

NEWTON COUNTY BOARD OF EDUCATION
Special Called Planning Meeting
Minutes of Meeting
Friday, February 25, 2011

The Newton County Board of Education met for a special called planning meeting on February 25, 2011 in the Clamp Board Room of the Administrative Offices of the Newton County Board of Education. The meeting was called to order by Board Chair Mr. Almond Turner. Board members in attendance included Mr. Eddie Johnson, Ms. Shakila Henderson-Baker, Ms. Abigail Coggin and Mr. Jeff Meadors. Also present, Superintendent Dr. Gary Mathews, Deputy Superintendent Dr. Dennis Carpenter, Associate Superintendent Dr. Linda Hayden, Public Relations Director Ms. Sherri Davis-Viniard, Business Manager Peggy Bullard, Elementary Director Dr. Ken Proctor, Secondary Director Ms. Samantha Fuhrey, Human Resources Director Ms. Nyree Sanders, representatives from the local newspapers, *The Covington News and The Newton Citizen*.

At 9:00; following the welcome by Mr. Turner, Mr. Johnson gave the invocation and Ms. Henderson-Baker led the Pledge of Allegiance.

Business Manager Peggy Bullard began the meeting with a review of the multi-year projections, including 2011-2012 and 2012-2013, of the NCSS budgets, presuming “no more, no less” scenarios in light of various budget reduction amounts.

Public Relations Director Ms. Sherri Davis-Viniard reviewed the recent results of the Stakeholder Survey on possible major budget reductions for the 2011-2012 school year. These results were from the Stakeholder Survey taken online by the general public, the School Councils, the school PTO’s, the Teacher Forum group, and the administration of the NCSS. The survey listed thirteen possible budget cuts which included; to change the high school scheduling to a seven period day to include remediation/enrichment for students; contract with Ombudsman, a division of Educational Services of American (ESA), to provide a new delivery model for alternative education; implement a three-tier student transportation system (which was previously approved on February 15, 2011); eliminate 70 six-hour per day regular instructional paraprofessionals at the elementary schools; reorganize and reduce maintenance and custodial staffs; reduce the school year by one day for students and reduce employee work days by one additional day; change to one of the following school schedules – four day week (156 days), 158 school days, 169 days; eliminate 28 eight-hour per day regular education instructional paraprofessional positions at the elementary school; reduce the 1% Board contribution to the 403b retirement plan for Teachers Retirement System employees to .5%; eliminate two assistant principals at the high schools – one at Newton High and one at Alcovy High; reduce the number of school resource officers (security) from 18 to 14; require a 10% cut in all central office budgets; and combine the Newton College and Career Academy CEO and Director of Career, Technical, and Agriculture Education (CTAE) positions.

Dr. Mathews reviewed the first two budget items; rescheduling the high schools – for a savings of \$2,820,000 and implementing the Ombudsman program – for a savings of \$1,941,962. After much discussion, Dr. Mathews asked for a non-binding vote on these two items. The non-binding vote for high school rescheduling was a 5-0 vote, with all voting in favor. The non-binding vote for implementing the Ombudsman Program was a 4-1 vote; with Ms. Henderson-Baker being the dissenting vote. Due to the lengthy implementation process for these two items, an official vote on these items will be requested at the work session on March 8, 2011.

As scheduled on the agenda; the group was dismissed for lunch.

At 1:30 p.m., the group reconvened.

Dr. Mathews reviewed the additional budget reductions, item by item, with discussion of each item with the Board members and the administrative team from the Central Office. After discussion, a non-binding vote was taken on each item and Dr. Mathews asked that these items also be presented for an official vote either on March 8, 2011 at the work session or March 15, 2011 at the regular BOE monthly meeting.

Items reviewed:

Reorganize and reduce maintenance and custodial staff for a saving of \$954,000. The non-binding vote was a 5-0 vote; with all voting in favor.

Eliminate 28 eight-hour per day regular education instructional paraprofessional positions at the elementary schools for a savings of \$582,000. The non-binding vote was 1-4, with Mr. Johnson voting in favor; with Mr. Turner, Ms. Coggin, Ms. Henderson-Baker and Mr. Meadors voting against.

Reduce the 1% Board contribution to the 403b retirement plan for Teachers Retirement System employees to .5% for a savings of \$422,000. The Board members wanted to pass on taking a non-binding vote on this item. The Board members gave no clear direction about this item.

Eliminate two Assistant Principal positions; one at Newton High School and one at Alcovy High school, for a savings of \$215,000. The non-binding vote was a 2-3 vote; with the two in favor being Mr. Johnson and Ms. Coggin; and the three undecided being Mr. Turner, Mr. Meadors and Ms. Henderson-Baker.

Reduce the number of school resource officers (security) from 18 to 14 for a savings of \$171,428. The non-binding vote was a 5-0, with all voting in favor.

Require a 10% cut in all Central Office budgets for a savings of \$160,000. The non-binding vote was a 4-1 vote; with Mr. Johnson, Ms. Coggin, Mr. Turner and Ms. Henderson-Baker being in favor and Mr. Meadors being undecided.

Combine the Newton College and Career Academy CEO and Director of Career, Technical and Agricultural Education (CTAE) positions for a savings of \$65,000. The non-binding vote was a 5-0 vote; with all voting in favor.

Dr. Sheila Thomas, Federal Programs Director, reviewed three possible school calendars for the 2011-2012 school year. Mr. Turner asked the BOE members to review the calendars and be prepared to vote on the selected calendar at the March 8, 2011 Board Work Session meeting.

Human Resources Director Ms. Nyree Sanders reviewed the NCSS Reduction-In-Force policy and procedures.

Mr. Turner thanked all those in attendance for their dedication to the school system and asked for a motion to adjourn. At 4:00 p.m., on a motion by Ms. Coggin and second by Mr. Meadors, the Board unanimously voted for adjournment.

Superintendent, Newton County Schools

Chair, Newton County Board of Education