

The Halifax County Board of Education  
August 17, 2009

MINUTES

The Halifax County Board of Education met in closed session on Monday, August 17, 2009. The meeting was held at the central office administrative building located on Hwy 301 in Halifax, North Carolina.

Present: Debbie Hardy - Chair, Gladys Walden - Vice-Chair, A. Faye Young, Michael Hawkins, Carolyn Hawkins, Tyrone Williams and Dr. Donna Hunter.

Others present: Superintendent, Geraldine Middleton, Associate Superintendent, Dr. Elese Frederick, Assistant Superintendent, Charles Chambliss, Assistant Superintendent, MiShawna Moore, Finance Officer, Carrie Neal, Representatives from DPI: Dr. William Harrison, Dr. Pat Ashley and Catherine Brooks, and Board Attorney, Larry Armstrong.

Chairman Hardy called the meeting to order at 7:40 p.m.

Those present participated in the pledge of allegiance and a moment of silence.

Mr. Hawkins moved to approve the meeting agenda with the addition of VI. E. Cafeteria Plan. Mrs. Walden moved in second. Motion carried.

Mrs. Hardy, Chair, read the Conflict of Interest Statement, which refers to Board Policy #1050. Mrs. Walden has a conflict with VII.A.6. - Project STAY Instructor - Clemmon Williamson and VII.A.7. - Project STAY Instructor - James D. Whitaker.

Mr. Hawkins moved to approve the minutes from the meetings held July 6, 13, 21 & 28 2009 with said corrections. Mrs. Young moved in second. Motion carried.

PUBLIC COMMENTS:

Mrs. Hardy referenced Board Policy #1213, which allows up to 30 minutes for public comments. Each person is given up to 3 minutes. The board will hear the comments but no feedback will be given at this time.

- Gary Grant - Organization Concerned Citizens of Tillery - One of the issues that will be coming back to the board on is the Board Policy regarding Public Comments. There are some of us who feel that we wonder if this board should be allowed to meet ever. We are still in protest of the June 6<sup>th</sup> meeting to close schools. We have

- concerns, typos on the last month's meeting agenda, e-mail address to the board chair is not functioning, no one at the central office can give board member addresses, and we know there are a number of students that are leaving Halifax County Schools. None of you have students riding bus for the long bus routes.
- Mrs. Margaret Parrish - She shared her letter requesting to have a dialog with the superintendent and board chair. The two committees to save schools in Halifax County have concerns regarding the transition committees and have problems with the following: changing school colors, school mascots, school names. The students do not have bus routes, the bus numbers that they will be riding. The teachers have not had time with the moving, etc. to fully prepare for the students to return. Our request to the board to assist with the process still stands. Please prepare a.s.a.p. a date and time that such a meeting can occur. We request that any board item regarding the school colors, mascot, name changed be tabled until we have an opportunity to meet and discuss our concerns.
  - Rev. Andrew West - I do not have an agenda. I'm a man that believes in prayer. I've made mistakes and anyone who knows me will be aware of this. I'm stepping into this thing a little late. I find things that are not suitable, not satisfactory. That is not God's way. Yes, one lady stepped up and took prayer out of school. But if we do not step up and make sure that they work with the parents and the parents work with the board, you will not only lose the children this year, but will continue to lose children. At the polls, the same folk that stated let's get this one and let's get that one. Just as the same folks that wanted Jesus to lead them to Heaven were the same people who put him on the cross. I want the board members to know that the same folks, in the county, who fought hard to get you there, are fighting to get you out of there right now.
  - Ms. Joyce West - I do not have an agenda, but I do have concerns. Parents met, standing ovation at Eastman in the gym. We've got to try to work together to get it back or work together to move on. What about our children? How are they going to be able to perform in: sports and other extra-curricular activities? Academics are important. Someone needs to do some decision-making. Cheerleading practice, sports, etc. are beginning. Will our children be able to participate? So, when you think about what you want best for your child, think about our children too.
  - Mr. Clure Evans - I'm from the Scotland Neck end. I'm still walking around in shock that Brawley has actually been closed. Especially when we offered other options.

People are out of jobs. I'm looking from a stand point of the decisions that have been made. We need to work together for the betterment of our children. We are for the education of the children. It is not about your agenda or my agenda. I do not want to see the Brawley Building sitting there and rotting. Those buildings are going to be eyesores in our communities. We'd like to see something positive happening in these facilities. Some sort of programs. The facilities are just sitting there. Even if we rent them for \$1. Let's do whatever is best for the children and do something positive for the community with those properties. If we can turn it into something positive for the children at night or on the weekends.

- Randell Richardson - On August 25<sup>th</sup> do you know where you are going to be? Because, my daughter does not know where she is going to be. I don't know what school, what bus, what bus route. People say people from Halifax County Schools cannot get a job. That is not so. I have got a job. Don't send me another letter from Pittman school letting me know that the asbestos has been removed. I called the school and the principal was not there, but was at a meeting all week long. Don't set my daughter up for failure by not letting her know where she will be going to school.
- Rev. Dexter Davis - There was a Transition Team Meeting was held on August 13, 2009. I would like to see if a name change takes place that all of the children come together to make that decision. I have a daughter at Enfield in the AVID Program. I want to see the test scores go up and the dropout rate go down. I want the people in Scotland Neck and Enfield communities to come together. They will not work as hard if they do not feel that this is my school. It will be real conducive if we get the kids on the same level for learning.

Mrs. Hardy thanked everyone for coming out tonight and thanked them for their concerns.

Board members recognize, Cherell Alston, rising eighth grade student at William R. Davie Middle School, as Halifax County Schools' Student of the Year for 2008-2009.

Mr. Chambliss gave an update to board members on the procedures for closing schools and the disbursement of equipment. Teachers were given extra time to go to the school to tag items to go to their new schools. Gen. Stat. 115C-118 (a) basically phased out the law for surplus property. The local board must first make it available to the county commissioners.

Dr. Hunter asked what happens to the trophies and other items.

Mr. Chambliss stated that these items will be protected until they are carried over to the new facilities.

Mrs. Carrie Neal, Finance Officer, shared with board members the Internal Audit Report from Cherry, Bekaert & Holland, which is a summary of findings based on agreed upon procedures in regards to the Child Nutrition Program.

Mr. Williams would like to have specifics as to how these findings are being addressed.

Dr. Hunter indicated that she noticed that the letter was dated June 26, 2009 and the book with the findings was dated May 31, 2009.

Board members were provided with a copy of the Monthly Financial Report for FY 2009-2010 by Mrs. Carrie Neal, Finance Officer. The only direction from DPI was that we were to operate at 85% of the budget. We have just completed the preliminary work for the 2007-08. Recons have been done for 2007-08 and 2008-09. We do have our state numbers in and we are looking at some pretty tremendous cuts in (PRC 003 - Non instructional support) but should receive some stimulus money 1.2 million each year. We also got cut for technology.

- We are still in a state budget crunch. (State budget freeze). As we finalize the state numbers it will have an impact on local budget.
- We also have a \$650,000 budget cut from the state and administration will have to work to see where these cuts will come from.

Mr. Hawkins shared that during the last week of mandatory staff development required by DPI, on August 10<sup>th</sup> - 45 employees met with Hendricks, on August 11<sup>th</sup> - 36 met with Wellington, on August 12<sup>th</sup> - 31 met with the Pierce group. After the meetings there was a vote that did not include all employees. We are therefore, asking principals to take a vote at their schools and send it in to Carrie Neal a.s.a.p. The board felt that the numbers sent in did not truly represent the total employment. Then the board will vote on this at our next meeting.

Mr. Hawkins moved to approve the contract for Hands-on Rehab to provide evaluations and physical therapy services for students with disabilities as referred by the Director of Programs for Exceptional Children. Funding will come from Exceptional Children funds (1.5210.032.311). Mrs. Young moved in second. Motion carried.

Mr. Hawkins moved to approve the contract for Franklin-Vance-Warren Opportunity, Inc. to provide Head Start services to special needs students as referred by the Director of Programs for Exceptional Children. Funding will come from Exceptional Children funds (1.5210.032.128). Mrs. Young moved in second. Motion carried.

Mr. Hawkins moved to approve the contract for Kids-R-Us Therapy, Inc. to provide Speech/Language Therapy to special needs students and other students as referred by the Director of Programs for Exceptional Children. Funding will come from Exceptional Children funds (1.5210.032.311). Mrs. Young moved in second. Motion carried.

Mr. Hawkins moved to approve the contract for Educational Insights, Inc. to provide educational and psychological evaluations for students with disabilities and students as referred by the Director of Programs for Exceptional Children. Funding will come from Exceptional Children funds (1.5210.032.311). Mrs. Young moved in second. Motion carried.

Mr. Hawkins moved to approve the contract for Clemmon Williamson to provide individualized classroom instruction and director services for students who have been suspended from their assigned school and are attending Project STAY as referred by the Director of Programs for Exceptional Children. Funding will come from Exceptional Children funds (1.5210.032.311). Mrs. Young moved in second. Motion carried. Mrs. Walden abstained.

Mr. Hawkins moved to approve the contract for James D. Whitaker to provide individualized classroom instruction students who have been suspended from their assigned school and are attending Project STAY as referred by the Director of Programs for Exceptional Children. Funding will come from Exceptional Children funds (1.5210.032.311). Mrs. Young moved in second. Motion carried. Mrs. Walden abstained.

Mr. Hawkins moved to approve the contract for Division of Vocational Rehabilitation to provide on-site training for students as referred by the Director of Programs for Exceptional Children. Funding will come from Exceptional Children funds (1.5210.032.311). Mrs. Young moved in second. Motion carried.

Mr. Hawkins moved to approve the contract for Transportation Services for contracted transportation providers to transport students with disabilities safely to and from school when they attend school outside of their assigned areas as referred by the Director of Programs for Exceptional Children. Funding

will come from Exceptional Children funds (1.5210.032.331).  
Mrs. Young moved in second. Motion carried.

Mr. Hawkins moved to approve the contract for PFH Contracting, Inc. to provide educational and psychological evaluations for students with disabilities and other students referred by the Director of Programs for Exceptional Children. Funding will come from Exceptional Children funds (1.5210.032.311). Mrs. Young moved in second. Motion carried.

Mr. Hawkins moved to approve the contract for Venture Rehabilitation Group Medicaid Billing services for students with disabilities receiving related services as referred by the Director of Programs for Exceptional Children. Funding will come from Exceptional Children funds (1.5210.032.331). Mrs. Young moved in second. Motion carried.

Mr. Williams moved to approve Cherry, Bekaert & Holland, L.L.P. to audit the financial statements for Halifax County Schools for the fiscal years ending June 30, 2008 and June 30, 2009. Mr. Hawkins moved in second. Motion carried. Dr. Hunter opposed.

Board members heard Transition Team Reports from Enfield Middle and William R. Davie Middle Schools.

Mrs. Linda Bulluck, Principal shared the Transition Team Report for: **Enfield Middle School (Brawley Middle School)**:

<u>School Colors:</u>	Dark green and white
<u>School Uniform:</u>	Shirts with collars – dark green or white Bottoms – Khaki or black Shoes: Brown or Black <i>(Suggesting that a grace period to parents for the purchase of uniforms in the new color.)</i>
<u>School Mascot:</u>	Panthers
<u>PTA:</u>	The team decided to allow the officers of both schools (Enfield Middle and Brawley Middle share the positions for the upcoming year. Officers will be elected for the following year).
<u>Transition Activities:</u>	Students/Parents – Youth Summit: July 15, 2009 Staff – Meet and Greet: July 30, 2009
<u>Vision/Mission/Motto:</u>	Under construction

Mr. Dennis Carrington, Principal shared the Transition Team Report for: **William R. Davie Middle School (Eastman Middle School)**:

<u>School Colors:</u>	Royal Blue, White or Gold
<u>School Uniform:</u>	Shirts (with/without colors) – Royal Blue, White or Gold Pants: Navy and Khaki Shoes: Brown or Black
<u>School Mascot:</u>	Vikings

Dr. Hunter moved to table the recommendations of the Transition Team until a committee comes together, which includes the renaming of the school, school colors, school uniforms, school mascot. Mrs. Hawkins seconded. Motion carried. Opposed: Mrs. Walden and Mr. Hawkins. Mrs. Young abstained.

Mr. Williams concurs with the recommendation to table. I have some concerns. Madam Chair, I feel that you should appoint one person from each end of the county to represent the committee on the Transition Team.

Mrs. Walden can understand Mr. Williams and Dr. Hunter's concern. I feel that if the students show up with different uniforms that there may be some issues. I do not know why someone from the Save Our Schools Committee was not on this team.

Mr. Hawkins, what directions do we give to the parents on what color uniforms?

Mr. Williams moved to charge a fee of \$3.00 per non-student official high school transcript as recommended by Mr. Chambliss, Assistant Superintendent. Mr. Hawkins moved in second. Motion carried.

Mr. Hawkins moved to approve a "right of use" of the (old Enfield Middle School) for the Enfield Warriors for four years as requested by Cummins, Inc., with an option to renew for an additional three years. Mr. William moved in second. Motion carried.

Mr. Williams announced that Mr. Garrett Freeman and Mr. Lee Anderson of the Enfield Warriors are present tonight.

Mr. Williams asked that the board attorney draft a non-legal binding document to this effect.

Mr. Freeman indicated that they are looking at about 120 kids participating in their athletic program this year.

Mr. Williams moved to approve the HCS Incentive/Performance Initiative to Recruit and Retain Highly Qualified Principals and Instructional Coaches to Serve High Needs Schools as presented by Dr. Frederick and Ms. Middleton. Dr. Hunter moved in second. Michael Hawkins and Carolyn Hawkins opposed.

You have been asking for accountability for performance measures.

Mrs. Hardy asked will the student performance be a part of the evaluation.

Dr. Hunter asked Dr. Frederick if this instrument is data driven.

Three Levels:

- 1- Recruitment
- 2- Student Performance
- 3- Principal Retention/Commitment

Mrs. Walden moved to approve personnel as discussed in closed session. Mrs. Young moved in second. Motion carried.

**CERTIFIED**: Amelia Rivera, Jason Klaus, Michael Bevel, Cindy Neville, Jeffery Saunders, Paula Van Winkle, Alfredo Bonilla, Kevin Pierce, Jennifer Feathery, Shan Etta Pittman, Jennifer Friend, Laura Smith, David Ballard, Mary Valentine, Jerry Snow, Katrina Unstill, Sharing Clark, Gina Co field.

**NON-CERTIFIED**: Sara Myrick.

**TEACHER SUBSTITUTES**: Reba L. Battle, Debbie Saunders, Deborah T. Williams.

**ELIGIBLE TO RETURN TO WORK**: Janet Smith, Elizabeth Alston, Melody Hunter, Doris Vaster, Sandra Pittman, Ivan Walton, Bernadine Pittman, Brenda Falcon.

**RESIGNATIONS**: Jessica Norwood, Suzanne Ferguson, Marjorie Barber, Janice Miller, Gregory Jones, Myrna Goldberg, Angela E. Mallory, Sonya P. Pierce, Steven McCalmrock, Reatha Bryant, Geraldine Middleton.

**RETIREMENTS**: Clifton T. Allen

**TRANSFERS**: Duriel Smith, Victor Garner, Linda Hedgepeth, Annie Williams, Matthew Robinson, Antionette Whitaker, Willie M. Hewlin, Margaret Dancy, Gloria Brinkley, Dorothy Brown, Mary McDaniel, Phyllis Evans, Charles Debrow, David Williams, Mary G. Williams, Ethel Brinkley, Wayne Oatis, Phyllis Sanders, Angela Mallory, Diane Powell, Linda Hilliard, Margaret Batts, Jeanetta Hockaday, Katrina Baker.

**SUPERINTENDENT COMMENTS**:

- Tomorrow is the first day back for staff. Teachers are excited. Keep the students motivated.

**BOARD COMMENTS**:

- Tyrone Williams - School is getting ready to start. It is that time of year. No one has had a lot of rest.



- Dr. Donna Hunter - I would like to see at our next board meeting the status of our SACS Accreditation. The board needs to see a breakdown of the savings from the closing of the three schools and the cutting of the staff. I concur with Mrs. Hawkins that DPI needs to share with us what they are doing to get our test scores up. Maybe if Dr. Ashley can pull this together for the next board meeting. On July 31, 2009 there was a board meeting to discuss mediation (litigation), Mrs. Hawkins and myself were asked to leave the meeting. When I checked I found out this was not legal. It is only legal when there is a conflict. Mrs. Hawkins and I did not have a conflict, we did not agree with the decision of the other board members. I was also told that the Board Chair does not have the authority to exclude any board member from a meeting. Madam Chair, I would like a copy of the minutes of the meeting Mrs. Hawkins and I were asked to leave. Mrs. Hardy replied, OK. School opens on the 25<sup>th</sup> and they are going to model what they see. We've got to be their support system. Make them read to you. I'm here at your disposal. I don't just serve on the board, I'm here for you.
- Mr. Michael Hawkins - I concur with Mrs. Hawkins. We need to see what we can do for our teachers. They don't receive any bonus/incentives. I concur with Judge Manning, "It's all about the children" and that's what we should be focused on.
- Mrs. Faye Young - We have been in training for the last three weeks. I was surprised to see: Dr. William Harrison, Dr. Pat Ashley, Dr. June Atkinson, Governor Perdue, Senator Jones and Rep. Angela Bryant. I also attended the first day of Teacher Training. This is my final year on this board. I've heard numerous times that you will not support me again. I ran for the betterment of each and every child in this district. I challenge some of you parents to run and come up here and do what we do and be there not just for the students in your community, but for every boy and girl in this district. My vote was made for every boy and girl not just for McIver, Eastman, or Brawley. I will continue to make what I think is the best decision for all boys and girls. I've been an educator for the last 25 years. I will not be intimidated or slow down the process by letting people dictate the decisions I make.
- Mrs. Carolyn Hawkins - I am looking forward to school opening tomorrow. We need to excite our teachers as well as principals. I wish we could find some monies to offer

incentives to our teachers too. It was reported in the minutes that I would like updates from DPI. Not just DPI, instructional coaches, grants, etc. I want to add, because there was a testing irregularity in at least one of our schools, how can our scores be valid?

- Mrs. Gladys Walden - Thanked the participants this evening for attending.
- Mrs. Debbie Hardy - We are in a partnership with the Department of Public Instruction. I've heard a lot of positive feedback. I know it is going to make a difference with the boys and girls of Halifax County. All we are asking is let us work together for the boys and girls.

I would like to encourage participation in the HCSEF CARE SHARE. The HCSEF CARE SHARE Payroll/Contribution forms are being distributed today.

I'd like to recognize Ms. Katrina Evans with the MATCH Program. It would be wonderful if everyone could contribute and be a mentor to a mentee.

I am providing you the 2009-2010 List of Board Committees.

Shared a copy of the letter mailed to Mr. Gene Minton, Chairman of the County Commissioners.

Read letter of resignation from Superintendent, Geraldine Middleton effective September 18, 2009.

Mr. Williams moved to accept Superintendents resignation and request of waiver. Mrs. Young moved in second. Motion carried.

Mrs. Hardy shared the following statement accepting Ms. Middleton's resignation.

**The Halifax County Board of Education received and accepted a letter of resignation from Superintendent Geraldine Middleton. We feel fortunate to be in a partnership with the Department of Public Instruction as well as our Central Team to continue our focus on student achievement. This board is committed to the Master Plan that has been mandated to achieve academic excellence for our children entrusted to "The New" Halifax County School System. Change is here and we stand together as a team ready to run the race that is before us. The Halifax County Board of Education asks each and everyone in whatever capacity to help us meet this monumental challenge. The Halifax County Board of Education believes with all parties working smart together, we will be successful.**

Ms. Middleton shared a statement for those in the community.

**It is both with resolve and anticipation that I submit my resignation effective September 18, 2009. I have accepted an opportunity to further my current career goals and achieve growth within a new adventure.**

**Two years ago, with a vision, a dream, and mountains of faith, I accepted the job as superintendent of Halifax County Schools. In this capacity, I served the children and the community tirelessly. I was vigilant in my attempts to raise test scores, create positive learning environments, implement new programs and create the financial stability of the district.**

**Many times I was faced with difficult decisions and had to perform what seemed, the impossible. Difficult decisions are not always popular; however, if they are made in the best interest of children, they become challenges you can not, should not and must not ignore.**

**I will remain committed to cost effectiveness, innovative programs geared to 21<sup>st</sup> century learning, research-based professional growth and development – all the while dedicated to helping children overcome obstacles and reaching higher levels of achievement. In order to grow, we will always have to “navigate the winds of change.”**

**To the children who attend Halifax County Schools, I continue to wish that you will grow educationally and always strive to be excellent in all your endeavors. You are the future leaders. As you “navigate the winds of change,” keep in mind that if you are prepared intellectually, there is no limit on what you can be.**

**To the parents of the children who attend Halifax County Schools, I challenge you to ensure that your children receive a quality education daily. By attending parent-teacher conferences, PTA meetings, volunteering and by being an active participant in the educational process, you can help to facilitate a new vision and a bright future for your child.**

**Underscored in this challenge is that you not just become active in times of crisis incited by politicians, instead, demonstrate responsible actions throughout your child’s school years.**

**To the teachers, I implore you to take advantage of the challenge to educate all children and to fully embrace change because it is incapable of being avoided. Always bring new vitality to the classroom and fresh approaches to teaching. Our children must never be the losers in an educational decision, especially if those decisions benefit someone’s political career and personal ambition.**

**To the community, I encourage you to embrace the necessary changes related to declining enrollment, budget cuts, and low student achievement as an opportunity to use wisdom versus status quo, excellence versus mediocrity, strength and fortification versus what is politically expedient for someone else.**

**It has been my genuine pleasure to work for Halifax County Schools. I have enjoyed working with the fine staff of professional colleagues and will miss my association with them. I will keep Halifax County Schools in my prayers.**

Mrs. Walden as a point of personal privilege I would like to let Ms. Middleton know how much we appreciate what she has done for all of us.

Mr. Hawkins thank you for the professional way you stepped into Halifax County. We were \$1.2 million in debt and we are now working on our second year with a balanced budget.

Mr. Williams certainly wish you the best on your professional journey. We’ve had some very pleasant moments and some very unpleasant. I appreciate what you brought, what you attempted to bring and what you are leaving.

Mrs. Young indicated that two years ago, I was one of the two people who did not vote for you. I’ve come to see your vision; I regret that you will not be here to see the light at the end of the tunnel. Academically we are headed in the right direction. I’ve enjoyed getting to know you.

Mrs. Walden moved to adjourn at 10:40 p.m. Mr. Williams moved in second. Motion carried.

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Board Chair

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Secretary

September 8, 2009