

OFFICIAL MINUTES OF THE CALDWELL COUNTY BOARD OF EDUCATION

The Caldwell County Board of Education met in special session at 4:00 PM on October 5, 2011, in the Board Room of the Education Center, Lenoir, North Carolina.

The following members were present:

Chairman Darrell Pennell
Teresa Branch
Linda Coffey
Dottie Darsie
Dr. Helen Hall
Duane Knight

Vice-Chairman Tim Hawkins was absent.

The following administrative staff members were present:

Dr. Steve Stone, Superintendent
Dr. Trish Johnson, Associate Superintendent for Human Resource Services
Dr. Caryl Burns, Associate Superintendent for Educational Program Services
Dr. Jeff Church, Assistant Superintendent for Auxiliary Services
Karla Miller, Finance Officer
Libby Brown, School-Community Relations Director
Ed Blair, School Board Attorney, Groome, Tuttle, Pike and Blair

Chairman Darrell Pennell called the meeting to order at 4:00 PM.

REPORT FROM THE VISITING COMMITTEE FROM THE SOUTHERN ASSOCIATION OF COLLEGES AND SCHOOLS

Judy Wesley, Lead Evaluator, Southern Association of Colleges and Schools, provided information on AdvancED and gave an exit report of the findings of the Quality Assurance Review team for the Caldwell County School System.

AdvancED began in 2006 when the National Study of School Evaluation, the North Central Association Commission on Accreditation and School Improvement, and the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Council on Accreditation and School Improvement joined forces. They use research and best practices to help schools and districts improve student learning and increase their effectiveness. AdvancED became the world's largest educational network, serving over 27,000 schools and districts across the nation and around the world. These schools and districts represent over 15 million students, 3 million teachers, and over 18,000 professional educators, who serve on Quality Assurance Review teams.

In order to earn and maintain accreditation, districts and the schools within the district must apply themselves to three complex and ongoing tasks: (1) Meeting ever higher levels of the standards of excellence set by AdvancED, both at the district level and at the school level; (2) Engaging in a process of continuous improvement, standardized across the organization, and (3) Demonstrating quality assurance through self study and external evaluation.

Districts are evaluated against AdvancED's seven standards that reflect research and best practice not just in education, but in organizational excellence in general. These seven standards are: (1) Vision and Purpose, (2) Governance and Leadership, (3) Teaching and Learning, (4) Documenting and Using Results, (5) Resources and Support Systems, (6) Stakeholder Communications and Relationships and (7) Commitment to Continuous Improvement.

The Quality Assurance Review team evaluated the district using the AdvancED standards as their guide. Using the framework provided by the standards, they were able to determine the degree to which the district engages in a process of continuous improvement and provides internal and external quality assurance. The QAR team collected and analyzed evidence that provided support for an accreditation decision. They conducted interviews with a representative sample of school stakeholders, reviewed the school's self assessment document, profile data, student performance results, improvement plans, and other documents, observed classes and the everyday operations of the school, and made observations of how the school daily demonstrates adherence to the AdvancED standards. The evidence was analyzed to determine the degree to which Caldwell County Schools met AdvancED standards.

The Quality Assurance Review team commended Caldwell County Schools in the following areas: (1) collaboration between the school board and superintendent, (2) a strong academic program that has resulted in improved student achievement, (3) strong effort to communicate with stakeholders, (4) collaboration between the staffs, district office, and community, and (5) use of non-traditional schools to meet the needs of every student.

The Quality Assurance Review team determined that Caldwell County Schools must act on the following: (1) Evaluate the current strategic plan to determine if the number of objectives limits the district's ability to focus and prioritize time, human, and fiscal resources, (2) Establish a process for program evaluation that would determine the effectiveness and sustainability of the various district initiatives, (3) Explore additional funding sources for technology and (4) Use data, teaching strategies that challenge and engage students, and wider implementation of higher order thinking skills, while building on the Common Core Standards.

In addition to the overall commendation and required actions, the school system was evaluated using *each* of the seven AdvancED standards. The four ratings the QAR team used to indicate the degree to which a district meets each standard are "Not Evident," "Emerging," "Operational," and "Highly Functional." The combined ratings of these seven standards are used by the QAR team and state council to determine whether or not a district should be accredited and if so, to determine an accreditation status.

Caldwell County School's rating for the seven standards is as follows: Vision and Purpose, Operational; Governance and Leadership, Operational; Teaching and Learning, Operational; Documenting and Using Results, Operational; Resources and Support Systems, Highly Functional; Stakeholder Communications and Relationships, Operational; and Commitment to Continual Improvement, Operational.

The responsibility of the QAR team is to provide evidence and commentary to the AdvancED Accreditation Commission. It is the accreditation commission that grants the term of final accreditation. The recommendation of the Quality Assurance Review Team indicates that Caldwell County Schools should become an accredited district.

A written report of the findings will be submitted to the AdvancED Accreditation Commission. After receipt of the report, the district is expected to review and communicate the findings, address the required actions, monitor school and system accreditation standards, continue improvement efforts on an ongoing basis and submit the Accreditation Progress Report.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business to come before the board and upon motion of Teresa Branch, second by Linda Coffey, and the unanimous approval of the board, the meeting was adjourned at 4:26 PM.

Signed:

Chairman, Caldwell County Board of Education

Attest:

Secretary, Caldwell County Board of Education