

HICKORY PUBLIC SCHOOLS

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE HICKORY BOARD OF EDUCATION

Monday, October 14, 2013

The Board of Education of the Hickory City Administrative School Unit met on Monday, October 14, 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; Michael Wike of the account firm of Anderson Smith & Wike, PLLC; middle and high school principals and the chair of their School Improvement Team; 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 a review of the 2012-2013 audit of the financial statements of the Hickory City Board of Education. Finance Officer Adam Steele introduced Mr. Michael Wike of Anderson, Smith & Wike, PLLC who was present to share with the Board the results of the recent audit.

Mr. Wike reported that during the course of the audit no material adjustments were found. He thanked the staff for its cooperation in providing access to individuals and documents necessary for review by the audit team. Mr. Wike then highlighted information from the Financial Statements, the Compliance Report, and the Statement of Cash Receipts and Disbursements of the individual schools. He reported one finding that involved the Child Nutrition program's cash balance being in excess of the amount allowed by Federal guidelines but further reported that the Child Nutrition program will implement a plan to spend down the excess cash. Two internal control matters were mentioned as constructive suggestions for improvement: one drivers' education payment had no evidence of approval for payment; and during the testing of signed concussion awareness forms at the high school, it was noted that 13 out of 41 varsity football players did not have a form on file signed by both the student and parent.

Mr. Wike reported a clean audit report to the Board and encouraged members to review the documents and contact him with any questions. Chairperson Beaver Simmons thanked Mr. Wike for his presentation.

The next item of business to come before the meeting was a presentation from Ms. Shawn Clemons, Director of Accountability, on SAT (Scholastic Assessment Test) and ACT (American College Testing) data for the graduation class of 2013. Ms. Clemons first reported on the SAT

scores stating that, although performance has declined slightly, the district ranks above state and national performance levels. With regard to the ACT, Ms. Clemons advised the Board that North Carolina is one of 20 states that administer this test state wide to all 11th grade students with no charge to the students. The ACT benchmarks are predictors of how students will perform at the college level and students are able to use their ACT test scores as their college entrance exam. Even with more students participating in the ACT, Ms. Clemons stated that the district remains above the state's benchmark of 17.

Ms. Angela K. Simmons, Director of Students Services, reported to the Board that October is Bullying Prevention Month. She advised the Board that both Jenkins Elementary and Grandview Middle will be conducting their Olweus Program kick off this month and invited the Board to attend the programs if their schedules allow. Ms. Simmons further reported to the Board on the new online reporting tool that is available to students to report bullying incidents. After the student makes a report, the principal will receive an email regarding the incident, can conduct an investigation and document their findings on the website where the report was made. Ms. Simmons reported that the website is available 24/7 and stated if there is a serious report someone from the website will immediately contact her so that she can immediately contact the principal.

Ms. Simmons reported that posters with information about this new online reporting tool have been placed in schools, at the YMCA and other places in the Hickory community in order to make this tool available to all students. She indicated that Ms. Snowden will be working to get the word out through the media and that schools will notify parents through the district call system of this new online reporting tool.

The next item of business to come before the meeting was a discussion of a field trip request from the Beta Club at Northview Middle School to go to Washington, D.C. in March. Mrs. Dischiavi stated that the trip would include a day out of school for the students; however, the field trip is aligned with the social studies curriculum for middle schools. She reported that the ratio of chaperones to students at this time is 1:11 and that all chaperones are members of the Northview staff. Scholarships would be provided to students who may be unable to afford the cost of the trip. There being no questions from the Board, Dr. Hart advised the Board that this would be presented for official approval at its October 28 meeting.

The next item of discussion to come before the meeting included presentations of School Improvement Plans from the principals and school improvement team chairs from Northview Middle School, Grandview Middle School, Hickory High School, and Hickory Career & Arts Magnet High School. Each school presented accomplishments from the 2012-2013 school year and provided the Board with its goals for the 2013-2014 school year. A copy of each school's presentation is attached for reference. Chairperson Beaver Simmons thanked those who presented for taking time to be at the meeting.

The next item of discussion to come before the meeting was information shared by Dr. Hart on the costs associated with the use of school facilities by outside organizations. Dr. Hart asked the Board to consider adopting a revised fee schedule for non-profit agencies who use our facilities stating that the reduced fees would be more affordable for some of the non-profit agencies and it

would be a show of partnership from Hickory Public Schools. He stated that official approval by the Board would be requested at the Board's October 28 action meeting.

Dr. Hart shared a resolution that would request the North Carolina state legislators to submit legislation that would enable Hickory City Schools to exercise a pilot program that would require all students in the Hickory schools to attend school until they are graduated from high school or the completion of the school year of their 18th birthday. To accomplish the planning involved in implementing this program, the request included a July 1, 2014 effective date. Dr. Hart asked Board members to review the resolution and contact him with any questions or concerns. He further stated that it would be an item for action on the October 28 Board meeting agenda.

Dr. Hart shared the results of a non-binding survey of the current staff and parents at Longview Elementary School asking them to select their first, second and third choice for the name of the new elementary school. The three names that were provided came as a result of a special called meeting of the Board. The names included Marie G. Poston, West Park, and Westview. The results of the survey showed West Park and Westview as close first choices. Dr. Hart reminded the Board that the ultimate decision is the Board's decision. Board members questioned why the name Longview was not part of the survey. Dr. Hart reminded the Board that there were three names recommended by various individuals and groups and those were the names that were included in the survey. Board members discussed the naming of the new elementary school and requested that they be provided with geographical boundaries of the school district and the boundaries of the neighborhood associations that made recommendations to the Board. Dr. Hart reminded the Board that Mr. Huckabee would need the Board to make a decision at its October 28 meeting so that he can work with architects and others in the building process.

Dr. Hart advised the Board that Mr. Sims is working with Catawba County Schools and Newton-Conover City Schools to consider options for next year's calendar. Dr. Hart stated that the current calendar law states that the district must have 185 days or 1025 instructional hours. The current calendar includes the 185 days; however, after a poll of districts in the region, it was determined that the majority of the districts stayed with the 180 days and met the 1025 instructional hours. Dr. Hart stated that the district may be considering a change to 180 days as it has become apparent that there needs to be time for teachers to have planning, meet with parents and have professional development. Dr. Hart stated that a draft calendar would be shared with staff for input and a recommendation would be presented to the Board at a future meeting.

Chairperson Beaver Simmons stated that the Board would like to offer Dr. Hart an extension to his contract for four years. She stated that the contract has been reviewed by Mr. Mackie and that it would be on the agenda for approval and public comment at the next meeting.

Dr. Hart stated that the renewal of Mr. Mackie's contract will be on the agenda for approval at the next meeting and stated that the district benefits from his advice and wisdom and was pleased that Mr. Mackie has agreed to continue serving the Board in this capacity. The contract term is for two years – January 1, 2014 through December 31, 2015. Dr. Hart advised the Board that this contract will be presented for approval at the Board's October 28 meeting.

Dr. Hart shared six policies with the Board. Four related to technology and are new and recommended policies from the North Carolina School Boards Association. One policy related to extracurricular activities and addressed clubs that are curriculum related and school sponsored and clubs that are student lead and non-curriculum related. The last policy was a recommended policy from NCSBA relating to the evaluation of the superintendent. Dr. Hart encouraged Board members to review the policies and stated that they would be presented for first reading at the next meeting.

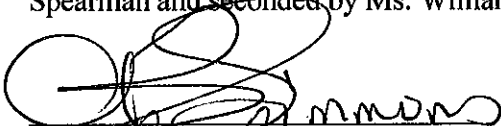
Ms. Johnson made a motion that the Board of Education go into closed session for the following reason: to consider candidates recommended for employment by the administration as provided for in G.S. 143.318.11 and in accordance with the North Carolina Personnel Act. The motion was seconded by Ms. Williams and the Board's vote was 6-0. (Mr. Hamilton excused himself from the meeting just prior to going into closed session.)


Upon return to open session, Rev. Spearman made a motion that the Board approve Personnel List No. 7. The motion was seconded by Ms. Monroe and the Board's vote was 6-0.

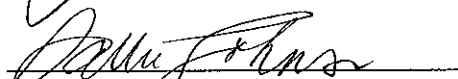
Dr. Hart stated that although test scores from last year have not yet been released he wanted the Board to be prepared for lower proficiency scores that will result across the state of North Carolina.

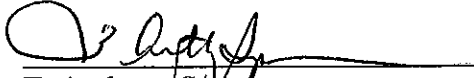
Chairperson Beaver Simmons suggested postponing the ribbon cutting ceremony for the newly renovated Hickory High media center scheduled for tomorrow night. Ms. Neal Orgain, who was instrumental in this project, will be unable to attend due to death in the family. Ms. Beaver Simmons stated that she would contact Dr. Stalnaker about rescheduling this event.

There being no further business to come before the meeting, upon motion made by Rev. Spearman and seconded by Ms. Williams, the Board voted 6-0 to adjourn.

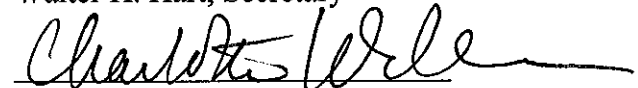

Angela Beaver Simmons, Chair

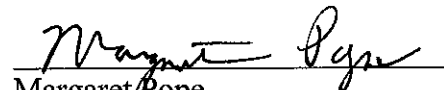

Reginald Hamilton, Vice Chair

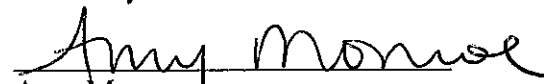

Sallie Johnson


T. Anthony Spearman


Walter H. Hart, Secretary


Charlotte Williams


Margaret Pope


Amy Monroe