

NEWTON COUNTY BOARD OF EDUCATION

MINUTES OF WORK SESSION MARCH 10, 2009

Covington, GA

March 10, 2009

The monthly work session of the Newton County Board of Education was held on Tuesday, March 10, 2009. The meeting was called to order by Board Chair, Dr. C. C. Bates and the following Board members were present: Vice Chair, Ms. Cathy Dobbs; Mr. Almond Turner; Mr. Johnny Smith; and Mr. Eddie Johnson. At 5:30 p.m., the Board went into executive session on a motion by Mr. Johnson and second by Mr. Turner to discuss the appointment, employment, and compensation of employees.

On a motion by Mr. Johnson and second by Mr. Smith, the Board voted 5-0 to return to open session.

WELCOME, INVOCATION, AND PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Following the welcome by Dr. Bates, Mr. Turner gave the invocation and led the Pledge of Allegiance.

SPECIAL RECOGNITION

The week of March 9 – March 13, 2009 has been proclaimed School Board Appreciation Week in Georgia. Our Board members from each Newton County district were recognized for their countless hours of dedication and working together to improve and support the school system.

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

There were no requests for public participation.

Ms. Christila Milner, Treasurer of the Newton County NAACP, presented checks to the high schools in support of the media center at each school. The donations, in honor of Black History Month, are for the purchase of books to support and enhance the Black History section of each high school library.

SUPERINTENDENTS' REPORTS

Financial and Administrative Services Reports Ms. Deborah Robertson, Associate Superintendent for Business Administration, reviewed the Financial Report for the month ending February 28, 2009. With 66.67% of the year complete, total revenues are at 69.31% and total expenditures are at 61.53%. All departments continue to reduce spending and are hopeful to have significant savings in the FY 09 budget to prepare for additional revenue shortfalls for FY 10.

The Newton County School System's net December SPLOST II distribution is \$893,530; an increase of \$249,622 from our net for November. Total net SPLOST II received for the first 48 months is approximately \$41,107,780—averaging \$856,412 per month.

The exit conference with the state auditors was held on March 3, 2009. Our system had an excellent audit report with no substantial findings. The auditors were very complimentary, stating that the Business Office, under the direction of Ms. Peggy Bullard, maintains excellent records. They further complimented Ms. Bullard and her staff stating that this is such an easy audit to complete that all the auditors want to come here.

There has been no further development in the solution for foam tray recycling, although a solution continues to be sought.

Construction on Liberty Middle School by Carroll Daniel Construction is ahead of schedule. The building is at 98% completion. The school is scheduled to open at the beginning of the 2009-2010 school year and is funded primarily from SPLOST II. Mr. Ray Moore, architect for the project, gave an update on the progress of the school.

Construction of Live Oak Elementary School by Meja Construction is on schedule. The roof is at 100% completion and the plumbing is at 90% completion. This school is scheduled to open at the beginning of the 2009-2010 school year and will be funded primarily from SPLOST III. Mr. Ronnie Watts, from Meja Construction, gave an update on the progress of the school construction.

Construction of the new classroom additions at Alcovy High School by Carroll Daniel Construction is on schedule. Steel erection has begun. This addition is scheduled to open the 2010-2011 school year and is funded primarily from SPLOST III. Mr. Ray Moore, architect for the project, gave an update on the progress of the classroom addition.

Plans are being finalized to advertise to receive bids on the continued renovations at Newton High School. This is the second year of the three-year renovation plan.

The architect continues to work on the design of the Eastside High School band addition. We continue to monitor the SPLOST revenues to determine the funding timeline for this project.

There are six drivers in bus training. There are currently 28 sub drivers and 7 sub monitors. This is the largest number of sub drivers that the transportation department has ever reported.

The average cost of fuel for February was at \$1.53 per gallon for a total cost of \$70,191. This is a decrease of \$.15 a gallon, over the average amount paid in January. The last fuel purchased in February was \$1.44 per gallon. Buses traveled 393,426 miles for the month of February. The average mile per gallon for the month of February was 8.9.

The School Nutrition Department is working towards using the School Messenger system to notify parents of student charges and low balances. The system will be tested in one elementary school during the month of April. Students will not be identified by name. We are working with system and school administrators to determine the appropriate message. Implementation of this system is a way to improve communications with parents and reduce the printing and mailing costs to the School Nutrition Program. Once the program is ready to be fully implemented, a notice will be placed on the school system web site and a press release will be issued. Notes will be sent home with all elementary students.

The next meeting of the Steering Committee for the Education Foundation is March 18, 2009. The mission statement and goals were adopted at the last meeting. The subcommittee working on the bylaws submitted a draft to the committee for review and discussion.

Curriculum/Instruction/Technology Report CIT Report.

Associate Superintendent Dr. Linda Hayden presented the

All Newton County third grade students will receive a writing assessment during the window of March 16- March 17. Throughout the school year, teachers have provided students with various opportunities to write in a number of genres. The third grade teachers will evaluate their students' writing abilities using the Development Stage Scoring Guidelines provided by the GDOE.

Parent newsletters addressing the change from traditional schedule to block schedule have been distributed at Alcovy High, Newton High and Sharp Learning Center. Parent meetings have been scheduled at each school. School Messenger will be utilized to notify parents of the "Block Schedule Informational Meetings". Rising 9th grade registration meetings will be held at each high school. Information regarding block scheduling will be shared at these meetings in March.

Newton County High Schools have utilized their NovaNET Credit Recovery licenses during school, after school, and on Saturday for student credit recovery. The credit recovery results from first semester showed that 403 students have taken advantage of this credit recovery option. At the end of the first semester, a total of 112.5 credits had been recovered with many still in progress. Newton County has established a NovaNET users' group that meets quarterly to evaluate progress.

Principals participated in a funding workshop presented by Mr. Doug Eza on February 19, 2009. Mr. Eza spoke exclusively about the understanding and application of Quality Basic Education (QBE) and Full-Time Equivalency (FTE). Mr. Eza showed different scheduling options that could improve FTE earnings.

Newton County's Aspiring Leaders have participated in a leadership workshop at Griffin RESA. The cohort is reading John Maxwell's *The 21 Irrefutable Laws of Leadership*.

The New Principal Cohort has participated in district specific professional learning that has addressed the following areas: budget and human resources. Additionally, the New Principal Cohort has also attended a workshop at Griffin RESA that is designed specifically for new principals.

Congratulations to the following middle school students who won awards at the Griffin RESA Literacy Days Contest: 1st place in Poetry Recitation – Kimberly Stier, Cousins Middle, 7th grade; 2nd place in Poetry Recitation – Imari Daniels, Cousins Middle, 8th grade; 2nd place in Ready Writing – Kymberly Langford – Veterans Memorial Middle – 8th grade; and 1st place in Drama – Ms. Caren Reed's Drama Team at Veterans Memorial Middle.

The Student Services Department will be working with K-12 Solutions to convert all student data to the new student software system, Infinite Campus. A schedule will be developed for data conversion, training and implementation with collaboration from K-12 Solutions. Infinite Campus will be implemented for the 2009-2010 school year.

A small group of special education teachers and staff recently taped professional learning sessions using Media Cast, an on-line digital library recorder for distribution to all special education teachers. The group taped a mock IEP meeting, a manifestation IEP meeting, and demonstration of how to develop a Functional Behavior Assessment (FBA) and Behavior Intervention Plan (BIP). Both are components of an IEP for students with disabilities who experience behavioral difficulties. Annual Review IEP reminders will also be made available through Media Cast sessions in the future. The use of Media Cast enables the special education administrative staff to provide trainings without pulling special education teachers from their classrooms.

The secondary Media Specialists participated in their first Helen Ruffin Reading Bowl. The local competition took place at Eastside High on January 31, 2009. In the middle school division, Veterans Memorial Middle won first place and Clements Middle won second place. In the high school division Alcovy High won first place and Newton High won second place. Each first place and second place winner advanced to the regional competition at Clayton State University on February 7, 2009. At the regional competition, Alcovy High won second place and advanced to the divisional competition. At the divisional competition, Alcovy High won third place.

The True Colours Art Exhibit reception is scheduled at the Newton County Library for March 16, 2009. Student art from all Newton County Schools will be on display at the library for the month of March. No student art will be at the NCBOE during this time due to the event at the library.

Enrollment

Total enrollment on March 6, 2009, was 19,150. A copy of the detailed enrollment report is attached.

OLD BUSINESS

The following item, Item A, was presented by Ms. Robertson and approved on a motion by Ms. Dobbs, and second by Mr. Turner, with all voting in favor:

- **Requested Board Action Relative to Sharp Stadium Renovations** Approval recommended to approve the low bidder, Hobgood Construction Group, LLC, as the contractor for the construction of the field house and associated site work for Sharp Stadium. As instructed, Mr. Moore negotiated with the low bidder to reduce the cost of the field house project; with the cost being approximately \$873,400. Mr. Moore will continue to pursue cost efficiency.

The following item, Item B, was discussed and will be on the table for one month and action will be requested at the regular Board meeting on March 17, 2009:

- **Requested Board Action Relative to Review of Section I of the NCBOE Policy Manual**

NEW BUSINESS

The following items, Items A - D, of New Business were presented by Ms. Deborah Robertson and action will be requested at the next meeting:

- **Requested Board Action Relative to Certificate of Completion for Newton High School**
- **Requested Board Action Relative to Bids for Electrical Repair**
- **Requested Board Action Relative to Preliminary Mid-Term Adjustment for Revenues and Expenditures**
- **Requested Board Action Relative to Surplus Items**

The following item, Item E, was presented by Ms. Robertson and approved on a motion Ms. Dobbs, with a second by Mr. Smith and all voting in favor:

- **Requested Board Action Relative to Class Size Waivers for Fairview Elementary, Middle Ridge Elementary, and Palmer Stone Elementary** Approval recommended for of the adoption of the attached Class Size Waiver Resolution authorizing the submittal to the State Board of Education a Class Size Waiver Application for any eligible grade level that goes over the maximum class size by one student. This waiver allows for flexibility in systems such as ours, where students are transferring in and out throughout the year.

The following item, Item F, was presented by Dr. Hayden and will lie on the table for one month and action will be requested at the next meeting:

- **Requested Board Action Relative to Revision of Section J of the NCBOE Policy Manual**

The following items, Item G and Item H, were presented by Dr. Hayden and action will be requested at the next meeting:

- **Requested Board Action Relative to Bid for Student Agendas**
- **Requested Board Action Relative The Academy of Liberal Arts at Newton High School**

The following item, Item I, was presented by Dr. Whatley and approved on a motion by Mr. Turner with a second by Mr. Johnson and all voting in favor:

- **Requested Board Action Relative to Revision of the 2008-2009 School Calendar** Approval recommended that the March 2, 2009 snow day not be made up for student attendance as per allowance under state law 20-2-168(c) (3), but that the staff be required to make up the day through activities and recordkeeping maintained by the administrator at the school level.

Executive Session Mr. Dennis Carpenter, Associate Superintendent for Human Resources, presented for Board action, the Superintendent's personnel recommendations. Mr. Smith made a motion to approve the list of recommendations, with a second by Ms. Dobbs and all voting in favor. A copy of the personnel report is attached.

Dr. Bates reminded those in attendance that the Newton County School System Job Fair will be held at Eastside High School on March 14, 2009, from 10:00 a.m. until 2:00 p.m.

A reception is also planned on Monday, March 16th, from 5 p.m. until 7 p.m., for the True Colours Youth Art Exhibit at the Newton County Library. This reception and exhibit is provided by the Newton County Arts Association and showcases art work from the students in the Newton County School System. When the exhibit leaves the library, it will be moved to the NCBOE building.

Also, there will be a Board Planning Session on March 16th, at the NCBOE at 5:30 p.m.

With there being no other matters for discussion, the meeting was adjourned at 8:26 p.m. on a motion by Ms. Dobbs, second by Mr. Smith, and all voting in favor.

Superintendent, Newton County Schools

Chair, Newton County Board of Education