

**NORTHAMPTON COUNTY BOARD OF EDUCATION
SUMMARY OF FORMAL ACTIONS TAKEN AT
MONDAY, May 9, 2016, REGULAR MEETING**

This document summarizes formal actions taken on substantive matters at the regular meeting of the Northampton County Board of Education on May 9, 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; Clinton Williams, Lucy Edwards, Kelvin Edwards, Phil Matthews, Keedra Whitaker, Dr. Monica Smith-Woofter, ex officio

Members Absent: Marjorie Edwards, Vice Chair

Others Present: Administration and interested parties

ACTIONS TAKEN:

Closed Session. The Board entered closed session at 5:39 p.m. pursuant to G.S. 143-318.11 (a)(1), (a)(6), and (a)(7) to discuss student matters, personnel matters, and to consider matters relating to investigations of alleged criminal conduct. Ms. Keedra Whitaker and Mr. Kelvin Edwards were not present for the vote.

Approval of the Meeting Agenda. The meeting agenda was approved as presented.

Break. The Board took a five-minute break at 7:20 p.m. The Board reconvened the meeting at 7:25 p.m.

Approval of Consent Agenda. The Board approved the minutes under the consent agenda. The consent agenda included the approval of special meeting minutes for November 30, 2015 and regular session minutes for December 15, 2015. The Board amended the motion to delete the closed session minutes for April 4, 2016 from the agenda.

2016-2017 District Calendar Revision. The Board approved the 2016-2017 District School Calendar, Option 3 as revised and presented by the Policy Committee with a student start date of Monday, August 29, 2016. This revision was necessary due to school systems not being able to use Friday, August 26th as a start date, because the start date must be the closes date to a Monday.

Records Request Fees. The Board approved to amend the fees for requests for student records as presented by the Policy Committee as follows:

- Requests by Current Students – There would be no charge for student records requests from current students.
- Requests by Former Students – There would be a \$10.00 fee for student records requests by former students, but there would be a \$35.00 fee for full cumulative record/disability student records requests.

- Requests by Agencies, Corporations, Universities and Attorneys – There would be a \$20 fee for student records requests by agencies, corporations, universities and attorneys, but there would be a \$35.00 fee for full cumulative record/disability student records requests.

Board Policy No. 7100 – Recruitment and Selection of Personnel. The Board approved the revisions to Board Policy No. 7100 - Recruitment and Selection of Personnel, as recommended by the Policy Committee and Tharrington Smith with the deletion of the following inserts: “a cousin, aunt/uncle, niece/nephew; and/or anyone living in the employee’s household” in the two places where it appeared in the policy under item 2 (c) & (d). The Policy Committee is recommending the approval of the other changes that were recommended by Tharrington Smith.

FY 2016-2017 Current Expense Budget. Mr. Matthews stated on behalf of the Finance & Facilities Committee that the Current Expense budget is in the total of \$3,850,000.00 and is inclusive of \$3,550,000.00 County Appropriations, \$85,000.00 Fines & Forfeitures, and \$215,000.00 Current Expense Fund Balance to complete this budget.

The Board approved the FY 2016-2017 Current Expense Budget, as recommended by the Finance and Facilities Committee. This budget will be submitted to the County Commissioners prior to the May 15, 2016 deadline.

FY 2016-2017 Capital Outlay Budget. Mr. Matthews stated on behalf of the Finance & Facilities Committee that the Capital Outlay Budget is in the total amount of \$2,045,000.00 and is inclusive of \$645,000.00 County Appropriation and a new request of \$1,400,000.00 from the County Commissioners to cover the school system’s Re-organizational Plan for the 2016-2017 school year.

The Board approved Version A of the FY 2016-2017 Capital Outlay Budget, as recommended by the Finance and Facilities Committee. Ms. Keedra Whitaker was not present for the vote. This budget will be submitted to the County Commissioners prior to the May 15, 2016 deadline.

Reconsideration of the FY 2016-2017 Current Expense Budget.

Dr. Smith-Woofter reminded the Board that as we are presenting our Capital Outlay Budget, we don’t have an official commitment to what we are asking for from the County Commissioners and we are not pulling from our Fund Balance to balance the budget. We understood at the County Commissioners’ Meeting last Wednesday that they have \$9.2 million in Fund Balance, which is 32% of their operating budget. It is recommended that they retain 25% of that amount for operating expenses (3-4 months’ worth) and that amounts to \$3.2 million. Therefore, \$9.2 million minus \$3.2 million rounds out to about \$6 million of their funds that are not allocated or appropriated out. The school system currently has \$1.1 million in Fund Balance and it is recommended that we retain 3 months of operating expenses.

Therefore, since we are budgeting \$215,000.00 out of our Fund Balance for Current Expense, can’t we ask for the \$215,000.00 from the county rather than going into our Fund Balance?

The Board approved to reconsider the agenda item #13.04 FY 2016-2017 Current Expense Budget.

The Board approved to keep the FY 2016-2017 Current Expense Budget as presented with the exception of allocating \$215,000.00 from Fund Balance and to request an additional \$215,000.00 from the County Appropriation, which would make that request \$3,765,000.00 to fund the Current Expense Budget. This motion was based on the recent information received from the Superintendent.

Dr. Smith-Woofter informed the Board that the administration would amend the draft letter to the County Commissioners to reflect the additional amount that we are asking for Current Expense.

Board Per Diem Increase. The Board approved to request that the County Commissioners increase the Board Per Diem by \$200.00 instead of the \$100.00 previously recommended by the Finance and Facilities Committee. Mr. Phil Matthews voted against. This amount would be officially requested in formal correspondence to the County Commissioners when the local budget is submitted on or before May 15, 2016.

The Way Forward Plan. Dr. Smith-Woofter reminded the Board that in our Joint Meeting with the County Commissioners last Wednesday we discussed the considerations that the Board has presented to them along with the advanced notification that we would need additional funding in consideration of the plan that was approved two months ago. Therefore, we are all aware that at this time that the Commissioners are not committing to any additional funding appropriations. In addition, we talked about the sales tax distribution and when that money is coming. We do know from projections from the State Department that \$617,000.00 is projected to be allocated to Northampton County. However, the County Manager's most recent notification is saying that we are going to be shy of that \$617,000.00 and roughly it would be \$500,000.00. When I talked with Senator Ingram, her literature is saying it will be closer to \$700,000.00. Regardless of the amount we are appropriated as a county, that funding must be used for public schools, community colleges, and economic development. In knowing that this money was on its way eventually from last year's General Assembly with approved distributions, the County Commissioners met sometime earlier this year, and under the agenda item that says Sales Tax notes that Ms. Tuner provided us with information that she received from whom she has to work with at the state level guiding her as to what has to be appropriated to any of the three areas. In Article 42, which I mentioned in that meeting, the state says 50% must be allocated to education, but her guidance is saying there is no requirement that must be afforded to any of the entities; therefore, we could actually receive more.

In the County Commissioners' thinking earlier this year you will see on the second page of that document the amount of funding they are considering to make available to the schools: Northampton Seaboard Advanced Industrial Laboratory - \$246,000.00 and Northampton High School Automotive Vocational /Neat - \$75,000.00. We presented to the County Commissioners in January of 2015 the proposal regarding the Northampton Seaboard Advanced Industrial Laboratory; therefore, the projections we were considering as a Board at that time we were trying to make sure we have a presence in as many townships as possible for educational opportunities. Since then, we realized we were not going to be able to do that, because we are not financially stable to reopen school facilities that are already closed. They did reference that presentation that we had with them back in January. I will certainly follow-up and I mentioned that to Ms. Turner that while they may have been some of our recommendations for funding that we really need to re-purpose that money based on what direction the Board may go from this point. Hopefully, we will get at least 60% of that amount, but how they allocate that 60% should be a decision that we make as a governing body and not the County Commissioners. It would be my recommendation that the amount they intend to appropriate to public schools, just appropriate that amount and let the Board of Education make a decision as to how they are going to appropriate or designate that lump sum of money within the school system.

Also, as a result of that Joint Meeting last week, Principal Battle was there along with a few other staff members who participated in the meeting. Hearing some of the conversation from some of her staff and one of things that has come out of all of this is that our staff has said, "in the past they have not had the opportunity to give a voice, the Board has not asked them their opinion, and they have not had a chance to give formal input on any of the decisions that affects them." Therefore, Ms. Battle took it upon herself, because she wanted to know how the high school felt and a short survey was done on Friday and

we received the survey results. I called Ms. Taylor this morning to let her know that the survey results are available and would like to share them with the Board. During that discussion, we realized all the other schools have not had a voice either. Therefore, we have surveyed all schools to give them the opportunity to have a voice. Our administrators, in less than three hours, came up with a short survey to all staff before the end of the day. The other attachment that you have shows you the survey results and the pointed comments whether favorable or unfavorable. As we move forward in considering all of the stakeholders in our county, it is our job to give you the information and the facts so they can be used for consideration as you continue to move forward with the direction you are going in.

As we have talked about earlier, at this time we have passed the window of time with regards to any consideration of moving students to different locations. We knew we would have to have modular units at Gaston Elementary and Conway Middle Schools. In reviewing the survey summary, it looks like the majority of elementary and middle school staffs are not in agreement with schools sharing spaces and the high school is interested in moving.

While we have been in much conversation about students having to travel, we also have staff that will be impacted and will have to travel as well. One of the biggest concerns that I have had and we have discussed it as well as a collective Board is that since 2006, the last ten years, we have been talking about building a new school and it is yet to happen. To be presented with constantly, let's make a plan two to five years down the road. We are past that now and the only way to build a new school is to raise taxes. Because of past decisions of the county, our first debt relief for the county will not happen until '2026. So you can't expect other revenues coming into Northampton County to be allocated for a new school. That is not going to happen. Looking at the debt ratio that our county has, I don't see any of the funds that are normally coming to the county. Therefore, having a new school within the next ten years, unless the State of North Carolina is going to come up with some means to help Tier I counties so that it is not a burden on our taxpayers and with the economic distress that our county has, the money will have to come from the state level. The decisions that our Board is going to have to make, we need to prepare for the future and whatever buildings we end up in that is going to be the future.

One of the other concerns that I have and I shared with the County Commissioners is that we cannot continue to put this off and it is time we start investing and we have to make some decisions. Whatever building we keep open, we have to make sure we have funding to afford the maintenance and upkeep of it, because the \$345,000.00 Capital Outlay Appropriation has not been enough to deal with the aging of our facilities. Regardless of where we are, we are going to need money to make sure our buildings are up to par for our students.

Mr. Matthews made a motion to revisit all the options in regards to the reconfiguration of schools. The motion did not pass for the lack of a second.

Dr. Smith-Woofter revisited with the Board what took place when the Board voted on Option 4 at the April 4, 2016 Board Meeting to include Phase I & II.

Mr. Williams made a motion to continue with Option 4 with the immediate plan to relocate the high school from its current location to the now Gaston Middle School campus, move one additional grade level from Gaston Elementary School as recommended by the Superintendent to Gaston Elementary Pre-K Campus, move Gaston Middle School students to Gaston Elementary School, place Early College at Gaston Elementary Pre-K Campus, and continue to build on the plan to finalize Option 4 within a period of time that is necessary to secure funding. Ms. L. Edwards seconded the motion. The motion passed by a 4-2 vote. Ms. Rhonda Taylor and Mr. Phil Matthews voted against.

The Board discussed the rationale for removing the cost of \$700,000.00 from the budget for the mobile classrooms.

Mr. Matthews made a motion to revisit agenda item #13.05 Capital Outlay Budget for the 2016-2017 school year. Mr. K. Edwards seconded the motion. The motion carried.

Mr. Matthews made a motion that the Board revisit the 2016-2017 Capital Outlay Budget and remove \$782,000.00 from the \$2,045,000.00 amount that we requested and that brings the 2016-2017 Capital Outlay Budget total to \$1,263,000.00. The \$782,000.00 budget amount included \$700,000 for mobile classrooms and \$82,000.00 for renovations to install mobile classrooms.

Ms. Taylor announced that the following schools would remain in the same locations as currently configured: Willis Hare Elementary School, Conway Middle School, and Central Elementary School. The Alternative Program will move to the Gaston Elementary Pre-K Campus.

Personnel. The Board approved the personnel as presented.

Substitutes/Volunteers:

Jaretta Ayersman, Volunteer

Josephine Easter, Volunteer

Regina Cheek, Substitute Bus Driver

Valerie Hinton, Substitute Teacher

Sharon Peele, Substitute Teacher

Resignations:

Annie Kee, Bus Monitor, Central Elementary School, 6/8/16

Sonya Johnson, Teacher, Central Elementary School, 6/2/16

Kalene Hutchinson, Teacher, Central Elementary School, 6/10/16

Jessica Ferguson, Elementary Teacher, Gaston Elementary School, 4/18/16

Danielle McDevitt, Elementary Teacher, Gaston Elementary School, 6/10/16

Melissa Luge, Elementary Teacher, Gaston Elementary School, 6/10/16

La'Shonda Wood, Pre-K Teacher, Gaston Elementary School (Squire), 5/31/16

Darren Williams, EC Teacher, Conway Middle School, 6/10/16

Asia Knowles, Science Teacher, Northampton County High School, 6/10/16

Samuel Belgique, Math Teacher, Northampton County High School, 6/14/16

Retirements:

Qwendolyn Bowser, EC Teacher, Conway Middle School, 7/1/16

Josephine Faison, Teacher Assistant, Conway Middle School, 6/30/16

Martha Paige, Principal, Gaston Middle School, 6/30/16

Mary June Phelps, Administrative Assistant (EC), Central Services, 6/30/16

Leave of Absences:

Curtis Benton, Bus Driver, Conway Middle School, 4/21/16 thru 5/25/16

Catherine Thomason, Media Coordinator, Gaston Middle School, 4/12/16 thru 4/18/16

Jamica Scott, School Nutrition Assistant, Gaston Middle School, 5/5/16 thru 6/20/16

Robert Webb, Custodian, Northampton County High School, 4/5/16 thru 4/20/16

Sharia Joyner, CTE Teacher, Northampton County High School, 4/4/16 thru 5/23/16

James Tillery, Transportation/Maintenance Director, Central Services, 4/4/16 thru 4/15/16

Alice Woods, Administrative Assistant, Willis Hare Elementary School, Medical Extension thru 5/17/16

Additional Assignments:

Sarah Kent, EC Teacher Homebound Instructor, Conway Middle School, 4/5/16 thru 6/10/16

Administrative Transfers (Promotions):

Monte` Freeman, from Gaston Middle School, Assistant Principal to Gaston Middle School, Principal, 7/1/16

Business Before The Board For Information

Parents As Partners for Student Success. Dr. Smith-Woofter informed the Board that this item was requested by the Board from the administration to share with the various providers who are serving our students and parents in our district. It is a combined list of agencies that are available for staff to share with parents also some of these groups are already working with students and they come to our schools and provide services. Everyone on this list has gone through the SHAC Committee. The Board held a discussion regarding the providers coming into the schools without having a contract. Attorney Malone asked the Board should this agenda item be referred to the Policy Committee now that we have this list of providers?

Mr. K. Edwards stated that he would like to make a motion to move this agenda item from Board Information to an Action Item for the Board to allow Superintendent Dr. Smith-Woofter to come up with the outline and procedures for the agencies presented to serve our students and to make a recommendation to the Policy Committee. Ms. Whitaker seconded the motion. The vote was 3-2-1. Ms. Rhonda Taylor and Mr. Phil Matthews voted against and Mr. Clinton Williams abstained.

Elimination of Pre-Pay Status for all 10 Month, Non-Licensed Employees. Dr. Smith-Woofter informed the Board that the administration is considering the elimination of pre-pay status for all 10 month, non-licensed employees that are specific to classified staff for the 2016-2017 school year. It was the consensus of the Board to request that the Superintendent check out all of the legalities of the pre-pay status before implementing this change.

Summary of Benchmark Data Analysis.

It was the consensus of the Board to move the Summary of Benchmark Data Analysis to the May 17, 2016 Board Meeting for Personnel scheduled for 5:30 p.m.

Adjournment. The Board adjourned the meeting at 10:30 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Dr. Monica Smith-Woofter, Superintendent