

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

The Caldwell County Board of Education met in special session for a Board Retreat at 3:30 PM on March 17, 2008, in the Staff Development Room of the Education Center, Lenoir, North Carolina.

The following members were present:

Dottie Darsie, Chairman  
Dr. Sharon S. Pennell, Vice-Chairman  
Linda Coffey  
Tim Hawkins  
Dr. Helen Hall  
Mike LaBrose

Chris Becker was absent.

The following administrative staff was present:

Dr. Steve Stone, Superintendent  
Donnie Bassinger, Associate Superintendent for Auxiliary Services  
Trish Johnson, Associate Superintendent for Human Resource Services  
Dr. Caryl Burns, Associate Superintendent for Educational Program Services  
Bob Query, Finance Officer  
Libby Brown, School-Community Relations Director  
Ervil Anderson, Director, Student Support Services

Chairman Dottie Darsie called the meeting to order at 3:30 PM.

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

Chairman Dottie Darsie welcomed the board, administrators and the press to the Board Retreat and Tim Hawkins gave the invocation.

Chairman Dottie Darsie approved changes to the order of presentations on the agenda due to time constraints of some of the presenters.

### **OUT OF SCHOOL SUSPENSIONS**

Student Support Services Director, Ervil Anderson, and Social Worker, Jill Duffey, gave a report concerning a new program to address out of school suspensions. A booklet was distributed with information regarding "A Suspension Alternatives Program" (A.S.A.P.), modeled after the Burke's Alternative to Suspension (BATS) program in Burke County. This program will provide an alternative to short term, out of school suspensions from 1-10 days per semester. Eligible students who participate in this voluntary program complete academic assignments and perform community service with participating agencies. Parents and students sign participation contracts and the parent is responsible for providing transportation, snacks and lunch for their student. Program coordinators rotate among worksites to insure that students have completed their homework assignments and to answer questions, etc. Successful completion of the program allows the student to be counted present during the period of suspension, provides a structured method for completing academics, and promotes increased self-worth through community service. Grant funding has been requested for year one, subsequent funding would require the board's allocation from local funds.

## **PROJECT LEAD THE WAY UPDATE**

Kathy Jo Eckard, CTE Director, Career Center, and Sharon Everhardt and Beth Fox, William Lenoir Middle School, gave a PowerPoint Demonstration to the board regarding the progress of the Project Lead the Way Program funded by Duke University. This program provides hands-on, problem-based learning to middle school students to excel in fields involving technology. It consists of five modules entitled Gateway to Technology and adds rigor to traditional technical programs and relevance to traditional academies. The five independent, nine-week units include: Design and Modeling, The Magic of Electrons, The Science of Technology, Automation and Robotics and Flight and Space. Teachers are trained in each of these units during the summer at Duke University. The program has been very successful in William Lenoir Middle School this year. Grant funding has been sought for the first year to implement the program in all middle schools.

## **WESTERN PIEDMONT COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS**

Donnie Bassinger, Associate Superintendent for Auxiliary Services, provided the board with a brief update on the project growth models for the Caldwell County Schools. He reviewed the preliminary projections and school capacities through 2014-15 and noted that Hudson Elementary and Sawmills Elementary are predicted to be slightly over capacity by 2014. Most schools will be at 90 to 100% capacity at that time. He also noted that William Lenoir Middle School has the greatest potential for overcrowding in the next seven years based on its current capacity.

Several subdivisions are projected in northern Caldwell County within the next ten years; however, the majority of the housing is geared toward retirees and vacation homes, which will not impact the student enrollment. Student growth is projected to take place mainly in the southern end of the county.

## **BENCHMARKS, EOC, MIDDLE SCHOOL INITIATIVE**

Dr. Caryl Burns, Associate Superintendent for Educational Program Services and Craig Bryson, Director, Testing and NCWISE, presented a PowerPoint presentation to the board regarding winter EOC result percentages on grade level, the county bench mark reading level comparison by year and the county bench mark math level comparison by year. The board was advised that the benchmarks are not used as individual objectives for students, but as class objectives for teachers that indicate Standard Course of Study objectives that need additional work.

Dr. Burns distributed a graph indicating AYP status for the Caldwell County Schools and explained how to read the indicators for each school. She noted that Gamewell Middle School has five elementary schools feeding into it, which explains much of the reason the school is in its fourth year as a School In Improvement. It also explains why so much funding and staff development have been geared toward helping this school succeed. Dr. Burns noted that assistance is also going to the elementary schools that feed into Gamewell Middle School.

## **HORIZONS/STATE MENTAL HEALTH**

Trish Johnson, Associate Superintendent for Human Resource Services, updated the board on Horizons Elementary School. There are 38 students enrolled with no increase in mental health services for these students. Horizons began with 4 full-time mental health staff and 18 mentors. They currently have 2 full-time mental health staff and 3.5 mentors, a 65% reduction.

## **HORIZONS/STATE MENTAL HEALTH**

The reduction in mental health services is due to changes in the billing process of outside agencies, mainly Medicaid, who no longer approves “in-service” mental health services for students. Ms. Johnson noted that the current principal is retiring and suggested that this would be an excellent time to re-visit the blueprint for Horizons due to the decrease in the mental health component. All future services to these students will fall to the Caldwell County Schools; therefore, a move toward a more elementary alternative school would be in the best interest of the school system. One missing component is that of supplying instruction in music, PE, arts, etc. The student enrollment should also be addressed, which is currently based on the criteria of the mental health element at the school.

## **BOARD BUDGET PRIORITIES AND BUDGET UPDATE**

Board Member Dr. Helen Hall introduced Bob Query, Finance Officer, who updated the board on the school system’s budget and budget priorities. Mr. Query reviewed the attached 2007-2008 revenues and expenditures for the school system, as well as the attached 2008-2009 budget calendar. Superintendent Dr. Steve Stone reminded board members to bring their suggestions and concerns to the Board/Budget Finance Committee members.

## **DINNER**

The Board recessed for dinner at 5:45 PM.

## **STATE OF THE CALDWELL COUNTY SCHOOLS**

Superintendent Dr. Steve Stone deferred giving the board a PowerPoint presentation on the *State of the Caldwell County Schools* due to time constraints. He briefly noted that the school system had improved academically and was ahead of the State percentages in every category. He also noted that 20% of our teaching staff in Caldwell County are Nationally Board Certified and we have much to be proud of. Dr. Stone commented that we will continue to work on those areas of challenges.

## **BOARD POLICY REVISION PROPOSALS**

**Proposed Policy Revisions: 3400-Student Due Process, 3630-Transportation/Safety and 5200-Employment of Administrators** – The revisions to the attached policies will be placed on a one month comment period at the April 14, 2008, board of education meeting.

**Proposed New Policy** – The attached policy was drafted and will be placed on a one month comment period at the May 12, 2008, board of education meeting.

## **CLOSED SESSION**

Upon motion of Tim Hawkins and second by Vice-Chairman Dr. Sharon S. Pennell, the Board unanimously agreed to go into Closed Session at 6:15 PM pursuant to N.C.G.S. Section 143-318.11 (A) (1) to discuss personnel matters. No action was taken.

**ADJOURNMENT**

Upon motion of Dr. Helen Hall and second by Tim Hawkins, the Board unanimously agreed to end the Closed Session at 6:40 PM. There being no further business to come before the board and upon unanimous approval of the board, the meeting was adjourned at 6:45 PM.

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

Attest:

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