

Burke County Board Of Education
West Concord Resource Center – Olive Hill Room
509 West Concord Street
Morganton, NC 28655

Special Called Meeting

Monday, July 25, 2011
6:00 P.M.

AGENDA

- I. Call to Order – Mrs. Catherine Thomas, Chairman**
- II. Agenda Review & Approval – Mrs. Catherine Thomas, Chairman**
- III. Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag of the United States**
- IV. Public Comments – SACS CASI #1**
- V. Resolutions for Approval**
 - A. School System Attorney**
 - ♦ Contingent Attorney
 - B. Reduction in Force Report – Mr. Blair Propst**
 - ♦ Middle School Art Teachers
 - C. Resolution requesting Accreditation from North Carolina Department of Education**
- VI. Information Items (No Action Required)**
 - A. Reports from the Superintendent**
 - ♦ Student Transfer Process – Mr. Blair Propst
 - ♦ Speech Assignments
 - ♦ Superintendent’s Evaluation – Discussion of Process/Timelines
- VII. Adjournment**

Board Member Self Evaluation – SACS CASI #2 - Directive 2 / SACS CASI #4 - Directive 2

Burke County Board of Education

July 25, 2011
Special Called Meeting Minutes

West Concord Resource Center
Olive Hill Room

Call to Order

Chairman Catherine Thomas called the meeting of the Burke County Board of Education to Order at 6:00 PM in the Olive Hill Room of the West Concord Resource Center. Other members of the Board who were present for the meeting included: Vice-Chair; Karen Sain, Mr. Buddy Armour, Mr. Tim Buff, Mr. Rob Hairfield, Mrs. Susan Stroup, and Mr. Sam Wilkinson. Also present for the meeting was Dr. Arthur Stellar; Superintendent of Schools, Mr. Blair Propst; Executive Director of Human Resources, Mr. Keith Lawson; Finance Officer and Mr. Dean Shatley, Esquire; of Campbell Shatley, PLLC; Interim School System Attorney firm.

Protocol Review

Chairman Thomas reviewed proper protocol for public meetings.

Agenda Review & Approval

Mr. Armour made the motion to approve the agenda with a second by Mr. Hairfield. The motion carried 7-0.

Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag of the United States

Chairman Thomas led in the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag of the United States.

Public Comments

The following individuals addressed the Board during public comment:

Mr. Tom Wood – Topic(s): A – Student Transfers B – Fund Balance

- A. Mr. Wood felt there was confusion regarding Rutherford College student transfer requests. With a capacity of 256 students and only 217 students currently enrolled why were transfers being denied? Offered a solution of a 2nd/3rd grade combo classroom. Suggested less purchase of software and emphasis on a combo classroom.
- B. Mr. Wood questioned why the Fund Balance was not known until 6/30/11. Where is transparency? Positive position on amended calendar. Suggests task force to help save money. Mr. Wood also wondered what and why had recently been shredded at the Central Office.

Mr. Gary Swaim – Topic(s): A. – Finances B – SACS January report

- A. Mr. Swaim questioned why the REVES report was not posted online. Problems with the consolidation plan include: not all savings would be as portrayed, bussing and transportation not included, inactive and incomplete information, building modification costs.
- B. Concern with SACS January report. Why is there a tug-of-war with Board and Superintendent? What has Superintendent done to maintain accreditation?

Ms. Amanda Lennex – Topic: Her son’s denied transfer to Rutherford College Elementary. What is the criteria for a transfer? She has requested a call-back from Central Office and was told student transfers are not a priority, at this time. She is frustrated and needs time to make arrangements. Received notice last day of school that transfers may be rescinded. Why is it taking so long to know the status of her request? When will she know?

Mr. James Causby – Topic: Requesting Clarity. Mr. Causby concerned with events since March. Were told that 270 employees would receive RIF notices – did not happen. Were told \$12-\$15 million deficit – not true. Why art class cancellations? Feels all news about Burke County is just doom and gloom. Suggests two things: (1) Board and Superintendent restore credibility with people; (2) Board set forth a specific vision.

Mrs. Tilley- Topic: Schools Tools. Mrs. Tilley is the liaison for school supplies. August is School Tools Month. August 26-27 will be Yard Sale. Burke County has many donors and offers website for supplies to teachers. Has had this program for 3 years.

Resolutions for Approval

A. Retain Board Attorney

Dr. Stellar stated that it would be advisable to have a legal firm that is familiar with school board issues. He recommended continuing with Mr. Chris Campbell of the firm Campbell, Shatley & Associates. It would be a good idea to have a back-up attorney and recommended Mr. Ed Blair. Suggested that in event of a crisis, the Superintendent and Chairman would be granted permission to designate an attorney.

Mr. Armour stated that since there would be a new majority on the Board, in November, it would be best to wait on voting to allow new members to make the decision. Dr. Stellar recommended to delay new Board vote until January 2012, to allow new Board members to get in and settled. Mrs. Stroup suggested letter explaining delay to all attorney applicants. Mr. Hairfield wanted it to be noted that he highly objects Mr. Ed Blair as a back-up attorney. Mr. Armour made the motion to continue with Mr. Chris Campbell of Campbell, Shatley & Associates until new Board members can vote with a second by Mr. Wilkinson. The motion carried with 4-3. Mr. Buff, Vice-Chair Sain and Mr. Hairfield opposed.

B. Special Counsel for Hearings

Chairman Thomas noted the need for attorneys at hearings. Chairman Thomas made the motion to provide Special Counsel for hearings with a second by Vice-Chair Sain. The motion carried with 6-1. Vice-Chair Sain opposed.

C. Retroactive Approval

Chairman Thomas made the motion to approve, retroactively, Ed Blair, Esquire for the March 15th meeting with a second by Mr. Wilkinson. The motion carried with 4-3. Vice-Chair Sain, Mr. Buff and Mr. Hairfield opposed.

D. Accreditation Draft

Chairman Thomas made the motion to draft a Resolution Requesting Accreditation for state review. The motion carried with 5-2. Vice Chair Sain opposed and Mr. Buff abstained.

Informational Items

A. Reduction in Force Report/Employment – Mr. Blair Propst

Original projection was that 166 positions would need to be cut. Actual positions cut is now 120. Difference may be associated with attrition and 4 resignations received in the last 1.5 weeks.

Classified positions are almost complete. Mr. Allred is finishing up working on EC positions.

Certified positions are still contingent on: resignations, 7 pending appeals, final student enrollment down 400 since last September, unknown moves within county and kindergarten enrollment.

Mr. Armour requested a final list of names with status for all employees. Mr. Propst said he could provide a temporary list but will provide a final list to a hearing for a vote.

Mr. Wilkinson wanted to know guidelines for employees chosen to receive a RIF notice. Some personal friends of his received a notice and he cannot explain the process.

Mr. Armour stated that a Personnel Report had not been seen in awhile.

Mr. Propst stated he did not think there were any new hires, fires or salary increases to report.

Mr. Wilkinson questioned if Burke County Schools is advertising out-of-state for teachers. If so, why? What instructions are principals given in regards to hiring?

Dr. Stellar stated that the qualifications needed may not be met with personnel within the county. At this time, there is a need for a psychologist and an AP social studies teacher. Looking for highest quality for students but have not had to pay advertising dollars.

Mrs. Stroup stated that because of the fear of the employment situation, many good teachers have already left Burke County.

Dr. Stellar stated that some employees have left due to the RIF potential as well as higher pay in other districts.

B. Even Start

Chairman Thomas questioned the status of the Even Start program. Kim Rudisill, Director of Elementary Education stated that Federal funding has been eliminated for the Even Start program. 5 employees will be impacted. Program will cease operation end of August at which time the positions will be eliminated.

Chairman Thomas suggested if the Board may be able to assist with funding through the Fund Balance.

Mrs. Rudisill stated that 27 children are served through Even Start. It employs 2 certified and 3 classified staff.

C. Art/Band Program

Mrs. Stroup stated that we should not eliminate programs that benefit students.

Dr. Stellar stated that middle school art was the last cut from the program. He is aware it is not a popular process to eliminate programs but with no funding, there have to be cuts. All areas have rationale for being maintained and being a benefit to students. We are already looking at \$8.5 million deficit for next year. May have to go through the RIF process again, next spring. Middle and high schools had more reductions since elementary had Title I funds carry-over.

Mr. Armour stated that he was concerned about the reduction in band teachers. Parents may not invest in instruments if only a part-time offering. Students will be less prepared for high school band.

Mr. Hairfield stated that just 2 years ago, funds were spent to bulk-up East Burke's instrument base. Students tend to excel academically when involved in band and art.

Dr. Stellar stated that there is a need for a band instructor as one was lost through attrition. May have to hire outside county.

Mr. Wilkinson questioned how 1 person will be able to handle 2 bands.

Dr. Stellar stated that new ways will be figured out. It will not be the traditional program. Middle school principals made decision.

Mrs. Stroup made a motion to use Fund Balance to hire back 3 middle school art teachers with a second by Mr. Armour. The motion carried with a 5-2 with Vice-Chair Sain and Mr. Buff opposed.

D. Student Transfers

Mr. Propst reported than there were 294 +/- transfer requests; less than in previous years. Per Policy 4150, there is a 3 step process. Step 1 – Request, Step 2 – Administrator makes decision based on school capacity and allotted number of teachers, Step 3 – Hearing Officer. State restrictions for Kinder – 3rd = 24 students/class; Policy restrictions for Kinder-3rd = 21 students/class. Middle and high school = 30-32 students/class. There were no denials for family convenience (siblings at school) and employees at school. Large denials at Liberty and Table Rock due to large incoming 6th grade class. All denied at Patton due to over capacity. Letters were mailed July 14-18 with status of transfer request. 24 appeals – 1 reversed/23 still in force. Kindergarten

yet to be determined due to difficulty in projecting class size. Will hold off until closer to the start of school year.

Dr. Stellar commended Mr. Propst for his tireless efforts on this process which had been started by Mr. Rick Sherrill.

Dr. Stellar suggested that the Board pass a resolution that if a transfer is legitimate, no need for a 1 year hold on athletics. Board policy states athletes need to sit-out for one year, if a transfer, to avoid athletic recruiting.

Chairman Thomas questioned the use of vouchers.

Mr. Propst stated that no vouchers can be used until 10 days into the school year.

Dr. Stellar stated that Mrs. Lennex was declined her transfer request because of class size for her 2 students. One suggestion was to have combined grade classrooms at Rutherford College Elementary, but the school principal has chosen not to do that for this coming school year. Another option for Mrs. Lennex is to attend another Burke County school that would have an opening for her students.

Mr. Propst re-iterated that all transfers have followed the guidelines of the Board policy.

Chairman Thomas stated that the consensus was to go with appeals on an individual basis and re-visit the policy for next year, at a later time.

E. Speech Teachers

Dr. Stellar spoke to contract services for speech teachers. Presently have company out of Hickory, NC. Looking at different schedule to provide more efficiency, less travel, and more direct service to students.

Mr. Armour questioned why Hickory and not Burke County people? Pick Burke County speech people to save money.

Dr. Stellar will look into the matter.

F. Superintendent Evaluation

Dr. Stellar reviewed training on new state evaluation process. Is it more cost-effective to train incoming Board members and outgoing members or just do a one-time training of incoming Board members? The new state evaluation model is similar to teacher and principal evaluations.

Mr. Wilkinson felt it would be valuable to have outgoing Board evaluate Superintendent.

Mrs. Stroup felt it would be beneficial for the outgoing Board members to evaluate the Superintendent as they have worked with him.

Chairman Thomas suggested a training schedule in December for the new Board. Dr. Stellar to provide what instrument will be used for outgoing and incoming Board members to review. Evaluate instructions by 9-15-2011.

Mr. Armour made a motion to amend Agenda to allow action and when and how Superintendent evaluation will be. The motion was seconded by Mrs. Stroup and carried 6-1. Mrs. Sain opposed.

Chairman Thomas made a motion to have the evaluation instrument process completed by 9-30-2011. The motion was seconded by Mr. Armour and carried 6-1. Mr. Buff opposed.

G. AYP Update

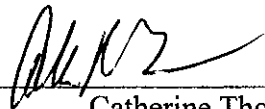
Dr. Stellar stated that the recent article in the local newspaper was accurate. Figures may change due to the way the state disperses information piece by piece. Burke County did fairly well. Proud of results. Subgroups effect us.

Mr. Wilkinson requested clarification on subgroups.

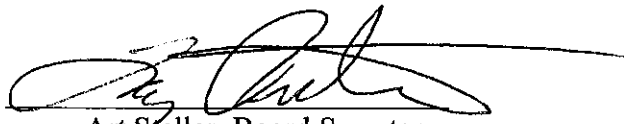
Dr. Stellar stated that subgroups can be made up by race, language, low income, sex, etc.

Adjournment

The motion for adjournment was made by Mr. Armour with a second by Mrs. Stroup at approximately 8:30 p.m.


Catherine Thomas, Chair
Burke County Board of Education

ATTEST:


Art Stellar, Board Secretary
Burke County Board of Education

*Minutes were approved
8/15/11 after Dr. Stellar
was gone.
Signed by Interim Superintendent,
Mr. Larry Putnam*