

**NORTHAMPTON COUNTY BOARD OF EDUCATION
SUMMARY OF FORMAL ACTIONS TAKEN AT
MONDAY, January 11, 2016, REGULAR MEETING**

This document summarizes formal actions taken on substantive matters at the regular meeting of the Northampton County Board of Education on January 11, 2016. This document is provided for the convenience of the public and does not constitute the official minutes of the meeting. For details such as the precise substance of main motions, any subsidiary motions, the names of members who made and seconded motions, staff presentations and public comments, and the times the meeting was called to order, recessed, reconvened, and/or adjourned, please consult the official minutes of this meeting, which are maintained as audio or video recordings and available for public inspection in the office of the Superintendent and on the Board of Education website.

Members Present: Rhonda Taylor, Chair; Marjorie Edwards, Vice Chair; Clinton Williams, Lucy Edwards, Kelvin Edwards, Phil Matthews, Keedra Whitaker, Dr. Monica Smith-Woofter, ex officio
Others Present: Administration and interested parties

ACTIONS TAKEN:

Closed Session. The Board entered closed session at 5:46 p.m. pursuant to G.S. 143-318.11 (a)(1) and (a)(6) to discuss student and personnel matters. Ms. Keedra Whitaker was not present for the vote.

Approval of the Meeting Agenda. The meeting agenda was approved as presented. The Board approved to amend the agenda to move item #12.01 North Carolina Department of Public Instruction (NCDPI) Support to Low Performing Schools/Districts by Dr. Nancy Barbour under Business Before the Board for Information to become item #5.02; and also to add an agenda item to become item #13.04 Agencies Coming Into the Schools under Business Before the Board for Approval. The Board approved the amendment and addition to the agenda.

NCDPI Support to Low Performing Schools/District – Dr. Nancy Barbour

Dr. Smith-Woofter introduced Dr. Nancy Barbour, Director of District and School Transformation Division for the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction, to the Board and audience.

Dr. Smith-Woofter further stated that the information that Dr. Barbour has been requested to share with us as a school system is certainly pertinent information that we would have our parents, students, staff and our Board to be privy to.

Dr. Nancy Barbour addressed the Board and informed them that she would be sharing a powerpoint with them regarding the work of the District and School Transformation Department and where the changes have occurred. She stated that the original model was the NC Assistance Team Model, which was more of an evaluative model. They found that an assistance team model was not effective so they alleviated that model and adopted the NC Turnaround Model, which was what they engaged in response to the work of Judge Manning's order in the Leandro Case. In the Turnaround Model, they used an approach that involved coaching, staff development, and talking with schools and districts about their most effective practices, a work along side or partnership model. Then from the Turnaround Model, Race To The Top (RTTT) was born and the work of turning around low achieving schools. We have continued

that Turnaround Model in what became the District & School Transformation Model and only in addition to just serving individual schools, we serve the district model. We looked at and learned some of the disconnects between what was happening at the Central Office level and what was happening in the school and why some of the things in the school were not happening and how it was impacted by the decisions made at the district level. Therefore, we had two Turnaround Models going at that time, which we called School Transformation and District Transformation and from that came a change in legislation that was effective for the 2014-2015 school year. That is how we identified a low performing school administrative unit, a new definition that has never been named in legislation before and it is effective for last year's data and is identified on an annual basis. That means that the majority of the schools in the district are low performing and that is how the district is identified on an annual basis. Again, you are talking about a potential for a low performing list of schools to be updated every year. A low performing school is now a school that has performed a "D" or an "F" by their EOG, EOC, or school performance grade and has a growth status of "meets growth" or "does not meet growth," which is a bit different because historically, the low performing law was the "majority of your students not at grade level" and "you did not meet growth." Therefore, if a school is meeting their growth expectation, they would not be considered low performing regardless of the percentage of students they had on grade level. Now things are a little bit tighter and we are looking at saying "meet" and "does not meet," because we know if a school is low performing or if a school has a low percentage of students on grade level, it is not enough to meet growth every year. You have to exceed growth every year to catch up. The legislation tries to address that situation by identifying those schools that aren't exceeding as low performing. A big change when you think about how many schools are in there, because when you look at the State of North Carolina and there are 581 low performing schools in the state. Once we followed that number and we realized how large we were talking about we realized that of those 581 schools, 547 were public traditional schools and 34 of them were charter schools. We also found out that under the new designation, out of the 115 school districts there were 15 school districts identified as low performing. By that definition meaning that more than 50 percent of the schools in their districts were low performing. With that information I will say for an example in Northampton County, if you historically look at Northampton County High School realizing there have been a lot of changes and a lot of things going on in Northampton. If you look historically at Northampton County during the Turnaround years and these were the years in response to Judge Manning and District and School Transformation provided support through that model during the turnaround years. The percentages to the right are the performance composite, basically percentages of students that were performing proficient on the EOC tests in the high school at that time. Let me add that you tests changed, so this is not a number that you can compare year to year. Then during 2010-2011 and 2011-2012, those were the RTTT years so we transitioned from Turnaround Model to the RTTT Model. You can see that out of a course of those six years you have a school that went from 44.4% proficient up to 84% proficient and that is remarkable. That is 40% of percentage points of improvement over the course of six years. That was the time period when we were in partnership working along side in that model where we were helping and coaching, supporting, not evaluating and working in our old assistance team. Then we decided to put a new accountability standard in place and all bets were off at this point and across the state you saw these kinds of numbers. When you talk about a school that is dealing with morale, teacher retention, teacher recruitment, which are all of the issues involved in a school and then you throw in that you went from 84% to 25.7% just because we changed the standards. However, when we changed the standards we raised the bar. So across the state you saw this similar decline and everybody sort of shifted down and we started on that trend of upward again, which is what you want to

see. Therefore, you want to raise the bar and you feel like that year everybody is going to drop back and then you want to see everybody catch back up again.

Then the General Assembly decided, let's not do the accountability model and percentages anymore. Now we are going to give you a grade and a score. Therefore, the score is based on a set of criteria or indicators that include things like your graduation rate, your percentages of participating in higher-level math courses, and other things that might make a high school shine, other than ECO test scores. We now have the same high school with a school performance grade of a "C" and an EVAAS growth status of "met". Therefore, during the 2013-2014 school year you have a situation where you would not have a low performing high school. They don't meet the criteria of the new law, but what you don't have is what it means to go from a 25.7% proficient to a "C". What does that mean? How can we tell if we are really improving, because you don't have similar numbers or letters? It is hard to tell the connection between '2012-2013 and the '2013-2014 changes.

Then we bring in the new low performing districts and schools law and the 2014-2015 data. Now you have a school with a performance grade of a "D" and an EVAAS growth status of "not met". We now have two things to compare and we can see in the schools that in the 2014-2015 RTTT year where resources from Districts and Schools Transformation were basically null and void. You have a decline in this example and now you have something to compare. However, when you look at that school performance "D" and the EVAAS growth status, what you don't know is under the old law, would that have qualified as low performing or would it not, because the "D" does not translate into one of those percentages. Just looking at this one example, there are a lot of factors that goes on when you are talking about a low performing school and a low performing district. There are a whole lot of things to consider when resources are changed and reduced or when testing is different, whether it is in format or aligned. All of those things don't necessarily translate into what a "D" means. But, this does give you an example of a school that was on the rise, a school that was hit really hard when the standards were changed, and now you see a school that offers some cause for question of why we are going from a "C" to a "D" and why are we going from a "met" to a "not met" status. Therefore, what District and School Transformation is doing across the state is of the 581 schools and 15 school districts that the bar has identified, we are serving a proportional amount of 75 schools and I wanted you to see what that breakdown looks like in terms of the number of schools that we serve and how they were identified.

The State Board was given a charge in the law to read every School Improvement Plan and District Plan that was from a low performing district and low performing school and our first support and service was to read all of the 440 school plans and district plans that were submitted to the state and provide specific feedback. Now if you are a low performing school you provide your school plan and if you are a low performing district you provide a district plan for all of your low performing schools. Therefore, all of the schools in your district did not have to send in a plan to us, but your district sent in a plan to us. We have read those plans for the past two months and we have provided feedback. Now we are in a position where we can provide services with our coaches. We have coaches who are going to be sent and are making come backs right now with the districts that will support instruction that will support school leadership and overall district leadership for those districts identified as low performing. These are the numbers across the state that we will be serving and these are the numbers and schools within Northampton County that we hope to be serving too.

The way these schools were identified was to take the 581 schools and first remove what we call the big ten for those worst school districts that really have the greater capacity for serving their schools and then we removed those schools that were charter and that were alternative, because charter schools have the charter school office to address some of their needs and the alternative schools, many are under the an accountability plan. That left us with a core group of elementary, middle, and high school and we took

the elementary schools and we ranked them by their performance composite (ranked them by their percentages of students in 3rd-5th grade that were at or above grade level). Then we worked from the bottom up and were able to take the bottom 38 elementary schools across the state. We did the same thing with the middle schools, because in the middle school you have grades 6th-8th EOG test and then you estimate Algebra I and we included that number as well. Then we took the bottom 11 high schools across the state. So when you do all of that statewide with low performing schools, you see that Central Elementary School and Gaston Elementary School were in our elementary group, and that Conway Middle School was in our middle school group, and that Northampton County High School was in our high school group. Therefore, for the District Transformation Coach piece, we have district transformation coaches that through the RTTT and through the first three years we were able to provide that support person full-time in the districts that we worked. In 15 school districts now and basically 4 district transformation coaches; therefore, we are not able to provide that full-time resource, but we do have a person who is designated to be shared between 3 school districts, because all 15 of the low performing school districts have a District Transformation Coach coming.

In addition, we also have a Service Support Council, which is not a District and School Transformation resource, but it is a resource that is provided to all schools and districts across the state. We have a person on that service support team that is responsible for all of the low performing schools by region that does not receive direct services. That is another resource that if you have a specific need that is the contact person who will try to get the resources for any district or school. Behind the District and School Transformation Coach, that person can go to the head of the class and get those resources or have access to those resources in advance.

Therefore, our whole philosophy here is to take the approach that it takes us all. The District and School Transformation can't do it alone. School districts, many of them need the support of District and School Transformation as well as the department, but you are the potential members of the School Board that makes these two decisions that heavily impact everything that goes on in the schools. If we have learned anything in the districts at all, these are the two biggest responsibilities that we think the School Board has. In those policy decisions, hopefully our District and School Transformation Coach can help in terms of instructional improvement. What kinds of things do we need to do from a policy perspective that you all need to consider from a policy perspective in terms of supporting the improvement of these low performing schools. In addition, we want to focus on that the superintendent is recommending and supporting effective principals, the principals is recommending and supporting effective teachers, and the teachers are making instruction real for students and it is individualized based on their needs. Bottom line, we wanted to announce the resources that we have to ensure that we are using them and the funds that we have in an effective manner. We do also provide a Comprehensive Needs Assessment and customized professional development. We have about 75 schools that we will provide a needs assessment to and will do about 30 per semester. We are looking at grouping a group of 30, which will occur in the first semester and the next two rounds would be in the fall of 2016 and the spring of 2017.

Dr. Smith-Woofter responded to Dr. Barbour stating that was something that we were proactive on as a school district and all of our schools have completed their CNA. We started in the spring of last year with four being done and two done this fall. We finished out district CNA.

Dr. Barbour thanked Dr. Smith-Woofter and the Board for allowing her to come tonight.

Chair Rhonda Taylor thanked Dr. Barbour for coming as well.

Good News Award

2015-2016 Northeast Regional Teacher of the Year. Dr. Mark Rumley announced to the Board and audience that Ms. Marie Smith, a Conway Middle School Teacher and the 2015-2016 Northampton County Schools' Teacher of the Year has now been selected as the 2015-2016 Northeast Regional Teacher of the Year for the entire northeast region! Dr. Rumley stated that Ms. Smith was notified in a surprise visit at Conway Middle School on December 16, 2015 and that the Board and her family were informed about her recognition the night before.

Dr. Rumley informed Ms. Smith that she would receive an all-paid state conference as Northampton County Schools' Teacher of the Year and for being selected Regional Teacher of the Year and she would also receive an all-paid national conference of her choosing and a new iPad to use in her classroom, thanks to Ms. Rhonda Moses.

Dr. Rumley added that we are very proud of Ms. Smith, as she has been in Northampton County for a long time and it is evident when you see the students at Conway Middle School show their support and recognize the excellence in this teacher. Therefore, we would like to recognize and congratulate Ms. Smith along with the Board, the Superintendent, everyone else who is here tonight, and others across the district. We applaud your efforts and we look forward to hearing your name called in April!

Northeastern North Carolina School Leadership Program at Elizabeth City State University Presentation. Dr. Smith-Woofter announced that she would like to applaud the hard work of Dr. Claude J. Mackey and Ms. Yvonne Walton who works with the Northeastern North Carolina School Leadership Program at Elizabeth City State University. She stated that she had worked with Ms. Walton a number of years in her former position at Weldon City Schools. Now, both of our schools systems have been fortunate enough to benefit from the hard work of Elizabeth City State University in providing us with grant opportunities that support our leadership, our teachers and our students. Therefore, they are here tonight to do a special recognition of our staff members of Northampton County Schools.

Ms. Yvonne Walton announced that Dr. Mackey could not be here tonight with her, because he is recuperating from knee surgery. She stated that she is the Coordinator of the Northeastern North Carolina School Leadership Program at Elizabeth City State University. Back in 2009, Elizabeth City State University was awarded a \$2.9 million dollar grant from the U.S. Department of Education and that the grant was written by Dr. Claude J. Mackey and Dr. Shirley Turnage. The purpose of the grant was two-fold with the first goal being to "grow your own administrators," which would increase the number of certified principals and assistant principals in your school district. The second goal was to provide funding to help out those school districts with professional development. The grant had to be research-based professional development structured around the School Improvement Plan; therefore, nine school districts agreed to partner with us and they were Bertie, Edgecombe, Edenton, Elizabeth City, Northampton, Perquimans, Washington, Warren, and Weldon City. The superintendents or their designees served as our Advisory Council.

Ms. Walton further shared the following information regarding the grant:

- This program started back in September 2009 and ended in December 2015.

Over the course of six years, five (5) clusters or cohorts were established and over time we had sixty-nine (69) students who enrolled in our NENC School Leadership Program, sixty-three (63) of them earned a degree, one of them opted to get certification only, and once the state, pending with all of the changes, decided to drop the certification only then everybody ended up getting a degree. Five (5) of the students were unable to complete the program due to personal issues, but our final cluster graduated this past December 2015 and we are certainly proud of those sixty-nine (69) in this cohort.

- Northampton County had three students to complete the program and all three of them are serving in administrative capacities, which is proof that the program is working.
- Throughout the life of the program, \$665,787.40 was awarded to school districts in the form of PBLs (Problem Based Learning Initiatives) and Northampton County received \$71,250.38.

Dr. Walton stated that at this time, I wish to present plaques to Mr. Monte` Freeman, Ms. Pamela Joyner Miles, and Ms. Paula Pruden. She also asked Dr. Smith-Woofter to come forward and she presented her with an Education Partnership Award and informed her that this award is a token of their appreciation from the Elizabeth City State University Northeastern North Carolina School Leadership Program sponsored by the United States Department of Education in honor of the Education Master School of Education Degree recipients: Mr. Monte` Freeman, Ms. Pamela Joyner Miles, and Ms. Paula Pruden who were selected from your district.

Break. The Board took a break at 7:50 p.m. Chair Taylor announced that Mr. Kelvin Edwards has to leave the meeting at this time due to a scheduling conflict. The Board reconvened the meeting at 7:58 p.m.

Approval of Consent Agenda. The Board approved the minutes under the consent agenda. The consent agenda included the approval of regular session minutes for June 8, 2015 and special meeting minutes for June 8, 2015 and June 29, 2015. The closed session minutes for December 15, 2015 were deleted from the agenda. The consent agenda also included the following request for fundraiser:

Request for Fund Raiser

Northampton County High School – JROTC – Discount Card Sales – August 24, 2016 thru June 1, 2017

Mileage Rate Change. The Board approved to adhere to the state guidelines to decrease the business standard mileage rate from 57.5 cents to 54 cents per mile, effective January 1, 2016. A state employee shall be reimbursed the business standard mileage rate set by the Internal Revenue Services when using their personal vehicle for state business when the round trip does not exceed 75 miles. However, if a state employee chooses to use a personal vehicle when the round trip exceeds 75 miles, all departments and agencies will reimburse the employee at a mileage rate of 34 cents per mile.

Audit Contract Fiscal Year 2016. The Board approved a contract with Anderson Smith & Wike PLLC of Rockingham, NC to conduct the school system’s independent audit for the fiscal year ending June 30, 2016.

Personnel. The Board approved the following personnel as presented:

Substitutes/Volunteers:

Roslyn Parker, Substitute
Keonta Williams, Volunteer

Resignations:

Laurie Kuchenbrod, Teacher, Gaston Elementary School, 1/20/16
Marilyn Daniels, Bus Driver, Gaston Middle School, 12/8/15
Queen Peterson, Child Nutrition Assistant, Gaston Middle School, 12/28/15
Hessy Bateman, Teacher, Northampton County High School, 2/5/16

Retirement:

Joe Holloway, Finance Officer, Central Services, 2/29/16

Leave of Absences:

Judy Davis, Child Nutrition Assistant, Willis Hare Elementary School, thru 2/24/16
Tiffany Stephens, Child Nutrition Assistant, Willis Hare Elementary School, 1/4/16 thru 1/18/2016
India Robinson-Martin, Social Studies Teacher, Gaston Middle School, thru 12/31/16
Mervintine Scott, Teacher, Central Elementary School, 1/7/16 thru 1/18/16

Administrative Transfers:

-Victor Jones from ISS Coordinator at Conway Middle School to Positive Behavior Assistant at Northampton County High School, effective 1/21/16
-KJ Whitfield from Positive Behavior Assistant at Northampton County High School to Positive Behavior Assistant at Central Elementary School, 1/21/16
-Lakeisha Epps from School Secretary at Northampton County High School to Office Support at Central Services (59% PG 61/50% PG 63) to be held harmless, 2/15/16
-Rosa Vaughan from District Powerschool & Payroll Technician (50%/50%) to Payroll Technician (100% PG 63), 2/15/16
-Jerry Adams (Squire) from ISS/PG 56 at Northampton County High School to Office Support/11 months PG 59 at Northampton County High School, 2/15/16
-Cathy Gillus from Assistant Finance Officer at Central Services to Interim Finance Officer (6 months: 3/1/16 thru 9/1/16 – PG Admin I – 19 years experience), 3/1/16

Agencies Coming Into Our Schools. The motion for the Board to direct the principals and the administration to not allow anyone to come on the school campuses to provide any counseling and/or any other consulting services if they do not have a contract with the Board of Education did not pass due to a tie vote. Chair Taylor made a second motion to direct the Superintendent of bring a list of providers to be added to the agenda and discussed at the Board Retreat scheduled for January 23, 2016. Chair Taylor withdrew her motion.

The Way Forward Plan Update. The Board discussed the need for a centrally located school in the county in that the Board of Education and the Board of County Commissioners agreed to come together to provide Public forums for the communities.

Dr. Smith-Woofter informed the Board that the Public Forums are scheduled below and we are waiting to hear back from Ms. Kimberly Tuner after she polls the County Commissioners regarding the dates. Also, please note that for one of the February dates below, the Public Forum will be held at the Lake Gaston Community Center and we can use one of the other dates for the Conway and Garysburg areas:
Thursday, January 28, 2016 at the Northampton County Wellness Center at 6:00 p.m.

Tuesday, February 9, 2016, location TBD

Tuesday or Wednesday, February 23 or 24, 2016, location TBD

Monday, March 7, 2016, location TBD

Dr. Smith-Woofter added that she has begun to participate in the Town Hall meetings at Woodland and that Mr. Miller is not here tonight because he is participating in the Gaston Town Hall meeting in my place. He is also scheduled to be on Jackson's agenda for this coming Wednesday. I have already scheduled Conway and Garysburg, but I still need to schedule Rich Square's meeting.

Dr. Smith-Woofter stated that she plans to meet with the Education Foundation Committee tomorrow at 12:00 noon. We met a month ago and one of the reasons we tabled the discussion as far as if the Education Foundation could fund our efforts was to ensure that everything was finalized for the supplemental tax as the language has already been sent in to Raleigh for the ballot. I also plan to discuss with them if they have any available funding to help us with marketing literature, because as a school

system, we can only provide factual information and the fact sheet that you received a few months ago is what I have used for talking points. Those constituents are ready to serve the community and make sure they spread the word. We know that our population of students, according to the NC Department of Public Instruction, is on the decline. With that fact, in order to be able to provide a sound education, which is now defined by Leandro to have four major components to it, we need to make sure that we are expending our funds and making sure we have the resources that are collectively serving the needs of all of the students across the county. Even though we are a large district, we will in the future not be able to keep the number of schools that we have open. Therefore, if we are not fortunate enough to build a centrally located school, then we certainly will have secondary students in grades 6-12 facing traveling to extreme ends of the county. We will not be able to afford local neighborhood schools without having a centrally located school. If we could get a centrally located school that would afford us the opportunity to add two years to the three (3) feasibility studies that have supported the closings of Willis Hare, Squire, and Northampton County High School. So that twenty years from now we no longer have to be in buildings that are 80 or 90 plus years old. That is the effort that we are moving in full force to do and we recognize that whether we use the language *bond referendum* or *supplemental tax*, it will impact tax payers with regards to increasing our taxes, but as I often respond to our public, we have to invest in our future and we must afford our students an opportunity to be educated in a building in which there are resources and that we can provide the curriculum necessary that will prepare our students to compete in a global society. When our average property tax value in Northampton County is \$80,000 and that would mean a difference of an increase of about \$70.00, which equates to \$.19 cents per day. If I were to give up sodas twice per month, then I have been able to afford that investment in paying that extra property tax value at least through '2026, because you know that in '2026, Central Elementary School's debt would be paid off and that debt pays off an annual debt for building that school and then that funding source could go to paying off the new school, which hopefully we would be able to afford our students in 2018-2019. Therefore, that is how I have been able to get the word out, entertain, and answer questions that the public may have. We also know, as Senator Ingram is here, that there have been discussions with our Representatives and the Senate in regards to assistance for the counties who need new buildings, but we can't wait on that, because we have been waiting to get a new school since '2008 and we know the longer we wait the more it will cost. Therefore, that is how we are moving forward and it has been a tough decision for this Board to push our Commissioners into a partnership to get this done, but we have to do it sooner or later and there is no better time than now.

It was the consensus of the Board to schedule the following dates:

- Hold a Board Retreat on January 23, 2016 to be held at the Hilton Gardens for the first option or the Hampton Inn for the second option. The Board requested that the Superintendent bring a Plan B to The Way Forward Plan of where our students will attend school next year.
- Hold a Policy Committee Meeting on February 1, 2016 at 6:00 p.m.
- Hold school visits along with the County Commissioners on February 3, 2016.

Dr. Smith-Woofter further shared with the Board that when the Board was in the budget dispute last summer with the County Commissioners and we provided our plan to them for affording the funding for the various options, which we had narrowed them down to 2 or 3 as it cost money to do any kind of renovations or consolidation of schools, the Commissioners certainly re-emphasized as a Board that they did not have a funding source to be able to afford any funding to consider any of the options. Therefore, even though we need to make a decision about what Plan B would be, we still have to go through the same funding agencies for monetary support.

Dr. Smith-Woofter also announced that we are excited to share some good news with the Board and audience that Northampton County School's Early College has made it through Phase II! Phase I was approved by the Joint Advisory Committee and the State Board of Education meets on it this week and then it goes to the Community College System for review. They will be reviewing our waivers and one of them that we have submitted was to allow us to have our Early College offsite in one of our buildings instead of Halifax Community College, as they do not currently have the space for two early colleges, but they are planning for it in the future. Once it goes past the Community College System and they vote on it in February, then it goes to the General Assembly. On February 1, 2016, we have to start planning for our Early College opening for 2016-2017. We have an Early College on the way and it has to be a stand-alone school from the high school!

Adjournment. The Board adjourned the meeting at 9:55 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Dr. Monica Smith-Woofter, Superintendent