

DATE: July 28, 2009 PRESENT: Mary Grace Bright, Chair  
Jill Camnitz  
TIME: 8:30 A.M. Michael Dixon  
Benjie Forrest  
Jennifer Little  
Ralph Love, Sr.  
Barbara Owens  
Billy Peaden  
Roy Peaden  
Marcy Romary  
Dick Tolmie

PLACE: Facility Services Building ABSENT: Mary Williams

The Chair, Ms. Mary Grace Bright, called to order the Board of Education in Retreat Session and expressed appreciation to everyone present. She especially thanked Facility Services Director Terry Smith and his staff for having the Board meet in the Facility Services Building and for the lunch of hamburgers and hotdogs they were providing.

Mr. Smith thanked everyone for coming and stated lunch would be ready at 11:30 a.m.

Chair Bright also announced that Panera Bread had donated fresh bagels and cream cheese for the Retreat and Dr. Reep had furnished the bowl of fruit.

There are three major objectives for the Retreat stated Chair Bright:

1. A decision by the Board for grade configuration.
2. Whether to grow the smaller high schools or possibly consider a seventh high school.
3. Affirm Phase I of the Long Range Facility Plan - 2009.

Chair Bright stated Mr. Jimmy Hite, AIA, of Hite Associates and Mr. Mike Miller of ITRE/ORED would be present this morning to answer any questions from the Board, and this afternoon, discussion would be held among Board members regarding the three major objectives.

Superintendent Beverly Reep stated there would be a short Regular Session following the Retreat for the Board to read a Resolution which needed to be approved before July 31, 2009 so that PCS could receive approximately \$2.8 million with zero to low interest bonds for construction at a school site. Dr. Reep also thanked Board members for their presence and taking off from their jobs to attend the Retreat.

Associate Superintendent Aaron Beaulieu stated there were two Guiding Principles which needed to be revisited by the Board.

1. Achieve a consistent configuration of grade levels throughout the district, consisting of grades K-5 elementary schools, 6-8 middle schools and 9-12 high schools.
2. Establish feeder patterns where a school feeds no more than two schools and high school attendance areas do not restrict elementary and middle school lines.

Mr. Mike Miller stated two forecasting tools used in determining student growth in schools are:

1. Residency increasing (number of live births).
2. Average daily membership increasing (424 students this year)

Mr. Miller discussed the Pitt County Out-of-Capacity Schools and stated the South Central High School attendance area is the most over capacity. He stated attendance percentages are

as follows: 47-48% in the elementary schools, 22% in the middle schools, and 30% in the high schools. Mr. Miller stated the boundary lines for the six high schools could remain the same and the high school population could be maintained, but there would continue to be overcrowding in the K-5, 6-8 schools. The goal would be to have a K-5 school only feed two middle schools and two high schools. Mr. Miller stated there could be a balance of student population if the high schools are in the right places. Three factors for optimal attendance boundary lines include:

1. Shortest student driving distance to the school.
2. Capacity restraints.
3. Balance constraints.

Mr. Miller used the Durham Public Schools System as an example and stated socioeconomic student data was used in planning their schools. He discussed J. H. Rose and South Central High Schools and E. B. Aycock, A. G. Cox and C. M. Eppes Middle Schools. Mr. Miller stated if a new high school was built, all high school districts would be affected.

Challenges needing to be studied are:

1. Utilization
  - a. Balance – adjust feeder pattern
    - 1) Socioeconomic data
    - 2) Academic data
  - b. Growth
    - 1) High schools
    - 2) Phase I plan
  - c. Reassignment
2. Configuration/size
  - a. Feeder pattern

Mr. Roy Peaden asked Mr. Miller had he worked with data for Wake County? Mr. Miller stated they have - using twenty-year projections. He stated they did reassignments for capacity/balance every three years. Mr. Miller stated they look at different attendance areas and population growth in those areas.

Mr. Dick Tolmie stated NC WISE had brought changes in ADM for various schools. He asked of the numbers for enrollment were off could out-of-capacity numbers be corrected quickly. Mr. Miller said yes, that the ADM was looked at yearly and projected for the upcoming year. He stated they used the student's residence and the school for that district – not open enrollment, transfers, etc.)

Ms. Jill Camnitz stating in looking at the attendance percentages in k-5, 6-8 and 9-12, how many seats were in the schools? Mr. Miller stated in the high schools, there were 7,250 total seats with 7,050 enrollment. In the elementary and middle schools, it was hard to say as K-8 schools are hard to figure. K-5 grades would have to be looked at and then the 6-8 grades studied. Mr. Miller stated the present feeder pattern does not line up with available seats.

Ms. Camnitz asked if a new high school was not built, but Pitt County Schools grew the two smallest high schools (Farmville Central and Ayden-Grifton), what action was needed. Mr. Miller stated the Board needed to look at the district as a whole, not one high school area.

Mr. Dick Tolmie stated there was a decrease in the number of high school students, but the reason was unknown. A decrease in the number of kindergarten students for a period of time could account for this lower high school number. He stated we need to look at the boundary lines for South Central, J. H. Rose, and D. H. Conley High Schools to grow the smaller high schools of Ayden-Grifton, North Pitt and Farmville Central.

Chair Mary Grace Bright stated travel guidelines for students would need to be reviewed.

Mr. Roy Peaden asked why would Falkland Elementary be switched to the North Pitt attendance area if a new high school was built in the Highway 33 area? Mr. Miller stated in looking at the whole system, capacity numbers put Falkland in the North Pitt district. Mr. Peaden stated the river crossings needed to be studied before decisions were made, and Mr. Benjie Forrest stated the Clay Root area should likewise be researched.

Dr. Reep asked regarding existing lines, is there a balance in the current schools and Mr. Miller stated there is.

Ms. Jill Camnitz asked regarding balance of our schools in other concepts besides transportation. Mr. Miller said grades 6-8 were off in some areas.

Ms. Camnitz asked could our district change from the hole and dough nut distribution of high schools to a pie shaped distribution of high schools. Mr. Miller stated yes, it could be done, but would be very difficult given the location of J. H. Rose High School.

Mr. Beaulieu then introduced Mr. Jimmy Hite who discussed the Phase I Projects. The new elementary school to be constructed on Briarcliff Road was briefly mentioned.

The construction sequence at Eastern Elementary has changed due to not starting in June 2009 as previously planned. There would be only one modular unit used during construction, which will save money as previously two modules were needed.

Ms. Jill Camnitz asked what would happen to the module after construction? Mr. Beaulieu stated it would be moved and used for different phases of construction. If moved to another construction site, it could be set up in approximately six weeks.

Mr. Beaulieu stated he hoped to be ready to accept bids by early fall.

Superintendent Reep made note that the Governor had placed another hiring freeze effective July 28, 2009 stating that only classroom teachers could be hired. She stated she did not know what that would mean for construction, but does not think these projects would be involved.

Dr. Reep stated there has already been a plan developed for shifting classes at Eastern as needed during construction – hopefully shifting smaller classes, i.e. tutoring.

Mr. Hite then discussed construction at Farmville Central High School. Mr. Beaulieu also explained to the Board that Farmville Central and Ayden-Grifton could grow to a capacity of approximately 1300 with additional classrooms, which would then necessitate an auxiliary gym and expanded cafeteria.

Ms. Jill Camnitz asked if the smaller high schools were grown to a capacity of 1300, would ten additional classrooms still be needed? Mr. Hite answered yes – the present addition planned for Farmville Central and a future addition of classrooms would be necessary to reach 1300 seats.

Mr. Benjie Forrest asked what the labs would be used for with Mr. Miller stating two would be for science courses and the other two would be flexible for different programs.

Mr. Beaulieu then explained that he had been working with Ms. Bryan in the County Office to obtain a \$2.8 million stimulus package with zero to low interest to be used for additional

construction to a school. Dr. Reep stated if this pool of funding was not used, what is left may be reallocated for further use.

Mr. Roy Peaden asked what schools were not applying for their money? Mr. Miller stated some he knew about were Johnston and Clayton with Beaufort applying for a small amount. Dr. Reep stated that the money had to be used now and construction sites or plans already made – a system could not hold the money.

Mr. Beaulieu stated at D.H. Conley, a new state road will go to Edwards Farm Road to improve the traffic situation. He stated we were working with the land owner to get about 10.6 acres which would mean additional cost. The land is needed for the road construction and a large drainage ditch taking care of the storm water problems. He again discussed the Phase I construction and parking addition. Mr. Beaulieu stated five mobile units had been moved and the campus looks great. Six mobile units were kept as Conley cannot grow anymore with 1400 students enrolled. Dr. Reep asked about the Department of Transportation adding a turning lane as we had changed our enter and exit pattern? Mr. Beaulieu stated we could send in a written request asking for a turning lane to be added at Conley.

Mr. Benjie Forrest stated he did not like limiting a high school's growth – he asked about the additional twelve classrooms that were never built several years ago. Mr. Hite stated parking areas and practice fields would have to be relocated to another location. Mr. Beaulieu stated the administrative area and cafeteria would be totally inadequate. The only way Conley could grow would be to buy additional land advised Mr. Hite.

Mr. Dick Tolmie brought up classroom size stating the smaller the school, the better the socioeconomic achievement.

Mr. Roy Peaden stated considering the property, what about constructing a two-story building? Mr. Hite commented in that scenario, you would need two stairwells and two elevators at a cost of approximately \$450,000 additional dollars. He asked would the need overcome the cost difference?

Mr. Billy Peaden asked was it necessary to have lockers for the students? Mr. Beaulieu stated the school had asked for the lockers. Mr. Peaden asked were lockers cut at Farmville Center? Mr. Beaulieu stated no, but they were adding classrooms and large labs. Dr. Reep asked could there be separate locker room bids? Mr. Hite said yes, prices for steel and copper were low right now – cost would depend on the market at the time of bidding.

Mr. Roy Peaden questioned increased cost on a couple of construction sites. Mr. Hite explained that some were for land and road changes costs that have been mentioned, and Mr. Beaulieu explained at Sadie Saulter without the definite PreK requirements in place at the time of building and the office annex changes, we are guessing at a cost. Mr. Dick Tolmie asked could we change Sadie Saulter before beginning the new school or construction at Eastern? Mr. Beaulieu stated not at this time. Mr. Beaulieu stated ECVC could ask us to move at any time if that building was sold, and there are lots of PCS programs in that building.

Discussion was held regarding Chicod School. Mr. Beaulieu discussed the sewer project needed at the school, and also turning the building to face the side road to help with traffic problems. Bringing modules in to help with students while the old building was demolished was mentioned.

Mr. Beaulieu stated 60% of the sewer project at Pactolus was done, and Stokes would be started next. A solution for the sewer problem at Chicod has not been defined as yet.

Mr. Benjie Forrest asked could a building be added to Chicod where the baseball field presently is located and more land bought nearby? Mr. Hite shared with the Board the construction that is needed for either a K-8 school or a K-5 school stating the traffic pattern would be pretty much the same. Mr. Beaulieu commented that the baseball field was not only used by the school but the community as well.

Mr. Roy Peaden mentioned the play areas between the different grade levels. Mr. Hite explained that there are double doors to the areas but it is hard to get maintenance equipment in and out. Dr. Reep suggested E. B. Aycock be looked at as they had put gravel in these areas so grass cutting would not be a factor.

Ms. Barbara Owens suggested tearing down the old school and rebuilding. Mr. Hite said the price for a K-5 building would be \$16 million and a K-8 school would be \$24 million. Dr. Reep stated if the buildings were torn down and they did start over, Hope, Chicod and G. R. Whitfield housing 700-750 students could look near the same.

Mr. Beaulieu reminded everyone that a cafeteria built in 1984 was being used.

Chair Bright stated that people living in the community wanted certain items saved, i.e. the stone over the front door.

Ms. Jill Camnitz stated the classrooms per grade could be lowered and leave the school with about 700 students enrolled.

Mr. Beaulieu explained that turning the school to face the side road was going to be extremely difficult – probably the most difficult construction change in Pitt County Schools' history. Handling 900+ students during these construction changes was going to be a difficult task also. Mr. Beaulieu explained that the cost could change – Greenville Utilities could add additional cost over night.

Mr. Roy Peaden asked about metal roofs with Mr. Hite stating they could be used.

Mr. Benjie Forrest asked regarding metal buildings. Mr. Hite stated they would not be structurally sound for this size school and would not have a long lifespan. He stated Beaufort County had added a smaller building which housed a media center using a gym floor.

Options for Pitt County Schools high schools was then discussed with two choices – grow the smaller high schools or build a new high school. The cost of a new high school was discussed as well as the number of students who could be housed in the six high schools that presently exist. Mr. Roy Peaden also brought up athletics in our present high schools and what would a seventh high school mean?

Mr. Dick Tolmie stated to grow the smaller high schools, boundary lines needed to be changed. Ms. Jill Camnitz discussed birth rates in Pitt County and what would that mean for high schools ten years from now? Mr. Miller stated we would need to get recent data to look at and decide was there just a bump in rising numbers now or would it be lasting increased figures. Mr. Dick Tolmie commented if Durham Public Schools used socioeconomic information in locating a new high school, a new high school location may be different for Pitt County Schools using the same information. Dr. Reep asked is it time consuming to have personnel research this information. Mr. Miller stated it could be – would have to talk to Student Assignment Director Kay Weathington regarding that issue.

Chair Bright stated the Board needs to make a decision regarding moving forward with Phase I of the Long Range Facility Plan 2009, grade configuration and what to do in reference to the high schools – grow the smaller high schools or build an additional high school.

Mr. Michael Dixon stated we need the socioeconomic information before making a decision on a new high school and it should be taken off the table at this point. Mr. Dick Tolmie stated we need the socioeconomic information and capacity to reach a balance between the high schools.

Mr. Billy Peaden stated we need to take the new elementary school off the table and complete the other projects to see if we have enough money to build the new school. Mr. Dick Tolmie stated it was not reasonable to take off the new school construction as we need it to convert Sadie Saulter to a Pre-K and not use the Third Street Center. If we take students out of Wintergreen Schools and send them back to Greenville City Schools, we would need space in the new school for this.

Ms. Jill Camnitz stated it was her understanding that we had the money for these projects. Assistant Superintendent of Finance Michael Cowin stated ADM money was questionable, but there is money for Phase I construction. Mr. Beaulieu stated we can borrow \$37-\$38 million dollars now. He stated the next round of construction is where possibly we would need to question if money is available. Dr. Reep stated we had the money to build a new school, but we also need money to operate and open the school. Mr. Roy Peaden stated that money would come from not using the Third Street Center and using Sadie Saulter for Pre-K and offices. Mr. Dick Tolmie stated we could look at the 10 and 20 day figures before bidding on a new school.

Mr. Beaulieu stated a bid cycle was approximately six weeks.

Mr. Cowin stated by using Sadie Saulter as a Pre-K center with approximately 200 students, operational costs would be minimal. Dr. Reep stated EC Pre-K could also possibly go to Sadie Saulter.

Dr. Ralph Love stated in regards to voting on Phase I, we need to look at the 10 and 20 day figures for attendance. Mr. Beaulieu reminded everyone that all projects will not come in until the 2011-12 school year except for Farmville Central High School. Student re-assignment will not be until the 2011-12 school year.

Chair Bright stated she is hearing that the Board affirms to move forward with Phase I after waiting to see the 10 and 20 day numbers.

Regarding grade configuration, Ms. Jill Camnitz feels we need to alter the language or move toward K-5, 6-8 schools. Dr. Reep stated we need to change the language regarding configuration, but look at the whole district not just certain areas.

Chair Bright said we need to discuss what size school we are comfortable with. Ms. Camnitz asked what type scenarios will work? Dr. Reep stated we heard the community speak and the Board needs to look at different configurations with size and geography as factors. Mr. Michael Dixon stated we need to take the K-5, 6-8, 9-12 configuration off the table and come up with a K-8, K-5 – 6-8 plan that will work. Mr. Dick Tolmie stated the K-5, 6-8, 9-12 configuration needs to be dropped in the Guiding Principles and a decision made regarding a minimal/maximal size school to provide the best educational quality for our students. Ms. Camnitz stated the community feels educational quality is offered in small schools - which need a minimal and maximal size range. Mr. Roy Peaden feels smaller schools are achieving.

Ms. Marcy Romary commented that we need to know the programs offered in smaller schools. Dr. Reep informed the Board that K-8 and 6-8 smaller schools had to go over the teacher allotment formula to offer more programs.

Chair Bright suggested a workshop session in the fall at one of our Monday night meetings to look at size constraints. Dr. Reep stated we need to know what size school can sustain itself.

She also stated it cost more to educate students in smaller schools due to additional teachers being hired to offer programs for the schools. Mr. Tolmie asked if you have to supplement a school to offer other programs, don't you take money from another school to accomplish this? Dr. Reep stated you had to be careful with this – low wealth money can be used. She stated in looking at last year's State allotment formula and what's needed in a school, additional money had to be used to supplement the middle schools but we did not take a program away from one school to give to another school. Ms. Camnitz stated we need to spend money wisely from whatever source was available.

Mr. Beaulieu stated transportation dollars have been cut. We have to look at travel distances, operational costs and programs involved.

Mr. Beaulieu also stated we need to be consistent with school size when looking at our school feeder patterns.

Mr. Dick Tolmie stated in growing the smaller high schools we need to look at moving the attendance lines and look at growth of attendance areas. Dr. Reep stated that Open Enrollment for the last seven years has not really helped. She feels we need to know how to grow the six high schools; and if that doesn't work, look at a new high school. Ms. Jennifer Little stated we need to change the lines to force growth for the six high schools and look at expected growth ten years from now. Mr. Beaulieu emphasized that we need to let the community know long-term effects. He stated high school lines are just a part of this – elementary and middle school lines will change also. Mr. Tolmie stated in looking at the high school boundaries first, what would that mean for elementary and middle school students? Ms. Camnitz commented that we would have to see the results to know what to do. Dr. Reep stated we may have our own Athletic Conference with our end results.

Mr. Dick Tolmie stated we need a map drawn using existing criteria; with Dr. Reep stating we would then factor other influences (i.e. river access).

Chair Bright stated the smaller high schools still don't have what's offered academically in the larger high schools. Dr. Reep stated some students are saying on-line classes are better than being in larger high schools. She commented that technology is providing access to many study opportunities for students that were unavailable before.

Chair Bright stated she feels the preference of the majority of the Board is for growing the smaller high schools, but we need more information on seeing how this can be accomplished.

Mr. Beaulieu asked regarding the Chicod project – face highway 43 or not face highway 43? He also mentioned looking at purchasing the land behind the school for more options. Also, the decision of whether to build a K-8 or K-5 school had not been firmly stated. Ms. Jennifer Little stated she thought the community wanted a K-8 school but what size school had to be determined. She also commented that it seemed Mr. Hite discussed safer traffic conditions if the school was turned to face the side road. The appearance of turning the school from highway 43 was discussed.

Mr. Roy Peaden suggested buying the six acres of land and wait for the sewer decision before finalizing details of school construction.

Chair Bright asked for a Board consensus on going ahead with Phase I after the 10 and 20 day numbers are in, alter the configuration statement of the Guiding Principles with more discussion on school size, and grow the smaller high schools with additional information/map provided. A consensus was given by the Board. A time line was discussed. A feeder pattern for the elementary schools of no more than two middle schools and two high schools was also discussed. Ms. Jill Camnitz stated a statement clarifying that "in as much as possible these

Guiding Principles will be followed, but circumstances may warrant necessary adjustments” should be added before listing the Guiding Principles.

Mr. Tolmie stated new lines for A. G. Cox, E. B. Aycock and C. M. Eppes need to be in place. Dr. Reep stated we plan to have new assignments ready for the fall of 2010. Public meetings could be held in January regarding these changes.

Mr. Roy Peaden stated we need to go over the Guiding Principles and specify changes to be made, i.e. configuration wording. Dr. Reep stated administration would revamp the Guiding Principles to comply with direction from the Board.

Ms. Jill Camnitz feels we need to look at Hope Middle School for compliance along with A. G. Cox, E. B. Aycock and C. M. Eppes. Mr. Dick Tolmie stated Hope Middle School could accommodate the Wintergreen students moving to sixth grade.

Chair Bright asked everyone to take a moment to review the Retreat and make comments if desired. She stated it had been great and closed the session 1:35 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

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Ms. Barbara Owens, Chair

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Beverly B. Reep, Superintendent