

THE BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS OF THE COUNTY OF CRAVEN RECONVENED ITS RECESSED REGULAR SESSION OF MARCH 17, 2008 ON MARCH 17, 2008 AT 1:00 P.M. IN THE COMMISSIONERS' ROOM OF THE CRAVEN COUNTY ADMINISTRATION BUILDING, 406 CRAVEN STREET, NEW BERN, NORTH CAROLINA. THE COMMISSIONERS MET IN JOINT SESSION WITH THE BOARD OF EDUCATION.

MEMBERS PRESENT:

Chairman Jason R. Jones
Vice Chairman Theron McCabe
Commissioner Lee Kyle Allen
Commissioner Perry L. Morris
Commissioner Johnnie Sampson, Jr.
Commissioner M. Renée Sisk
Commissioner Steve Tyson

STAFF PRESENT:

Harold Blizzard, County Manager
Ray H. Moser, Assistant County Manager
Richard F. Hemphill, County Finance Officer
Gwendolyn M. Bryan, Clerk to the Board

BOARD OF EDUCATION MEMBERS PRESENT:

Carroll Ipock, Chairman
Francis Boomer
Becky Kafer
Beatrice Smith
Kim Smith
Linda Thomas
Rev. Joseph Walton

BOARD OF EDUCATION STAFF PRESENT:

William Rivenbark, Superintendent
Larry Moser
David Clifton
Gerald Johnson
Jeff Murphy
Becton Broughton
Jo Wheeler
Arnetta Davenport

Following an invocation by Rev. Walton, the Board of Education addressed concerns for discussion that were raised by the Board of Commissioners, as follows:

Plans for Countywide Redistricting

Mr. Ipock indicated that the Board of Education has no redistricting planned for the coming year. He stated that there would ultimately be some action needed, but not now. There was specific concern expressed for West Craven Middle School; however, Mr. Ipock stated that redistricting West Craven at this time would put it in the track for New Bern High School, which already has population concerns. He reported that a parent meeting is being scheduled at Havelock Middle School concerning redistricting.

Board of Education's Annual Cost for Baldrige

Jo Wheeler responded that \$35,250.00 was spent on information technology; \$100,363.00 on leadership, which involved conferences and workshops; \$15,428.00 was spent on safe schools; and \$286,859 spent on student achievement during the 2007-2008 school year; \$133,992.00 are federal funds on continuous improvement, which is a requirement of No Child Left Behind and of the State Board of Education and the Accrediting Association.

Plans to Light the Field at West Craven Middle School

There are no plans to light the field at this time. The Board of Education indicated that in the event the Commissioners should consider providing funds through the Parks and Recreation Department budget to provide lighting as has occurred in the past, the Board of Education would request that each of the middle schools be included in the plan.

Assignment of Air Conditioned Buses

The Commissioners raised concerns that the air conditioned buses are not assigned to the longest routes. Mr. Broughton, Director of Transportation, responded that he receives more requests and concerns relative to video cameras and push bottom door operation than lack of air conditioning. He provided the criteria used to assign air conditioned buses to bus routes, as follows:

- Assignment based on bus being removed from service-because of age or mileage (Note: specific school buses are replaced by NC DPI when bus has 200,000 miles or 20 years of service; therefore, when possible, the new bus is assigned to replace the bus being removed from active service.)
- Assignment of at least one air conditioned bus to every school
- Assignment based on length of route, either mileage or time
- Assignment based on physical requirements of a school's bus drivers (Note: generally this has to do with the height of the driver.)
- Assignment based on routing efficiency (seating capacity and bus route area)
- Assignment based on care of equipment (either driver and/or students)
- Temporary assignments of a/c equipped buses are based on school calendar

For the current year 57 of 150 school buses are equipped with air conditioning.

Improving Performance of Incoming Freshmen at West Craven High School

The Commissioners expressed concern that more than half of incoming freshmen score below a level 3 on the End of Grade Tests, and inquired what resources have been directed to addressing this issue. West Craven High School received \$13,359 in the fall to help remediate these students, and another \$5,000 in February. The school system funds a full time assistant to help with at risk students. The Board of Education also indicated that attempts have been made to secure retired personnel for tutoring.

Alternative Classrooms

The Commissioners inquired if there are alternative classrooms for all schools. The Board of Education responded as follows:

Alternative Classrooms/Alternative Learning Programs: Oaks Road, Roger Bell, Grover C. Fields, H.J. Mac Donald, Havelock Middle, Tucker Creek, West Craven Middle

In School Suspension: Bangert, Ben Quinn, Brinson, Graham Barden, Havelock Elementary, J.T. Barber, James Smith, Trent Park, Farm Life, Grover C. Fields, H. J. MacDonald, Havelock Middle, West Craven Middle

Need and Timetable for a New High School

The Board of Education responded that the new high school would be addressed as soon as possible, hopefully within five years. They indicated that the need is there now; however, there are issues in locating a site. The money that has been set aside is not adequate for acquiring a site and would only provide seed money for the site. There was discussion of the desirability of acquiring a site for a joint high school/middle school project, with the high school project first, followed by a middle school in approximately five years.

Plans for the Old Bridgeton Elementary School

The response was that there are no plans to utilize this facility at this time.

Admissions Policy for Athletic Events

Commissioners presented a inquiry on behalf of parents at Havelock High School concerning the rationale for admissions fees charged for children at athletic events. The Board of Education explained that Havelock High School currently does not charge admission for children under kindergarten age. The current admission for all athletic events was determined by the Coastal 3A/4A Conference.

Handling of Suspension at Havelock High School

Commissioner McCabe expressed concerns he has heard from parents complaining about inequitable handing of suspensions. He inquired how these situations are assessed. The Superintendent responded that Rev. Walton's district, which is District 5, has fewer incidents than others. He has worked with the school in trying to avoid these issues. Ms. Kim Smith stated that it would be more productive to channel these concerns through the appropriate Board of Education member, as opposed to through the Commissioners.

This concluded the discussion relative to concerns expressed by the Board of Commissioners.

Concerns for discussion that were submitted by the Board of Education were addressed.*Grover C. Fields Middle School Land Issue*

The Board of Education informed the Commissioners that the schools are now being billed a rental fee for the strip of land adjacent to the track at Grover C. Fields Middle School. Options being considered for restoring the matter were offering to purchase based on the appraised value of the land or offering a land swap for another parcel of equal appraised value; however, the land being considered for the swap is of greater actual value to the school system than indicated by the appraisal. The County is to seek a tax appraisal upon which and offer can be based, also explore splitting the area with the current owner to accommodate his and the Board of Educations' needs.

Impact of Medicaid Relief to the County on Capital Projects and Budget Needs

The Board of Education inquired of the impact that the Medicaid savings would have on other County projects. County Finance Officer, Rick Hemphill, responded that the net savings of \$500,000 is expected this year and next. There was discussion as to whether or not the savings or a portion of the savings could be directed to the school's debt service.

Support for Bringing Gyms up to District Standards

The Board of Education expressed interest in bringing the gyms at Gurganus, Bangert, Ben Quinn and Smith schools up to district standards.

SRO Compensation Enhancement

The Board of Education expressed interest in enhancing the compensation of school resource officers beyond the state budget item allotment. The Board of Education reported that New Bern Police Department, Havelock Police Department and the Sheriff's Department request more than the budgeted amount of \$38,000 over ten months service to the schools for school resource officers.

Support for Moving the Local Teacher's Supplement to a Percent of Salary

There was discussion as to whether or not enhancing the teacher supplement by calculating it as a percent of salary as opposed to a flat fee. The Board of Education

expressed the opinion that such a shift would enhance recruitment and retention. Mr. Larry Moser agreed to bring data on what the surrounding systems that are in competition with the Craven County system are offering as a percentage of salary.

Support for Increasing the Local Budget for Technology Needs

Finance Officer, Rick Hemphill, inquired of the telephone savings from having fiber installation and the response was approximately \$14,500 a month is saved by using fiber.

At 2:50 p.m. the Board of Education recessed its meeting and Commissioner Sampson moved to adjourn the Commissioners' meeting, seconded by Commissioner McCabe and unanimously carried.

Chairman Jason R. Jones
Craven County Board of Commissioners

Gwendolyn M. Bryan
Clerk to the Board