

**NORTHAMPTON COUNTY BOARD OF EDUCATION
SUMMARY OF FORMAL ACTIONS TAKEN AT
MONDAY, April 4, 2016, REGULAR MEETING**

This document summarizes formal actions taken on substantive matters at the regular meeting of the Northampton County Board of Education on April 4, 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 5:35 p.m. pursuant to G.S. 143-318.11 (a)(1) and (a)(6) to discuss personnel matters.

Approval of the Meeting Agenda. The meeting agenda was approved as presented. The Board approved to amend the agenda to add item #14.05 Behavior Health Services and item #14.06 Board Per Diem Increase under Business Before the Board for Approval. Mr. Phil Matthews and Ms. Marjorie Edwards voted against the amendment. The Board approved the agenda with the added items.

Break. The Board took a short recess at 6:59 p.m. The Board reconvened the meeting at 7:03 p.m.

Approval of Consent Agenda. The Board approved the minutes under the consent agenda. The consent agenda included the approval of closed session minutes for March 21, 2016, the approval of contracted services listed below, and the deletion of the regular session minutes for December 14,

2015 from the agenda:

Contracted Services

Northampton County Health Department – Contract for School Nursing Services

Northampton County Health Department – Walking Program Memorandum of Agreement

Business Before the Board for Information (Administrative)

NC Department of Public Instruction Updates – Restart Model. Dr. Smith-Woofter shared the following information with the Board with regards to their consideration of the Restart Model:

- We have received a board update from the North Carolina School Boards Association as well, discussing the opportunity of School Boards to consider Restart Models for schools that meet the criteria of having been low performing 2 out of 3 times within the last recent 3 years. Therefore, the schools that meet the criteria were listed in the email have webinars with regards

to this, they have posted some lists that show which process of application would be used, a form to be filled out, and the direction that Boards would take if they wanted to consider the opportunity.

- The Restart Model affords you two systems: 1) the opportunity to have charter flexibility with regards to licensure of employees that work within that school with 50% of the staff having to meet licensure requirements, and 2) it also gives the opportunity of a calendar waiver that affords school districts to consider calendar start and end dates or modifications of traditional type calendars to be used outside of the normal start date of August 26th, or the closes Monday to that or June 11th, or the closes Friday to that.
- Mr. Kelvin Edwards and Ms. Lucy Edwards participated in the Comprehensive Needs Assessment Unpacking Session that began back in February. It was a 2-day unpacking opportunity for us to gain a deeper understanding of what was captured when the team visited us on December 14th & 15th. Our staff had to reschedule due to inclement weather in February and we finished up right before we went home for Easter break on March 23rd and 24th. The notes from that session, captured by Ms. Felicia Whitaker, have been posted in Google Docs, downloaded, and that has been updated as well. In the leadership section, there are at least 3 areas that make reference to the School Board, areas that were recognized and captured during the visit, the evidence that supported it, and failures for growth in instruction, leadership, professional development, and management, etc. There are areas that we know are quick fixes that we have begun to work on already and areas for further improvement that we need to consider when we are working on our District Improvement Plan.
- We have a fourth session scheduled this coming Thursday morning and we will be starting at 8:00 a.m. for at least 2 hours to work on this last phase of Unpacking. There was so much information and so much good conversation among staff that we didn't get around to finishing our brown paper process; therefore, we will be finishing that up on Thursday and we welcome our Board Members to come and participate as well. It will be held here at Central Services.
- If you have questions about the Restart Model, we can request that if that is something the Board is willing to entertain. In order for the school district to pursue that opportunity, the Board would need to take formal action to request that the administration pursue that opportunity for all schools or a few schools. The formal action would need to be taken now before May 1st, because the State Board of Education meets the first week in May. They would review the application and then in June, permission would be given or not given. It is a benefit to the students and the school district in terms of licensure, a wonderful opportunity. In terms of who is eligible, only the schools that meet the criteria are eligible; therefore, we would not be able to pursue it for all schools, however, if there are two schools, for example Gaston Elementary and Gaston Middle, that could potentially be eligible depending upon the direction of the Board in terms of the plans that we are considering. If we were to consider a year-round opportunity and because they are sharing space, that opportunity would need to be applicable to both schools. Northampton County High School is a school that officially does not meet the criteria, but there are two feeder schools that do and the administration believes that we can pursue that opportunity for the high school since the last two years the students have feed into the high school. I think we would have a valid argument for doing so.

It was the consensus of the Board to move the agenda item, #13.01 Restart Model, from Board Information to Board Approval.

Attorney Malone informed the Board that their motion needed to include moving the agenda item and the reason for the motion.

Restart Model. The Board approved to move the Restart Model agenda item from Board Information to Board Approval and approved to support the Superintendent's recommendation to pursue the Restart Model for the schools that qualify to include the high school.

Memorandum of Agreement for Youth Extensions, Inc. – Day Treatment & Out Patient Therapy Services. Dr. Smith-Woofter informed the Board that Youth Extensions, Inc. has submitted a letter requesting that the Board revisit and/or discuss their previous Memorandum of Agreement that was submitted to the Board in 2015 to provide a Day Treatment Program and Out Patient Therapy Services. Youth Extensions, Inc. was informed by Trillium that their MOA was not approved and as of January 2016 their contract agreement with the school system expired. They have received approval from Trillium as of February 22, 2016 to operate a Day Treatment Program and Out Patient Therapy Services, but they no longer have a contract agreement with us. Therefore, they are asking the Board to re-enter into a partnership agreement with them. We would pursue the same opportunity that we would with other persons that we contract with and use the form contract that Mr. Malone has provided us with. We will address the new MOA when it comes in. This agenda item is for information only at this time.

Acceptance of Donation of Books to Elementary Schools – Ms. Crystal McKnight. The Board approved a book donation to each elementary school's Media Center, *The Adventures of Princess Summer*, written and donated by Ms. Crystal McKnight. Ms. McKnight, Center Director of the Sylvan Learning Center in Durham, NC is the daughter of Ms. Johnetta Lofton, Child Nutrition Director with Northampton County Schools.

2016-2017 Proposed District School Calendar. The Board approved the 2016-2017 Proposed District School Calendar, option 3 (revised) with a start date of August 26, 2016 and an ending date of June 9, 2017. The regular District School Calendar proposed by the calendar committee is inclusive of 1,025 hours of instruction and provides a list of all calendar dates including dates for professional development, grade and progress reporting, all holidays, annual leave days, and workdays as required by the N.C. General Statutes.

2016-2017 Proposed Northampton County High School Early College Calendar. The Board approved the 2016-2017 Proposed Northampton County High School Early College Calendar with a start date of August 10, 2016 and an ending date of May 25, 2017. The calendar for the Early College proposed by the calendar committee is inclusive of all required days and has workdays aligned with the district calendar.

The Way Forward Plan Update. The Smith-Woofter informed the Board that she was going to reference the Study on Viability of Plan for School Consolidation that documents and gives a summary of information for the Board to consider what correlates with the procedures that one must follow when considering school consolidation or school closings. The Smith-Woofter and the Board held a discussion regarding the following items:

- Dr. Smith-Woofter - In the document, the open circle items were lifted from the *School Closing Procedure: Relating to the Public Schools of North Carolina* and *General Statute 115C-72* along with responses from the administration.

- ~Four Feasibility Studies have been done since 2005 (two by contracted agencies and two were internally generated and researched).
- ~The Board voted last month for Option 4, which included part of Willis Hare Elementary being housed on Conway Middle School's campus leaving Pre-K through Kindergarten at Willis Hare, while Option 7 was one of the original options that closed Willis Hare Elementary and the high school on the eastern campus.
- ~An updated quote was given for modular units with the difference in leasing or purchasing. Originally, that cost was \$180,000 and has not gone up to \$268,000.
- ~The IT pads were one of the things omitted from the school consolidation/school closings cost from last month. Therefore, approximately \$80,000 has been added to the plan for Option 4 infrastructure in regards to the high school and that infrastructure at the high school will have to be moved to the Gaston Middle School location to ensure students will have enough internet access.
- ~We have just received confirmation that the General Assembly is strongly considering the ratio to decrease for Kindergarten through 3rd grade. It was in the budget recommendation last year and we received our specifics following the General Assembly. We have been modeling on a 1:21 to determine student-teacher ratio and they didn't take that flexibility away from us, but we are funded on a 1:16 ratio.
- ~The administration submitted a letter to the County Manager last Tuesday and then after speaking with Attorney Malone, a revised version of the letter was uploaded and emailed. The County Commissioners should receive their copy today during their meeting. They are scheduling a Finance Work Session on April 18, 2016 and they have invited me to attend. I plan to be there to entertain any questions they may have with regards to our request. Our request is approximately \$800,000 on top of the Planning Allotment they had already appropriated to us, but the \$350,000 planning appropriation would not be enough to do any kind of planning.
- ~Public Hearings need to be scheduled at the pleasure of the Board. The School Board is scheduled to go on school visits tomorrow along with the County Commissioners beginning at 9:00 a.m. They would like to visit Willis Hare, NCHS, Squire Elementary, and Gaston Middle.
 - What happened to the plan that we were moving our kids to the newer facilities that we have? When you closed W.S.Creecy, that building was in much better shape than Willis Hare. I know we voted on a specific option in open session, but out in the community it is being said that Willis Hare will remain open another year and I am not in agreement with that. It is not fair to the kids at Willis Hare for them not to be in the newer facility. To me once again, it looks like we are dragging things out.
 - Dr. Smith-Woofter - With the closing of a facility, we have to provide to the administration every aspect of the execution; therefore, in the phasing out, we can't do anything without any money. Of the \$800,000, when you close a high school and replace those students it takes half of that just to get started executing that plan. Phase I and Phase II is just laid out in that order; therefore, if you say you want to do Phase II first then that is the pleasure of the Board. When you close a school completely, those kids have to go somewhere and we have to get that somewhere ready. If you decide to close all of Willis Hare, you have to have somewhere for those kids to go.
 - How much of Squire Elementary building will we be utilizing?
 - Dr. Smith-Woofter - The Pre-K and Kindergarten have to be in the Pre-K building in those classrooms adjacent to the gym; the Early College will be on the main hall, and the Alternative Program will be on the back wing; therefore, we don't have to open another building.
 - If you will recall that the Squire building is in just as bad of shape as Willis Hare and the high school. Squire will be at its capacity.

- Dr. Smith-Woofter - We can't get a new school, because we don't have the appropriation for that. Therefore, we have to decide that out of the facilities we do have where are we going to have them and some of our old buildings will have to stay open.
- I see under Phase I, item B where it says (in April order a minimum of 3 modular units for Gaston Elementary campus to house the overflow of Gaston Middle students), what is the price tag that goes with that?
- Mr. Miller - We have just received an updated amount up from \$258,000. The new price is \$400,000. I have only talked to one group, Mobile Modular, and they are eight weeks out in their construction and have just taken on a large account. Our projected date to receive modular units is by August 26th.
- You are saying that we have to order modular units that we don't have money to pay for until the county gives it to us?
- We are here again at crunch time and we should be ready to do what we need to do that is in the best interest of our children. We all, including Dr. Woofter and staff, have to pull together to make this thing work. We have to get on crunch time and we need to say to our Commissioners, "Work with us now" so that on April 18th there will be no surprises. They have agreed through a settlement in that they would help us with the funding that we need in the event that The Way Forward Plan was not approved in March. Since that plan was not approved, I think it would behoove us to go ahead and submit to them a tentative budget right away even if it is one line, "We need \$900,000" and put them on notice.
- Dr. Smith-Woofter - That was the logic behind the development of Phase I and Phase II.
- That agreement with the Commissioners was not in writing, it was only verbal.
- Attorney Malone - In regards to the \$800,000, are the Commissioners prepared to make a decision on the 18th or is it just conversation? I need to ask the Superintendent, on the 18th how much do you need in order to do whatever needs to happen. The only place that I see "April" is on the modular units. Are there any other items Mr. Miller that you need right now to move forward? How do these other items get funded or is there some amount that you can get on the 18th? What happens if you just get the money for the modular units and you don't get the rest of it?
- Mr. Miller - There is a leasing option that gives in, but leasing modular units is always really expensive. The bottom line is that it would cost \$50,000 to lease four modular units. Then it would cost us roughly \$120,000 initially to get in, but you still have to pay for hooking up sewer, water, and electricity.
- Is there an option to purchase?
- Mr. Miller - As a matter of fact, at the end of the lease there is a \$27,000 charge to take up units, plus they could give us fair market value. There is an option to purchase. I told him we would stick to a three-year lease.
- Would it be feasible for us to submit a couple of financial options to them prior to the 18th?
- Dr. Smith-Woofter - I did let Ms. Turner know that we were coming up with cost and that I would have another update for her by the end of the week with a more accurate figures.
- Looking at our numbers on page 3, our projected population will continue to decrease until 2021. We are only looking at five years from now. When you talk about modular units, there is no need to get locked in, because you get stuck. I agree that our students need to be in our best facilities, but we don't have a cash account.
- Attorney Malone – Let us understand that the only thing about leasing is that you have basically bought it. You would have spent about the same amount of money when you lease. You probably should be thinking about a lease/purchase option just because you would dump so much money into it after one year. The Commissioners would have to approve this agreement anyway. If they would agree to fund it over four years, that might be another way to look it.

I would like to throw something out there for the Board's consideration. Since the Board and the Commissioners have the walk-through scheduled for tomorrow, you can have some real conversations as you are walking around with them about what they are going to do. You should be able to have some basic understanding of what is realistic. Therefore, if you want to recess this meeting, come back together Wednesday after you have walked around with them, then you would have a little more information about what they might consider, because I can't imagine walking around all day and not knowing if \$800,000 is realistic. What are they likely going to consider?

- Exactly what is it that we need to vote on tonight? We have been presented this report so do we have to approve or disapprove the report?
- Attorney Malone – What you officially did last month was to ask the administration to amend the process to do Option 4. Now what would happen tonight is that you would receive the study and to schedule a public hearing as soon as you want to have it. Following the public hearing, then you would vote to actually implement Option 4.
- Dr. Smith-Woofter - Let's just say I have put before you in my thinking, executing, and also understanding the reality of whether or not the County Commissioners are going to give us the money that we need. I was the one who put in Phase I and Phase II with a date of summer 2016-2017. Now, if that is something you want to modify to this report, you can certainly say that you accept this report with modifications of taking off the timelines. I also know the reality of what our staff can do, because it is a lot to close out a school, close out three-fourths of a school, move everybody, and get two other facilities ready to receive students. Had we started this in November is a different story, but we are now in April.
- Attorney Malone – In any quest involving the closing of a school, the Local Board shall call for a thorough study.
- In looking out for our staff and we say we are trying to get the community involved, there are so many people out there who will roll up their sleeves and help our Maintenance Department. They are willing to come in to help move our schools forward and we are going to have to solicit that.
- You said that three schools are bad, but the only one moving forward is the high school.
- We are talking about safety and better buildings. Willis Hare is in just as bad condition and houses younger children. Older children can take care of themselves much better than the children over there at Willis Hare. We talked about trying to get that breezeway closed in, our children inside with all of that mold, smell, termites and for two or three years we have been talking about the same thing. But, you are always talking about the high school, but you never talk about Willis Hare and the shape it is in. So if you are talking about one you should talk about the other one.
- When you closed down Creecy and Garysburg the same year, those buildings were in better condition than Willis Hare is now and I am speaking as a teacher who was at Creecy. It was my responsibility to get my room packed up. Yet we are talking about keeping Willis Hare open another whole year and it is sad that we have put Dr. Smith-Woofter and her staff in this position. But, if you are talking about closing down the high school and leaving Willis Hare open, I am not in agreement with that, because both buildings are in bad condition and those children need a better facility as well. I thought that was the reason that we went with the option that we went with.
- I am in agreement with both of you and we have just been talking, but not acting.

Mr. Williams made a motion that this Board will move on Option 4 that was adopted at the last Board Meeting, look at taking every child out of Willis Hare that will not fit in the new wing, and that Dr. Smith-Woofter provides the Commissioners with what our physical needs are for the next upcoming year.

Dr. Smith-Woofter stated that she feels we should remove the phases and just use the alphabets A-I.

Mr. Williams amended his motion to add, accept the study, remove the phases and use alphabets A-I, and have all of the work completed by this summer in time for the 2016-2017 school year. Ms. Keedra seconded the motion.

Dr. Smith-Woofter stated that she would make copies of this document for Ms. Turner in the morning for her to share with the Commissioners. We will meet at the Courthouse in the morning at 9:00 a.m. and we should arrive at Willis Hare by 9:30 a.m., from there we will travel to Northampton County High School, to Squire Elementary, and Gaston Middle in that order. If a Board Member cannot make all of the schools, just text me and I will let you know where we are as we are traveling.

- Can we keep in the forefront where we could save some money without modular units, to look at bullet number 2 on page 6 for (redistricting to increase capacity at Central Elementary, which would reduce capacity at Gaston Elementary) in the event we do not receive the requested full funding from the County Commissioners? I am thinking about how we can get the work done without spending \$400,000.
- Attorney Malone – What you have to approve under the statute would be the closing of schools and the consolidation of schools. What this process is allowing is a net result in which you might consolidate or close a school. When you get to the end and if you back off any part of that, you are fine, but what you can't do is to decide to close or consolidate something else. You can back away from a redistricting plan, but you cannot close a facility once you accept the study. What you are doing right now gives you maximum flexibility, but at some point you are going to have to look at how much money you do have. Right now, you are keeping all of your options open.

The amended motion to accept the study, remove the phases and use alphabets A-I, and have all of the work done by this summer in time for the 2016-2017 school year passed by a 4-3 vote. Ms. Marjorie Edwards,

Ms. Rhonda Taylor, and Mr. Phil Matthews voted against.

Board Scheduled Meetings. The Board scheduled the following Public Hearing and Board Meetings:

- Public Hearing - April 7, 2016 @ Northampton County Wellness Center – 6:30 p.m.
- Special Meeting – April 13, 2016 – Board Room – 6:00 p.m.
- Finance and Facilities Committee Meeting (Budget Meeting) – Board Conference Room – April 18, 2016 – 3:30 p.m.

Personnel. The Board approved the following personnel as presented.

Certified Elections:

Pauletta Broadnax, Elementary Teacher, Gaston Elementary School, 8/8/16

Classified Elections:

Calvin Benjamin, Custodian (10 months), Willis Hare Elementary School, 4/5/16

Substitutes/Volunteers:

Vanessa White, Volunteer

Samantha Bell, Volunteer

Cynthia Edwards, Substitute Teacher

Alicia Flythe, Substitute Bus Driver

Resignations:

Oliver Holley, Principal, Conway Middle School, 6/30/16

Mecia Moore, ELA Teacher, Gaston Middle School, 6/10/16

C. Matthew Mazick, ELA Teacher, Gaston Middle School, 6/10/16

Leave of Absences:

Sharia Joyner, CTE Teacher, Northampton County High School, 3/30/16 thru 5/25/16

Tammy Branch, Exceptional Children Teacher, Central Elementary School, 3/9/16 thru 5/23/16

Brenda Moore, CTE Teacher, Northampton County High School, 4/4/16 thru 4/15/16

Administrative Transfers:

Mark Long from Assistant Principal at Conway Middle School to Principal at Conway Middle School, 7/1/16

Behavior Health Services. Mr. Williams made a motion that the Board would give the Superintendent and her staff the direction to look at Behavior Health Services, as well as other service needs and make sure our students are addressed from all angles and that we do this as soon as possible to include information that is coming forth from Youth Extensions, Inc., as well as other agencies. Mr. Williams' motion died due to the lack of a second.

Mr. Matthews made a motion to table the Behavior Health Services agenda item until a later Board Meeting. Ms. M. Edwards seconded the motion. The motion did not pass by a 3-4 vote. Mr. Clinton Williams, Mr. Kelvin Edwards, Ms. Keedra Whitaker, and Ms. Lucy Edwards voted against.

Mr. Williams made a motion to instruct the Superintendent to bring a list of service providers that can go under contract with the Board to provide Behavior Health Services to the school system's children. Ms. L. Edwards seconded the motion. The motion passed by a 6-1 vote. Ms. Marjorie Edwards voted against.

Board Per Diem Increase. Mr. Williams made a motion for the Board to explore the option of a Board Per Diem Increase. Ms. L. Edwards seconded the motion.

Mr. Williams amended his motion to have the Finance & Facilities Committee and Dr. Smith-Woofter to explore the opportunity for the Board to have a Per Diem Increase and bring that recommendation back to the Board for consideration. Ms. L. Edwards seconded the motion. The motion passed by a 7-0 vote.

Dr. Smith-Woofter announced that she would like to end the meeting on a positive note in that Northampton County Schools' dropout rate is one of the lowest in the State and that the North Carolina Legislative Black Caucus is interested in visiting us. The tentative date that has been scheduled is April 20th or 21st and I will let you know as soon as I find out which date it is, because they will hold a Town Hall Meeting at the school.

Adjournment. The Board adjourned the meeting at 9:59 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Dr. Monica Smith-Woofter, Superintendent