

HICKORY PUBLIC SCHOOLS

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE HICKORY BOARD OF EDUCATION

Monday, November 4, 2013

The Board of Education of the Hickory City Administrative School Unit met on Monday, November 4, 2013, beginning at 5:30 p.m. in the Board Room of the Administrative Services Building. Members present included: Chairperson Angela Beaver Simmons; Vice Chair Reginald Hamilton; Board members Charlotte Williams, Sallie Johnson, Margaret Pope, Rev. T. Anthony Spearman and Amy Monroe.

Also present were Board Attorney Jeff Mackie; Dr. Walter Hart, Superintendent; Dr. Denise Patterson, Chief Academic Officer; Shawn Clemons, Director of Accountability; Adam Huckabee, Director of Facilities; Timothy Sims, Director of Federal Programs; Amanda Byrd, Director of Exceptional Children's Programs; Jeff Tice, Director of Technology; Beverly Snowden, Public Information Officer; Angela Simmons, Director of Student Services; Adam Steele, Finance Officer; Members of the Hickory Public Schools PTA Council; Dr. Vanessa Howerton and Richard Holmes from Grandview Middle School; Ryan McCreary, Principal, Oakwood Elementary School; Karyn Youssy, Catawba County Emergency Management; and Mary Duquette, Clerk to the Board.

Chairperson Beaver Simmons called the meeting to order at 5:30 p.m.

The first item of business to come before the meeting was an update on the incident that occurred at Hickory Career & Arts Magnet High School the previous week. Several students and the dance instructor at the school demonstrated symptoms of nausea and dizziness and were transported to local hospitals to be evaluated. Dr. Hart thanked HCAM Principal, Teresa Carroll, and administrators from the central office for their assistance during this event. He further thanked the Hickory fire and police departments for their assistance and leadership. In addition to these individuals, Dr. Hart thanked Ms. Karyn Youssy, Coordinator for Catawba County Emergency Management, for her assistance and thanked Ms. Youssy for being present at the meeting in order to provide the Board with an update on the situation.

Ms. Youssy thanked Dr. Hart for inviting her to the meeting. She stated that, on a positive note, no one has had a prolonged effect from the events of last Tuesday when 15 individuals were transported to area hospitals with symptoms as described by Dr. Hart (weakness, dizziness, nausea, vomiting). She reported that the fire department was on the scene to be sure nothing had to be handled immediately. Meters from environmental groups were brought in to test for airborne contaminants but those tests proved to be negative. These same groups swabbed areas to test for pesticides and/or toxic substances and those tests were also negative. Oxygen levels were checked to determine if the environment might be explosive. Four air samples were taken from four different locations in the building and those also came back negative.

Mr. Adam Huckabee, Director of Facilities, stated that OSHA conducted tests of the site and found no evidence of contaminants. They also reviewed the reports received from other agencies. Ms. Youssy stated that everyone who was transported to the hospitals went home within a short

period of time of arriving after being checked out in the ER. Some students reported headaches for a couple of days and a couple of students did not come to the school the next day. However, at this time, Ms. Youssy stated that the facility has been thoroughly evaluated in terms of safety and has been cleared for use by the school. She encouraged Dr. Hart to contact her with any additional questions or concerns.

Dr. Hart thanked Ms. Youssy for her evaluation of the events of the day and thanked her for taking time for her schedule to be at this meeting of the Board.

The next item of business to come before the meeting was an update on the construction of the new elementary school from Mr. Roger Holland of Holland & Hamrick Architects. Mr. Holland reported that the project is 50% complete and should be “under roof” by the end of the month which will allow the subcontractors to work during the cold winter days. He reported that the project is on schedule and will be ready to open in August 2014. Mr. Holland thanked Dr. Hart for his leadership and Adam Huckabee for his front end planning on this project. He stated that the current success of the project could not have been possible without the involvement of everyone working to the common goal.

The next item of business to come before the meeting was update from Adam Huckabee on Security Updates across the district. Mr. Huckabee reported that cameras have been installed at all schools. The entrances to Hickory High and HCAM have been renovated to provide for secure access by all visitors. Mr. Huckabee reported that he has applied for a grant to cover the cost of installing panic alarms at all facilities. In addition to these measures, Mr. Huckabee reported that he is currently working on a project to rekey all facilities across the district. Additional security measure projects include card access for exterior doors for all facilities. Mr. Huckabee stated that this will be on the district’s capital project request to the Commissioners for next school year.

The next item of business to come before the meeting was an update from Shawn Clemons, Director of Accountability, on the 2012-2013 Accountability Report – District Data. Ms. Clemons reported that a new state accountability model became effective during the 2012-2013 school year and reviewed components of the new model with the Board. They included: performance composite; math course rigor; ACT; ACT WorkKeys; and graduation rate. Ms. Clemons stated that the State Board of Education will act to formally adopt test data from last year’s tests and stated that across North Carolina less than 50% of students will be labeled proficient, although many students will show growth in terms of their performance.

Ms. Clemons reported that the district’s performance composite, which is the percent of proficient scores on all end of grade and end of course assessments for the 2012-2013 school year, at 42.8%. Ms. Clemons stated that this percentage is lower than normal and does not reveal the full picture of how students performed in various subgroups and the growth exhibited on the various assessments. She reviewed performance data and growth in the following areas: reading and math, grades 3-8; science, grades 5 and 8; reading and math, grade 10; and science, grade 11. She further reviewed participation indicators for EOCs and math rigor for students in the Future Ready Core (FRC) Course of Study.

The next item of business to come before the meeting was the introduction of members of the PTA Council which includes the president or co-presidents of each school's PTA. Each PTA Council member shared information with the Board surrounding fund raising efforts being conducted at their schools, as well as any special events that are scheduled. Board members thanked the members of the PTA Council for being at the meeting and for all they do for the students of the Hickory Public Schools.

The next item of business to come before the meeting was information shared by Dr. Hart relating to the use of an automated system to call and secure substitute teachers. The automated system would have the ability to track the number of hours a substitute teacher works in any given week to maintain their status of part-time temporary employment. In addition, the system would alleviate the need for staff at each school to spend time on this effort. Dr. Hart indicated that various vendors are being considered and that he anticipated presenting a contract to the Board for consideration in the near future.

The next item of business to come before the meeting was information pertaining to teacher performance pay and teacher contracts. Dr. Hart advised the Board that new legislation will require districts to offer four year contracts to 25% of its teachers beginning with the 2014-2015 school year. Teachers who accept the contract would also receive a \$500.00 salary increase in each of the four years. In exchange, teachers would surrender tenure. Career status will no longer be awarded and will be completely relinquished in 2018. Dr. Hart stated that the legislation does not provide a process for identifying the 25% of teacher to whom a contract would be offered. He advised the Board that he has met with the district's local NCAE representatives, principals, and a task force of School Improvement Team chairs. Through conversation with these stakeholders, Dr. Hart stated that a plan for the district will be developed and it will be shared with the Board for approval prior to moving forward with the selection process.

The next item of business to come before the meeting was a field trip request from Grandview Middle School for the band to perform in Festival Disney, an adjudicated music festival at Walt Disney World in Orlando, Florida, in March of 2015. Grandview Principal Dr. Vanessa Howerton and band director Richard Holmes were present to address any questions or concerns from the Board. Dr. Howerton stated that arranging the trip a year in advance provides for many fund raising opportunities and assured the Board that no child who has the opportunity to participate in this field trip would be denied due to the inability to pay. Dr. Hart advised the Board that this would be an item for approval at the Board's next meeting.

Revisions to Board policies IHAA (*End-of-Grade/End-of-Course Retests*) and IHE (*Promotion and Retention of Students*) were presented as an information item to the Board. Dr. Hart stated that the revisions are in compliance with policy and legislative changes and would be presented for first reading to the Board at its next meeting.

Dr. Hart presented two field trip requests for approval by the Board. The first included two Hickory High School students who were selected to participate in the North Carolina Honors Chorus on November 9 and 10 in Winston-Salem. The second was the Grandview Middle School band performing in the Concert Band Festival of Music on Saturday, April 12, at Carowinds.

Upon motion made by Ms. Johnson and seconded by Ms. Williams, the Board voted 7-0 to approve the field trips requests as presented.

Dr. Hart reminded the Board that, at is October 28 meeting, School Improvement Plans from each elementary school were presented. Dr. Hart stated that he was requesting approval by the Board of those plans which align to the district's Strategic Plan.

Upon motion made by Ms. Pope, and seconded by Ms. Monroe, the Board voted 7-0 to approve the School Improvement Plans of Jenkins, Longview, Oakwood, Southwest and Viewmont Elementary Schools as presented.

A Walk/Run 5K fund raiser from the Hickory High Scholastic Cup Club was presented for approval by the Board to raise funds for transportation and materials for the club.

Upon motion made by Ms. Monroe and seconded by Ms. Williams, the Board voted 7-0 to approve the fund raising request as presented.

Mr. Hamilton made a motion that the Board of Education go into closed session for the following reason: to consider candidates recommended for employment by the administration as provided for in G.S. 143.318.11 and in accordance with the North Carolina Personnel Act. The motion was seconded by Ms. Williams and the Board's vote was 7-0.

Upon return to open session, Ms. Monroe made a motion that the Board approve Personnel List. No. 9. The motion was seconded by Ms. Johnson and the Board's vote was 7-0.

There being no further business to come before the meeting, upon motion made by Ms. Pope and seconded by Mr. Hamilton, the Board voted 7-0 to adjourn.

The meeting adjourned at 7:30 p.m.

Angela Beaver Simmons, Chair

Reginald Hamilton, Vice Chair

Sallie Johnson

T. Anthony Spearman

Walter H. Hart, Secretary

Charlotte Williams

Margaret Pope

Amy Monroe