. Mr. Kenny also thanked past Board members – Ms. Mary Grace Bright, Mr. Roy Peaden, Ms. Marcy Romary and Mr. Dick Tolmie for their service to the students of Pitt County Schools. In closing, he asked everyone at Christmas to remember those less fortunate.

Ms. Barbara Owens remembered past Chair Bright's quote where she stated every Board will disagree agreeably and focus on the positives while addressing the negatives. She informed all present that her health is fine, and she congratulated her husband on his being elected Chair of a Board earlier today. Ms. Owens also commented that there had been master minding and grand standing behind events which occurred tonight.

Mr. Worth Forbes congratulated Chair Peaden and Vice-Chair Love and stated he is looking forward to serving the students of Pitt County as a Board of Education member. He further commented that there has been no political grandstanding – stating all have a right to their

opinions. Mr. Forbes reported that he will give his opinion on items discussed and will support all students.

Bishop Ralph Love congratulated the new Board members and Chair Peaden stating he has served on the Board for 19 years. He thanked those who elected him Vice-Chair of the Board. Vice-Chair Love stated the Board needs to work together for the children – further adding that he has eight grandchildren, five of which are in Pitt County Schools. He commented on his work as Pastor with 160 churches in Eastern North Carolina and stated his heart is with the children.

Ms. Mary Williams welcomed the new Board members and congratulated the Chair and Vice-Chair in their appointments. She stated she was looking forward to a good year serving on the Board of Education.

With no further business, Chair Peaden moved to adjourn at 9:07 p.m.

Respectively Submitted,

Mr. Billy Peaden, Chair

Dr. Beverly B. Reep, Superintendent