

HICKORY PUBLIC SCHOOLS

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE HICKORY BOARD OF EDUCATION

Monday, August 12, 2013

The Board of Education of the Hickory City Administrative School Unit met on Monday, August 12, 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; Principals Dr. Ann Stalnaker (Hickory High), John Black (Jenkins), Judy Jolly (Longview), Pam Helms (Oakwood), Jenny White (Southwest) and Jeff Hodakowski (Viewmont); Instructional Coaches Jennifer Griffin and Bobbi Siefert; Hickory High Chorus teacher Donna Wiles; 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 presentation from Ms. Shawn Clemons, Director of Accountability, about the 2013 Hickory Public Schools Cohort Graduation Rate. Ms. Clemons stated that one of the goals of the district's Strategic Plan is to graduate students on time and for them to be career or college ready. She indicated that there is still work to do but the district is making progress stating that the district has seen a 12% increase to 82.8%. Ms. Clemons presented graduation rates for various subgroups and reported that graduation gaps have decreased among subgroups including white and black students, white and Hispanic students, all students and economically disadvantaged students and all students and students with disabilities. She stated that the next goal for Hickory is a four year cohort graduation rate of greater than 90% for all subgroups of students. Ms. Clemons provided the Board with a comparison of the four year cohort graduation rate of area districts stating that Hickory Public Schools is making progress in the right direction with a goal to be the best in the county.

A copy of Ms. Clemons presentation is attached for reference.

The next item of business to come before the meeting was a review of a program that would raise the compulsory attendance age. Dr. Hart provided the Board with a copy of the legislation that relates to both Hickory Public Schools and the Newton-Conover City Schools having the option and opportunity to raise the compulsory attendance age. He reminded the Board that it passed a resolution in support of such a program. Dr. Hart advised the Board that there is no funding associated with this legislation; however, if implemented, there may be grant opportunities

available. He stated that at a future meeting a proposal would be presented to the Board highlighting specific plans for implementation and a request for formal approval by the Board.

The next item of business to come before the meeting was a request from Ms. Donna Wiles, Chorus teacher at Hickory High, that the Board give consideration to a field trip request for her students to attend the Spring 2014 Heritage Festival National Adjudication Festival in New York City, May 1-4, 2014. The cost of the trip is \$740 and Ms. Wiles indicated that there are scholarship opportunities available for any student who cannot afford to go. Board members thanked Ms. Wiles for presenting this information to the Board and indicated that formal action by the Board would be made at its next action meeting on August 26.

Mr. Adam Huckabee, Director of Facilities, reported to the Board a change order for the renovation project at the Hickory High media center. He reported on a list of items that reflected a deduction which was due to the item either coming in under budget or being deleted from the project. The total change order reflected a reduction to the budget of \$2,483.00.

Mr. Huckabee further reported to the Board that four trees on the bus parking lot side of Jenkins Elementary School will have to be removed due to the possibility of the roots causing structural damage to the building.

The next item of business to come before the meeting was a discussion of the parking and traffic flow at Hickory High School. Dr. Ann Stalnaker shared safety concerns with the Board that included student crossing 3rd Street, dangerous automobile movement on 3rd Street, parking on 3rd Street, and students parking in the lots at Lowe's Foods and Viewmont Baptist Church. Dr. Stalnaker stated that no student who drives to school will be allowed to park in the Lowe's or Viewmont Baptist Church's parking lot. Parking in these lots will result in school discipline. She further stated that three school staff members along with the School Resource Officer will be present along 3rd Street and at the two off campus parking lots each morning to redirect students and there will be the addition of a crossing guide. Dr. Stalnaker indicated that she will meet with her leadership team in late September to study the impact of these changes.

Dr. Hart thanked Dr. Stalnaker and her staff for being proactive in this endeavor to increase safety for students on Hickory High.

The next item of business to come before the meeting was a review of Literacy First and the results of a recent outside analysis of the program. Dr. Patterson acknowledged members of the curriculum department. She reviewed teacher feedback as well as recommendations for improvement as a result of the audit. Eighty-nine percent of teachers interviewed shared that they were better reading teachers as a result of Literacy First and that they implemented Literacy First strategies routinely. Recommendations from the audit included the following: develop a training program for new teachers; retain walkthroughs; revisit job expectations of instructional coaches; monitor the number of assessments in use; address flexibility in the Literacy First schedule; and enhance services to advanced learners through the Literacy First framework.

Dr. Patterson stated that every teacher involved with Literacy First participated in the survey and had the opportunity to voice their opinions, good or bad. The question of substitute teachers

being trained in Literacy First was raised and Dr. Patterson assured the Board that on days when there are substitute teachers, coaches and principals will have a presence in those classrooms. Board members thanked Dr. Patterson for the report.

The next item of business to come before the meeting was a report on a new state initiative for 3rd grade students, Read to Achieve. The goal of the State is to ensure that every student read at or above grade level by the end of the 3rd grade. Third grade students not performing at grade level at the end of the 2013-2014 school year will be retained and provided with summer reading camps that last for 6-8 weeks, 4-5 days a week with at least 3 hours of instruction per day. Parents will make the final decision regarding attendance. These students will be placed in a transitional 3rd/4th grade class for the 2014-2015 school year and will retake the 3rd grade test for mid-year promotion to 4th grade in October 2014. There are good cause exemptions from this initiative that include the following: LEP students with less than 2 years of instruction in ESL; students with disabilities with IEPs that specify alternative assessments; students who demonstrate reading proficiency appropriate for 3rd grade on an alternative assessment; students who demonstrate reading proficiency through a student reading portfolio; and students who have received reading intervention and previously been retained more than once in prior grades. The principal may make a recommendation for a good cause exemption to the superintendent who will then make the final decision.

The next item of business to come before the meeting was a review of the Beginning Teacher Plan for the Hickory Public Schools. The plan provides a comprehensive program supporting first, second and third year teachers that outlines district and state expectations for educators and provides feedback for teachers beginning their practice. Dr. Hart stated that the plan will be presented to the Board for formal approval at its next meeting on August 26. In the meantime, he encouraged Board members to contact Dr. Patterson with any questions they may have.

Ms. Amanda Byrd, Director of Exceptional Children's Programs, presented for information to the Board a list of contracts for services for the 2013-2014 school year. Ms. Byrd indicated that the need for these services is low in nature and hiring a full time person would not be cost effective. She stated that the contracts would be presented for formal approval by the Board at its next meeting.

Dr. Hart presented for information two contracts with I-Care Head Start for programs at Jenkins and Southwest elementary schools. He stated that the cost of the programs to the Hickory Schools comes in the form of providing the facility. The third party provider is responsible for the cost of operating the program. He stated that the programs were operational in our district in the previous school year with success and that these new contracts would be presented for approval by the Board at its next meeting.

Dr. Hart advised the Board that Catawba Valley Community College (CVCC) is requesting that the Board consider the reappointment of Clement Geitner as its representative to the CVCC Board of Trustees. Dr. Hart provided the Board with information pertaining to Mr. Geitner and stated that if there was no objection by the Board this would be an item on the Board's agenda on August 26 for formal action.

Dr. Hart provided the Board with a list of individuals serving on the Board for the Hickory Public Schools Education Foundation. He stated that Articles of Incorporation have been filed and filing for 501(c)(3) status is underway. The Foundation will provide support for the district and Dr. Hart stated that at a future meeting of the Board a request will be made to support a capital campaign. Dr. Hart stated that the Bylaws state that the Superintendent and the Board Chair or Designee shall serve as ex-Officio members.

Mr. Adam Steele, Finance Officer, provided the Board with a budget update for the 2013-2014 school year. Highlights of his presentation included the following:

- No salary increases for state employees
- Five bonus days to be used by June 30, 2014
- No salary increases for advanced degrees earned after April 2014
- The elimination of career status
- Increases in retirement and hospitalization costs
- 50% cut in instructional material supply dollars
- 76% cut in textbook dollars
- 21% cut in dollars for teacher assistants (estimated loss of 12 positions for Hickory)
- 3.5% cut to LEP programs
- Reduction in funding for driver education programs, children with special needs and at-risk student/alternative schools

Dr. Hart shared a graph with the Board that reflected a decrease in per pupil appropriations from the 2008-09 school year (\$5,779) to the 2013-14 school year (\$5,426). He assured the Board that teachers and staff will do everything they can to make sure students have a good experience and are successful despite the reduction in funding for public education.

Dr. Hart reported that the NCSBA annual district meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, September 25 and will be held at Ashe County High School. He encouraged Board members to contact Ms. Duquette if they are interested in attending.

Dr. Hart recommended that the Board consider the cancellation of its November 18 meeting based on the fact that it is scheduled at the same time of the NCSBA Annual Conference in Greensboro. After some discussion among the Board, there was consensus to cancel the November 18 meeting as presented.

Mr. Huckabee stated that renovations to the entrances for the two high schools are part of the 2013-2014 capital projects. Mr. Huckabee requested that the Board award Matthews Construction Co. the project of security improvements at Hickory High School and Hickory Career & Arts Magnet High School. Matthews Construction submitted the low bid of \$111,000 for the project.

Upon motion made by Ms. Pope and seconded by Mr. Hamilton, the Board vote 7-0 to award the project of security improvements at Hickory High School and Hickory Career & Arts Magnet High School to Matthews Construction Co. 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, Chairperson Beaver Simmons reviewed calendar reminders with the Board which included:

- August 21, 8:00 a.m., Opening Convocation, P.E. Monroe Auditorium
- August 23, Hickory High's first home football game
- August 26, first day of school for students
- August 26, 7:00 p.m., Board meeting at City Hall

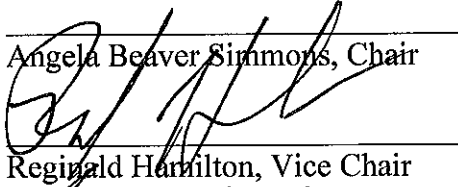
Chairperson Beaver Simmons suggested the Board give consideration to a date in February for its retreat, that consideration be given to the Board training provided by NCSBA and requested that this be a topic of conversation at the Board's next work session.

Dr. Hart reported that the start time for students attending HCAM will be changed from 8:00 a.m. to 8:30 a.m. in order to avoid extremely early morning bus routes.

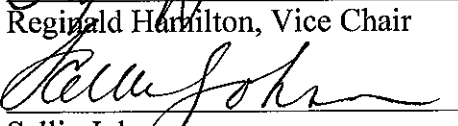
Dr. Hart shared with the Board an article that highlighted excerpts from a speech made by Diane Ravitch, former assistant secretary of education in President George H.W. Bush's administration, at UNC Charlotte on what works and what doesn't in education.

Ms. Johnson made a motion that the Board approve Personnel List No. 3. The motion was seconded by Mr. Hamilton and the Board's vote was 7-0.

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




Angela Beaver Simmons, Chair



Reginald Hamilton, Vice Chair



Sallie Johnson



T. Anthony Spearman



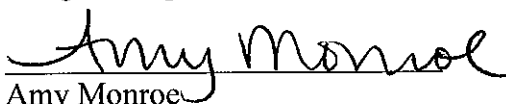
Walter H. Hart, Secretary



Charlotte Williams



Margaret Pope



Amy Monroe