

MINUTES
ASHE COUNTY BOARD OF EDUCATION
March 25, 2014

The Board held its Retreat and budget work session at the Annex as scheduled with all members present beginning at noon. Lunch was provided.

A motion by Vice Chairman Jones and a second by Mr. Williams gave unanimous approval to a request from the ACHS Marching Band for an overnight trip to Western Carolina for competition on March 28, 2014.

The Superintendent reviewed the current school calendar and reported that the last day for students is June 10. Discussion was heard on setting the graduation date—June 6 or June 13. Assistant Superintendent Phil Howell confirmed that the testing calendar can accommodate either date for seniors. A motion by Mr. Williams and a second by Dr. Beckworth gave unanimous approval to setting June 6, 2014 for graduation.

Assistant Superintendent for Testing and Accountability Phil Howell reviewed the 2013/14 mid-year EOC comparisons and results. He informed the Board that the State Board of Education had recently approved new achievement levels 4 and 5, thereby making five achievement levels which will be beneficial to our students. Mr. Howell gave an overview of all the current components of the testing and accountability programs as required by the State. The Board was also given an update on all the things that are being considered for changes in programs and implementation from the State level.

K-6 Curriculum Coordinator Jamie Little reviewed Plan A and Plan B for the Read to Achieve 3rd Grade Summer Reading Camp as mandated by the State Legislature. Plan selection is dependent upon final decisions at the State level as to how much flexibility local school systems are given to operate the summer camp.

Mrs. Little then reviewed the District Literacy Plan which currently focuses on grades K-8. The plan for secondary grades is under development. Mrs. Jones asked that a writing component be included in the plan.

The Digital Learning Consortium, which is made up of school systems in Region 7, was discussed. One of the activities included in the grant and approved by the State is to attend the national technology conference in Atlanta, Georgia in the latter part of June. The Superintendent asked that the Board revisit its stance on out-of-state travel, particularly since the conference does not interrupt instructional time nor is a cost to the school system. The Board asked the Superintendent to prepare a statement outlining the parameters to present to the Board for consideration at the April meeting.

Discussion was heard on using the Northwest Regional Education Center (NWRESA) for as many professional development opportunities for math and reading as possible. Assistant Superintendent Howell reported that the school system is taking advantage of sending our teachers to NWRESA for training. The NWRESA staff is willing to come to local school systems as well. NWRESA consultants have provided on-site professional development on numerous occasions for Ashe County.

Mrs. Jones requested that the attendance policy needs to address the makeup times for homework, tests, etc. for absences in order to provide consistency for all teachers. She asked that this be addressed at the next Board meeting.

Board members were given a copy of the District Crisis Plan. Emergency Management and the Sheriff's Department were included in the development of the Plan. The Superintendent informed the Board that he is sending Assistant Principal Ken Lyall to a train-the-trainer session sponsored by the State on school safety which he will later share with all school administrators. Dr. Beckworth asked that someone call all the emergency contact list to ensure that all the numbers are valid.

The Superintendent is in the process of arranging a meeting with the County Manager to discuss the timeline for the middle school project.

Dr. Beckworth asked that the Superintendent investigate the feasibility of building an auditorium at Mountain View prior to construction of a middle school.

The Board expressed the need for a commitment from the County Commissioners for construction projects and directed the Superintendent to arrange a joint meeting as soon as possible to discuss current facility needs. The Superintendent asked if the Board wanted to remain with the current architect for these projects. He was directed to ask Larry Greene for an estimate for the auditorium at Mountain View.

Leanne Winner from the North Carolina School Boards Association sent two versions of a resolution in support of teacher salaries to local school systems. The Board felt this is a legislative issue at this time.

A motion at 3:16 pm by Mr. Williams and a second by Vice Chairman Jones gave unanimous approval to going into closed session for the purpose of considering personnel action that involves an officer or employee of this Board [N.C. General Statute /143.318.11(a)(6)] and real estate [N.C. General Statute /143.318.11(a)(5)].

The Board returned to regular session at 5:12 pm and immediately took its dinner break.

The Board began its budget deliberations at 5:50 pm and discussion was heard on each of the requests submitted by the schools and directors. The Superintendent and Chief Financial Officer received direction on the capital and current budget requests to prepare for submission to the County Manager following Board action at its April meeting. The final approval on all budget requests will be made once the school system receives its 2014/15 budget from the County.

There being no further business, the Chairman declared the meeting adjourned at 8:20 pm.