

**REGULAR MEETING
NORTHAMPTON COUNTY BOARD OF EDUCATION
Monday, March 10, 2014**

Members Present: Marjorie Edwards, Chair; Kelvin Edwards, Vice Chair; Erica Smith-Ingram, Donald Johnson, Rhonda Taylor, Phil Matthews, Clinton Williams, Dr. John Parker, ex officio
Others Present: Administration and interested parties

The Northampton County Board of Education held its regular meeting on March 10, 2014 in the Board Room of the Northampton County Schools administrative building. Chair Marjorie Edwards called the meeting to order at 5:10 p.m.

Closed Session

On a MOTION by Ms. Taylor, SECONDED by Mr. Matthews and APPROVED, the Board convened closed session at approximately 5:15 p.m. pursuant to General Statute: 143-318.11(a)(1) to prevent the disclosure of confidential personnel files under G.S. 115C-321 or other information that is privileged or confidential pursuant to state or federal law, or not considered a public record and pursuant to General Statute: 143-318.11(a)(6) to consider matters relating to initial employment of an individual employee or a complaint, charge, or grievance by or against an individual employee. The motion passed by a vote of 5-0. Ms. Erica Smith-Ingram was not present for the vote.

Open Session

On a MOTION by Mr. Matthews, SECONDED by Ms. Smith-Ingram, the Board adjourned closed session. The motion passed by a vote of 6-0. The Board's closed session ended at approximately 6:15 p.m. On a MOTION by Mr. Matthews, SECONDED by Mr. Johnson, the Board unanimously APPROVED to recess the meeting until 6:30 p.m. The motion passed by a vote of 6-0.

Mission Statement

Chair Marjorie Edwards read the Northampton County Schools' Mission Statement to the audience as follows: To provide each student the opportunity to gain skills, knowledge, and values necessary to function effectively in society through a cooperative effort of school, family, and community in a safe and nurturing environment.

Approval of Board Agenda

On a MOTION by Mr. Johnson, SECONDED by Ms. Smith-Ingram, the Board unanimously APPROVED the Board agenda, as recommended by the Interim Superintendent. On a MOTION by Mr. Williams, SECONDED by Ms. Smith-Ingram, the Board APPROVED to amend the Board agenda to add item #12.05 Board Chair's Pay for the Superintendent Search, as recommended by the Interim Superintendent. The motion passed by a vote of 4-1. Mr. Donald Johnson voted against.

Pledge of Allegiance

Brooklyn Pulley, a student at Squire Elementary School, led the Board and audience in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Shining Star Character Education

Ms. Catina Hoggard along with Dr. John Parker and Chair Marjorie Edwards recognized and presented the following students with **Shining Star Award Certificates** for demonstrating the focus of “Good Judgment” for the month of February:

Destiny Dean (a), Central Elementary School

Camryn Barnes (a), Conway Middle School

Cortez Santos, Gaston Elementary School

Hannah Baird, Gaston Middle School

Tatiyanna Eley, Northampton County Alternative School

Moriah Martin (a), Northampton County High School

Brooklyn Pulley, Squire Elementary School

Sarah Deberry, Willis Hare Elementary School

Chair M. Edwards: I wish to congratulate all of our “Good Judgment” students this month! Keep up the good work children and “thank you” parents for taking the time to bring them to the Board Meeting.

Public Comments

No one signed up to speak during Public Comments.

Break

The Board recessed in a five-minute break at 6:42 p.m. Chair M. Edwards announced to the audience that Mr. Kelvin Edwards had another meeting conflict and that is why he is absent tonight. Chair M. Edwards called the meeting back to order at 6:50 p.m.

Consent Agenda

On a MOTION by Mr. Matthews, SECONDED by Mr. Williams, the Board unanimously APPROVED the consent agenda consisting of the following items, as recommended by the Interim Superintendent.

The motion passed by a vote of 5-0.

Board Minutes – Closed Session – February 10, 2014

Regular Meeting – October 14, 2013 and November 12, 2013

Request for Fund Raiser

Northampton County High School – JROTC – Car Wash – March 8, 2014

Overnight Field Trip

Northampton County High School seniors will travel overnight to Atlanta, Georgia during April 13-15, 2014 to tour Spellman College, Clark-Atlanta College, Morehouse College and visit the Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. National Historical, Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.’s Birth Home and Crypt, the Freedom Hall, the Eternal Flame, and the Historic Ebenezer Baptist Church.

Business Before the Board for Approval

Dr. Parker informed the Board that we are in need of a school calendar make-up day for the day missed last week, March 4th. We are down to where we cannot add minutes to the school day anymore, we do have Easter Monday left, and it still keeps the week prior to Easter Sunday intact. It is the administration’s recommendation to use Easter Monday as the make-up day.

On a MOTION by Ms. Taylor, SECONDED by Mr. Matthews, the Board unanimously APPROVED to use Easter Monday, April 21, 2014 as the make-up day for the day missed on Tuesday, March 4, 2014, as recommended by the Superintendent.

Mr. Matthews: On our current calendar, is Easter Monday a holiday or a vacation leave day? If it is a holiday, it would need to be moved.

Dr. Parker: It is a vacation leave day versus a holiday, which the other option would be Memorial Day.

Ms. Taylor: Are the kids in school on Good Friday or are they out of school?

Dr. Parker: Our kids are out on Good Friday as they are out of school during the week of April 14-18, 2014.

Mr. Williams: Did you consider that the kids will be doing a lot of things on Easter Monday, such as Easter egg hunts and things like that? Did the administration consider Monday, April 14th of Easter week rather than Easter Monday?

Dr. Parker: No we did not and the reason why is that we thought people would rather have a solid week out rather than breaking the week up and then going on Tuesday through the following Monday.

The motion to approve Easter Monday, April 21, 2014 as the make-up day for the day missed on Tuesday, March 4, 2014 unanimously passed by a vote of 5-0.

Dr. Parker informed the Board that in reference to the agenda item, Four-Year Contract Determination and upon further reading, we have to go back and make sure that we are complying with 25% of the district; therefore I will be reworking that document and sending it back out to the Board in a correspondence. I ask for the Board's patience on that and I am requesting that item be tabled for further review.

On a MOTION by Mr. Johnson, SECONDED by Mr. Matthews, the Board unanimously APPROVED to table agenda item #12.02 Four-Year Contract Determination, as recommended by the Interim Superintendent. The motion passed by a vote of 5-0.

On a MOTION by Mr. Johnson, SECONDED by Mr. Williams, the Board unanimously APPROVED the changes in the retainer rates with the Agreement with Tharrington Smith to provide legal services to Northampton County Schools, as recommended by the Interim Superintendent. The motion passed by a vote of 5-0.

On a MOTION by Mr. Johnson, SECONDED by Mr. Matthews, the Board unanimously APPROVED personnel list below as presented and amended, as recommended by the Interim Superintendent. The motion passed by a vote of 5-0.

Personnel

Classified Recommendations:

Tosca Townes, Tutor (4 hours per week), Gaston Elementary School, 1/22/14 – 5/25/14

Contract Recommendations:

Tikisha Joyner, Exceptional Children Director, Central Services – Effective: July 1, 2014 – June 30, 2018

Betty Liverman, Principal, Central Elementary School – Effective: July 1, 2014 – June 30, 2018

Deborah Balmer-Drew, Assistant Principal, Willis Elementary School – Effective: July 1, 2014 – June 30, 2018

Retirements:

Carolyn Williams, Child Nutrition Supervisor, Central Services, 4/1/14

Perry Roberts, Agriculture Teacher, Northampton County High School, 3/1/14

Resignations:

Alton E. Pope Jr., Bus Mechanic, Transportation Department, 2/28/14

Corey Williams, CTE/Special Populations Teacher Assistant, Northampton County High School, 2/27/14

Hans D. Lassiter, Chief Human Resource Officer, Central Services, 3/31/14

For Information

Sandibel Reyes, Volunteer, Conway Middle School, 3/11/14

George Gee, Substitute Bus Mechanic, Transportation Department, 3/11/14

Minerval Phillips, Substitute Bus Driver, NCS, 3/13/14

Vander Monroe II, Assistant Girl's Basketball Coach, Northampton County High School, 2/24/14

The Board held the following discussion regarding an increase in stipend for Board Chair Marjorie Edwards:

Mr. Williams: I would like to recommend that the Board add as an agenda item that Chair Marjorie Edwards receive an increase in stipend during the Superintendent Search process. The Board agreed about two Board Meetings ago and recommended that Chair Marjorie Edwards receive an increase in stipend because of all of the extra duties. I understand that information did go before the County Commissioners and they denied the increase. I don't think their response has been formally communicated back to us at this point; therefore, I would like to see this Board make some resolution about how to resolve that at this meeting. Attorney Malone did share with us that it is N.C. General Statute that the Board of Commissioners approves the change in Board stipends. I believe that we need to do something for the Board Chair, because of all of the extra duties she will endure during this Superintendent Search.

Ms. Smith-Ingram: Do we have any funding in our travel budget? Is it allowable to use the travel line item?

Chair M. Edwards: That would be up to the attorney and Mr. Holloway.

Attorney Rod Malone: The issue, as I understand it from the Board Members and Mr. Holloway that it is not funds. I think you have more than enough money to cover the extra \$50.00 per month. It is a weird statute, but for whatever reason the statute requires that the County Commissioners approve Board Members' compensation. There may be a way to cover it through the same way you cover mileage to your meetings and receive reimbursement or a fee allowance. As far as you know, has it officially been turned down?

Mr. Williams: I think that since it was in the newspapers that would make it official. I believe Dr. Parker informed us that he has had a conversation with the new County Manager.

Dr. Parker: According to the County Manager, it was officially turned down in a meeting of the Commissioners. We have not received a formal communication to that effect.

Mr. Johnson: This is why we are paying an attorney. Let him look into the legal aspects of the issue.

Ms. Smith-Ingram: I really do want to remain positive. They voted themselves a raise and we are asking for \$50.00 and they vote ours down. Our Chair has worked around the clock with phone calls, emails, and coordination. It is a lot and if we can ask the Board Attorney to have a conversation with the County Manager to see what the problem is.

Mr. Johnson: I will say this, because I don't have much time left. If you read the paper where our Chairman of the County Commissioners said, "We want to give the citizens of our community the opportunity to vote on whether we should serve liquor within the county, because we want to give the people the opportunity to vote for it." Yet, when we asked for a referendum to build a school they said, "Yes" and a month later they came back and said, "No".

What is the difference in trying to get liquor-by-the-drink than having a building for our children to go in to?

Attorney Rod Malone: I will work with the Superintendent on this issue.

On a MOTION by Ms. Smith-Ingram, SECONDED by Mr. Williams, the Board unanimously APPROVED to amend the agenda to add item #12.06 Discussion of Regularly Scheduled Board Meetings, as recommended by the Interim Superintendent. The motion passed by a vote of 5-0.

Chair M. Edwards: On the 2nd Tuesday after the 2nd Sunday I have a standing meeting.

Mr. Williams: Would it be possible for us to look at a date for each month as we go instead of doing it ahead of time?

Dr. Parker: We do have to give official notification to the public, but as long as we do that I think we will be okay.

Chair M. Edwards: I do want Mr. Edwards to be here for our meetings as well, because he has a standing meeting on second Mondays.

Attorney Rod Malone: I think the cleanest thing to do, because you are suppose to post your regular meeting schedule, would be to leave your regular meeting schedule as it is on second Mondays and notify the public on a month to month basis for now.

On a MOTION by Mr. Williams, SECONDED by Mr. Matthews, the Board unanimously APPROVED to schedule the April Board Meeting on Monday, March 31, 2014 due to scheduling conflicts, as recommended by the Interim Superintendent. The motion passed by a vote of 5-0.

Superintendent's Information

Dr. Parker addressed the Board and audience as follows:

- Tonight, I would like to announce a few personal things related to our staff.
 - ~I would like to extend congratulations to Mr. Oliver Holley and his wife on the addition of a new member of their family! Their "new baby girl" was born this morning and we extend our congratulations to them.
 - ~As part of the personnel agenda, Mr. Hans Lassiter will be moving on to a new job as Executive Director of Human Resources in Washington County Schools. Mr. Lassiter is not here tonight as his grandmother passed away on Sunday. I would like to personally thank Mr. Lassiter for the work he has done in helping me make the transition into a new job. I also thank him for all of the hard work he has done while I have been here serving for the last six weeks.
 - ~Finally, as I hold up this beautiful potted plant, we have a member of our staff, Ms. Carolyn Williams, who is retiring on March 31st. I think everybody here knows Carolyn so well and knows that she does not like any hoopla around her in terms of recognitions and things like that and that speaks to the person that she is and that I have grown to know. I knew her before, but not as well as I have gotten to know her in these last six weeks. In her absence and knowing that somehow she knows what it going on here, I want to express appreciation on behalf of the students, staff, and the School Board for the wonderful job she has done for the past 20 years plus and most recently as Child Nutrition Director. We want everyone to know that we will be presenting Ms. Williams with this plant and my comment on that is when I had the good fortune, right after I got here, to go around and meet our staff. I went over to the annex building and met Ms. Williams and sat down with her. It was a very touching moment and what I would say about that moment is that my wife, June, and I had this discussion on the way back from church one day. June said, "John what is your definition of "grace"? I had a hard time with that, as you know you talk about it a lot and you hear it spoken a lot, but I would say to you all that my experience with Carolyn over the last six weeks is that she is a

living example of “grace”. I just wanted to say that on Ms. Williams’ behalf and if Ms. Edwards would like to make comments on behalf of the Board.

Chair M. Edwards: First of all I want to say that I echo Dr. Parker’s sentiments. I have had the opportunity to go over and talk to Ms. Williams about a couple of things and the whole time you are over there she is “pumping you up”. I am over there trying to give her some love and talk to her and the whole time you are talking to her, she is saying something good or something positive. What a sweet person we have had here in Northampton County. Certainly, we want to do a lot more, but as Dr. Parker said, she just won’t receive it like that. She is always telling us that she will be all right and she is okay. She is just a great inspiration and she is somebody we are certainly going to miss. We certainly cannot fill those shoes for the kind of person Ms. Williams has been in Northampton County. We are going to miss her, but just show her love. We wanted to give her this plant and a nice card, because we the Board just can’t thank her enough for the meals that she would be sure that we have and for all that she has done for our children. We want all of you to know that we will really miss her.

Thank you Ms. Harris for finding such a beautiful green arrangement for Ms. Williams, because it really looks alive, as she likes to dig in her yard and we hope she has enough energy to plant it in her yard.

Dr. Parker: The other thing I wanted to say is that I look forward to the Board Facilities Retreat on next Monday, March 17, 2014 at 3:00 p.m. I will be collapsing last week and this week into an update and I will have that delivered to you all this week prior to Friday in preparation for that Retreat.

Board Information

Chair Marjorie Edwards addressed the audience as follows: As you know the Board is in search of a new superintendent and we received 20 applications. We have had a job of going through 20 applications and we have narrowed them down to 8 applications right now. The Board will start their interview process during March 15th & 16th; on March 17th we will hold our Facilities Retreat; and on March 18th we will try to finalize all of the work that we have to do regarding the Superintendent Search. We certainly want to thank the public and those who applied for superintendent. We will get back to you all and our constituents to let you know what is going on. There is still a lot of work for the Board ahead and we want to thank you for all that you have done starting with the Survey Monkey. In all that you have done you have certainly used it and the Board Members are still absorbing a lot of that information as we try to reign in another superintendent as good as Dr. Parker or better. We are certainly going to be struggling hard to do that, because we want Northampton County to have what it needs and the best. We have good people working for us and your input is looked at beside what we are doing. We thank you very much for coming out and for everything you do for our students on a daily basis. If there is anything this Board can do we stand ready to help you in any way that we can. We wish you a good evening.

- NCSBA Assembly Hall - March 11-12, 2014 - NCSBA Assembly Hall, Raleigh, NC – 9:30 a.m. – 5:00 p.m.
- NCSBA School Board Chairs Seminar – March 13, 2014 – NCSBA Assembly Hall, Raleigh, NC – 9:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m.
- NCSBA March 14, 2014 Webinars: Employee Use & Misuse of Social Media – 7:00 a.m. – 5:30 p.m.; Ethics for School Board Members – 7:00 a.m. – 9:00 p.m.; Student Searches: Law & Policy Webinar – 7:00 a.m. – 5:30 p.m.

- Board Facilities Retreat – March 17, 2014 @ NCCAR, Garysburg, NC – 3:00 p.m. – 7:00 p.m.
- Next Regular Board Meeting – March 31, 2014 – Board Room – 5:00 p.m. (Closed Session) – Open Session beginning at approximately 6:30 p.m.
- NCSBA Legal Issues at Graduation Webinar – April 1, 2014 – 7:00 a.m. – 5:30 p.m.
- NSBA Annual Convention – April 5-7, 2014 – New Orleans, LA

Adjournment

On a MOTION by Mr. Johnson, SECONDED by Ms. Smith-Ingram, the Board adjourned the meeting at 7:15 p.m.

Approved: July 7, 2014

Marjorie Edwards, Board Chair