

**REGULAR MEETING
NORTHAMPTON COUNTY BOARD OF EDUCATION
Monday, March 5, 2012**

Members Present: Donald Johnson, Chair; Marjorie Edwards, Vice Chair; Bill Little, Erica Smith-Ingram, Lafayette Majette, Kelvin Edwards, Rhonda Taylor, Dr. Eric Bracy, ex officio
Others Present: Administration, press and interested parties

The Northampton County Board of Education held its regular meeting on March 5, 2012 in the Board Room of the Northampton County Schools administrative building. Chair Donald Johnson called the meeting to order at 5:30 p.m.

Closed Session

On a MOTION by Ms. Taylor, SECONDED by Mr. Majette and APPROVED, the Board convened in closed session at approximately 5:35 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; pursuant to General Statute: 143-318.11(a)(3) to consult with the Board's attorney in order to preserve the attorney-client privilege 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 and Mr. Kelvin Edwards were not present for the vote.

Open Session

A motion was made and seconded to go into open session. The motion passed by a vote of 7-0. The closed session ended at approximately 6:35 p.m.

Approval of Board Agenda

On a MOTION by Ms. M. Edwards, SECONDED by Mr. Little, the Board unanimously APPROVED the Board Agenda, as recommended by the Superintendent. On a MOTION by Ms. Smith-Ingram, SECONDED by Mr. Little, the Board approved to amend the agenda to add the School Board Policy, a personnel item, and an additional item by the Superintendent to be considered by the Board under item #14 - Business Before the Board for Approval, as recommended by the Superintendent. The motion passed by a vote of 7-0.

Dr. Bracy addressed the Board as follows:

As the Board is aware, following the Board's vote in December to consolidate the two high schools, the administration began taking the necessary steps to ensure this could be accomplished prior to the beginning of the 2012-13 school year. While the Board and administration have engaged in considerable communication with the community regarding the two high schools, the Administration has continued to accomplish tasks required in order to ensure that a decision by the Board to go forward with the consolidation could be accomplished. In the event that the Board votes tonight to go forward with the consolidation of the schools, I would like the Board to consider the following items this evening:

- 1) The name of the school;
- 2) School colors and mascot;
- 3) Purchase of band uniforms; and

4) Painting contract for Northampton County High School-East.
On a MOTION by Mr. Little, SECONDED by Mr. Majette, the Board unanimously APPROVED to add the Superintendent's recommendations under item #14 - Business Before the Board for Approval, as recommended by the Superintendent. The motion passed by a vote of 7-0.

Pledge of Allegiance

Chair Johnson requested that the Board and audience stand and recite the Pledge of Allegiance.

Good News Award

Ms. Tanya Byrd-Robinson along with Dr. Eric Bracy and Chair Donald Johnson recognized and presented Good News Award Certificates to the following recipients:

Association of School Business Official's Certificate of Excellence in Financial Reporting Program Award – Mr. Joe Holloway, Finance Officer along with the **Finance Department** was recognized and presented a Good News Award Certificate for recently receiving the **Association of School Business Official's Certificate of Excellence in Financial Reporting Program Award for two consecutive years**. This prestigious award is only conferred to school systems that have met or exceeded the standards of the program.

National Leukemia and Lymphoma Society – Pennies for Patients – Conway Middle School was recognized and presented a Good News Award Certificate for meeting their goal of raising **\$1,100.00 for "Pennies for Patients"** sponsored by the National Leukemia and Lymphoma Society.

Shining Star Character Education

Ms. Tanya Byrd-Robinson along with Dr. Eric Bracy and Chair Donald Johnson recognized and presented the following students with **Shining Star Award Certificates** for demonstrating the focus of "Good Judgment" for the month of February:

Chelsea Wheeler (absent), Central Elementary School

Desiree Pope (absent), Conway Middle School

Blanca Carachure (absent), Gaston Elementary School

Isaiah Jones (absent), Northampton County Alternative School

Kathryn Martin (absent), Northampton County High School-East

Derrick Davis, Northampton West Stem High School

Markhial Rawles, Squire Elementary School

Kevin Garris (absent), Willis Hare Elementary School

Introduction of New Personnel

Mr. Phil Matthews introduced the following Northampton County Schools' new personnel to the Board and audience:

Daniel Smith, English Teacher, NCHS-East

Alana Metheney, English Teacher, NCHS-East

Public Comments

The following persons addressed the Board during Public Comments:

Mr. James Mills – "Honorable Board Members, community, friends and visitors, I would like to start out with a little Black History moment. In 1809 on March 15th, a man was born by the name of Joseph Jenkins Roberts. The family of Joseph Jenkins Roberts is the Roberts of

Northampton County. To make a long story short, Joseph Jenkins Roberts went on to be the first African American President of Liberia. If you look it up, he was the first African American President. Now why do I say that to you tonight, because I want to emphasize to you and I know that you know, but I want to reiterate to you the importance of the treasures that you preside over—our children. I say our children because the children belong to all of us. The children are our future. I am here tonight, because I am concerned. I will just say to you and let you know the experience that we had just over the river in the town of which I was the Mayor of Scotland Neck. Our experience was that our children rose at 4:00 a.m. and some at 4:30 a.m. to go to school. It was a long ride. Those children rode a long time on the bus and they were tired when they got to school. We found that when they got to school they had breakfast. After being up so early in the morning, the long ride and having breakfast, they were tired in the classroom too. We found that these children's parents were not able to go the school and participate in extra-curricula activities. We found that these children often times when they would get up in the morning would miss the bus and did not have rides to school and were suspended from school. I was told in the Scotland Neck area that we had about 85 students on suspension at one time. What I am just saying to you is that these are some of the experiences of children living so far away from the school that they attend. Thank you very much and I just wanted to bring some of these things to your attention.”

Naomi High – “Good afternoon Board and parents of Northampton County East and West. I am here tonight to let you know that I have a grandson who lives on the other side of Henrico. He gets up every morning and stands at the road at 6:30 a.m. to catch the bus. If he has to do that now, what does the Board think with changing schools? He will have to be at the road at 5:30 a.m. to catch the bus? That means he will have to get up very early. How do you think he is going to be able to study and do his work at school peacefully and understandably? Sometimes he has a hard time now. He wants to grow up and be a carpenter or a chef and you have to go through something at a young age to be that. He is cooking right now and doing carpentry. If he has to miss school, be late or cannot get his homework out because you can't do your work at school when the teacher puts it on the board. How do you think we as black people feel about that? Thank you.”

Anthony Roberts – Mr. Anthony Roberts distributed a handout to the Board. “Good afternoon. I would like to first thank Mr. Johnson and each of you for supplying a written response to my request. I would like to provide a copy of that response for each of you, as there are several very important questions that we have for you tonight in following up.

1. On page 2, the second underlined passage indicates that you went to the County Commissioners to request funding and that they officially decided in August of 2010 that they would not place a referendum for a new high school on the ballot to be voted on by taxpayers. Have you gone back to the County Commissioners to request funding or funding options since August 2010?
2. On page 3, you noted that Skinner, Lamm and Highsmith provided a \$12 million dollar estimate, but there was still no formal soliciting of bids, vendors, or detailed statement of work for turning Central Elementary into a high school. There was a general estimate of \$150 per sq. ft. for construction of new space and \$75 per sq. ft. for renovated space. What I wanted to note was that it was a general agreement among the Board that \$12 million dollars was not available to fund renovations so you did not move forward.
3. On page 4, you stated that it does not take \$4 million dollars to renovate NCHS-West and that it really only takes \$492,000 for a new roof, which I believe the Board did on last year. Using

the figures in #2 above and the email from Skinner, Lamm and Highsmith, West has the 65 acres almost double what is required for a high school and only needs 2 additional classrooms. This roughly equals to 1500 sq. ft. of additional space for West to accommodate all high school students. Using Skinner's estimate - $\$150 \times 1500 \text{ sq. ft.} = \$225,000$. If you use this figure along with the \$40,000 in transportation to bring students from East to West times 5 years until a new high school is built would only cost \$425,000 to put them in one high school. This makes more economical sense rather than spending over \$5 million dollars on East to close it within 5 years. Why did the Board choose to spend \$7 million more dollars to put the school at East when you would only have to spend less than one half million to put the school at West?

4. On page 5, you stated that the over \$5 million dollars for East (\$3.7 million dollars of that for just the mechanical systems alone and \$1.5 million dollars in staffing for one high school). This figure did not include a detailed scope of work and is grossly under cost. Why would the Board spend over \$7 million dollars to put the school at East when it makes better economic sense and the use of taxpayers' dollars to put it at West? Again, this is not about East or West. It is about making good sense and good judgment, which I don't believe the Board is doing at this moment. As a concerned parent and citizen, again we ask you to reconsider this merger. Like my Pastor told us yesterday, you guys are throwing us into a lion's den, but God does make miracles happen."

Clinton Williams – "Good evening. First, I would like to say that my comments are primarily to the seven Board Members. The seven Board Members elected to represent the schools and the children in Northampton County. I have sat right where you are sitting tonight and I know that decisions are very difficult to make sometimes and sometimes the public does not always understand what goes into decisions. You all have heard a lot of information tonight. You heard a lot of information two or three Board Meetings ago. You heard a lot of information when we met at the Wellness Center and we talked about the schools. I have already given you the information that I know about MBAJ reports and all the other figures that everyone is calling out. This is really a common sense approach and not an insult to anyone's intelligence. Our most valuable assets are our children. When we don't do what we need to do for the children in Northampton County we are going to lose them. We are already losing them, because you have heard how long it takes them to get to school and then to be motivated. There are a lot of social issues and I am not talking about money. It is not about economics right now, I am talking about emotional, mental and behavior problems and academic issues that our children are suffering with. If we do not take the proper steps to make sure that they are able to reach their greatest potential I think we are putting them at risk. Every child that we do not educate is a risk to all of us. There is not a night that I go home, that I have in the back of my mind about what is going on in my community. Each time that we do not educate a child all of us better have that something on our minds. I would like to ask everyone in here to make sure you are looking at your news and newspapers (Daily Herald) so that you can see what happens when our children our not educated. These folks are coming up here every single time to talk to Board Members to say look, we are crying out to you to make a difference, because we know what difference it is going to make in our children's lives. At least four of you who have the power or the authority to make a decision, but you don't make the right one. What happens to people when they are not happy with where they are? They leave. I have been on jobs I did not like and I left. You have been on jobs you did not like and you left. Children at schools that they don't like they are going to leave. Sometimes they don't always dropout, but they don't get what they need to be able to feel comfortable there and feel that they are thriving. If they feel that way, they are going to

leave. If everyone leaves, that is a threat to every single one of us in this room. The prisons are already full with our young men and women. I am not going to put a black or a white tag on it. I have worked in a lot of prisons and they don't discriminate. If you are white, you are going to get locked up and if you are black, Chinese or Puerto Rican it does not matter, you are going to get locked up. I am here before you tonight saying, let's do what we need to do for all of our children in Northampton County so that we don't have to keep coming here feeling like we are in a tug of war. Let's do what we need to do for these children. Go back to the drawing board and look at your decision. See what it is that you can do and do the right thing. Someone said that you paid a lot of money, but I am here to say that if you have to do it, don't do it at East. Let's do the right thing and put the money where our children are going to benefit."

Ms. Ella Lundy – "I would like to yield my time to Mr. Richie Hardy tonight."

Rev. Richard Webb – "Good evening to the Board Members and all of the parents who are represented here tonight. I have been here in several of your meetings to Mr. Johnson, Dr. Bracy and everyone here and I have also sat in the back with you as we sat around the round table talking of which we didn't get anywhere with that. I know this Board has a major decision to make, but I urge this Board to rethink your decision. According to the economy now, gas prices are going up and the money you are going to spend going into an old building that the engineers told you was worthless. It would be in the best interest of this Board to save money rather than to lose money, especially millions and millions of dollars. If you save money you will be able to build this new centrally located school that we are talking about. But, if you lose money, you will never have any. You heard about the County Commissioners didn't have any money. I thought about that if the Board would save the money and then go to the County Commissioners with it what you have and the money you can bring to the table, I believe it would be no problem that the County Commissioners would grant you the other money to build a new centrally located school. The Board is not acting in good faith. We as concerned citizens, parents, students, and taxpayers have faithfully attended your meetings. Even at this present time, this Board has not responded or shown any concern for the people of this community who put you where you are. The same pen that put you there is the same pen that can reverse where you are. We want people who sit on Boards who will be concerned about our students of this county and educate them, not playing a political game for some of your personal agendas. We know that it is not about education and if it were about education the children would have been educated a long time ago, because you had the money to do so. We are hoping tonight that as you sit around this Board, as you have heard when Mr. Anthony Roberts spoke to you, that you would reconsider what you are doing. The Board has not given the taxpayers a plan of merging nor have you given us a financial cause. Be honest with these people and put it all out on the table. Let them know what it is, talk to them and stop trying to do things under the table. Be open, because I think people just want you to be open. I think they will be more considerate when you are being open with them. Thank you and God bless you!"

Ms. Claiborne – "I would like to yield my time to Mr. Richie Hardy."

Chair Johnson: Mr. Hardy you will have 9 minutes to speak.

Mr. Richie Hardy – The proposed closing of West is a temporary solution until the money for a central high school is available. How long do you anticipate it will take for a central high school to be built? Indeed temporary, what is the School Board doing to save money for a new school? A recent newspaper article speaks of expanding activities when you are rationing other things. How can you save money when you are planning to spend more money? Contrary to what the public is being told, the high school building in Gaston is not closing. It is only closing as a high

school. It will be a middle school with operating cost still there. How much money is being spent to renovate NCHS-East? We all know according to the minutes that the school is in poor physical condition. We also know you have been advised not to put any money into that building because it has deteriorated from the many years of service. We also know it is a health risk for people such as myself with breathing issues. What is being done to remove the asbestos that is lying beneath the floor tile and the walls? Even though there have been several meetings, it has been a one-sided discussion. The Board has not provided all of the information. What are the actual financial numbers? What does it really cost to repair East. Not just from a physical appearance, but health wise as well. All of the changes in policies and meetings, the School Board has no clear plan what to do. There is no clear strategic plan to build a high school for all of the students of Northampton County. As time goes on, things get clearer and clearer. The Board is not here to serve the entire county. You have no concern for the taxpaying citizens of the western end. It makes no sense to put millions of dollars in a building that you have been told is worthless. Instead of spending money in expanding a newer and a much nicer facility, you will dump bags of money into a septic tank. East is an asbestos filled septic tank that can never be cleaned and brought back to life. You are only as good as your leader that is a history lesson. Gaston High School was not always Gaston Lakers. First, it was the Gaston High Rebels. A school built and operated in Northampton County for whites only. Can a person change that much that ran the school? Who was the principal of the school? Ask your Chairman, because he was the principal of that segregated school.

Ms. Owens – “I would like to yield my time to Mr. James Boone.”

Mr. James Boone – Chairman Johnson, Superintendent and all who are gathered here this evening. To God be the glory. I have sat in your set once upon a time and I now it is not easy. I am here for the children who represent our future. When I graduated from W.S. Creecy in 1954, I don't think they had Magna Cum Laude back then, but I graduated alright and went on to North Carolina Central University. Back then, Creecy School was K-12 with all grades on that campus. I want to ask you to take a good look at that situation with respect to East and West. You have at least one decent school on each end of the county that could become a K-12 or something similar. This would avoid confusion about going from one end of the county to another and it may be equally as well for our kids. It certainly would reduce the travel that we have heard so much about and that we already know about. We built Conway Middle back when I was on the School Board. I don't know which is in better shape Conway or East. I know on the west end you have very decent buildings. To me the real thing to do is have a k-12 on each end of the county and we all go home happy. Think about it. I haven't done the math, but think about that one. That is what I came here to recommend to you this evening. Thank you.”

Ms. Cynthia Mason – “I would like to yield my time to Ramel Gaston.”

Mr. Ramel Gaston – “I really don't have a lot to add to what has already been said. It makes no sense to me to invest whatever you are planning to invest in East when you have a perfectly good school at West. The only thing I ask is that you don't sell out your future just to make a dollar. I have seen it done in my town and I can attest to that. It is a pitiful thing to take a child and bus them two hours to a school. Would you want to ride two hours to go to work and two hours to come back? It makes no sense and there is nothing more that I can add that these people have added tonight from what I understand from the past weeks. The only thing I ask is to consider the Town of Gaston and do the right thing. Do what is the best for the children and the families that are here tonight. Put your egos aside.”

Ms. Susan Fields – “Good evening. I graduated from Gaston High School in 1977. I was a smart girl. Back then it was a thing of do what you feel not do what you want. I want the Board Members to know that I appreciate all the kids who are here. I appreciate all of the parents who are here who don’t serve a closet religion. They are out here because they want to say something. Mr. Johnson was my principal when I graduated from Gaston High School. I honestly can’t believe that he would sit here as a Board Member in this position and recommend that anybody from Gaston High School to go to East. That is a long ways to go. You may not remember it Mr. Johnson, but I remember you in the hall one day saying how short a distance you had to get to work. Do you think these kids want to ride two hours to get to school? Do you honestly think they want to ride two hours to get to school? My kids are about five minutes from school if you drive to school. The bus picks them up at 6:40 a.m. so to add an hour and a half to the time my children get up is terrible. I have two smart children. I am not bragging I am saying it because they are. God has given them a gift just like he has given a lot of these kids. They do their work and my son is a straight “A” student right now. My daughter is a straight “A” student when she wants to be. The bottom line is if Brooklyn has to get up any earlier than she gets up to get on the bus, she will fall way down and she is a junior this year. You all have confidently said this School Board Member has not changed his mind and this one is not going to change his mind. Well guess what, I am a parent from the Northampton County west end and I am not going to change my mind. I don’t know what is going to happen because I cannot tell the future, but you all need to put this thing on the backside and stop giving us 3 minutes to speak, stop giving these kids 3 minutes to speak, stop harassing us when we come up here to speak and let us say what we have to say. You know for yourself that East is not the best route to take. You have heard all of the figures that East is not the best route to take. I am a handicapped parent and when my kids miss the bus, it is hard for me to get up in the morning and take them to school. I have a trait of sickle cell along with diabetes and other things. My body does not start working sometimes until 10:00 a.m. and at 10:00 I will not be taking my kids to East. Thank you”

Break

Chair Johnson announced that the Board would take a 5-minute break at this time.

Consent Agenda

On a MOTION by Ms. M. Edwards, SECONDED by Ms. Taylor, the Board unanimously APPROVED the minutes of the following meetings, as recommended by the Superintendent. The motion passed by a vote of 7-0.

Closed Session – January 9, 2012 and February 13, 2012

Regular Meeting – November 7, 2011 and November 21, 2011

On a MOTION by Ms. Smith-Ingram, SECONDED by Mr. Little, the Board unanimously APPROVED the following Request for Fund Raiser, as recommended by the Superintendent. The motion passed by a vote of 7-0.

NCHS-West Senior Class – Doughnut Sale – April 16-27, 2012

On a MOTION by Mr. Little, SECONDED by Ms. M. Edwards, the Board unanimously APPROVED the following ERATE Contracted Services, as recommended by the Superintendent. The motion passed by a vote of 7-0.

Northampton County Schools and Century Link – WAN Services for 8 schools and District Office –

Effective: July 1, 2012 through June 30, 2012 - (Contract #120100501573 and 120200516786 and Quote #12-001080)

Northampton County Schools and Century Link – Frame Relay Service for Bus Garage –

Effective: July 1, 2012 through June 30, 2013 - (Contract #120100502069 and Quote #12-001140)

Ms. Smith-Ingram: According to our policies, we were not in compliance in reference to approving the \$225,000 that was approved under the Consent Agenda. Our Board Policy No. 7400 – Contract Administration states that any amount over \$5,000 must receive prior approval from the Board. I make a motion to reconsider the action taken to approve the \$225,000.

Attorney Rod Malone: The Consent Agenda is used for districts if there is no discussion to expedite a meeting for items that are not controversial. The Board approves contracts every Board meeting.

Ms. Smith-Ingram: The motion is on the floor. If I am on the affirming side to bring it back. We did not have bids before us and it was untiming. I have not missed a regular meeting.

Attorney Rod Malone: Board Policy No. 7400 allows the Board to expedite. Your threshold is \$5,000. It does not say on the agenda where. Any board Member can ask so that there can be some discussion.

Ms. Smith-Ingram: I raised this question for a reason. If I can be held liable as well as then I am not going to give in. I have a great respect for taxpayers. I am asking that the Board reconsider the \$225,000 that was approved under the Consent Agenda.

Attorney Rod Malone: I can't speak to the dollar amount.

Mr. Phil Matthews: The expenditure has not been spent.

Ms. Smith-Ingram: We voted on it and it was a long meeting. I raised a question and I need information to be clear.

The motion died for the lack of a decision on the matter.

Business Before the Board for Information

Senior Report 2012 – Mr. Phil Matthews shared with the Board the Senior Report for 2012 as of to-date. Mr. Matthews stated that it is certain that this report will change as time passes and the end of the year draws closer. The report showed the following data:

	# Seniors	# Higher Education (accepted)	# Military (accepted)	# Higher Education or Military (applied)	# Scholarships
NCHS-East	98	40	1	14	24
NCHS-West	54	14	0	36	1

Ms. Smith-Ingram: Thank you Mr. Matthews for giving us this report. I believe that last year this time we received this report during our February meeting. It showed at the high schools that 100% of those kids had at least applied to one four-year or community college. We do want to shoot for 100% compliance. We want to encourage our seniors that there is a road after Northampton County. Can we double check with the principals and make sure we get 100% applied by the next Board Meeting?

Mr. Matthews: I will use this same report format and add a percentage column to the report the next meeting.

Directors' Updates - Mr. Matthews also shared the Directors' Updates with the Board for the month of February 2012.

Business Before the Board for Approval

Ms. Smith-Ingram stated that she would refer the Policy Manual explanation to Attorney Malone.

Attorney Rod Malone addressed the Board as follows: The Policy Committee and I have been working on the Policy Manual and we have not been as successful as we had hoped. After discussing the matter with Ms. Smith-Ingram, the Superintendent and having conversations with the North Carolina School Boards Association what we would like to propose, because it is important for the Board to get a complete up-to-date set of policies as quickly as possible, would be that we contract with the School Boards Association to purchase their generic policy manual. It can be purchased for \$2,500.00 to \$3,500.00. The \$3,500.00 version includes them taking their standard manual and inserting Northampton and other things to create the manual. It then would require a marathon Work Session of 3-4 hours to go through and select policies. Sometimes there will be alternative policies that you would have to choose from and blanks that may have to be filled in. We should have a Work Session preferably in March when you will be able to iron out all of those details, adopt and officially have on your website available a complete Policy Manual. The other part of this is the idea that what we can also consider doing is over the next several meetings the Board would be free to review either a couple sections per month. If there are individual policies that the Board feels it wanted to change to better reflect this Board that those could be put in place. The lack of us being able to put our hands on a complete and up-to-date manual is something we feel the Board should address. The policies are out there, but we just don't have them all in one place. To get them all in one place is the other advantage of the School Boards Association that they will provide you with updates anytime the Legislature changes something or the federal government changes something or any other updates that are required. They will also maintain your policies on their website to make them accessible. You go on Northampton's website and it kind of links you to their website where they have all of those policies to make it simple. Finally, the other reason is that the Technology Department needs a series of policies adopted and it would be nice to get all of that done at one time. That is the recommendation coming from the Policy Committee Chair and I have talked to Dr. Bracy about it so that we are all on the same page.

On a MOTION by Mr. K. Edwards, SECONDED by Ms. Taylor, the Board unanimously APPROVED to contract with the North Carolina School Boards Association in the amount of \$3,500.00 to further advance the policies of Northampton County Schools, as recommended by the Superintendent. The motion passed by a vote of 7-0.

Attorney Rod Malone: The \$3,500.00 covers the first year's update.

Ms. Taylor: Will the Policy Committee continue to meet on a regular basis?

Attorney Rod Malone: You will only need to meet when updates come out and the Policy Committee would review those updates. We need to schedule the marathon Work Session for 3-4 hours as soon as everyone is available. That is very important to get it done. The School Boards Association can get the policies to us electronically pretty quickly.

On a MOTION by Ms. M. Edwards, SECONDED by Mr. Majette, the Board APPROVED the Child Nutrition Student Lunch Price Increase for a paid student lunch from \$1.65 to \$1.70 for the 2012-2013 school year, as recommended by the Superintendent. This increase is to ensure the continued compliance and gradual implementation of this ruling. The motion passed by a vote of 4-3. Mr. Kelvin Edwards, Ms. Rhonda Taylor and Ms. Erica Smith-Ingram voted against.

School Merger

Mr. Little presented the following motion: After receiving four independent studies regarding school consolidation that were provided by MBAJ Architecture, SFLA Architects, Roger Ballard with DPI, and Johnny Clark with DPI, and receiving comments from the public during the public hearings held at the Northampton County Cultural and Wellness Center on January 19, 2011,

Northampton County High School-West on February 24, 2011 and Northampton County High School-East on February 17, 2011, I move that the Board ratify its previous decision to consolidate the two high schools into a single high school to be located in the Creeksville precinct. Ms. M. Edwards SECONDED the motion.

Ms. Smith-Ingram: My question is that at the December Board Meeting Mr. Little was the sole person who voted against merging, because we split it into two motions. Technically, if you are not on the winning side you can't come back and offer another motion in contradiction to the motion that we rejected. I was just asking that question for clarification. Can he offer the motion? Based on what the attorney says, yes he can because he is not trying to change the motion he is ratifying it.

Attorney Rod Malone: He is not asking the Board to undo anything.

Ms. Smith-Ingram: I heard Mr. Little reference several reports such as MBAJ and SFLA. None of those contractors or architectural firms recommended as a primary option or a priority option for us to place the merged high school at East. MBAJ's recommendation was that we maintain PreK through 12th grade on each end of the county. SFLA did a report, but theirs was toward a centrally located high school, wherein the County Commissioners said they would not put it before the voters for a referendum. The representative from DPI said in the final report that we were given that East could not handle an additional load of students. Therefore, two years ago when we voted to move 7th & 8th graders to NCHS-West we did not do the same at NCHS-East, because East could not hold an additional load of students. Nothing has changed except we did do a little with the air conditioning and heating unit. Outside of that the building it is still not in any condition to be safe or even to provide temporary housing. I don't see how we as Board Members can make the decision to put a merged high school in a building that can never meet standards even after we spend \$5 million, \$7 million or however much it is going to take, because in this report that Mr. Matthews prepared and Mr. Roberts shared with us tonight, it is clear that it is only going to take (according to Skinner, Lamm & Highsmith) for a high school GPI standards at least a minimum of 36 acres. West has 65 acres and East has 50 acres. West is a 20-year old building and East is a 48-49 year old building. Why would we put \$5 - \$7 million dollars in a building that is not our money? I think we are being a little frivolous to want to put that much money in a school that we know was recommended by MBAJ that we close down along with Squire School. You get the same affect if you close Squire School and have Prek through 5th grades at Gaston Elementary and 6th through 12th grades at NCHS-West. Because of the distance of two hours I am the only one in here who teaches high school students currently. I am abreast of today's issues and challenges and it is appalling that my fellow Board Members will put anybody's child on a bus for 1 hour and 45 minutes to 2 hours and expect them to be in the condition to be able to learn. I have been up since 5:00 a.m. this morning and I bust my chops to get to these Board Meetings because when I don't come I feel like sometimes decisions are made without the minority voice being heard. I don't see any justification. Why wouldn't you spend \$400,000, if that, to add on the additional space for 30 more kids at West? But, it wouldn't be fair to East and I know that and because I am a parent of high school students, I am a teacher, I am an educator and I am an advocate for everyone in this room. From day one I have said, don't put anyone's children on that bus. No one sitting in this room would want their child sitting on that bus for two hours. I drive 1 hour and 15 minutes to work and would not drive that if they were not paying me. We are not paying these students and I protest you all moving forward with this merger. I am just going to take a stand and I will stand up for the rest of the meeting. Board you can do what you want to do, but we just went back to the County

Commissioners as you just admitted and asked for \$250,000 to be set aside for Capital Outlay. But we have not gone back to the County Commissioners and asked would you please put the new school on the ballot and let these people decide. I am going to be silent because I don't want you all to sanction me. I may not get re-elected again, but while I am here I will stand up for the rest of the meeting. It makes no sense that we want to spend \$7 million dollars on a 50-year old building. It is ridiculous and it is unfair and you are killing the future of Northampton County. I have been cursed out by Board Members, but it did not bring me to tears. I will cry tonight when I listened to all of these people trying to fight for their children and their grandchildren and for their community. I feel like we have not had a meeting to reconsider. After that hearing in January we did not come back together and if you did you did not invite me. It has been a one-sided discussion and we have pulled these people back out here tonight. I am just going to stand right here in protest for the rest of the night.

Chair Johnson: This is a Board of Education meeting with the public invited. We have heard you and we respect your opinions and we would ask you to please refrain from further outburst. You have heard the motion, you have heard the second and you have heard the discussion. At this time we will ask for a show of hands.

The Board APPROVED to ratify its previous decision to consolidate the two high schools into a single high school to be located in the Creeksville precinct, as recommended by the Superintendent. The motion passed by a vote of 6-1. Ms. Erica Smith-Ingram voted against. On a MOTION by Ms. M. Edwards, SECONDED by Mr. K. Edwards, the Board APPROVED the personnel list below as amended and recommended by the Superintendent. The motion passed by a vote of 6-1. Ms. Erica Smith-Ingram voted against.

Personnel

Certified Recommendations:

Donald F. Winslow, Spanish Teacher, NCHS-East, February 27, 2012

Dawn M. Gonzales, Science Teacher, NCHS-East, March 6, 2012

Melanie A. Gile, Chemistry Teacher, NCHS-East, March 6, 2012

Ruth A. Theisen, Exceptional Children Teacher, Conway Middle, March 19, 2012

Thelma Greenwell, Interim Federal Programs/Title I Director, Central Services, February 27, 2012 through June 30, 2012

Melanie Fagert, Director of Exceptional Children, Central Services

Classified Recommendations:

Ratasha Benton, Job Coach, NCHS-West Stem, March 6, 2012

Leave of Absence:

Ralph Graham, Social Studies Teacher, Northampton Alternative School, February 13, 2012 through March 23, 2012

Sheri Garner, Allied Health Teacher, NCHS-West Stem, February 2, 2012 through March 5, 2012

Tutors:

Claudine Wilson, Tutor, NCHS-West, January 24, 2012

Substitute Teachers:

Patricia Brogden, Substitute Teacher, All Schools, March 6, 2012

Stephanie Hicks, Substitute Teacher, All Schools, March 6, 2012

Velma Stephenson, Substitute Teacher, All Schools, March 6, 2012

Addendum Items

Mr. Matthews addressed the Board stating that based on the decision of the Board of Education at your December meeting, the staff has no other option but to start working on the merger of the high schools as we have been directed to begin that work. Based on your recent action of ratifying that merger, it is the calendar time of the year to start moving to make the Board's wish come true. The addendum items are before you and there are about 20 extra copies that the public can pick up at their convenience. Mr. Matthews presented the following addendum items for approval:

Name of Newly Merged Single High School

On a MOTION by Ms. M. Edwards, SECONDED by Mr. Majette, the Board APPROVED to name the newly merged single high school as Northampton County High School, as recommended by the Superintendent. The motion passed by a vote of 6-0. Ms. Erica Smith-Ingram was not present for the vote.

School Colors and Mascot

Mr. Matthews informed the Board that Mr. Dexter Harris worked with the schools during this process of selecting the school colors and mascot.

Mr. Harris addressed the Board regarding the school colors and mascot and informed them that the principals from both schools selected students to represent the student government, student body and student athletes. I came together with the student committee and we went to Russell Athletics a uniform builder. I put in the color combinations that each of the committees came up with from NCHS-East and NCHS-West. Both of the schools came up with the same colors. It was recommended to keep navy and white because they were the two common colors at each school and to pick a separate color to go with the navy and white. Upon doing that and after the recommendation from each school, a survey was sent out at each school that underclass students had the opportunity to vote on. The students voted and came up with the same colors and the same mascot.

On a MOTION by Ms. M. Edwards, SECONDED by Mr. K. Edwards, the Board APPROVED to select the school colors as navy, white and teal and the school mascot as the Jaquars, as recommended by the Superintendent. The motion passed by a vote of 6-1. Ms. Erica Smith-Ingram voted against.

New Band Uniforms

Mr. Matthews informed the Board that pictures of the uniforms, a letter from the Band Directors explaining the selection process of the new band uniforms are included in the packet. Mr. Dexter Harris also led this process along with the two Band Directors, Ms. Altrovis Terry and Mr. Monte' Freeman who are present tonight.

Mr. Dexter Harris: The band directors led the process and if you have any questions they are here to answer them.

Ms. M. Edwards: Did the children help to select the band uniforms?

Mr. Monte Freeman: Yes they did. Ms. Terry and I had the opportunity to attend the N.C. Music Educators Conference and were able to visit all the uniform providers, see their designs and the quality of their products in reference to what we were looking for. They have a website and the students had the opportunity to look all the uniform providers and select colors. The reason why we wanted to move forward was because it takes about six months to get them back in a timely manner. We did not begin this process until we knew we were merging so that we could collaborate together.

Ms. M. Edwards: Mr. Harris, what about the uniforms for sports? Did the children have input? Has that been taken care of as well?

Mr. Dexter Harris: Yes they have been taken care of and the children had input in that selection as well. The numbers have been sent out for bids and we are getting some of those back in from companies now.

On a MOTION by Ms. Taylor, SECONDED by Mr. K. Edwards, the Board APPROVED to purchase 80 new high school band uniforms from Fruhauf Uniforms, Inc. of Wichita, KS in the amount of \$33,009.92, as recommended by the Superintendent. The motion passed by a vote of 6-1. Ms. Erica Smith-Ingram voted against.

Painting Contract for Northampton County High School

Ms. Smith-Ingram: The name of the school, the school colors and mascot was not an additional cost, but the purchase of band uniforms was an additional cost of how much?

Mr. Phil Matthews: The band uniforms is a cost of \$33,000.00.

Ms. Smith-Ingram: The painting was \$98,000.00. Are any of those additional costs included in the \$5 million dollars projected for East? Is the Board tracking the cost, because you would not have this painting expense if the school were somewhere else? I just want to be sure someone is tracking the amount of money that is being spent.

Ms. M. Edwards: I am sure that Mr. Matthews is. Just because I am on Facilities, there are other schools that need to be painted, such as Willis Hare. I don't know the cost right now.

Ms. Smith-Ingram: I just want to be sure we are being prudent and physically responsible, because how much of this \$98,000.00 painting is absolutely necessary? Is it cosmetic or is it necessary?

On a MOTION by Ms. M. Edwards, SECONDED by Mr. Majette, the Board APPROVED to award a bid to ARMEN Construction of Charlotte, NC to paint Northampton County High School inside and outside for the bid amount of \$98,209.00, as recommended by the Superintendent. The bid specifications do not include the paint. The paint will be purchased separately by the school system from a state contract vendor at state contract pricing, therefore the cost of the paint is not included in this bid. The motion passed by a vote of 6-1. Ms. Erica Smith-Ingram voted against.

Mr. K. Edwards: My question is directed to Mr. Matthews and Mr. Holloway, because I keep hearing the figure \$5 million to \$7 million dollars for Northampton County High School-East and I am unaware of that cost. Where is that coming from?

Mr. Matthews: To address your concern, in 2007 a company called Progressive did an in depth review of NCHS-East's mechanical systems (heating and air conditioning, electrical and wastewater). Their cost was approximately \$3 million dollars.

Ms. Smith-Ingram: In a report that you provided to the Board on page 5, it states that it would cost \$3.7 million.

Mr. Matthews: That is about right. Since 2007, because that school has been operating, not \$3 million dollars has been spent, but a lot of the things that were addressed in that report have been already repaired, such as the heating and air conditioning.

Ms. Smith-Ingram: I believe you spent about \$400,000.00 on the heating and air conditioning.

Mr. Matthews: What was the other thing you mentioned.

Ms. Smith-Ingram: That was regarding the \$1.2 million operating cost for one high school versus two high schools.

Ms. Taylor: Those were things had to be done because students are in the building.

Mr. Matthews: The other thing I believe Ms. Ingram is referring to is the \$1.2 staff cost and utility cost.

Ms. Smith-Ingram: It states in the March 5, 2010 minutes: to maintain this option for any length of time, well over \$5 million would need to be spent on East. That came from this administration and I say again: Board Policy #1370 states: The Superintendent must provide information in order for Board Members to make sound decisions. It is not readily spelled out in the information. How are we able to make this decision knowing that we are going to spend millions of dollars on a school that we are projecting to close within five years?

Mr. Matthews: Many of the things in the \$3.7 million dollars have already been addressed. They were addressed at less than \$3.7 million dollars, but I can't give you the numbers now. The \$1.2 million dollars is operating cost and is going to exist anyway. If you maintain that facility or any school you are going to have to pay staff, light bill, water bill, phone bill and any repairs. That is going to occur anyway and yes within 5 years at \$1.2 million cost per year it will cost you \$5 million to operate that school, but that is operating cost and we have been paying it every year.

Ms. Smith-Ingram: I am looking at all of the expenses and as a matter of fact isn't there a ramp going to be built at East. These are all cost upon cost.

Mr. Matthews: To address the ramp at the bus parking lot. One of the things that has been identified to the Facilities Committee is to raise the sidewalk from the bus parking lot to the building. We are in the process of getting bids on that. The funds that we talked about earlier that have been drawn down, Lottery and ADM Funds of \$250,000, the improvements will have to stay within that budget or resources that we already have.

Board Information

- February Calendar of Events
- NCSBA Superintendent & Administrator Contract Issues Webinar – March 6, 2012
- NCSBA School Law Academy – March 12-13, 2012 – NCSBA Assembly Hall – Raleigh, NC
- Next Regular Board Meeting – April 2, 2012 – Board Room – 5:30 p.m. (Closed Session) – Open Session beginning at approximately 6:30 p.m.
- NCSBA Teacher Tenure and Renewal Contracts Webinar – April 3, 2012
- NSBA 72nd Annual Conference – April 21-23, 2012 – Boston, MA

Chair Johnson: Before I call for the meeting to adjourn I would like to make one statement. I have been married over 50 years. My wife and I don't always see eye to eye though we love each other and try to work through situations. I have been on the East end and the West end. I know that when I was on the West end that if I had to send a child home I took them home, because I wanted to know the mothers and the fathers. We have been here and we have listened. I have heard transportation, but I haven't heard anything about education. Our children are our most important commodities in this county. I have 9 grandchildren and one on the way. I had three children to go through Northampton County Schools. They have been successful and I am proud of them and I am proud of the school system. I just ask for your patience in trying to work with us through this. If we need to go before the County Commissioners of which we have been and which we have been turned down. We have been back to the Commissioners to ask for a referendum and they would not put that on the agenda. We can only do so much as a Board because they handle the money. We are trying to do everything that we can in our power to get the Commissioners to agree and that is to give us some money. If you go back and think of all the schools that have been built, the county has never furnished the money. They have had bond

issuances, but the School Board had to pay it back. The county by law is required to furnish the school system with the money. They have not done that and we can't force them to do it. We can ask and if they refuse we have not other alternative but to accept. As we have done in the past, if we need money we go into mediation and that cost money too. We have County Commissioners who are former Board Members, such as Mr. James Boone. He was a County Commissioner and a former Board Member and he knows both sides of the story. We are concerned just as you are. You elected us, which is true, but this is a democratic society and you are entitled to your opinion and entitled to vote your convictions just as we are. I am a taxpayer just as you are. I am not trying to place an undue burden on anyone on the western end or the eastern end, because I too pay taxes. I think that I am trying to do as an individual that I don't just arbitrarily make the decisions. I pray about my decisions. I pray to the same God I hope that you do.

Rev. Richard Webb – “I would like to say thank you to this community. We are intelligent and you have let it be known that we must not be intelligent to have officers here from the County. We are not going to get outrageous and act like a wild bunch of people. We are going to act like people who have some sense and educated just like you are. I am totally hurt from this Board tonight that you had to invite officers in here to watch over grown up people. Good night.”

Adjournment

On a MOTION by Mr. Little, SECONDED by Mr. Majette, the Board adjourned the meeting at 8:40 p.m.

Approved: July 16, 2012

Dr. Eric C. Bracy, Superintendent