

DATE: September 19, 2011                      PRESENT: Billy Peaden, Chair  
Benjie Forrest  
Sean Kenny  
TIME: 7:00 P.M.                                      Jennifer Little  
Barbara Owens  
Matthew Ward  
Christine Waters  
PLACE: County Commissions' Auditorium                      Marc Whichard  
Mary Williams

ABSENT: Jill Camnitz  
Worth Forbes  
Ralph Love, Sr.

Chair Billy Peaden called the Board of Education to order in Regular Session at 7:00 P. M. He followed with Roll Call for Board members.

Ms. Barbara Owens led the Board in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Dr. Matthew Ward followed with a Moment of Silence asking that we remember anyone who has suffered a tragedy, sickness or loss of a loved one in our Pitt County Schools system. He specifically asked that everyone remember one of our Board members at this time.

Chair Peaden then offered the Agenda for consideration. Mr. Marc Whichard moved, second by Mr. Benjie Forrest, that under Item VI. New Business, A. Educational Programs and Services Committee Meeting Report be postponed until our next Board Meeting. Motion passed unanimously.

Two members of the audience wished to speak during Public Expression. The first speaker was Mr. Nelson Williams, who was dressed as Smokey the Rapper. Smokey stated his goal is to spread Fire Prevention information to as many people of all ages as possible. He informed the Board that he can be nice or tough, depending on the audience, when presenting a program on Fire Prevention. In closing, Smokey shared a rap presentation regarding Fire Prevention with the Board.

The second speaker was Ms. Nicole Mitchell who is an Early Childhood Instructor at Pitt Community College. She informed the Board that she has a second grader at Creekside Elementary School and is speaking to the Board to applaud and celebrate a new homework policy put in place at Creekside Elementary for second grade students. Ms. Mitchell stated that a review of more than 180 studies of homework and its effectiveness show there is very little correlation between the amount of homework given and achievement of students in elementary schools and only moderate correlation in middle schools. She stated that the new homework policy implemented at Creekside asked that second grade students read twenty minutes each night. There are five focus points in the new homework policy which are:

1. Physical activity for at least one hour after school each day.
2. Dinner with the family at least four times a week.

3. Early to bed having at least ten to twelve hours of sleep each night.
4. Limited video, computer or television time.
5. Read each evening with the family.

Ms. Mitchell stated she is proud that the Creekside staff and families stepped out in support of the new homework policy.

Under Spotlight on Teaching and Learning, Superintendent Beverly Reep and Assistant Superintendent of Educational Programs and Services Cheryl Olmsted updated the Board on Pitt County Schools' textbook status. Dr. Reep informed the Board that she attended a legislative listening session this afternoon at the Pitt Community College and shared the issue of textbooks with them. She added that for the last two years, the State has allocated no funding for textbooks to be used in public education. Superintendent Reep stated many math books in the district have been used for nine years. Ms. Olmsted informed the Board that K-5 math books were purchased two years ago; adding that if 6-12 math books are purchased, it will cost \$1.2 million. She commented that legislators are not protecting the classroom by not appropriating funds for textbooks. Dr. Reep added that last year Pitt County Schools spent the cost of a teacher's salary to rebind books to try to make them last through another year of use. As Ms. Olmsted shared actual textbook condition samples with the Board, Dr. Reep asked that the community contact their legislators asking them to put funding of textbooks back into the education budget. Ms. Olmsted stated that parents call and want to know why their children are not bringing home textbooks for their classes. She explained that the classroom has one set of books which are used by all students at school, adding that editions are available on-line or through a DVD. Ms. Olmsted also stated that copies of pages are used for homework and workbooks are being used, as these may still be purchased. Dr. Reep added that Ms. Olmsted and Assistant Superintendent of Finance Michael Cowin had looked at the local budget to find ways to purchase textbooks, but Dr. Reep said no. Superintendent Reep feels if we start purchasing textbooks out of local funds, the State will pass the buck to the LEA when student textbooks should be funded by the State. She asked that parents be patient as the district is trying to make do until funding is available.

Mr. Marc Whichard commented that this is a tough situation. He added that some homes do not have the technology to look at books on-line or watch a DVD. Mr. Whichard stated that though we are trying to safe guard class sets, the system is getting farther behind and it will take even more money to catch up.

Ms. Christine Waters stated that she thought once a book was out of adoption (after five years of use), we could no longer purchase additional resources to accompany that particular book, i.e. workbooks. Ms. Olmsted responded that due to the lack of textbook funding, the book companies are continuing to print resource materials for the old books.

Under Consent Items, Ms. Jennifer Little, second by Dr. Matthew Ward, moved that the Board approve the Minutes from the Regular Meeting held August 15, 2011, the Personnel Report for September 2011, a proposed Easement for at W. H. Robinson School and a proposed Easement for Water Service for Chicod School. Motion carried unanimously.

Under New Business, three proposed Resolutions were presented to the Board with Superintendent Reep stating the first Resolution to be discussed had been approved by the Board

in the spring to be presented to the legislature. After the legislature took action, the Board has been asked to support this Resolution again so that if we have students who participate in the Agriscience/Biotechnology Regional School, we will be allowed to have a representative on the Advisory Board of the school. Ms. Christine Waters moved, second by Dr. Matthew Ward, that the Resolution to Support the proposed Regional Agriscience and Biotechnology Regional School, be approved as presented. Mr. Benjie Forrest recused himself from voting as his employment is related to this issue. Otherwise, approval of the motion was unanimous.

Superintendent Reep then shared a Proclamation supporting National Recovery Month: Prevention Works, Treatment is Effective, People Recover in reference to substance abuse and mental disorders. Ms. Barbara Owens moved, second by Mr. Benjie Forrest, that the Proclamation be approved as presented. Motion carried unanimously.

The last Resolution was presented by In-House Attorney Rob Sonnenberg regarding a proposed Resolution Approving the Redistricting Plan and Map for Pitt County Board of Education Election Districts Following the 2010 Census. Mr. Sean Kenny moved, second by Ms. Jennifer Little, that the said Resolution be approved as presented. Ms. Mary Williams asked questions related to the number of people being added to or removed from Districts 1 and 2 with County Planning Director James Rhodes and Pitt County Attorney Janis Gallagher explaining the number of people who were added or taken away to populate a district to meet the one person/one vote guideline. Attorney Gallagher presented the resulting total population numbers including a breakdown of the black and white constituents. She also gave a comparison between the results following the 2000 Census and the 2010 Census. Motion was unanimously approved.

In-House Attorney Rob Sonnenberg, in the absence of Chair Worth Forbes, reported to the Board following a Policy Committee Meeting held September, 12, 2011. He stated there are one revised policy and one new policy being presented for First Reading before the Board:

1. Revised Policy 7.108 – Licensed Personnel Reduction in Force
2. New Policy – Volunteer Activities of Classified Employees

Attorney Sonnenberg asked that anyone with comments or suggestions please contact Mr. Forbes or himself before the next Board meeting in October.

Ms. Christine Waters asked a question related to the revision of Section E of the Licensed Personnel Reduction in Force Policy. She asked that if a list of career employees who are dismissed in accordance with this policy is kept, but there are no further guidelines; why keep the list at all. Attorney Sonnenberg commented that a list is no longer mandated by law and that is why all other details were removed from Section E. Ms. Waters asked then what is the purpose of the list with Attorney Sonnenberg stating it could be used by the district for possible openings and rehires.

Mr. Marc Whichard asked did the new evaluation instrument make a difference in this policy revision. Dr. Reep stated that the legislature struck the list from being mandated, but the district recommended the list in case openings occur. Ms. Waters reinforced if the list is not required,

we should drop Section E completely from the revised policy. Attorney Sonnenberg stated that this would be discussed further at the next policy committee meeting.

Chair Benjie Forrest and Assistant Superintendent of Finance Michael Cowin reported to the Board following a Finance Committee Meeting held September 15, 2011. Mr. Cowin informed the Board that the main purpose of the meeting was to review fund balances and how money was dispersed, specifically our local and capital fund balances. He shared that there was \$3.6 million designated for one time needs – some examples were:

1. Furnishing and equipping the new Lakeforest Elementary School and remodeling of the Sadie Saulter Pre-K Center.
2. Completion of Facility Services' projects.
3. Instructional supplies.
4. Phase 3 of the computer roll out.
5. Adding to grant money to install more Smartboards in our schools.
6. Keeping funds for future Capital Projects.

Mr. Cowin stated that Dr. Reep had spoken with legislators today regarding Lottery Funding and how over the last two years this funding had decreased. He stated the Lottery Funds are needed to continue Capital projects. Mr. Cowin explained that Pitt County Schools has kept funding to help with Capital projects and details will be given in a Budget Resolution at the end of our first twenty days of school.

Associate Superintendent of Operations Aaron Beaulieu updated the Board following a Facilities Committee Meeting held August 22, 2011. He stated at that meeting, there was not a quorum present so no action could be taken. Mr. Beaulieu shared that Mr. Carl Reese from the City of Greenville presented some ideas for a partnership in the future regarding Third Street Center. He also presented a report from the NC Preservation Association (which is non-profit) regarding the Center. Mr. Beaulieu updated the Board regarding sealed bids for the Third Street Building being set for September 15 at 2:00 p.m., but no bids were received. Now, other options will be explored.

Mr. Beaulieu then led discussion regarding Sadie Saulter stating approximately 200 Pre-K and exceptional kids are housed there at present. Because the ALPHA Program, which will be moving to this location in the fall, is not an elementary school; he stated changing the name from Sadie Saulter Elementary School to Sadie Saulter Educational Center had been recommended. Mr. Benjie Forrest moved, second by Ms. Jennifer Little, that the name Sadie Saulter Educational Center be approved by the Board. Motion was approved unanimously.

Mr. Beaulieu shared that an update on our current construction projects was presented at the Facilities Committee Meeting. Due to no new information regarding the Third Street Center being available, Mr. Forbes has cancelled the Facilities Meeting scheduled for September 26, 2011.

Superintendent Beverly Reep led discussion with the Board regarding Pitt County Schools District Goals. She stated these would not be revised or voted on tonight, but perhaps the Board will agree to meet at 6:00 at our next meeting to review and discuss the current seven goals. Dr.

Reep added that four years ago, numbers one-four were adopted by the Board; and two years ago, numbers five-seven were added. She feels the district goals need to be revised with a balance found for all schools to meet these goals. In discussing subgroups, Dr. Reep asked are we closing the gap and stated measurement for this has been a complex procedure. Regarding attendance, she stated we did not make progress in this area this past year; but this remains a huge issue in our district and it's important to keep this active in our district goals. She also feels student dropout reduction and graduation rate increase are important, and we need to continue our focus in these areas. Superintendent Reep added that staff members feel we need to set a district goal addressing Unitary Status that says by December 2012 we will be ready to present a comprehensive plan to the Courts and be able to demonstrate action taken to support this plan. She asked did the Board have any areas or data they would like to see to prepare for revising our district goals.

Chair Peaden asked what are the wishes of the Board.

Mr. Marc Whichard stated we need to set strategic and realistic goals that can be obtained. Mr. Sean Kenny and Ms. Mary Williams concurred with this statement. Ms. Williams feels benchmarks need to be set. She added that we need to see where we were, where we are now and set benchmarks for 6 months from now, a year from now or whatever time span the Board chooses to be able to follow and check for progress made. Ms. Williams also voiced that we not only need to look at Unitary Status efforts, but countywide efforts as well. She added that we should look at each school for appropriate benchmarks and combine these ideas for a district-wide School Improvement Plan. The Board gave a consensus to meet at 6:00 p.m. at our next meeting for an hour's discussion of revising the District Goals.

Chair Billy Peaden asked In-House Attorney Rob Sonnenberg to update the Board regarding the Garcia Case Settlement. He reported that the settlement agreement had been given to Public Information Officer Heather Mayo and anyone could read the entire settlement terms if they so desired by contacting Ms. Mayo. Attorney Sonnenberg read a Summary Statement of the Settlement Agreement for the Garcia Case to the Board (as attached to these minutes).

Chair Barbara Owens and Vice-Chair Sean Kenny reported to the Board following two Graduation Task Force meetings. Ms. Owens stated the group of parents, students, principals, Board members, central office staff and others were great to work with, and attendance at both meetings had been outstanding. She shared that the students desire a dignified, peaceful and wonderful graduation ceremony and input from all involved concurred with this theme. Mr. Kenny stated the East Carolina University policy force had presented several venues regarding Minges Coliseum, different financial analysis had been presented and with very little debate, the task force had "come together" in their goal.

Under Comments by the Superintendent, Dr. Beverly Reep commented that the opening of school had been smooth – especially when you considered that an earthquake and hurricane had occurred in the same week. In her thirty-two years as an educator, she stated she's never seen events like these to occur during the opening of school. In this light, Dr. Reep spoke of the awesome work that Facilities Services personnel and Mr. Beaulieu had performed – being out before the storm Friday night and Saturday during the hurricane. She shared that principals had

been sent e-mails to check their schools Sunday morning and report to Senior Staff as they met Sunday afternoon to formulate a plan. Superintendent Reep stated the Finance Department was processing insurance claims and purchase orders, while Food Service employees assessed food loss. Three of our schools served as shelters housing folks who had to leave their homes for various reasons. She added that Transportation personnel were manipulating routes to pick up students where trees were down or roads remained flooded. Dr. Reep spoke of the human spirit in this crisis as school personnel with power who experienced little damage like Ridgewood offered to go to Falkland and help personnel clean up and prepare for their school to open; or Hope Middle who had power asked G. R. Whitfield personnel with no power to come and use their facilities, computers, or whatever to keep from missing a day of work. She stated that the employees at G. R. Whitfield met with central office staff and Facility Services staff to try to get phone lines going, generators hooked up and bag lunches planned so that children could come back to school. Dr. Reep even stated that “Camp Whitfield” had been planned to make half days at school “outside the box” fun and give students credit for attendance on Thursday and Friday – but current was restored on Wednesday. She added that the staff was so excited about this venture, they even asked could they try it on Wednesday – with no air conditioning, no power and bag lunches! Superintendent Reep stated she is proud of the district and the commitment employees have for their students. She even shared that many teachers were ready to go into the community with Spanish speaking areas to be sure communication regarding school was carried to all. Dr. Reep added that on day four after the hurricane, attendance was higher than the first or second days before the hurricane touched our state.

Superintendent Reep thanked all parents who had followed the new procedures regarding bus stops, and also to Dr. Morrow with the Health Department for his letter of thanks regarding the new bus routes implemented this school year. He stated this was a way to help fight childhood obesity. Dr. Reep also added that with 3,000 students being reassigned this year and new procedures introduced for transportation, the opening of school had presented no more concerns than in the beginning of a typical school year.

The last item Dr. Reep mentioned was that two students, Ms. Jenna Sjoerdsma from Ayden-Grifton High School, and Ms. Meagan Briley from J. H. Rose High School are finalists in the National Merit Scholarship.

Ms. Jennifer Little stated that for every negative “Bless Your Heart” article regarding transportation routes, there are far more positive remarks written daily.

Ms. Christine Waters stated she is continually astounded after reading an article about Teacher Karen Klaich at South Central High School and her work with the Holocaust Museum. She complimented all teachers who go above and beyond their daily jobs.

Mr. Sean Kenny stated he is very opposed to the “No Homework Letter” placed as his seat tonight and feels the letter needs to be taken to the Diversity Task Force. He commented that the letter does not take into consideration skilled and unskilled labor forces, free and reduced lunch students, parents who work different shifts, families with physical disabilities, substance abuse issues in a home, single parents and other constituents in our society. Mr. Kenny feels the results of this no homework policy should be watched closely.

Mr. Kenny thanked Ms. Ann Borisoff for her interest and assistance to him in discussing Mandarin Chinese in the past few weeks.

Mr. Kenny also stated he had visited several schools over the last few weeks and was greeted always with courtesy, respect, helpfulness and a caring attitude. He thanked everyone who had worked through Hurricane Irene, and remembered at a Board meeting a couple of years ago when fellow Board member Mary Williams had reminded everyone of hurricane season and being prepared.

Ms. Barbara Owens thanked Ms. Heather Mayo, Ms. Cheryl Olmsted and Dr. Beverly Reep for their help and input while serving on the Graduation Task Force.

Mr. Marc Whichard stated the school system is in great shape thanks to the hard work of Facility Services personnel, teachers, principals and all involved with the opening of school following a hurricane. He also shared that his son started kindergarten at Ridgewood Elementary having a wonderful experience as the school staff were well prepared and very organized for the opening day. Mr. Whichard concurred with Dr. Reep in that the opening of school went smoothly.

Mr. Benjie Forrest, second by Ms. Jennifer Little, moved that the Board adjourn. Motion was unanimous. Time was 8:07 P. M.

Respectively Submitted,

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Mr. Billy Peaden, Chair

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Dr. Beverly B. Reep, Superintendent