

**REGULAR MEETING
NORTHAMPTON COUNTY BOARD OF EDUCATION
Monday, May 6, 2013**

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

The Northampton County Board of Education held its regular meeting on May 6, 2013 in the Board Room of the Northampton County Schools administrative building. Chair Kelvin Edwards called the meeting to order at 5:00 p.m.

Closed Session

On a MOTION by Ms. Smith-Ingram, SECONDED by Mr. Johnson and APPROVED, the Board convened closed session at approximately 5:05 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 7-0.

Open Session

On a MOTION by Ms. Smith-Ingram, SECONDED by Ms. M. Edwards, the Board adjourned closed session. The motion passed by a vote of 7-0. The closed session ended at approximately 6:40 p.m.

Mission Statement

Chair Kelvin 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.

Pledge of Allegiance

Ms. Rhonda Taylor led the Board and audience in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Approval of Board Agenda

On a MOTION by Ms. Smith-Ingram, SECONDED by Ms. Smith-Ingram, the Board unanimously APPROVED to amend the agenda to add the following addendum items, as recommended by the Superintendent. The motion passed by a vote of 7-0.

Business Before the Board for Approval

12.05 Service Solutions
12.06 Facilities Update

Good News Award

Mr. Hans Lassiter along with Dr. Eric Bracy and Chair Kelvin Edwards recognized and presented Good News Award Certificates to the following recipients:

Central Elementary School – Pre-K Program “5” Star Rating - The Pre-K Department at Central Elementary School was recognized and presented a Good News Award Certificate for successfully completed their Environmental Rating Scales Assessment. Mr. Lassiter invited Ms. Keisha Squire, Pre-K Coordinator, to assist him in presenting the award. Ms. Squire informed the Board that currently all of Northampton County’s Pre-K classes have a “5” Star Rating and the classroom of Ms. Angela Ramsey and Ms. Evette McGuire was selected for this assessment and they received an overall average score 6.14 on a 7 point scale for their site. The Pre-K Program at Central Elementary School will once again maintain its “5” Star Rating. Mr. Lassiter further stated that along with Principal Betty Liverman, there was several other Pre-K staff members involved in this process: Pre-K teachers Ms. Vanessa Jefferson-Person and Ms. Terry Morton, Pre-K teacher assistants Ms. Patricia Dickerson and Ms. Connie Haskins and substitute teachers Ms. Miranda Cofield and Ms. Stephanie Hicks.

Exceptional Children Teacher of Excellence Recognition at the 63rd Conference on Exceptional Children – Ms. Dequetta Boyd, Exceptional Children's Teacher, was recognized and presented a Good News Award Certificate being selected to represent Northampton County Schools as the "Exceptional Children Teacher of Excellence" at the 63rd Conference on Exceptional Children. Ms. Boyd is currently completing her tenth year as an Exceptional Children's Teacher with Northampton County Schools and she currently works at Gaston Elementary School as a 1st-5th grade EC teacher. Ms. Boyd always puts the needs of her students first and is the first to ask for professional development in areas that will make her a stronger educator. Her paperwork is always on time and accurate. If there is something she is unsure about, she will first consult the NC Policies and Procedures Governing Students with Disabilities Manual and then ask for help. Ms. Boyd is a motivated teacher who strives for excellence from her students.

Shining Star Character Education

Mr. Hans Lassiter along with Dr. Eric Bracy and Chair Kelvin Edwards recognized and presented the following students with **Shining Star Award Certificates** for demonstrating the focus of “Perseverance” for the month of April:

Kelvin Edwards, Jr. (absent), Central Elementary School
KaNyma Moody, Central Elementary School
DeAndre Lee, Conway Middle School
Makayla Hines, Gaston Elementary School
Moshey Taylor, Gaston Middle School
Guy Caine, Jr., Northampton County Alternative School
Kim Peede, Northampton County High School
D’Monte McWilliams, Squire Elementary School
Kaya Baldwin (absent), Willis Hare Elementary School

Introduction of New Personnel

Mr. Hans Lassiter introduced the following Northampton County Schools’ new personnel to the Board and audience:

Regina Manley-Greene, Pre-K Teacher Assistant, Central Elementary School

Public Comments

No one signed up to speak during Public Comments.

Break

The Board recessed in a five-minute break at 7:05 p.m.

Consent Agenda

On a MOTION by Ms. Taylor, SECONDED by Mr. Williams, the Board unanimously APPROVED the consent agenda consisting of the following items, as recommended by the Superintendent. The motion passed by a vote of 7-0.

Board Minutes – Closed Session – April 8, 2012

Regular Meeting – March 4, 2013

Overnight Field Trip

The Northampton County High School senior class will travel to the Williamsburg and Richmond, Virginia to visit the Williamsburg Premium Outlets, Bush Gardens and Kings Dominion on May 17-19, 2013 for a senior class trip.

The Board held the following discussion regarding the senior class trip:

Ms. M. Edwards: Is this the only trip that our seniors will take prior to graduation? Don't the students pay senior dues and raise money for their senior year?

Dr. Bracy: They pay senior dues and this is their senior trip.

Ms. M. Edwards: I feel we should have heard something about this earlier, because I feel they deserve to go somewhere educational as they have worked hard all year. I feel they should be going somewhere such as Washington, DC.

Dr. Bracy: They will be going to Williamsburg on May 17th and come back on May 19th.

Ms. M. Edwards: I did not know they did not have anything else planned to do before right now. I feel if children go to school all year that they would be able to do more educational things and have more exposure to things before they go out into the world.

Ms. Smith-Ingram: It is my understanding or I heard someone say that there will be three different trips on three different days.

Chair K. Edwards: They will be there May 17th, 18th and 19th.

Ms. Smith-Ingram: Will it be like at a conclave with seniors from other high schools there?

Chair K. Edwards: I would like to suggest that we invite Principal Felisha Whitaker to address these questions from the Board.

Ms. Felisha Whitaker addressed the Board as follows:

The answer to the Board's question as to whether the \$120 senior dues go towards the senior trip, and the answer is that it does not go towards the senior trip. The \$120 senior dues go towards paying for their diploma, diploma cover, senior banquet, yearbook and local senior activities.

As far as the distance and why they are only going to Williamsburg and Richmond is because they wanted to do a big trip to Orlando, Florida, but a lot of our students struggled to pay the \$120 senior dues. A lot of them could not come out of pocket and pay the money that we needed for them to go where they wanted to go, which was Florida; therefore, we had to come back and regroup. The seniors got together themselves and it wasn't anything that I did or the advisors did. Once they realized that some of the classmates could not afford to do a big trip, they came together and said we still want to do a trip as a class and they planned this trip to Williamsburg and Richmond. There are still some students who financially just don't have the \$119 for this trip. We still wanted to give them the opportunity to do something together, but not so much that a lot of them are not able to participate. To answer Ms. Ingram's question as to whether this will be a big gathering, it will not. This is something the seniors got together and planned and it

seemed to be more feasible and economical as far as what they decided to do. We wanted to do something grand and a lot of our kids just could not afford it.

Ms. M. Edwards: What happened to the fundraising and projects they use to do, such as when my grandchildren came through there?

Ms. Felisha Whitaker: They did have a couple of fundraisers, but they did not do as much. We can't do the fundraising the students have to do it and a lot of the students just were not interested in selling the candy and there were only a few who said they would participate. Hopefully, next year we will be able to start earlier. Our kids started talking about going to Florida around November and while trying to get things into place and it just did not happen.

Ms. M. Edwards: Thank you so much Ms. Whitaker for addressing the Board. We just want to see our children go places. If this was known earlier and I would just say next time let us know and we would try to help.

Ms. Smith-Ingram: My concern is for those of you who have been following the news, there is a lot going on when our kids have been gathering, especially in the Virginia Beach area. I am just looking at the security of it and I feel good that it is not a gathering of children across the state or the geographical area. I feel much better about this being a senior project that our seniors wanted to do so they could go out together as a family.

Ms. Felisha Whitaker: What we are looking at now and it may not result in being an overnight trip, as we were waiting on the Board's decision. A lot of the students are still saying they still don't have the money to pay for a hotel; therefore, they may just go to the park one day and do the other activities on another day.

Child Nutrition Meal Charge Policy/Procedures

The Child Nutrition Department cannot permit charging of meals. Students may, however, pay for meals in advance or borrow money provided by the school principal from the school's General Fund. The student will be responsible for repaying the money to the school principal. The Superintendent shall develop procedures to implement the Child Nutrition Meal Charge Policy, consistent with federal and state laws and regulations.

Contracted Services

Northampton County Schools and STEM for Kids, LLC – STEM Summer Camp Services – Effective: June 17, 2013 until June 19, 2013

Northampton County Schools and Invision Services, Inc. – Visually Impaired Services – Effective: April 15, 2013 until June 30, 2013

Northampton County Schools and Invision Services, Inc. – Orientation & Mobility Services – Effective: March 1, 2013 until June 7, 2013

Business Before the Board for Information

Directors' Updates – Mr. Holloway shared the Directors' Updates with the Board for the month of April 2013. The Directors' Updates were inclusive of the following attachments from the Curriculum & Instruction Department: 2013 Summer STEM Enrichment Program Proposal, Migrant Education STEM Summer Camp 2013, Camp Get Connected June 24 – July 18, 2013, 2013 Summer Institutes, NCDPI Home Base Regional Training Information, ECSU Plan of Action for Advanced Placement and Summer Institutes 2013 Topics.

Mr. Matthews: There are a lot of good things going on and a lot of opportunities for our students coming up this summer. I think our staff should be commended along with Ms. Ash and the two math teachers at the high school for the Summer STEM Enrichment Program that captured June Atkinson's attention.

Chair K. Edwards: Thank you Mr. Matthews and that goes as well from every Board Member here.

Business Before the Board for Approval

On a MOTION by Mr. Johnson, SECONDED by Mr. Matthews, the Board unanimously APPROVED the Fiscal Year 2013-2014 Current Expense Budget, as recommended by the Superintendent. The motion passed by a vote of 7-0.

On a MOTION by Ms. Taylor, SECONDED by Ms. M. Edwards the Board unanimously APPROVED the Fiscal Year 2013-2014 Capital Outlay Budget, as recommended by the Superintendent. The motion passed by a vote of 7-0.

On a MOTION by Mr. Matthews, SECONDED by Ms. M. Edwards, the Board unanimously APPROVED a Migrant Education Summer Camp to be held at Northampton County High School for 40 students in grades K-12 on June 17-20 and June 24-27, 2013, as recommended by the Superintendent. The motion passed by a vote of 7-0

On a MOTION by Mr. Matthews, SECONDED by Mr. Williams, the Board unanimously APPROVED the personnel list below as revised and recommended by the Superintendent. The motion passed by a vote of 7-0.

Personnel

Classified Recommendations:

Collins Warren, Substitute Bus Driver, All Schools, 5/8/13

Curtis L. Benton, Substitute Bus Driver, All Schools, 5/8/13

Felecia L. Gray, Substitute Bus Driver, All Schools, 5/8/13

Shamika Pyfrom, Administrative Assistant, Curriculum & Instruction Department, 5/28/13

Resignations:

Mary Ann Cipriano, Elementary EC Teacher, Central Elementary School, 5/10/13

Arlethia Drumgoole, K1 Teacher, Squire Elementary School, 6/10/13

Mitchell Deloatch, School Resource Officer, Squire Elementary School, 5/16/13

Jean Everett, Bus Driver, Northampton County High School, 4/8/13

Lauren Greenhill, Teacher/Assistant Principal Program Intern, Northampton County High School, 4/30/13

Alice Hill, English Teacher, Northampton County High School, 6/9/13

Sammi Meucke, Spanish Teacher, Northampton County High School, 6/8/13

James Pope, CET-Automotive Instructor, Northampton County High School, 6/14/13

Retirement:

Jethro Branch, Dean of Students, Conway Middle School, 7/1/13

Vickie Branch, Teacher, Conway Middle School, 7/1/13

Nancy Daughtry, Teacher, Conway Middle School, 7/1/13

Belinda Edwards, EC Teacher Assistant, Conway Middle School, 7/1/13

Leave of Absence:

Corliss Garner, Guidance Counselor, Central Elementary School, 4/8/13 through 5/8/13

Service Solutions

On a MOTION by Ms. Smith-Ingram, SECONDED by Mr. Williams, the Board APPROVED the non-renewal of the contract agreement with Service Solutions for the 2013-2014 school year. The motion passed by a vote of 5-2. Mr. Phil Matthews and Mr. Donald Johnson voted against.

Ms. M. Edwards: I would like to have included that our people who are working for us that they would have what they need to do their jobs, such as supplies, equipment, etc.

Ms. Smith-Ingram: I think that it would be proper for the administration to set forth a transition plan that would include the appropriate personnel that we have to fill those gaps so that we can continue what worked well with the contract and be able to acquire some of the much needed equipment, access to the equipment and the best business practices. Also, if we could work towards putting together a workforce manual that would implement those best practices that we were able to gather over this past year. I think that would be beneficial and we can prepare for the administration to present that to us maybe at the July 1st Board Meeting. Dr. Bracy, would that be adequate time to prepare it.

Dr. Bracy: We will start working on that tomorrow.

Ms. Smith-Ingram: That plan should include the transition of who is going to be responsible for covering the supervisory positions and to make sure things run smoothly as well. Make note of things that did not work well and what ways we are going to address those and make corrective action. Once we have the manual presented then we could have a hands-on training so that we can transition our employees and it will be very clear about what the expectations are.

Ms. M. Edwards: Dr. Bracy, we talked about a person sort of like an overseer like the one that they have. Do you have anyone in mind?

Dr. Bracy: I don't have anyone in mind, but what we are going to do now, along with the Board, is to put our heads together and look at a model.

Mr. Williams: I know this is going to bring up a lot of questions in people's minds regarding job security. A plan to address that would be needed by the July 1st Board Meeting also.

Dr. Bracy: Mr. Lassiter, Mr. Holloway and I will start having those kinds of conversations with the employees.

Ms. M. Edwards: Did we have a lot of people who went over to Service Solutions or did everyone stay with us?

Dr. Bracy: I don't know of anyone right off who left us to work with Service Solutions. There are several Service Solutions custodians who were hired by them.

Facilities Update

Ms. Smith-Ingram addressed Chair Edwards, Dr. Bracy and the Board stating that as we all know we have discussed this at great lengths some of our plans and follow-up with our meeting with the County Commissioners and the ten-step plan for the Way Forward. As we look towards our facility needs that will get us through the next ten years and as we look at a new school, a part of that is viable. Because we initially brought up some concerns with some of our existing structures as early as October and again we revisited this at our Board Retreat in January 2013 that was held at the Hampton Inn. We had a second Board Retreat where this was also discussed in significant detail in April and that was held at Mr. Johnson's church in Jackson. Then, we revisited this again for the fourth time at our Board Retreat on Thursday night where we spent over an hour going over this topic as we speak to not only the ten-step plan from the County Commissioners, but as well we also had to follow statutory guidelines as we propose closing some of our older existing structures and moving to reorganize our facilities to meet our current and future needs for Northampton County. The first page includes the Checklist for School Closing Procedures that is taken from the School Closing Procedures Relating to Public Schools of North Carolina that was published by the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction and

as well that checklist has the North Carolina General Statute 115C-72, which governs school closures.

The next requirement is a thorough study that has been done through a 5-Year Facility Plan in 2010 and the Board voted on this prior to Mr. Edwards and Ms. Taylor being elected to this Board. We have studied this for years and in several of our studies we have a hard time sometimes continuing with the recommendations that were made. In that study, which the numbers were updated on page 3, is the projected enrollment from 2010 up to 2020. In 2012-2013, I wish to note that DPI's projection was that we would have 2,155 students enrolled. As of the present numbers we were presented at our last Board Retreat, we are only about 100 students off of that number. When this projection was done we did not anticipate losing a kindergarten class nor did we anticipate some of the changes that have been made in the approval of additional charter schools.

On the next page, the recommendation was to close two of our oldest facilities that were severely under capacity. Those two schools mentioned are two of the four schools that we discussed significantly and it was a consensus that we move towards closing those four facilities. The two that are not mentioned, one of them specifically was not open at the time and that was the Seaboard-Coates School, which is currently our Alternative School. Even though these numbers are a little off from what we just received these numbers were from 2008 and as you can see at the Alternative School with the number of students you are looking at the cost per pupil and it has almost tripled that of any other school. We are being more cost effective in our facilities and ninety percent (90%) of the school closings that we have discussed are listed in this report. We need an additional report from Dr. Bracy as it relates to the Seaboard-Coates campus.

The next page shows the school listings and the numbers during 2010-2011 and as you can see that has changed. I am excited about the additional information we received regarding fuel for facilities and we can see how the cost did go down once we closed some structures. That additional cost savings that we will have for closing facilities, some of it will be offset in the bus transportation once we consolidate some schools, but at the same time, we will be able save a significant amount and be able to allocate into that fund as the County Commissioners asked us to do.

On the next page, for those of us who went to the national conference and for those of us who participated in the CTE Fair and the CTE Banquet sponsored by Ms. Geneva Squire, we all got so motivated about the wonderful things our students are doing and with the restructuring of our high school to offer CTE. All across the nation, schools are moving towards STEM. This is not just a buzzword, but this is consistent with the Department of Labor projections in that we must graduate and produce 20 million more students capable of filling these STEM technology fields than we are currently producing. This requirement is going to involve more than our colleges, four-year universities and our community colleges and it is going to require some work on the secondary and middle school level that we can start generating these students who can fulfill these millions of jobs that will be available to them. We want our students to be ready and prepared to seek the opportunity. Mr. Williams and I got the chance to go to the agriculture. Dr. Bracy has been working on this and I commend him. We did have one of our high schools that was STEM and then we moved away from that. Now, I am proposing that we move back to STEM and call it STING, because it will include science, technology, engineering, art, agriculture and math. Agriculture is the big thing now and we have land, wonderful farmers, wonderful opportunities for the hydroponics and being able to grow our own food, and looking down the road towards the community farms and students getting involved in making that a

business. With the CTE Fair, we have seen how much the program has grown in the last ten years and once again I want to commend Ms. Squire and her staff for the revitalization of the CTE curriculum. By the way, that art stands for three types of art; medical, culinary as well the performing arts. Hands down, we have one of the best performing arts programs, not just in the Roanoke Valley but also in North Carolina. I would put our marching band and our choir up against anybody. I want to see them up on the stage at the next National School Board Association. A school from Rockingham County in North Carolina was on the stage in California and I know our kids could be there or the Macy's Day Parade. The reason why we have been talking about working towards STING Dr. Bracy is because we want to stop the bleed. We want to be able to attract students from Hertford County, Weldon City and Roanoke Rapids. What are we offering in Northampton County that is going to make students knock down the door to be able to apply to our high school? We have talked about all three and Dr. Bracy you have been working on it and we commend you and your staff for doing a phenomenal job with moving in that direction. We just need to unite and make sure that this happens so that our kids graduate from high school and walk right into a job, because they can get certifications to be a welder, they can catch the van that goes to the Shipyard every day and get jobs, nursing certification and the medical arts. It is going to be hard, because it is always hard when you consolidate schools. We lost a kindergarten class and the allotment for per pupil expenditures was cut in half and there are so many challenges now that face us. We seriously have got to look at using the best utilization of our facilities that we have. This is one of the proposals that we have looked at and there are four options, but we can't do anything until we start the statutory process. With that being said, we did some pros and cons with every option and every plan, but there was no way we could go to the citizens asking for a brand new high school that is going to be half full by the time we get the building built. There is no justification for that and we said that we wanted to be good stewards and we want to get the ball rolling. If the Board would look at your calendars and what I am proposing is that we look at this option. We don't have to commission the study, because the study has been done, but that we can amend the study to include Seaboard-Coates (Dr. Bracy and his staff can do the feasibility to include that with this) and we re-present this option at the May 14, 2013 Board Meeting. After this option has been presented at the May 14, 2013 Board Meeting along with the commission study and the feasibility study, then we will hold two Town Hall Meetings. The first Town Hall Meeting we can have on May 21, 2013 on one end of the county and the second one on May 29, 2013 on the other end of the county. When we come for the June 3, 2013 Board Meeting we will be able to vote and take action on an organization plan that will include closing our four oldest facilities, if not at least three of the four, and that being Squire and NCHS, because both are mentioned in this report as well as Seaboard-Coates. Then look towards the other option and have all of the figures, numbers and capacities so that we can do what is in the best interest of Northampton County citizens. To be able to offer more to our students and be able to step out into the educational arena and put forth a school that is going to be the icon across the state. The fourth building is Willis Hare, however we don't have a study on Willis Hare so we will need a study to be done on Willis Hare and Seaboard-Coates. That is to be presented to us on May 14, 2013 and to hold two Town Hall Meetings on May 21st and May 29th so that the Board can take a formal vote on June 3, 2013 to reduce our usage to four facilities. What we are presenting is to close the four schools and use our existing and newer structures. What that will include for the next twelve months is being able to use the suggested arrangement just until we can complete the renovations that need to be done. I know some of my fellow Board Members may be a little

startled about what that will entail in terms of moving the high school from one end to the other, but the strategic reason for doing that is because these students will have access to a hospital, all of the medical arts buildings, restaurants for the culinary arts program and the Halifax Community College. They can leave campus at a certain part of the day, go on campus and take welding and all of those special courses that will not be offered at the high school and come back to the school for the rest of the day. This is just a model to get us through the next year as we look at securing the funding that we will need to renovate the other schools that we had to close without other options.

Ms. M. Edwards: With that said, we talked about for one year that would be the comparable high school and do something at one of the other schools within the next year or so to renovate an area that would be more conducive and user friendly until we are able to get what we need.

Ms. Smith-Ingram: One of the things that I wanted to be clear about is that I really don't care which option that we do as long as we do not send our students back into those some of the conditions they were in. Ms. Edwards, you know we tried, but at the beginning of the year there were some issues with that building and it did not look like we thought it was going to look.

Ms. M. Edwards: As I said to you before, everything that we thought we were doing to make it better was not done. The things we were told that were going to be done were not done. I am not real sure how much money was spent, but I know how much was not done.

Ms. Smith-Ingram: For safety and health reasons, especially after Sandy Hook, I just cannot see sending our high school students back into that building another year when we don't have to. All we have to do is put up with a temporary model until we can do all of the renovations, get all of funding and do all of the capital projects at our newest facilities.

Ms. Taylor: Way back we talked about several options. We talked about the travel even last year when we talked about consolidating the schools. This is new to me as far as these forums you are talking about you want to have in May. I understand what we need to do as far as moving the Alternative School that we talked about. That is closing a building, but not actually closing a school. I think we need to sit down and at least go into closed session and talk about these forums, because this has been brought up all of a sudden. We need to have a discussion, because what was discussed on Thursday is not what is being presented right now. We talked about five different options and to me it feels like we are settling on one option right now. We need a little time to get things in order. I understand what we need to do within the next couple of years, but we don't need to take on big giant steps to close four schools.

Mr. K. Edwards: Looking at the General Statute 115C-72, which is regarding closing or consolidation, I wish to read that statute at this time. I wanted to interject that so that we are all clear on the reasons for the forums.

Ms. Taylor: I understand that, but here we are in May and we have a lot of things going on. I am a parent and no matter where the school is my child is going and I told you that last year. There is no hardship on me as such, but I can't speak for the people out there in the community. We have graduation and everything else coming up and these parents are getting ready for the different activities. If you want to have these forums after the school year is over I don't have a problem with that. That is giving them enough time to get the word out to the people. Here we are in May and you are talking about closing schools.

Ms. Smith-Ingram: This is the problem that I have, because I can pull the board minutes from the September or October meeting, I can pull them from January and I can pull them from March, April and May. If we continue to sit here and delay time and put off for tomorrow what we can plainly do for today, it does not make sense on a matter such as this, because we have to

follow the statutory process. I am not introducing new meetings; we are trying to follow the law. We have had hearings before and we are talking about hearings out two weeks from now. We have the newspaper, we have Alert Now, we can send out phone calls and we can send out letters. Where there is a will there is a way and it just takes the political will of this body to finally make a decision, because if you are not making a decision you are deciding to do nothing and waste more money. We have wasted money and we may as well dig a hole and put some money in the ground. I know we thought we were getting something, but it did not come out right. I don't even care about that, because my concern is the safety of those children. For years we have received the recommendation from private firms, the Department of Public Instruction and everybody has recommended closing those older facilities. If you look at the cost sheet, it does not make sense to sit here, stall and not do anything while we are wasting taxpayers' money. We can't keep a building open for 22 students and it does not mean that administrators lose their jobs. What is wrong with having co-principals? What do we need more time for, because we have been dealing with this subject for at least 30 hours in this matter? That has been my frustration, because we bring it up time and time again. Chair Edwards, it is time to move the agenda. There is nothing wrong with us getting the full presentation on the other two schools on Tuesday. This is what we were elected to do however much time it takes us. We need to inform the public, but we have means for doing that. I don't see why we can't move forward with public hearings on those dates. Graduation is not until June 8th.

Ms. Smith-Ingram made a motion that the Northampton County Board of Education move forward with the statutory process for reorganizing our facilities to optimize their use and to provide the safest educational structure and educational programming for our students to include the Five-Year Facility Presentation, amended with the Willis Hare and Seaboard-Coates Study on May 14, 2013, also to include two Town Hall Hearings on May 21, 2013 and May 29, 2013 with a Board formal vote on June 3, 2013. Ms. M. Edwards seconded the motion.

Dr. Bracy: Next Tuesday when the Board meets, what will I need to have?

Ms. Smith-Ingram: You will need to have the study for Seaboard-Coates and Willis Hare. I should already have the previous study. Can you restructure what capital outlay projects are laid out for the capacity of those schools?

Attorney Rod Malone: I think I would revise that motion and take the statute with the various things that the Board needs to consider. If you will remember the presentations that Mr. Matthews gave when the Board was considering other items. You would then pull the information from the existing presentations and fold it in under the headings to which the statute requires the Board to consider. That way you would be assured that the Board has all of the information that the statute requires. Ms. Ingram, you would need to pull the similar information for those two schools, but it needs to track the language that Mr. Edwards read. Mr. Matthews did a great job with that assignment.

Mr. Matthews: I think the statutory process requires the first thing that would be a Comprehensive Study being done with the existing and the closings mentioned. I am not knowledgeable of any Comprehensive Study being done. I am not exactly sure of what report Ms. Ingram has there, but I think it is the Five-Year Report that each LEA is required to do every five years. If it was done in 2010, I completed the report and the Board approved it. The main thing in that report calls for a new high school and with a new high school everything else hinges on that report. That is not a Comprehensive Facility Study as the General Statute calls for in my opinion. I am not opposed to moving forward, because we always have to move forward, but the

first step and the General Statute calls for a Comprehensive Study performed for the entire school system. I don't think that has taken place yet.

Ms. Smith-Ingram: One has taken place and it cost \$16,000.00 by MBAJ. It may have been done in 2011 or 2010. I will have to pull it for you and it was comprehensive. The only thing that has changed in that report is that the buildings are in worst condition than they were.

Mr. Matthews: There are some contradicting statements depending upon how you read it. There have been enough changes since that report was done that another survey is required at this point and time, because we are even not the same school system we were on that report.

Ms. Smith-Ingram: Chair Edwards, with all due respect I disagree. We paid MBAJ \$16,500.00 for them to do a Comprehensive Report. In that report they told us in each building what the facility needs were. Yes they had several options, but Option #3 was what they recommended and that option included closing NCHS-East and using NCHS-West because it was the building in better condition, but whatever report we looked at we didn't even follow the recommendations whether it was something we wanted to do or not or whether we agreed with it. I am quite surprised you are not familiar with the report because you gave the presentation Mr. Matthews.

Mr. Matthews: Chair Edwards, she does not have the floor. I never said I was not familiar with the presentation as a matter of fact I am familiar with it and I believe I indicated that I was. I don't appreciate a fellow Board Member telling me what I am familiar with and what I am not. She can disagree with me all that she wants to, but I know what is in those reports.

Ms. Smith-Ingram: You can disagree all you want Mr. Matthews, but a lot of this information you had privilege to it and you presented this information to us. We did exactly what you recommended, but it did not come out like we thought it was going to come out.

Ms. Taylor: I agree that we need to have a study, but what I am saying is during this time we are having EOC's and EOG's. I am not saying I am against the forums, but I feel they should be done after the school year ends. There is a lot going on in the month of May. What I was going to ask earlier was, can we make this motion into two motions? We do need to move forward with the study and I am sure everyone else agrees with that as well. We did not talk about closing four schools at one time. We talked about five different plans, but we did not talk about closing four schools at one time.

Mr. Johnson: Is this last page a part of your motion?

Ms. Smith-Ingram: No.

Mr. Johnson: The reason I asked was because at the Work Session was this one of the options that we discussed? Also, you picked a date (May 21st) and I will not be here that entire week due to prior commitments. I wanted the Board to know beforehand that I would not be here.

Ms. Smith-Ingram: This option we discussed two months ago and it included closures under Option #1: Willis Hare Elementary, Northampton County Alternative School, Northampton County High School and Squire Elementary. Option #2, closures: Willis Hare Elementary, Northampton County Alternative School, Northampton County High School and Squire Elementary. Option #3, this Board discussed at great details the following closures: Willis Hare Elementary, Northampton County Alternative School, Northampton County High School and Squire Elementary. Option #4, build a new Northampton County High School, but that was later amended when we found out it would cost \$39 million dollars and no longer \$23 million dollars. Option #5, closures: Willis Hare Elementary, Squire Elementary, Northampton County Alternative School and Northampton County High School. I have been in the same Board Meetings that everyone else has been in and I have listened very carefully to the information over and over again. We must move forward in being good stewards with taxpayers' money. I

realize that this is an emotional discussion for everyone, but as I said who wants to stand in the way of us revitalizing our educational facilities so that we cannot only optimize the those facilities, but be able to take every dollar that we receive through optimization, turn it around and invest into our children so that we can make them Career and College Ready. I don't understand why it appears that we want to stand in the way of progress. I was upset, because we did bus kids from one end of the county to the other and we took into account that it was going to be a burden. If we can bus kids from one end to the other, why can't we bus them from one end back to the other? No one is talking about breaking the high schools back up, but as we talked about and as we look towards our future numbers, it may mean for Northampton County one day that we may have a K-12 building. That is just the rate that we are losing students. What is frustrating to me is that we just want to keep throwing a spoke in the wheel. We have stayed in our retreats up until 10:30 p.m. and we have gone over this four times.

Ms. M. Edwards: I call for the question.

Chair K. Edwards: The Chair recognizes Mr. Williams and after he speaks Ms. Edwards we will call for the question.

Mr. Williams: As we move towards the question, I think it is important that we do start moving forward to revitalize our schools. Right now, something or somebody has their foot on our oxygen line and we are dying. We have sat around this table talking about, you know our numbers are really dropping and we are really losing students and will not have money to keep our schools open. Mr. Edwards said again, "We may be talking about a K-12 school under one roof. Do we look at a feasible plan now to prevent that? I do not feel helpless, but I think that we have to step back and take our personal feelings out of this and act like leaders. What leaders do is look at the problem, sit around and talk about solutions and then make a decision. What Ms. Ingram is saying, "Let's make a decision, because we have been talking too long." I agree that some of this stuff may be new to some of us in one sense, but I don't think this is new to any of us because this discussion has been going on for a very long time. Back before the schools were consolidated, some of the same issues we were talking about now came up. We talked about the condition of the high school a while back. Maybe in a way some people may not have appreciated it, but we did conclude on one thing at the end of that meeting and that is, it is one thing to know and nobody knows that you know, which I think hinges on just what we have been talking about when we have the children in front of us and that is the Character Traits: Integrity and Trustworthiness, which is what the people put in us when they elected us to make decisions. They look for us to make the best decisions when it is possible for these children and families in this county. I believe that we have been working diligently to do that, but we cannot keep talking about this issue and not move on it. Ms. Ingram has brought up a lot of ideas and one of the things she talked about was the STING high school and that is something that is necessary. We talked around this table about the conditions of the schools in this district. I have said before and it would seem hypocritical to me to now say, "I think we should move the kids from the former East high school and move them back to West without really looking at all of the things that go into that, because it is more than just children going from one end of the county to the other. This is a safety issue, because we know there are health and safety issues that exist and they are by far the most important things and once you get those taken care of we have a reasonable opportunity to educate our children. I think we have to get past our emotions that are caught up into this and really look at this for what it is worth. I don't think Ms. Taylor that it is going to necessarily threaten the jobs of the people at the Alternative School, because one thing

we did agree upon that should we move that program it would simply move to another location with all of the same entities that are in place now.

Ms. Taylor: I did not say it was the Alternative School.

Mr. Williams: Whatever schools we decide to move on we will look at the best plan possible, but we have got to get this foot off of the oxygen line, because it is killing us. In fact, if we wait until the summer to have these hearings, we will miss the statutory requirements. We are sort of pushed for time now and we have waited until the last minute and that will be the cost of our leadership. We are going to have to do this pretty quickly to get past the point of where we are at this particular time. I think this is a good time to move forward and get everyone involved who need to be involved in the decision-making. I think that will happen at those meetings we will hold and make this happen.

Ms. Smith-Ingram: Chair, I call for the question.

Attorney Rod Malone: Ms. Ingram, is it possible for the motion to be slightly revised? The way you stated it was, "motion to move forward to restructure," but I think it should be, "motion to move forward with the statutory process, which could result in the restructuring."

Ms. Smith-Ingram: I accept that amendment and I will restate the motion.

I move that the Northampton County Board of Education move forward with the statutory process, which could result in the restructuring to optimize their use to provide the safest educational structure and educational programming for our students to include the Five-Year Facility Presentation, amended with the Willis Hare and Seaboard-Coates Study on May 14, 2013 and to include two Town Hall Hearings on May 21, 2013 and May 29, 2013 with a Board formal vote on June 3, 2013. Ms. M. Edwards seconded the motion. The motion passed by a vote of 4-3. Ms. Rhonda Taylor, Mr. Phil Matthews and Mr. Donald Johnson voted against.

Principal's Survey

The Board held the following discussion regarding the compilation of the Principal's Survey:

Mr. Johnson: Will the Board Members have an opportunity to see the Principal's Survey prior to the meeting on May 14th?

Chair K. Edwards: Yes you will.

Mr. Johnson: Have the principals completed the survey and is it ready for dissemination to us?

Chair K. Edwards: No they have not received the survey yet.

Mr. Matthews: I would like to know what is on the survey, what is the objective of the survey and what is the opinion of the survey?

Ms. Smith-Ingram: Mr. Chair, that survey was sent out last Monday on April 29th for Board Members to review the survey and once it was reviewed we would disseminate it to the principals. If you had any objections to the survey you were supposed to present them.

Ms. Taylor: I thought we were going to do that today in closed session.

Ms. Smith-Ingram: Just for clarity, the survey is a neutral survey using questions so that we can improve customer service of the Board. If you have reviewed the questions, they are questions where we are asking how we can better serve the Northampton County schools, the administrators and it is a way for us to check our performance as well as look for ways that we can improve our working relationship and our support of the people who support our children. Board Members, please forward your response to the Board Chair if you have any objections or if you approve of the survey. If the majority of us believe that it is a good survey for us to get out there and build this customer service, then we can go ahead and get it to our principals so that

they will have time to respond. Then we can get the results analyzed through a matrix so that we can have some meaningful dialogue and move towards doing some good things.

Attorney Rod Malone: I don't see how you can do all of that before next week.

Mr. Johnson: I did not respond to the survey because I was not familiar with it and I did not know that the Board had decided this was one of the ways in which were going to do it. I did receive the email, I called Chair Edwards and we discussed some of the things about the survey. That is why I asked the question as to whether the survey had been discussed and has it been disseminated to the principals, because I too thought we were going to have the opportunity to discuss it among ourselves.

Chair K. Edwards: It has not been disseminated to the principals, is that correct Dr. Bracy?

Dr. Bracy: No, I have not sent it to the principals.

Ms. Smith-Ingram: Mr. Chair, can we have a closed session immediately following this meeting to discuss the survey?

Attorney Rod Malone: The survey is not a closed session item.

Mr. Williams: Fellow Board Members, with all due respect and I respect everybody's opinion, Ms. Ingram did take out time from her busy schedule, pulled together a survey and emailed it to us. We all share different emails at some point and I assume we are all on our systems on a day-to-day basis. I think we are making such a big deal of the survey that I am almost beginning to wonder why we are even going to do this. Then, I am reminded that this is really about the school district that we have been entrusted to help get better. Ms. Ingram has taken on the leadership role and we did not ask her to. She just took on the role to develop this instrument that will give us some useful information so that we can dialogue with the principals and this dialogue is really supposed to be about showing them how we can support them. Surveys are done all of the time all over the United States. They call us on our house phones, ask us questions, they pull together data and they use it to do something meaningful with it. It sounds like we are just making such a big issue of this thing that is really supposed to help us. I responded to Ms. Ingram, but I don't know if anyone else did. I responded that I thought the survey looked good, that it is reasonable and I think we should move forward. I did not get the opportunity earlier, but Ms. Ingram I want to tell you "thank you" for pulling this together. This simply shows leadership and when someone takes time out of their busy schedule to pull this kind of data together and present it like Ms. Ingram did tonight, says that she is definitely about educating our children and making sure that our school district is well taken care of. I believe the survey does the same thing. We should be above board in how we operate. We are simply saying to Dr. Bracy, get this information to your principals. It is a very positive tool. Board Members, please look it over and if you have some issues give it back to me and we can go back and recreate this thing. We will get it to Dr. Bracy once we all agree and then the principals will tell us what they think. Once the principals tell us what they think, we want to come together and dialogue. I think it is a very positive tool to be used, but I think we are making a big deal of it.

Ms. Smith-Ingram: For clarity, the reason why we wanted it to come from Dr. Bracy's office is so that Ms. Harris could get the access. It is through Survey Monkey and we use it a lot.

Ms. Harris will have the access so that she can pull all of the comments and they will come to you Dr. Bracy and you will just filter it and go in the login and be able to analyze the matrix and pull together the responses. The way the Survey Monkey works is that it helps you with the editorial language to make sure you are not influencing the responses based on the way the questions are made. It is nothing that I did, I just had the access. I feel that we were all elected

to do a job and part of doing that job is to get some feedback on how we are doing. There are some tough questions that I know I am going to get hit hard on, but how can I improve my performance if I don't solicit some constructive feedback? That is what we are doing as a Board so that we can break down the barriers. Now, if anyone who has any objections would please email the Chair, because we won't know what your objections are if you don't respond. It is just for helping to generate dialogue and to build a better organizational structure.

Ms. Taylor: I really thought the survey was a good idea. The only problem was that we all did not have the opportunity to put something into it. I know that you did send it out, but as you know I had a situation with my cell phone. I promise you I will look at it and respond. Again, I think the survey was a good idea, but I think that some Board Members felt that we were going to sit down and go over it and come up with one survey together for the principals.

Ms. Smith-Ingram: Ms. Taylor, you bring up a good point and if there are questions that you want added we can edit the survey. Please send those questions to me if you would like them to be added, but we don't want it to be so long that they won't feel like filling it out. We know they are very busy people.

Board Information

- NCSBA Community Use of Facilities Webinar – May 17, 2013 – 12:00 noon – 1:00 p.m. (Speaker: Janine Murphy, NCSBA Assistant Legal Counsel)
- Special Board Meeting (Work Session) – May 14, 2013 – Board Room – 5:00 p.m. (Closed Session) – Open Session beginning at approximately 6:30 p.m.
- ~All Principals have been invited to attend the Work Session to discuss the Principal's Survey.
- Next Regular Board Meeting – June 3, 2013 – Board Room – 5:00 p.m. (Closed Session) – Open Session beginning at approximately 6:30 p.m.
- Northampton County High School Graduation – The Centre (HCC) – June 8, 2013 – 10:00 a.m.
- NCSBA President's Summer Leadership Series – June 17-21, 2013 – Carolina Beach, NC

Ms. M. Edwards: The Board Members need to let Ms. Harris know in a timely manner if they plan to attend the graduation at The Centre because you have to have a ticket.

Ms. Felisha Whitaker addressed the Board as follows: If you plan to attend the graduation I will be sending an email out tomorrow to the principals. Everyone who enters The Centre has to have a ticket and they have given us a set amount of tickets, which is 1,500. What we would like to do is make sure we have our Board Members, Central Services staff and our principals covered. The tickets that we have left we will have to divide those among our seniors. We can't tell the seniors yet how many tickets they will get until we get the numbers squared away. We have asked Ms. Harris to inform the Board and the administrators to let us know by Friday, May 10th if they plan to attend. We have to work with the number of tickets they allotted us.

Chair K. Edwards: Board Members, in reference to our next meeting on May 14th, please email me your agenda items by Friday, May 10, 2013 at noon to be included on the agenda. As you know, Attorney Malone advised us that the Principal's Survey is not a closed session item and we really need to have a discussion on the survey instrument before we send it out. We need clarity about when can we afford the opportunity to send the survey out. We are looking at a deadline, as the meeting is May 14th. We need a quick, firm deadline and a turnaround, because again this meeting is scheduled for May 14th.

Principal's Survey Continued

The Board held the following discussion regarding the Principal's Survey:

Ms. M. Edwards: I think the deadline needs to be Thursday for all who have something to say. If we get it in by Thursday that will give Dr. Bracy time to get it out.

Attorney Rod Malone: I thought there was an agreement among the Board Members that if this is a Board survey then the Board needs to approve it. What I thought you were doing was selecting questions between now and some point and then the Board would approve a final survey document on Tuesday.

Ms. Smith-Ingram: The reason the survey was sent out to the Board on April 29th was so that we could get the responses and be able to dialogue with the principals. The Board Members were supposed to get back to me with their comments, additional questions or recommend an edit. If we don't move forward right now and do a survey, then there is no need to do it, as it will not be timely if we do it on May 14th.

Attorney Rod Malone: If it is the Board's survey, who is deciding which questions get deleted and which ones get added? The Board will need to make that decision.

Mr. Williams: Can we just give Ms. Ingram the go ahead to pull the survey together to send to Dr. Bracy? Do we need to go through this approval process?

Mr. Johnson: It needs to come from the Superintendent.

Attorney Rod Malone: It depends upon whether it is the Board's survey.

Ms. Smith-Ingram: I have received a survey from Ms. Geneva Squire and I believe she used Survey Monkey. I responded to that survey within 24 hours of her sending it to me. Dr. Bracy can open up his email, get the original survey, add the questions that everyone approves of and distribute it to the principals. I don't have to send the survey. We just need to get an instrument out there so that we can get some feedback from the people who support us.

Attorney Rod Malone: Here is another option. You can forward your questions to the superintendent and he can assemble them and send out the survey. It would be that he is sending it out based on his selection of the questions that he received from the Board Members. That way the Board does not have to decide any of the additional questions to go with the original ones. If it is going out as the Board's survey I don't see how you can get to the Board's survey.

Mr. Johnson: If I like all of the questions except one, what is that going to do to the others that might like the one I disliked? Everyone has his or her own opinion?

Chair K. Edwards: At that point, we would have to take it question by question.

Mr. Williams: I don't see why we can't pull it up now.

Ms. Smith-Ingram: I will write down the website right now and we can pull it up while we have access. I will read the questions to the Board from the Principal's Survey. Please note that several of these questions were based on some feedback that we were given. Some people had some good ideas of what they feel that the Board needs to put in place to help better manage the school system. A board sets policy and we need to know which policies are problematic for them in trying to implement and meet our expectations as well. Board Members, just say which questions you would like for us to delete and what question or questions you would like to see added.

Mr. Johnson: In regards to your question regarding Board Member visits to the schools, when I am asked and invited to schools I go. I am not going to put myself in the position to be running up and down the hall to be stopped and be told that, "I need this, I think you need to do this," because they do not know the full impact of what they are asking for. I am not going to cater to whims and take the message. If the principal has a comment, I will listen to the principal, but I do not walk up and down the halls and snoop. I know I am committed to go on any campus in

the county anytime I want to, but I will wait for an invitation. I have done that for 23 years and I have not tried to go and force myself upon the principals and the teachers.

Ms. Smith-Ingram: I know that you have been that way, but we need to know if they would like to see us more, they are not seeing us enough or they are seeing us too much. It is not to single out any one person, but there are some people who feel like we have abandoned them and I know for me it is hard to get around. I am going to do my best, but the only thing I can do is improve based on the feedback that we get. Is the Board in agreement to delete question #5?

Mr. Matthews: I like the way you said, "What professional development do you need?"

Ms. Taylor: Will you read question #4 again?

Ms. Smith-Ingram: "What policy or policies would you like to see implemented to promote behavior management and better academic focus among students?" I have been hearing a lot about the cell phone issue and some just want them banned.

Ms. Taylor: I don't totally agree, because technology is the new wave. They can use their cell phones for technology in the classroom.

Mr. Williams: Instead of it being all or nothing, can't we work it so that what policy might need to be revised? I think that may be part of the issue.

Mr. Johnson: What is the policy on electronics?

Chair K. Edwards: We currently don't have a policy that states you can bring your own device. The only thing that I constantly hear about cell phones is that when administrators take them up and that is the only phone in the house. That is a battle when you talk about taking someone's cell phone.

Ms. Smith-Ingram: Board Members are you in agreement with the following revisions to question #5? "What professional development opportunities or assignments do you feel would be of benefit to you in your career development?"

The Board was in agreement with the revisions to question #5.

Ms. Smith-Ingram: Are there any other changes other than question #5?

Dr. Bracy: I would like to add the following question to the survey, "Is there anything else you would like to share with the Board as it relates to our performance?"

Chair K. Edwards: Board Members, we have done all of the work on the survey and now we need a motion to approve the survey.

On a MOTION by Mr. Williams, SECONDED by Mr. Matthews, the Board unanimously APPROVED the Principal's Survey as presented by the Board. The motion passed by a vote of 7-0.

Chair K. Edwards: Dr. Bracy, will you be able to get the Principal's Survey out by Wednesday, May 8, 2013 at noon?

Dr. Bracy: I would like to ask that Ms. Ingram email the survey to Ms. Harris and me and we will go from there.

Attorney Rod Malone: We now need a motion to revise the agenda to add the Principal's Survey as an action item and a motion to revise the motion to go into closed session to add G.S. (a)(3).

On a MOTION by Ms. M. Edwards, SECONDED by Mr. Matthews, the Board unanimously APPROVED to add the Principal's Survey as an action item to the agenda and to add G.S. (a)(3) along with G.S. (a)(1) and (a)(6) as the reason for going into closed session. The motion passed by a vote of 7-0.

Adjournment

On a MOTION by Mr. Johnson, SECONDED by Ms. Taylor, the Board adjourned the meeting at 9:05 p.m.

Approved: September 9, 2013

Dr. Eric C. Bracy, Superintendent