

DATE: August 3, 2009 PRESENT: Mary Grace Bright, Chair
Michael Dixon
Benjie Forrest
Jennifer Little
Ralph Love, Sr.
Barbara Owens
TIME: 7:00 P.M. Billy Peaden
Roy Peaden
Marcy Romary
Dick Tolmie

PLACE: Pitt County Office Building ABSENT: Jill Camnitz
Mary Williams

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

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

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

Under Public Expression, Ms. Carolyn Reed asked the Board to reconsider not hiring retired teachers. She stated retired teachers are the “elders of education” - knowing more about the subjects they teach, great mentoring of new teachers and are the best teachers for students. Ms. Reed asked that the principals not have their hands tied in hiring retired teachers.

For the Spotlight on Teaching and Learning, Superintendent Beverly Reep shared with the Board a video on “Second Life” created by the Special Projects Department at E.C.U. Dr. Reep reminded the Board that Dr. Shirley Carraway spoke to the Board in February regarding Second Life which is a virtual early college pilot. She stated Second Life had 18 students (three from each of the high schools) enrolled through partnership with East Carolina University and Pitt Community College in the 2008-09 school year. With the Early College High School Program delayed due to space issues for housing students, the virtual distance learning plan was developed and demonstrated at the Department of Public Instruction where it was approved with much support. Second Life uses a 3D virtual world in the two courses offered – anthropology and design. Students are dual enrolled receiving six hours of college credit for the courses as well as high school credit. This program did not cost Pitt County Schools any money, but was a pilot through East Carolina University who received funding from the office of General Administration. If money is available for the coming 2009-2010 school year, the goal is to provide two more courses for the 18 students who participated in the program during the 2008-09 school year, and add 18 more students to take the courses already in place. Dr. Reep stated the same criteria to select these students were used to select the students who would have been enrolled in the Early College High School Program. She also stated that E.C.U. would really like to expand this project across Eastern North Carolina if funding is available.

During the Administrative Summer Retreat, Technology Director Jeff Smith is going to share virtual learning with all principals, assistant principals and central office staff. Using the Second Life process, Dr. Reep hopes to have group meetings throughout the year saving the district travel costs.

Under Consent Items, Mr. Michael Dixon motioned, second by Dr. Ralph Love, that the June 22, 2009 and July 28, 2009 Minutes and the Personnel Report for August 2009 be approved. Motion carried unanimously.

Under New Business, Director of Transportation Joey Weathington presented a report regarding the WEPN (Wilson, Edgecombe, Pitt, Nash) Grant from EPA (Environmental Protection Agency)-ARRA Funding School Bus Retrofits. Mr. Weathington stated this was a piggy back effort with four LEA's combining to receive a lower bid for equipment rather than each LEA doing a separate bid for a higher cost to each district. He stated Pitt County Schools will receive approximately \$86,000 with twenty buses getting Diesel Oxidation Catalyst resulting in 25% emission reduction and ten buses will receive Diesel MultiStage Filters resulting in 50% emission reduction. Besides the aforementioned bus updates, Mr. Weathington also stated Pitt County Schools would receive two buses with 2010 clean diesel engines compliant with 2010 EPA standards. Mr. Weathington stated Pitt County Schools will have 78% of our 103 buses that are from 2002 and older having had changes to help make them have more quality efficient emission of at least 25% better than the standard emission system on the bus.

Mr. Billy Peaden asked what would be the life span of the new emission features? Mr. Weathington stated 300,000 miles would be the limit, but they would not have to be replaced as the State usually replaces buses after traveling 200,000 miles. The cost of having the two replacements installed was also discussed. Mr. Peaden also asked what would happen if one of the new systems shut down on a bus? Mr. Weathington stated the bus would just revert to the standard system used by the bus.

Mr. Dick Tolmie asked were the bids received acceptable for the projects? Mr. Weathington stated yes, they were within reason.

Mr. Roy Peaden stated it was good that there would be no cost involved for Pitt County Schools. He also asked did these conversions have to be carried out by licensed personnel? He was thinking maybe this could be a project for the Auto Mechanics Class. Mr. Weathington stated these conversions had to be performed by licensed personnel.

Mr. Michael Dixon moved, second by Dr. Ralph Love, that the Board approve the prices of the recent bid made by another LEA to do the bus conversions for better emission. Motion carried unanimously.

Associate Superintendent of Educational Programs and Services Worth Forbes presented an accountability update stating that testing and the instructional department were moving in the right direction despite budget cuts and staff shortages. He stated his department was looking at where we have been, where we are now and where we are going. Mr. Forbes stated in the 2007-08 school year, EPS started looking at what was being implemented in classrooms, analyzing test scores and

checking School Improvement Plans. They also felt different curriculum departments were not connected.

Mr. Forbes stated now, with Pitt County Schools going from four schools last year making AYP to fifteen schools this year making AYP, we are headed in the right direction. Reasons for this improvement include motivating and helping principals make more data driven decisions and encouraging teachers to change instructional strategies to meet the needs of identified weaknesses, adjustments in the School Improvement Plans to include EC, ESL, Title I, etc., Study Island was implemented, principals have implemented classroom walk throughs, and identified AYP subgroups/identified specific students in the sub groups.

Mr. Forbes informed the Board that for the 2009-10 school year teachers are going to post an objective within the classroom each day for all subjects. We are implementing instructional coaches to provide staff development – collaborating both individual needs for a particular school and monthly district-wide staff development for the coaches will be delivered to each school on a consistent basis. He stated there would be more intensive work in high schools by the curriculum specialists and emphasis will be placed on instructional technology delivery. The 28 research based strategies will also be narrowed to five or six so that we as a district can focus on this smaller group, which will have the greatest impact on student achievement. Mr. Forbes also stated there would be Reading Recovery modifications.

Testing Director Don Rhodes stated that on August 6 test scores would be made official by the State Board of Education. He stated there were four ways to make AYP – meet the bar which has been set, meet the standard error of measurement, safe harbor which is a 10% reduction from the year before and growth which was determined using a complicated formula. Mr. Rhodes stated five of the six schools which did not make AYP had new subgroups so they had no safe harbor chance to make AYP. He stated there was unfairness with AYP in given situations. He also stated that 22 of the 29 schools in our district made growth. In the 2009-10 school year, Mr. Rhodes stated there would be no pretest for grade three and for the high schools, retest scores will count in the five exit standard courses. Retest scores counted this year in grades three through eight.

Ms. Jennifer Little asked did the schools which had new subgroups know beforehand that they were going to be added? Mr. Rhodes said they did not always know – there was a 140-day membership rule in place and there had to be 40 members to make a subgroup. He stated it was hard to make the bar for exceptional children but safe harbor helps. Mr. Rhodes stated students were identified at the beginning of school year. Dr. Reep reiterated that in a school with no baseline data, it was much harder to make AYP than in a school which had a subgroup last year as safe harbor growth could be used.

Ms. Little stated different teacher strategies could be used for identified exceptional children. Mr. Rhodes stated predictor scores were given to principals to guide them in knowing what to do in their respective schools to meet growth for AYP.

Mr. Dick Tolmie questioned exceptional students' scores at the high school level. Mr. Rhodes stated the Occupational Course of Study students take exams like the End of

Class exams, but the Federal government will not accept these exam scores. When exceptional students' scores are not counted by the Federal government, it hurts the proficiency standard of the school. Mr. Tolmie asked would this be true next year also? Mr. Rhodes said yes, unless the test is revamped and the score will be counted by the Federal government. Mr. Forbes stated he was working on this project, but it may not be completed by the end of the 2009-10 school year. Dr. Reep stated the rationale given by the Federal government is that the assessment in grades three through eight is good, but the assessment for grades nine through twelve is not on grade level.

Assistant Superintendent of Finance Michael Cowin stated the State budget was "floundering" by Mr. Worth Forbes' definition. Mr. Cowin mentioned that many scenarios were discussed – class size increase, a discretionary reduction will be put into place to replace any adjustment to the state teacher formula, conflicting information regarding teacher assistants – but he was told that the House budget was the best information available at this time. He stated he hoped the budget would be voted on and decided this week as school is getting ready to start and the budget could be adjusted accordingly.

Ms. Mary Grace Bright asked since concurrent enrollment at Pitt Community College was no longer an option, would there be enough courses to enroll all these students? Dr. Reep answered yes, but because of scheduling issues, high schools were getting an additional allotment. Mr. Dick Tolmie asked would Pitt Community College still offer the courses and Dr. Reep stated yes, they were offering vocational, math and science courses. She stated if money was in the budget for these courses, it would be too late for the first semester, but students could sign up for second semester courses.

Policy Committee Member Michael Dixon stated there were no questions regarding the Registered Sex Offender Policy and motioned for approval of the Second Reading. Second was made by Ms. Marcy Romary and unanimous approval was given by the Board.

Superintendent Beverly Reep explained to the Board that the Legislation lifting the cap which allowed retired teachers to be hired by a district full time (Sunset Rule) will expire October 1, 2009. Dr. Reep stated it would not be wise to hire retired teachers to start school and then leave in October. She stated that Legislation was very clear that in hiring retired teachers, we must in fact exhaust the market and be sure we have not hired them in front of other folks out there who are trying to find teaching jobs. She stated in the past, least expensive teachers were paid from local funds as their salaries were not the same as a retired teacher who was rehired and paid from State funds. The State has realized they were paying the highest salaried teachers and the Legislature is stopping that. Dr. Reep stated Pitt County Schools would not bring retired teachers back full time, but would use them for remediation, tutoring, etc. keeping them under the set cap.

Dr. Reep also wanted to thank all Pitt County Schools staff for the great test scores in the midst of a reduction in positions, returning \$1.8 million to the State cutting short money for supplies and support staff, and lastly a salary reduction for all. She stated there was also an 8% reduction in out-of-school suspensions. These values demonstrate the commitment of our staff to Pitt County students.

In closing, Dr. Reep reminded all Board members of the Drop Out Prevention Campaign launch to be held at 10:00 a.m. at City Hotel and Bistro Friday, August 7, 2009. She stated City Hotel and Bistro has donated the facility for the launch and had become a sponsor.

Dr. Reep also stated that an anonymous donor had given a grant for Smart Boards in the amount of \$100,000 to be placed in elementary and middle school classrooms, which will be used in partnership with Title I Stimulus money to purchase Smart Boards.

Chair Bright asked could retired teachers be used as substitutes with Assistant Superintendent of Human Resources Delilah Harris answering yes. Ms. Harris stated that the district is switching to a new sub system. She commented that last years' subs would be employed first allowing an opportunity to learn the new sub calling system which is now web-based. Followed this conversion, hiring of new substitutes will be implemented.

Mr. Roy Peaden asked what is the pay scale for substitutes? Ms. Harris stated it is \$90 for certified subs and \$68 for non-certified subs.

Chair Bright thanked everyone for participating in the Board Retreat, and she especially thanked Facility Services for sharing the space for our meeting and the food they prepared.

Mr. Billy Peaden stated in the Sunday newspaper, the picture showing a student priming tobacco was the North Pitt High School starting quarterback.

Ms. Barbara Owens expressed thanks for having the Board Retreat in Pitt County.

Mr. Dick Tolmie stated he felt the Drop Out Prevention Project was critical. He feels if the program cost \$1,000 or more, if it saved two students from dropping out of school, it is worth it.

Mr. Benjie Forrest stated the D. H. Conley High School campus looks great – it was well kept inside and outside.

Mr. Michael Dixon stated there would be a Policy Committee Meeting September 8 at 4:00 p.m.

With no further business to discuss, Mr. Michael Dixon moved, second by Ms. Barbara Owens, that the Board adjourn at 8:12 p.m. Motion carried unanimously.

Respectively Submitted,

Ms. Mary Grace Bright, Chair

Dr. Beverly B. Reep, Superintendent