

## **OFFICIAL MINUTES OF THE CALDWELL COUNTY BOARD OF EDUCATION**

The Caldwell County Board of Education met in special session for a Board Retreat at 4:00 PM on March 7, 2011, in the Staff Development Room of the Education Center, Lenoir, North Carolina.

The following members were present:

Vice-Chairman Tim Hawkins  
Teresa Branch  
Linda Coffey  
Dottie Darsie  
Dr. Helen Hall  
Darrell Pennell

Chairman Chris Becker was absent.

The following administrative staff members were present:

Dr. Steve Stone, Superintendent  
Dr. Jeff Church, Assistant Superintendent for Auxiliary Services  
Dr. Caryl Burns, Associate Superintendent for Educational Program Services  
Libby Brown, School-Community Relations Director

Vice-Chairman Tim Hawkins called the meeting to order at 4:00 PM.

### **CALL TO ORDER/WELCOME/INVOCATION**

Vice-Chairman Tim Hawkins called the meeting to order, welcomed those in attendance and asked Dr. Helen Hall to give the invocation.

### **CCC&TI BOARD OF TRUSTEES UPDATE**

Vice-Chairman Tim Hawkins introduced Ann Smith, Member, CCC&TI Board of Trustees. Mrs. Smith thanked the board for the invitation to report on the Board of Trustees noting the mutually beneficial relationship that the school system and the college enjoy. The student population at CCC&TI is 4,701 and they rank 17th out of 58 community colleges in the state. Approximately one-third of the student body attends the community college campus in Watauga County, while two-thirds attend the Caldwell County campus. There are 758 students that participate in the classes that are currently offered to our high school students and the first class is set to graduate from the Caldwell Early College High School on May 24, 2011. Mrs. Smith also advised that several members of the board recently visited members of the General Assembly in Raleigh regarding the upcoming budget. The community college will lose approximately 1.7 million dollars; however, Mrs. Smith noted that the college was positioned to absorb the loss without losing any full-time staff at this time. The board asked if the college had any areas they would like to see improved in regards to students enrolling from the school system. Mrs. Smith advised that most students need to take remedial math when they get to the college, which was not uncommon. This could be due to the fact that students are not required to take math during their senior year. She closed by thanking the board for their trust in placing her and her colleagues in this important role and for the successful collaboration the college enjoyed with the Caldwell County School System.

## **CELL PHONE ABUSE**

Lieutenant Aaron Barlow and Officer Jimmy Harrison updated the board regarding cell phone abuse commonly seen within the three high schools in Caldwell County. A major concern is texting while in the classroom and students becoming belligerent and disrespectful to teachers and administration when cell phones are confiscated. Another key concern is "sexting" between students. There have been cases where students use their cameras in the bathroom at school and send illicit photos to one another. This is also occurring between high school students and middle school students. Photos that are taken and placed on social networks such as Facebook, My Space, YouTube, etc., never "go away." Students are educated about these dangers through programs like DARE, but the problems persist. Lieutenant Barlow noted that many cell phones are now "mini-computers" which broadens the abuse in regards to the Internet. Board members were very concerned and asked if administrators are advising law enforcement about these incidents in a timely manner. Officer Harrison and Lieutenant Barlow commended administration for their immediate response in reporting issues that arise. They noted that parents like having the convenience of their student having a cell phone and it is difficult to get parental support at times. Vice-Chairman Tim Hawkins thanked Lieutenant Barlow and Officer Harrison for their report and noted that their input was very beneficial as the board looks at policy regarding cell phone use.

## **NEW MIDDLE SCHOOL UPDATE**

Assistant Superintendent for Auxiliary Services Dr. Jeff Church reviewed the attached ADM and Lottery Fund totals with the board noting that funding is not available at this time to consider building a new middle school. The board will review the project approximately every six months.

## **ELECTRONIC SCHOOL BOARD DEMONSTRATION**

Frank Resta, Representative with InterCom Network, and Dean Norman, Director of Technology for the Caldwell County Schools, gave a web-based demonstration to the board of how the electronic school board software operated. Mr. Resta advised board members that Electronic School Board would save them time, money, paper and streamline the paper agenda process that is currently in use. He noted the program is user friendly, easy to edit, accommodates unlimited users and is an excellent way to electronically store agendas, board policies and minutes. The costs of the program would be approximately \$2,900 per year to lease the software, or \$28,900 to own it. The board agreed to research the program and ask Superintendent Dr. Steve Stone to investigate further before making a commitment.

## **CHILD NUTRITION UPDATE**

Guy Garner, Child Nutrition Director, updated the board on new legislation that will raise meal pricing for the Child Nutrition Department. Mr. Garner reviewed the attached information and advised the board that they would be required to raise prices of full price paid meals until they match free reimbursement rates required by Section 205 of Public School Law 111-296. Mr. Garner also provided board members with a website where they could make comments on the proposed changes in legislation. The attached updated chart of School Lunch Debt was also provided for information and board members agreed for a debt collection agency to be pursued for debt incurred over \$100. The board asked Mr. Garner to notify parents well in advance to prepare them for the price increases.

## **DINNER**

The board recessed for dinner at 5:45 PM.

## **BOARD POLICY 3300 – REGARDING CELL PHONE USE**

Associate Superintendent for Auxiliary Services Dr. Jeff Church asked the board to consider the earlier discussion provided by Lieutenant Barlow and Officer Harrison and advise if modifications should be made to the attached Board Policy 3300, Student Conduct, regarding cell phone use. The board agreed that revisions to the policy are unnecessary at this time and directed Ed Center administrators to reinforce policy guidelines with principals. The policy provisions should also be listed in the student handbooks.

## **ETHICS TRAINING**

Superintendent Dr. Steve Stone asked board members who needed Ethics Training as required by law. Training will be scheduled for the four incumbents reelected to an additional two year term.

## **BOARD POLICY REVIEW – 1000 TO 2000**

Superintendent Dr. Steve Stone reviewed the 1000 and 2000 sections of the current Caldwell County Board of Education Policies. The following recommendations were made:

- Policy 1330 – Board Member Orientation/Training – An Ethics Training component should be added and item number 17, "Annually earn 12 hours of board member training," as noted in Board Policy 1350, School Board Member Ethics, should be added.
- Policy 1354 – Board Member Removal from Office – Delete
- Policy 1600 – Caldwell County Schools Strategic Plan – Revise to reflect the five Caldwell County Schools Strategic Goals as attached.
- Policy 2000 – Board Meetings – The policy should reflect the new board meeting time of 6:00 PM and add a provision for streaming pertaining to archiving and streaming of Community Board Meetings.
- Policy 2300 – School Advisory Councils – Delete

## **JOINT TOWN MEETINGS**

Superintendent Dr. Steve Stone addressed board members to see if they wanted to pursue joint meetings with local Town Councils and City Councils, invite them to our Community Board Meetings, or incorporate them into the governmental breakfast that is currently held each year. Board members agreed that meeting with individual groups is too time consuming and the City/County Services meetings already serve in this capacity. The general consensus was to invite the town councils to the community board meetings that pertain to their specific community as special guests, and/or incorporate them into the governmental breakfast that is held each year.

## **SUPERINTENDENT'S EVALUATION INSTRUMENT**

Superintendent Dr. Steve Stone reviewed the attached North Carolina Superintendent Evaluation Process set by the state. Training has not yet been made available through the North Carolina School Boards Association; therefore, the superintendent recommended, and the board agreed, that the current process continue until board members receive training.

## **STUDENT COUNCIL INVOLVEMENT AT BOARD MEETINGS**

Superintendent Dr. Steve Stone asked board members for ways to involve student councils into regular board meetings, noting the various ways students are currently involved. Suggestions by board members included inviting student bodies to board meetings to observe the board and how it functions, allowing the president of the student council to do an update to the board regarding activities in their schools, and also inviting student councils to the community board meetings to observe.

## **STATE BUDGET OUTLOOK**

Superintendent Dr. Steve Stone reviewed the attached Caldwell County Schools State Budget outlining the 10% and 13% reduction scenarios that legislators are contemplating in the General Assembly. He also reviewed Governor Perdue's budget, as attached, noting it is "only" a three million dollar cut because she includes a  $\frac{3}{4}$  cent temporary sales tax; whereby legislators are not including a temporary sales tax at all. Federal funding is being cut approximately 5.6 million dollars, which includes Title 1, Stabilization and Exceptional Children's funding. The school system did not use these funds for personnel, but rather for technology, classroom supplies, etc.; therefore, personnel will not be hit hard in regards to this reduction. Since the board is committed to keeping personnel, the superintendent advised that vacant positions are not being filled at this time and when the final budget is received the Board Finance Committee will review and make necessary recommendations.

## **TOXIC LEGISLATION**

Superintendent Dr. Steve Stone reviewed the attached lists of upcoming bills being considered by the General Assembly, noting some legislation is toxic while others are not.

## **ELECTION OF CHAIR – BOARD POLICY 1310**

Superintendent Dr. Steve Stone was asked to survey the board regarding Board Policy 1310, attached, in regards to electing the board chair and vice-chair in January versus December. The board reached consensus to leave the policy as is for now and possibly make changes as the next election approaches.

## **ATHLETIC ELIGIBILITY AND EQUITY ISSUES**

Superintendent Dr. Steve Stone advised the board that because the Caldwell Early College High School and the Career Center Middle College do not have sports programs of their own, the North Carolina High School Athletic Association includes their students participating in sports with the students who participate in sports at Hibriten, South Caldwell or West Caldwell High Schools. A new realignment is pending and this practice will affect high schools in regard to the division in which they are placed. Placing at the bottom level of any division has adverse effects from travel time and play locations, to fuel, etc. There may be no recourse for boards to address the issue; however, the New Schools Project may be able to be a voice with the association to give LEAs some flexibility on the issue.

**CLOSED SESSION TO DISCUSS PERSONNEL MATTERS PURSUANT TO N.C.G.S.  
SECTION 143/318.11 (A) (1)**

Upon motion of Dottie Darsie and second by Dr. Helen Hall, the board unanimously agreed to go into Closed Session to discuss personnel matters pursuant to N.C.G.S. Section 143/318.11 (A) (1) at 7:30 PM.

Upon motion of Dr. Helen Hall and second by Darrell Pennell, the board unanimously agreed to convene the Closed Session at 7:45 PM. No action was taken during Closed Session.

**ADJOURNMENT**

There being no further business to come before the board, and upon motion of Darrell Pennell, second by Teresa Branch, and the unanimous approval of the board, the meeting was adjourned at 8:20 PM.

Signed:

\_\_\_\_\_  
Chairman, Caldwell County Board of Education

Attest:

\_\_\_\_\_  
Secretary, Caldwell County Board of Education