

**SPECIAL MEETING
NORTHAMPTON COUNTY BOARD OF EDUCATION
Monday, February 25, 2013**

Members Present: Kelvin Edwards, Chair; Erica Smith-Ingram, Vice Chair; Donald Johnson, Marjorie Edwards, Phil Matthews, Clinton Williams, Dr. Eric Bracy, ex officio

Members Absent: Rhonda Taylor

The Northampton County Board of Education held a special meeting on February 25, 2013 in the Board Room of the Northampton County Schools administrative building. Chair Kelvin Edwards called the meeting to order at 5:20 p.m.

Approval of Board Agenda

On a MOTION by Mr. Johnson, SECONDED by Mr. Williams, the Board unanimously APPROVED the agenda, as recommended by the Superintendent. The motion passed by a vote of 6-0.

Business Before the Board for Information

2013-2014 Planning Allotment

Mr. Joe Holloway distributed copies of the 2013-2014 State Planning Allotment to the Board and reviewed the same. The Board held the following discussion regarding the decreases in the Planning Allotment:

Ms. M. Edwards: I see all of the increases in classroom materials, supplies and equipment, but they are cutting the teachers. Why do we need more supplies if they are going to cut the teachers?

Mr. Matthews: Is the amount that you have in the 2012-13 column of the Planning Allotment or the actual allocation?

Mr. Holloway: That is the Planning Allotment from last year, not the actual allocation.

Mr. Matthews: That means that the reversion is not reflected if you have to make a reversion. Do you anticipate a reversion for 2013-14?

Mr. Holloway: You are correct, it does not reflect a reversion and we do anticipate one this year according to the information we received last week. It will probably be the same as it was last year, which was approximately \$680,000.00.

Mr. Matthews: Now, to answer Ms. Edwards question about why are we receiving an increase in classroom supplies and other items knowing that they are going to ask for it back, they just gave you somewhere to pull it from.

Mr. Holloway: That is correct Mr. Matthews and if you would look at the textbooks line item where they have increased it of about \$100,000.00 along with the classroom supplies and materials, we can look at those two areas as far as sending funds back to the state.

Ms. M. Edwards: You only have to send it back if you don't need it, is that correct?

Mr. Holloway: No, it is mandatory that we send money back.

Dr. Bracy: They want it to look like the district made the decision about which pots of money to send back and not the state.

Mr. Holloway: The recommendation from previous years was that we would take a percentage of the total reversion amount from each program based on that percentage, but it really does not help some of the programs and it really hurts others. That is why I am suggesting now that we use the textbooks funds for a reversion since we have \$100,000.00 out there currently in our balance, unless there is an

adoption of textbooks for this upcoming year. If we don't have to buy textbooks, then I would like to use that as far as a reversion.

Ms. M. Edwards: I thought that it had been talked about two or three years ago that we would not be using textbooks? We talked about students were going without books because there were not enough books for students to carry home. Now we have over \$100,000.00. It seems like the children in our county are not important and funds are being pulled from the people who are educating our children. These line items to me seems like they are trying to hurt who we are trying to educate.

Dr. Mark Rumley: I think it is safe to say that you as the Board gets to say which line items you take the funds from so that is a local decision.

Ms. M. Edwards: When I look at the teacher assistants' line item is going up and the teachers' line item is going down.

Dr. Bracy: The teacher assistants' increase is insignificant. It may be a salary increase, but it won't add up to be that much.

Ms. M. Edwards: I just feel like they are not being supportive of the people who are educating our children who will be our future. That is why we have to do supplementary classes because they are not where they need to be. I have not experienced it with my grandchildren, but I have seen children go off to college and they have to go to the tech before they get where they need to go. I just see a struggle for our children.

Mr. Williams: It appears to me that with PRC-61, whatever you cut there will hurt the most. Isn't there a drive now to do a lot of the work on the computer? We adopted a policy that is really going to cut the books out and the children will be working from the computers anyway, but they still need the materials in the classroom such as paper for printing. Depending upon how much you are talking about cutting PRC-61 Mr. Holloway, it will take a major hit.

Mr. Holloway: This past year, we really had a lot of extra money in Title I in my opinion. There was an allocation for every school, except the Alternative School. The lowest school received approximately \$20,000 for supplies and materials. If the funding level stays the same, the allocation will be there for next year also. They did purchase at least three computer carts this year spending about \$12,000 for each out of Title I.

Mr. Williams: Is that why a lot of the teachers are having to spend money out of their pockets?

Mr. Holloway: They should not have to spend one single dime of their personal money. They should notify their principal, because there is more than enough money out there.

Ms. M. Edwards: Mr. Williams, if you know of someone who is doing that I would like to know as well. Our Ministers' Council asked two months ago for a list of teachers' needs for the classroom, but we have not heard anything since the last meeting.

Mr. Lassiter: I believe Ms. Susan Collins has that list Ms. Edwards.

Mr. Williams: Do the teachers know that this offer even exists?

Mr. Lassiter: Yes they know, because we put together a wish list and Mr. Holloway remembers an email that went out about textbooks. The requests varied between pens to the needs of French textbooks. When the research went through we were able to get French textbooks from a neighboring school district to fit that need. There are some areas where we have to be creative with our funding. There was an initiative to go "textbookless" and make a gradual transition into the digital age with instruction, but that kind of hit some snags with regards to networking, bandwidth issues, site license issues, etc. That is where your grant funding comes in to help offset some cost. Ms. Edwards, I agree with what you are saying with respect to helping our district, our professionals, our children be competitive and have the same access that they have in other counties.

Ms. M. Edwards: Do we have people in place to write grants and things like that?

Mr. Lassiter: Mr. Holloway and I have been working aggressively and we would like to start looking at alternative funding sources to help us get some funding. That was one of the things I spoke of during my interview to come here was to look at alternative funding sources to help finance some things we want to do here in Northampton County. The state may short change us, but we can be creative and take a look at the alternative funding sources such as the Magic Johnson Foundation. I would also like to talk with Dr. Bracy about the School Improvement Grant, as they vary in funding from \$50,000 to \$7.5 million. The SIG grants come with a price, but it would truly revolutionize your school system.

Dr. Bracy: We don't have a grant writer on staff, but you can contract people and I have come in contact with some people recently who are grant writers.

Mr. Johnson: We tried that some years ago and went into contracted services with Gates, Weldon and Northampton, but we did not get our monies worth.

Mr. Lassiter: Mr. Holloway and I will follow through and talk with Dr. Bracy regarding the SIG grants.

Ms. M. Edwards: We need help and I would certainly like to see Northampton County move from tier one, especially in the schools.

Chair K. Edwards: Mr. Holloway, I am looking at the 2012-2013 Planning Allotment for last year, but this is not the actual allotment?

Mr. Holloway: No, this is not the actual allotment for last year.

Chair K. Edwards: I would like to see the actual allotment from last year.

Mr. Holloway: I can get the actual allotment from last year, but we probably will not get the federal piece for this year until May, June or July as far as Planning Allotment. We will establish our budget that we will send to the County Commissioners based on last year's figures.

Chair K. Edwards: I am looking at our ADM figures of 2230 are down to 2121, which is 109 students less.

Mr. Holloway: Based upon classroom size with that figure of 2121 students, you are looking at 5 teachers they are taking back from us.

Ms. M. Edwards: I thought you said it was projected to be 2121.

Mr. Holloway: All of this is a prelude to what we have to do as far as Human Resources prior to making personnel determinations, our decision about a RIF, what we are going to lose through attrition and things of that nature as far as positions are concerned.

Mr. Lassiter: How it plays into a more simplified process with respect to how it is going with the RIF is called, not filling positions due to retirements and resignations. Mr. Holloway and I had a conversation today about alternate funding sources, because we are going to need additional teachers, instructional support, counselors and whereas we don't get the allotment we need, we are going to have to be creative in securing funding. Decisions will have to be made as to how we are going to use resources such as DSSF, Low Wealth, and Capital Building funding. Mr. Holloway and I have been working on that with regards to flexibility in those pots of money. We have created a form that talks about a position justification formula. When we get to the point where we start talking to principals and they demonstrate that they need funds and they need these positions, they will articulate on that form using hard data as to why they need that position. They may state I need this position, not because I want another person on staff, but because I have 29 3rd graders in one class and that is above the scribed 21 students to work with. That is a plenty of justification right there. Mr. Holloway has also stated that when he gets audited, he needs to be able to show the auditors that he had to use this money to reduce class sizes in grades K-3. That helps us get to what we need. If we could get the state to be a little more generous with us as we grow that would also help.

On another note, there is an issue of which we recently spoke with the media in regards to the impending expansion of Gaston College Prep (KIPP) and that they would be opening a Pre-K-8 school in Halifax County in school year 2014-15. In talking with the media, they asked us for our collective statement. There is going to be a pipeline to Pre-K-8 there in Halifax County and then moving into grades 9-12 in Gaston. That will have a significant impact on our student body here. Yet, as we spoke at the Retreat and as we have spoken to Board Members prior to tonight, we do have a very ambitious marketing plan to win families back to this district. We always talk about if we continue to do the same things the same way and expect different results. That is the definition of insanity. We are going to have to become innovative and transformative in deeds not just words. You, the Board, took a huge step in that direction by presenting a very consolidated, unified force in front and a recommitment of your service to these kids. That is what our families want. Our families don't want rhetoric and they don't want good spokesmen. They want to see action. Our Board, working with the County Commissioners to help us to get more money, get a public vote of confidence on this new high school, be transparent with the community and citizens about the conditions in our buildings and take steps in the right direction to win families back. Now Board Members, we have to produce. Our teachers, our staff, our administration and our students now need to produce. We need to compare side by side with our neighbors that we are producing and in some cases out-performing our neighbors. That will win families back. I received a voicemail tonight from a family outside of our district. Her son is attending Halifax Academy who wants to come to Northampton County High School and he is a football/basketball player. He wants to come and be a part of a conference championship team in two sports. That is an example of something that wins families back. When they see the earth turning on this new high school; that is going to win families. They will want to be a part of this \$20 million dollar high school. The quicker we can put those words into deeds; you will see that 2121 ADM grow. I applaud parents because they now have options. For too long, there was a monopoly in education where the public school system said, "Here is our product take it or leave it". Now, there are options and that are great for the children, but it forces us to step our game up.

Chair K. Edwards: Regarding that 2121 ADM, does that take into consideration the students that will start 1st grade at KIPP next year? Has that been taken into account or is this just a projection?

Mr. Holloway: This is just a projection.

Dr. Mark Rumley: That number is probably based upon birth rate population.

Dr. Bracy: Is Pre-K included in that number?

Mr. Holloway: No, just Kindergarten is included.

Chair K. Edwards: Just looking at our population, there are only 30 students at the Alternative School, there are 120 or less students at Squire, and 206 students at Gaston Middle. When we talk about grade configuration and building a building with less than 40% occupancy that is a grave concern. When I hear Mr. Holloway say that we are losing 13 months of employment for principals and I am looking at buildings that we have that are less than 40% occupied.

Mr. Lassiter: We would like to take a look at having a discussion about going to a Prek-12 set up.

Dr. Bracy: I would rather put it together and show it to you.

Chair K. Edwards: Those are the things that I am looking at as I go through. I am looking at buildings that we have on our current structure.

Ms. M. Edwards: That is the conversation we have had a couple of times already and we are still waiting for the figures to figure out what we need to do.

Ms. Smith-Ingram: Who needs to take the lead on this? Would that be the Facilities Committee or will Dr. Bracy and his staff take the lead?

Dr. Bracy: My staff is part of the Facilities Committee and we will meet whenever the Facilities Committee wants to meet. When you talk about closing Squire, I still have something in my head from my conversation with Mr. Matthews when he said, “putting up \$300,000 to fix Squire to get Gaston like you want it.”

Mr. Matthews: This is needed to handle the Pre-K, to meet all the licensing and codes, and putting up or knocking down walls, etc.

Ms. M. Edwards: We are not looking at Squire.

Dr. Bracy: We are talking about closing Squire, but it cost money to close Squire.

Ms. M. Edwards: But, aren't you talking about fixing Gaston up?

Dr. Bracy: We are talking about fixing Gaston. Also, Mr. Holloway did you say the cost to operate Squire is not quite \$300,000?

Mr. Holloway: Yes.

Ms. M. Edwards: Still some of the money we are putting into Squire would be utilized and help get Gaston where the little people can come. For two years that \$300,000 has been sitting there.

Mr. Holloway: If you close Squire, you lose the principalship. I think you may be grandfathered in for two years.

Chair K. Edwards: In the long run, we are talking about compassionate versus what we have. As we visit our schools and walk through our schools, I am talking about the student ratio to staff members and principals.

Dr. Bracy: One principal could handle the students at Squire and Gaston Middle. There is no doubt about that.

Chair K. Edwards: It could also be a teacher leader.

Ms. Smith-Ingram: One thing that I hope we can look at is to close the Alternative School and put an Alternative Program at our high school and at our middle schools.

Dr. Bracy: You can close the building without closing the school itself. You can close the building, but if it is the building you want closed and the facility pad locked you can do that without destroying the school number.

Ms. Smith-Ingram: That is fine as long as we are not running a new kind of building for less than thirty (30) students. Looking at Squire, it is an older facility and even looking down the road at what we are going to do about Willis Hare. We are really going to be looking to either modify the structures we have, but can we really make the argument that we are best utilizing our best facilities when we are dumping all of this money into facilities that are way too old and we can do some consolidating? I would like to see the Facilities Committee and this administration take that task on and look at bringing something to the table in early April.

Mr. Williams: I just wanted to say that once you close that building, you will have a big problem if you ever need to reopen it.

Dr. Bracy: I doubt you will ever get Squire reopened.

Mr. Williams: I think it would be helpful to keep it in limbo status.

Dr. Bracy: I can remember when that happened in Halifax County and what they went through. When they tried to reopen those schools it was going to cost them a lot of money.

Chair K. Edwards: When I look at when County Commissioners handed us our enrollment. By evidence, our enrollment is increasingly going down, although it is a projection. The charter school allotment has not been given out, three people have written letters of intent for a charter school in Northampton County, and there is a meeting in Halifax County tonight for another charter school.

These are unforeseen factors that will affect our population, although we are just speaking candidly. With all of those things taken into consideration, we are actually constantly decreasing in size as Ms. Edwards alluded to and that concerns me Dr. Bracy. When I say looking at where we are as a school district, a Pre-K-12 campus might be the way to go versus a new high school because of population. When I look at the DPI across the board projections, you are only talking about 70 graduates within the next five years.

Mr. Williams: If it is possible, maybe we can share some of those positions that Mr. Lassiter talked about earlier and I don't know if you have looked at it as a possibility. Even if it is an assistant principal position, can you share those between schools if necessary? That way, you are not looking at spending so much money, because you are over by 8, 20 or 19 then you would share that position some way. I know that was one idea that on was the table when we were looking at moving towards consolidating the high schools. Chair Edwards, you are making some good comments and I am going to tell you why our schools keep going down. It is because we are nothing more than a feeder for Gaston Prep, Weldon School District and Halifax School District. That is where our students are going.

Dr. Bracy: I don't agree with you about Halifax County. They are the worst school system in the state. They are a low performing school system.

Mr. Williams: We have lost students to Halifax County, but you may not know it. Nevertheless, they are going there. We are nothing but a feeder and I am not surprised that three charter schools are looking to come to Northampton County. I projected not that three would be looking, but that we would lose a lot of students early on. That is because we have made ourselves an open book. Northampton County is the place to go and any place that is marketing a business goes where there is a demand. Right now, we have set the stage for us to be a county of demand, because of some of the things we do that just does not make any sense. We are going to continue to lose students as long as our principals don't know how to talk to parents, as long as our teachers think that it is okay to say anything to children, as long as we continue to treat staff the way that we treat our staff, and as long as we continue to do some of the things that we do in Northampton County. One of the things I say to my parents of those who bring their children to me for services, the first thing you must do in order for your child to get better is you have to make some changes. I hear us talking around the table like this is a helpless situation and we have no solution and we talk about losing students. I think there is a solution and in order for this problem to change we have to make changes, such as the people in this room. We are not making any changes, but we still want our student population to get better or we keep looking for "how do we fix the problem". Let's stop looking at fixing these little problems and go to the very root of the problem and fix that. We don't offer the product that we need to offer. As I sit around the table at GCP and some of these other places, you are right Dr. Bracy, they are not offering any more and sometimes it is worst. The reason that we have some of our 16 and 17 year-olds in our middle schools is because GCP has done absolutely nothing with them and they come back or they send them back. In fact, they encourage them to come back to us.

Dr. Bracy: I would like to see that number of how many of our students have gone to Halifax County.

Mr. Williams: I am not saying Halifax County is doing something better than we are. Dr. Bracy, I don't want you to take this personal, because we are having a discussion and the discussion keeps coming up about how we are going to survive. That is the name of the game.

Dr. Bracy: You survive if you get creative and offer different things.

Mr. Williams: You do, but the first thing for me is going to be better customer service. Customer service means a lot and Ms. Ingram has been one of the leaders in talking about customer service. We don't have it and when I get some of the telephone calls from parents saying, "Somebody talked to me this way" or "somebody did this to my child" or "somebody is not doing for my child" or "my child is in this situation and nobody seems to be really looking at the situation". It is just like these 16 and 17 year olds I spoke about earlier. I keep going back to that, because that is an issue right now. But when you look at them overall, our customer service is where our problem is. I have said to you before Dr. Bracy, what we need to do is to start having some kind of forums, get out into the community and talk to these parents. You need to give parents a follow-up call like they do when they service your vehicle. This is the kind of things that is going to keep our people and is going to bring them back to us.

Dr. Bracy: I would appreciate it if you would bring specific details about incidences. You and I can meet after this meeting.

Mr. Williams: I will bring some specifics to you, but right now this is an extended problem.

Dr. Bracy: This is the same thing you said at the Retreat.

Mr. Williams: We have to have better customer service. People are going to go where they are getting that customer service every single time. I think that is what our problem is and why we keep losing people. I want us to stop talking about this like we are helpless and let's start doing something different than what we have been doing to attract these folks back here and keep those who are here from wanting to leave.

Mr. Lassiter: Mr. Williams, on Friday I will be representing our district at the North Carolina Schools Public Relations Association and our district was up for an award for Excellence in Communication. We did not win this time, but there will be a next time. I agree wholeheartedly with what you are saying about customer service. A good friend of mine, Jeff Nash who does Public Relations in Chapel Hill-Carrboro, has written a book about "Providing Rock Star Customer Service". I don't care what building you have or what instructional curriculum program you offer, Ms. Smith-Ingram is going to remember how she was greeted at that front desk more than anything else. I agree, we have had conversations about providing professional development to our office managers. When you call Dr. Bracy or me, you are going to hear a warm voice on that telephone. But, we are only two units and we have to make sure that our ambassadors and our faculties work with us in our schools and that they are exemplifying that very same commitment of customer service that we believe in, because we have to do a better job. At the conference on Friday, one of the sessions that we will be presented is "How to provide a level of customer service in your district and in your building that markets your school for you".

Dr. Bracy: You are preaching to the choir. Everybody does not have the professionalism of a Hans Lassiter, an Eric Bracy, a James Tillery, or a Patricia Harris. We are trying to bring certain folks along to have that. I bring it up at every Principals' Meeting and we talk about it at every meeting.

Mr. Williams: It is going to start with you saying, "This is the way it is going to be." When that issue comes up address it.

Dr. Bracy: I say those things, but I don't get these issues you are getting them and you are not telling me what the issues are or who the violators are. I don't get those calls that someone yelled at me.

Ms. Smith-Ingram: Mr. Williams is not the only Board Member, but I have heard it and Chair Edwards has heard that you have principals who do not speak to the teachers like they are professionals and that they get on the intercom and say some things that should not be said.

Dr. Bracy: I would like to know who they are.

Ms. Smith-Ingram: I have spoken about this in your office before when Chair Edwards and I met with you.

Chair K. Edwards: If we can move the agenda along then we can go into closed session and address all of those things.

Mr. Johnson: I wanted to comment that if anyone transfers from one county to another, there has to be an agreement with the Superintendents before that child can move. Isn't that the way it is supposed to be?

Dr. Bracy: Yes it is. I don't know how they keep moving around like that.

Mr. Johnson: If these people are leaving here and going to Halifax County, why aren't the people in Halifax County notifying us or asking for permission?

Chair K. Edwards: Mr. Johnson, I think it is because everyone is experiencing a decrease and they are going over there without permission.

Mr. Johnson: There is a stipulation in our policy that if a parent would like to furnish transportation and pay a fee, is that not still part of our policy?

Mr. Matthews: That is correct. We will accept them if they pay a tuition fee and provide their own transportation. The tuition fee is waived if the parent works in the school system. The tuition fee was \$450.00 per semester.

Mr. Johnson: The reason I said that was because that would not hold true at Halifax Academy if that is where the parent called from. They still have to pay the fee, but there is no release.

Mr. Williams: Yes it would because little Johnny has a new address.

Ms. Smith-Ingram: In regards to the allotment, where is the decline in the 109 students projected? What grade level are they in?

Mr. Holloway: I don't have that information with me. Ms. Moses does give me ADM information, but I don't have it right now.

Dr. Bracy: Mr. Holloway will you see if you can get those specifics from Ms. Moses.

Ms. Smith-Ingram: Why does the Non-Instructional Support Personnel line item look like it grew astronomically from 2010-11 until 2011-12, but I can see where it is going back down gradually.

Mr. Holloway: It is showing an increase after a substantial decrease due to the ARRA (American Recovery & Reinvestment Act). I also need to inform the Board that I have added a column called (Actual Allocation) to the Planning Allotment under column 2012-13 with some omissions. The first Planning Allotment document that you saw did not have PRC 20 (VIF) in there and it did not have PRC 08 (Dollar Allotment for K-12 Teachers). The difference in this figure reflects \$823,000.00. This amount is as the green bar code document that Chair K. Edwards has and it is actually what we have in our system. PRC 20 is in the approximate amount of \$200,000.00 and PRC 08 is in the approximate amount of \$600,000.00 and are shown on the document Chair K. Edwards has, but are not shown on the Planning Allotment handout that you have. Also, PRC 20 actually has four (4) teachers that are being paid out of the amount that is reflected and PRC 08 has six (6) teachers that are being paid out of that amount. That means we are looking at a difference of ten (10) teachers. The other amounts are as you received them. Also, in PRC 05 School Building Administration, we actually have 119 months of employment in there.

Dr. Bracy informed the Board that if there are no other questions regarding the 2013-14 State Planning Allotment, Mr. Holloway will present the Service Solutions Financial Update.

Service Solutions Financial Update

Mr. Holloway reviewed a Service Solutions FY 13 handout with the Board as follows: He informed the Board that they would see a projected cost through the end of this year based on our billing, which comes to approximately \$176,097.06. The contract amount should have been \$156,100.00, which is on the two-page contract handout that you have. The increase amount was a result of two custodians resigning, one at Willis Hare and one at the high school. The projected amount of their salaries was on the average of \$29,000.00 and Service Solutions is picking up these two people from us at the rate of \$23,000.00, which is shown on the page 2, item 4c of the contract. The salary for a normal custodian that we had was around \$29,000.00; however, the person at Willis Hare was 50% of that. The additional increase in salary reflected in that \$176,097.06 includes janitorial supplies. These supplies were something we incurred out of the norm, because there were some items at the schools that were needed such as, big towel dispensers, hand dryers and that type of thing that was not in the contract and we absorbed that cost. The line item showing substitutes is because we had three custodians from July forward who were out at various times and we still have two people out as we speak, one person at Willis Hare and one person at Gaston Elementary. The third person at Northampton County High School was out for a period of time, but he is now back. What we did to absorb one of those costs was to send a part-time custodian we had in the Central Office out to fill in for the person at Gaston Elementary and that cut our cost down significantly on that. To-date, looking at the far right (Paid) column, we have paid out \$132,565.97 and the projected cost through the end of the year right now is \$199,931.33.

The Board held the following discussion regarding the Service Solutions Financial Update:

Mr. Clinton Williams: In the case of the person who was out for quite a while, would he by any chance or would a person in that situation have qualified for short-term disability?

Mr. Holloway: It would depend upon how long he was out and whether or not he had leave to utilize, because quite a few factors come into play.

Dr. Bracy: In the past, if they were out we would have had a void there and no one to cover them.

Mr. Holloway: That is correct, but we did have one custodian to resign from the high school.

Mr. Matthews: Who paid for the substitutes, Service Solutions or did we?

Mr. Holloway: We paid for the substitutes.

Mr. Matthews: This is the first year ever that we have paid for custodian substitutes.

Mr. Holloway: You are absolutely correct.

Mr. Williams: My thinking is that if they qualify for disability and instead of absorbing that whole cost since we are paying disability anyway, wouldn't it make sense to look into transferring them to disability for that short-term if they qualify.

Mr. Holloway: Yes, we could if they qualify, but he did not qualify.

Ms. M. Edwards: When Service Solutions came, I thought they were going to do walk-throughs, checks and see what we needed. Why did they not know that we needed paper towels, toilet tissue, hand soap dispensers, washing supplies, trash containers, and plastic liners? Did they not charge us extra for that?

Mr. Holloway: This was something over and above and I think it was based on a session that Mr. Lassiter had prior to a visit from the Health Department and it was determined that the additional items were needed.

Ms. M. Edwards: If you would remember that we talked about some of these same things with regards to the facility respectably and also trying to get the building up to par. This cost a lot of money to be added into the contract.

Dr. Bracy: The cost for the janitorial supplies was a little over \$2,000.00.

Mr. Holloway: I believe the overall problem there was the destruction of some of those items by the kids.

Ms. M. Edwards: The regular pricing started out with \$11,515.00 in August and went to \$16,841.34 in October. Is that when it started being the regular pricing?

Mr. Holloway: In October, it would reflect the two people who are no longer with us that we were paying on our payroll from Willis Hare and Northampton County High School.

Ms. Smith-Ingram: Why did the contract amount go up in September and October?

Dr. Bracy: It was because when they were our employees and we were paying them. One person retired and one person resigned and now Service Solutions will have to start paying someone else.

Mr. Holloway: They only picked them up at \$23,000.00. If you look at what we were paying a \$29,000.00 plus salary versus the \$23,000.00 they have as a starter price, we actually gained about \$6,000.00.

Mr. Williams: Mr. Holloway, can you explain item #2(a2) under Invoices/Payment (Equipment Payments) on page 1? What does that really mean?

Mr. Holloway: There was a laundry list of items that they did an inventory on and decided this was needed at each school in order to maintain the floors and other things. These items were buffer machines, varnish machines and those kinds of equipment. This is the cost that would go way over that five-year period of time if we were to maintain that contract with them. This amount (\$133,420.00) was neither a start-up cost that we actually paid up front nor was the (\$14,838.00) start-up price under item #2(a1). We paid neither one of those costs up front.

Mr. Williams: So all of that nice equipment that we were understanding they were going to purchase, they were just locking themselves into a five-year contract or either they are going to walk away with some pretty expensive equipment that we are going to pay for.

Ms. Smith-Ingram: Plus we will still have to pay the amortized cost.

Ms. M. Edwards: I can recall when one custodian was asking for one piece of equipment that was going to be used in all of the buildings.

Mr. Williams: We were not presented this information in the correct way.

Mr. Johnson: The contract says that NCS shall either (i) pay or (ii) the contractor shall retain. It does not say we have to pay for the equipment they have purchased. That also means that when we go back at the end of the contract, we would have to purchase our equipment for the next year or once they left with the equipment.

Dr. Bracy: We never got rid of our equipment, because that would have been like giving it away. That way, if the contract did not work out we would still have all of our equipment.

Ms. M. Edwards: Even the initial contract is different from this one, because there are different items in here.

Mr. Holloway: There were probably about four additions to the contract as far as services to be rendered and equipment purchased. I don't know if they actually purchased the \$133,420.00 of equipment.

Ms. M. Edwards: It sounds like the same machine that the custodians were asking for. It would be housed in the Maintenance Department and used at the different facilities.

Dr. Bracy: When we had those custodians out sick, we did not have a list to pull from.

Ms. M. Edwards: Don't you have a list of those people who have been rified? Everybody can get sick, so maybe we need our own pool of people to pull from like our rif list.

Ms. Smith-Ingram: Under item 2(a1), has that start-up price of \$14,838.00 been paid in full or did we amortize it?

Mr. Holloway: No it has not.

Ms. Smith-Ingram: So no matter what, if we don't use them after the one year we will have to pay the balance of the \$14,838.00? Have we already paid that?

Mr. Holloway: No we have not paid that yet.

Ms. Smith-Ingram: It states that if this agreement is terminated by either party for any reason prior to five (5) years following the effective date, any unamortized balance remaining for the start-up price shall be paid to contractor by NCS on or before the date of termination.

Mr. Johnson: That contradicts what he asked on #2(a2).

Ms. M. Edwards: I know that he said it would be a one-year contract.

Ms. Smith-Ingram: I know our Board Attorney looked at it, but I was under impression that we could walk away clean if it did not work out. I should have gone back and checked the contract and I would have seen that.

Dr. Bracy: It is a one-year contract. We are not locked into five years.

Mr. Williams: It is, but it isn't. What the contract says is what is going to matter. It was sold as a nice piece of gold, but it looks like it is coated.

Dr. Bracy: I don't know that it is.

Mr. Williams: If you read #2(a1) and if we decided we did not want them at end of this year, would we not owe them anything?

Ms. Smith-Ingram: When you read #2(a1), a one-year contract or not it appears that if we terminate this contract or when we terminate this contract we will still be responsible for the balance of \$14,838.00 and that is not the impression I got when we went into this. In fact, I asked what is the advantage and why would we have to pay someone to supervise our people when we have people to supervise. According to the chart, it does not look like we broke even. It looks like it was at a cost for us and I think that our people can do just as good.

Dr. Bracy: If there is an increase, it is because we have had so many absences. That is the way I understand it with my conversations with Mr. Collins. Please know that the custodian at Northampton County High School has been out for three months and the one at Willis Hare has been out for six months.

Mr. Williams: It just looks like there were some hidden factors in the contract that we did not pay close enough attention to initially and we did have a copy of the contract that Mr. Holloway shared with us.

Ms. Smith-Ingram: I just did not know that we would have to pay when we terminated this contract.

Mr. Holloway: For clarification, I will give our attorney a call and he in turn can call Service Solutions' attorney.

Dr. Bracy: All of the language I am getting from Service Solutions Ms. Ingram is that "this is a one-year contract and we hope you all want us back next year". That is what they are saying to me. They also ask me, "What does the Board think about it".

Ms. Smith-Ingram: What about the customer service piece with Service Solutions? How has it worked for the building administrators and how has it worked for the people of Northampton County? Are the custodians satisfied?

Dr. Bracy: Mr. Lassiter, can you comment on that?

Mr. Lassiter: There had to be some conversations between and among the custodians, Mr. Racobaldo, Mr. Collins and the principals with regards to what is the chain of command. As far as the chain of command goes, Mr. Racobaldo is the Site Coordinator for all of the locations he is currently supervising, but they can still take directions from the building level administration. Mr. Racobaldo is in constant dialogue with the principals and assistant principals. Once we got that line of communications established things went very well. There were some expectations; however, and I had that conversation with the staffs. Anytime you have a change over in leadership there will be new and enhanced expectations. There were some who had some heartburn with the expectations and the work requirements and they chose to disassociate themselves with the organization. In talking with Mr. Racobaldo and Mr. Collins, those decisions were best for the organization. The level of cleanliness for example and what I have gotten from talking with the kids, parents and teachers is that, our buildings with their issues and limitations, actually look better now than in previous years. I think that is because there is a process and a systematic expectation in place. It has been very productive and positive. Mr. Racobaldo and Mr. Collins are frequent visitors here and as Dr. Bracy said, they seek feedback from us. "How do you think things are going and what is it that you see we can do differently?" We talk about being very aggressive and assertive with making sure that our high school, middle schools and elementary schools are termite free, mold free and so on for that reason and they go a good job in delivering that for us.

Ms. Smith-Ingram: By clarifying conversation, I did hear from several custodians who were concerned about, "If I have to meet this checklist and the principal has asked me to come over and do some things, who do I listen to"? That did cause some confusion about the chain of command.

Mr. Lassiter: That was a situation that I am aware of as well. Mr. Racobaldo and the principals will have conversations where that is accessible. That is something they want the custodian to do. If there is a pressing need right there immediately, then for sure the custodians will address that need. As you have said, there are the scribed work details that have to be attended to keep those buildings in tip top condition. Where possible, if the issue that avails itself at the moment and it is not a danger to students or staff safety then perhaps it can be tabled until these tasks have been prioritized and completed.

Ms. Smith-Ingram: Do the custodians share that or do the custodian stop and go call Mr. Racobaldo and then have that person speak to the principal and say, "can you let this person get through the checklist"? That can be stressful because you are trying to satisfy two different entities and you want to be sure you have a job.

Mr. Lassiter: I would imagine that there is a level of professionalism that exists whereby the custodians are very conscientious in wanting to fulfill their duties. At the same time, the principals and Service Solutions have had dialogue and Service Solutions has continued to emphasize to the principal that they are here to keep your buildings clean. There is flexibility and we don't want to be viewed as inhumane.

Dr. Bracy: Remember, the principal still runs the school.

Mr. Williams: I understand what you are saying, but the employee does not always understand it that way. They understand that Service Solutions hired them and that they have to answer to them.

Dr. Bracy: The last thing that Service Solutions is going to do and this is to block a principal, because they want your business.

Mr. Williams: I don't know that an employee knows that. Do you understand how the employee might feel?

Dr. Bracy: Those are rare occasions, because Rich and talk all of the time. I see him three or four times per week and in fact he was here today. He is the Site Manager.

Dr. Mark Rumley: Rich did an excellent job on that carpet in the back building. I watched him clean that one day.

Dr. Bracy: If there are no other questions or concerns regarding the Service Solutions Financial Update, Mr. Tillery will give us a Service Solutions Performance Update at this time.

Service Solutions Performance Update

Mr. Tillery informed the Board that in order to tackle the Service Solutions Performance Update, he looked at the inspection scores and had a one-on-one talk with each principal. He said the reason for the one-on-one talks was because they are the administrators of their buildings and they are there five days per week, in the mornings, afternoons and evenings.

Mr. Tillery shared the most recent health inspection scores with the Board. He added that he has been out visiting five (5) schools today along with three other gentlemen. In regards to the health inspection scores, any company that we bring in, no one is going to be a cure-all. We have made some improvements, but there are certainly some things that we can still work on. The health inspection scores are in comparison to the 2012 and 2013 school years. Both of these reports were done during January and February of 2012 and January and February of 2013. As you can see, some of the score are better in 2013 than they were in 2012 and some went down a little. There are other issues that can make them go down other than just custodial services that can cause them to go up or down.

The Board held the following discussion regarding the Service Solutions Performance Update:

Mr. Williams: Do you know why Gaston Middle, the Alternative School and even Northampton High went down?

Mr. Tillery: With regards to the high school, this is just a 2012 score and the Health Inspector just shared with me that he has not completed the 2013 report. I will have to go through the report when I receive it to find out why the school was 85.0 from last year.

Ms. M. Edwards: My question is, why is the Alternative School's score so high and Central Elementary's score has gone down and they are in a new building?

Mr. Tillery: We made a tremendous improvement at the Alternative School.

Ms. M. Edwards: In what way are you speaking of?

Mr. Tillery: It is basically a different way of handling things there. For an example, last year the custodian that was there was out a lot due to health reasons. This year, by having a person who has been there all year has made a difference.

Ms. M. Edwards: The walls look the same and the floors look a little shinier in the hallway. I am just trying to see what has changed.

Mr. Tillery: The Health Inspector looks at everything from the floors, restrooms, cafeteria, etc.

Chair K. Edwards: It could be Mr. Tillery, but are they doing lunches out there now?

Mr. Tillery: They still transport lunches out there. The other difference is that last year we had a part-time custodian and this year we have a full-time custodian.

Mr. Williams: Nevertheless, the Alternative School has raised their score. I am looking at the two of the three newer schools in the county and their scores this year are below where they were last year and some are below some of the older schools.

Mr. Tillery: I would like to look more into these scores, because sometimes the Health Inspector will come back and re-evaluate some of the schools, especially the ones with the lower scores. Maybe towards the end of the year he can re-evaluate them.

Ms. M. Edwards: Mr. Tillery, who is the Health Inspector?

Mr. Tillery: His name is Chris Deberry.

Ms. M. Edwards: Why did he not give us one of his professional health sheets with his name signed to it?

Mr. Tillery: We can get one for you, but the way it is written you may not be able to read it.

Mr. Williams: There should be some categories in there as to how their scores are done, such as the trash dumpster needs a pad, the pad is cracked or the door is not functioning properly.

Mr. Tillery: If you look at Gaston Middle, it has really improved from when it was NCHS-West.

Chair K. Edwards: When I look at this report I think about Gaston Middle had 352 students last year and this year it down to 206. You say Service Solutions is making a difference, but I can't see it when I look at this report. I am looking at the Alternative School with 5 students on Odyssey Ware and 18-20 students attending school daily. So when we say this is a case where Service Solutions is making a difference when there is a decrease in population.

Mr. Tillery: I am not saying that the decrease does not have anything to do with it.

Chair K. Edwards: I am saying it has everything to do with it.

Mr. Tillery: I am just saying that when I look at the scores, there is a difference in the schools.

Ms. M. Edwards: We definitely need some more investigation.

Mr. Williams: I was not looking at the scores and interpreting how well Service Solutions was doing, but now that I know this is what is supposed to be projected, is the change really worth what we are paying to have a cleaning company in our schools when you look at the numbers from 2012 to 2013? That would be a consideration for the Board.

Dr. Bracy: As Ms. Edwards said, the jury is still out. We can look at what the bottom line number is.

Ms. Smith-Ingram: We do have to look at all of this information.

Mr. Tillery: I have pretty much given you the Health Inspector's prospective. Now, I have the principals' prospective also. I will give you the positives first from the principals of how Service Solutions has helped with the working relationship:

- 1) Helped to weed out some of the negativity among the custodians and they are working better together.
- 2) Helped to keep the custodians on task, especially in the evenings. By having Service Solutions to monitor them in the evenings it has made a big difference.
- 3) Pleased overall with everything so far with Service Solutions.
- 4) Building is much cleaner now that Service Solutions is there.
- 5) Have better equipment to work with and the custodians can do a better job. (All Principals)
- 6) Have no problems with Service Solutions and everything is fine.
- 7) Like what I am seeing from the custodians.

- 8) Helped with better monitoring of the custodians.
- 9) Helped to get specialty tools for cleaning the gyms that they otherwise would not have been able to get.

The comments on the negative end regarding Service Solutions were:

- 1) It takes a longer time for them to get the supplies than before. (Have talked with Service Solutions about this.)
- 2) The quality of the supplies is less. The county provided a higher quality of supplies.
- 3) They felt they had a better finish on the floors from the product the county provided.
- 4) Don't care for Service Solutions washing the mop heads in the school washing machines. (After talking with Service Solutions they said they would change that process.)
- 5) One principal has a couple of restrooms that they are not satisfied with.

Mr. Tillery: Overall, the principals like the fact that the employees are being supervised and the fact that the company is trying to eliminate a lot of negative work ethics that might trickle through the school system.

Chair K. Edwards: Does Service Solutions do their own inspections of the property and give you a report?

Mr. Tillery: They do their own inspections, but they have not been giving me a report.

Chair K. Edwards: They do their own quality control as the Health Inspector does? I believe the Health Inspector comes once or twice per year and his concentration is on the kitchen.

Mr. Tillery: The Health Inspector comes once per year and he looks at other areas of the school from the water fountain to the floors, etc.

Mr. Matthews: The Health Inspector inspects the kitchen once per month and the school once per year. There is a spreadsheet that shows every year through last year, because the scores dropped about six points.

Mr. Tillery: The thing that we have to look at is the length of time Service Solutions has been here.

Ms. M. Edwards: They have been here approximately eight months.

Mr. Tillery: When I look at everything from the principals' prospective, most of them are pleased with Service Solutions.

Ms. Smith-Ingram: Is it possible for us to get a checklist of what Service Solutions provides for the custodians to do on each of the various shifts? I would like to know who pulls out the heating units and cleans them. Is it Service Solutions or is there a calendar of what they do?

Mr. Tillery: It is a major job when you start pulling out the units and going through all of them. We did it as a joint effort with the Service Solutions Supervisor, the custodians and the maintenance crew. Most of the units you are talking about are pretty much at the high school. We used Service Solutions' equipment to vacuum them out and I purchased a special disinfectant spray to spray them.

Ms. Smith-Ingram: Is that done every year or was it just done this year. Is it done in every school?

Mr. Tillery: It has been done in the past, but this year I have spent a lot of time cleaning the units. We clean them every year, but some schools don't have the units like they have at the high school.

Ms. Smith-Ingram: I am also thinking of the radiators on the walls. What I am getting at is that it could be that with Service Solutions it is their business and their specialty area. They could have a calendar of things that they do and I would like to see that. Then, if we are not doing it

and we elect not to use Service Solutions in the future, I would like to see us follow some of their practices that we learned from those specializing in cleaning facilities.

Mr. Tillery: I do understand what you are saying. In fact, we had a company before, Saffelle, that was working with four of our schools and they had a checklist. They would pretty much give us a report on how they rated the schools.

Ms. Ms. Edwards: We had a lot of problems with them too and they did not do all they were supposed to do.

Ms. Smith-Ingram: I would be interested in those two pieces of information if you can provide them.

Dr. Bracy: If the Board does not have any more questions or comments regarding Service Solutions, this brings us down to the New High School Timeline.

New High School Timeline

Dr. Bracy shared with the Board that looking at this timeline and the action required for The Way Forward that we received from Mr. Jenkins we have already completed Action Item #1 – We publically endorsed and supported the need and desire to build a new centrally located high school in January 2013.

Action Item #2 – Dr. Bracy stated on The Way Forward list is for the Board of Education to go back to the drawing board and determine basic design needs to adequately meet student space needs and design on current and predicted decreasing number of students – April 2013. What I am doing is having meetings with architects as we speak. It is my goal to have, as we did in the past, presentations from the architects. It is my goal to get that done in March to have an evening where we give each architect a half hour as I believe that is the way we did it the last time. I am meeting with the architects now to look at the basic designs. When I say we can get you some prices and floor plans, then we will invite the architects to come before the Board and do as they did the last time to present their plan to build us a high school in Northampton County. Are there any questions or concerns regarding Action Item #2?

Action Item #3 – Dr. Bracy stated that the Board of Education appoints a site selection committee to select three (3) potential sites keeping in harmony with the stated goal and bring it back to the joint Boards – April 2013. I want to make sure this stays on the Board's radar about appointing a site selection committee. I am assuming it comes from sitting Board Members and we will probably have some flexibility in that. I recommend that the Board of Education have a committee within itself to determine a site and bring three potential sites back to the Commissioners.

Chair K. Edwards: When this was talked about previously, were three sites selected?

Dr. Bracy: We still have those sites if you want to see them.

Chair K. Edwards: Are they still available?

Dr. Bracy: We lost one site to the Department of Social Services, but there a two still available.

Chair K. Edwards: So we need to select one more site. What is the pleasure of this Board? We need one more potential site and then we can complete that item.

Dr. Bracy: That does fall under the April timeline. Ms. Harris, is there a meeting scheduled to sit down with the Commissioners again in April?

Ms. Harris: No, they have not scheduled one.

Ms. Smith-Ingram: I would like to see us look at those old sites and go back and revisit them.

Chair K. Edwards: We do have to select one more site.

Ms. Smith-Ingram: What I am saying is that we revisit the two old ones and we may select two new ones and throw out one of the old ones.

Chair K. Edwards: We will actually need to appoint a committee then.

Mr. Williams: Where are the two old sites?

Dr. Bracy: I will get copies of those for you.

Chair K. Edwards: Do we have anyone willing to serve on the Site Selection Committee?

The following Board Members voiced that they would serve on the Site Selection Committee:

Ms. Marjorie Edwards, Ms. Erica Smith-Ingram, Mr. Clinton Williams and Mr. Phil Matthews.

Chair K. Edwards: We now have a Selection Site Committee. Thank you all for stepping to the plate. Also, I am looking at June and we are talking about when this committee needs to get together as March is almost here. We probably should go ahead and cover Action Item #4.

Action Item #4 – Dr. Bracy stated that we would go back to the Committee Meeting with the Board in selecting a site for the high school to be built on, negotiating a purchase price with property owner, and having conversations regarding the option to purchase agreement, which I understand that if you don't buy the land it is non-refundable and if you do buy the land the percentage goes towards the purchase. You can negotiate with the owner.

Chair K. Edwards: Where are those two sites Dr. Bracy?

Dr. Bracy: I can recall that one of the sites is located one-half mile outside of Jackson on 158 going towards Roanoke Rapids, if you can recall seeing the cotton building on the right.

Ms. M. Edwards: The other one was down by Central Elementary.

Ms. Smith-Ingram: I don't think we looked on Hwy. 186. One of the things that I wanted to put in here is that this is fine and good with what we said we were going to do, but we also said we need do a facility assessment at the same time and that really needs to be done. The Facilities Committee needs to meet.

Dr. Bracy: Mr. Johnson had to leave the meeting early, but I can get with him tomorrow and call a meeting.

Ms. Smith-Ingram: We can call a meeting and pick a day when we can go into all of the schools and sit down and look at the data and look at the numbers. I don't know how you all feel about working the first week of April, but it would free me up because we are out that week. It would be nice if we could get access to some of the buildings and go through some of the data and the projections. In the meantime, I will get with Don and see. Dr. Bracy, can you have your report ready at that time so that we can look at it along with the Facilities Committee? I just want to keep before this Board and looking at The Way Forward we need to take steps before the next ten years. We need to look at closing these older facilities that are going to require more maintenance and upkeep and looking at our projections and grade levels, because it seems like to me that we are going to have to do something about closing Willis Hare or either renovating Central or making Conway the elementary school. We are going to have to do something.

Ms. M. Edwards: I think we can look at that better when Dr. Bracy gives us those numbers about the school configurations. That will give us an idea of reorganization. That is going to be a big piece when you think about those numbers and what his thoughts are regarding the configuration.

Ms. Smith-Ingram: Do you think you can have it to us by April?

Dr. Bracy: What exactly do you need by April?

Ms. Smith-Ingram: We need the configurations regarding what your team is going to do.

Dr. Bracy: I can have it ready by April. You also want to know what my ideas are and how it looks?

Ms. Smith-Ingram: We already have the figures; it is just the fact of coming together and looking at it as a Facilities Committee and as a Board. I am not just willing to put all of that on you. I think that it is something that, we as a Facilities Committee, it is part of what we are elected to do. Then, as a Board we would sit down and get all of our hands into it. It seems like we will have to take maybe a four to five hours block of time. Something like this is so important and so vital that we need all hands on that. It is just a matter of pulling that information together and having a Special Work Session to deal with our facilities and our projections.

Ms. M. Edwards: Dr. Bracy, you know you mentioned earlier about how you were thinking about the little people going to the other school. During the same time, we were talking about closing the Alternative School. That is what I thought we were talking about.

Ms. Smith-Ingram: I know that is what we were talking about because we talked about closing Squire Elementary and renovating Gaston Elementary to accommodate the lower grades.

Dr. Bracy: Instead of a six-hour meeting, can we break it up?

Ms. Smith-Ingram: Yes, we can do it in two sessions.

Dr. Bracy: What about some go to meetings? Would that not work?

Ms. Smith-Ingram: Yes, that would work.

Dr. Bracy: At the go to meetings, everyone would get your documents and you play around with the numbers and come back to the table.

Ms. Smith-Ingram: That sounds excellent. If can you have that by the first week of April and we mull over it, we could come back in May with something concrete.

Chair K. Edwards: I appreciate this Way Forward Plan and what we discussed. I just looked at where we are in Northampton County and this is a question for our Board while we are thinking about a high school. Is it the long-range, as Ms. Ingram alluded to the ten years, not to have a K-12 campus? I say that because if you go out here and spend \$7 or \$8 million or whatever on a high school and you come right back three years later and your numbers are at 1,700 and we are on that track.

Dr. Bracy: You are absolutely right, it could happen, especially with all of the charter schools popping up.

Chair K. Edwards: When I look at the projections of 2230 for 2012-2013 and the number that I see from November 18, 2011 was 2171, which is 59 students less. Why we know things happen, we are on a continual decrease. Also, looking at that document that the Board of Commissioners has given us, I think we should be on a proactive plan for a ten-year phase. Is it not feasible, if you look at these tracts of land and talk about a K-12 campus here in Northampton County?

Dr. Bracy: You would hate to build a high school and turn around and it is half empty.

Chair K. Edwards: That is correct and what would be the feasibility of coming back and no matter who is sitting on the Board at that time is going to be faced with a serious decision and faced with going back to the County Commissioners for money.

Ms. Smith-Ingram: You said it so much better than I could have, because that is something that is so important and vital for us to do at this juncture so that we won't have this coming down the road. You never know because our numbers might tell us something different. Our numbers might say this is where you need to invest your brand new facility.

Chair K. Edwards: Listening at what Ms. Edwards and everyone at this table have been saying when you look at our bottom line figures Dr. Bracy. What is our projected number five years from now? If we build a high school that will hold 560 or 600 students, but yet we only have 300 students in the school. Also, one of the things that I remember when we were around the

table was we talked about economic growth and when the children leave they don't have jobs to come back to. Help me if I am wrong but that number did say less than 1,800 kids by the year 2020. That is just food for thought, but when you talk about building something, why not talk about a K-12 campus and a high school when you go to those architects?

Ms. Smith-Ingram: Therefore, by the first week in April, we are going to have some data and information from Dr. Bracy and we will have that electronically. We will play around with that and set another meeting up in April. We will announce that meeting at the Board Meeting.

Mr. Williams: If you look at the possibility of a K-12 school, we should look at one of the schools as part of that structure from ground up.

Chair K. Edwards: I was just throwing it out there, but that would be left up to the Site Selection Committee.

Ms. Smith-Ingram: We may as well all do it not just the Site Selection Committee.

Mr. Matthews: If Dr. Bracy is going to bring the architects before the Board tomorrow and I believe the sooner the better, because any architect you decide upon is going to want to help with the site selection. While we are here tonight, why don't we set up some meeting dates that we can give to the architects early in March?

Ms. Smith-Ingram: How are we going to meet with the architects if we really don't know what we want right now?

Dr. Bracy: The architect will come in and put on that wall what the school will look like, floor plan and things like that.

Dr. Mark Rumley: For now, they are working towards a high school and that is what they know right now.

Dr. Bracy: Yes, they are.

Mr. Matthews: That is also what the timeline from the Commissioners states.

Ms. M. Edwards: Even if it is something set in stone could they look at both a K-12 and a high school at the same time as a suggestion? There is nothing wrong with looking at both configurations. That could be something as a plan to have a K-12 along with a high school as a talk when we go back to the County Commissioners. We are looking at this and we are trying to figure out what is best. These are the two things we are looking at.

Ms. Smith-Ingram: Like what Ms. Edwards and Chair Edwards are saying and this is what I have been anticipating that whomever we bring on, this is THE PROJECT. This is our facilities project for the next ten years. We are going to need you guys to come in and renovate Gaston Elementary or add on this, that and the other or maybe modify this structure and at the same time modify Conway Middle and make it a huge elementary school to cover all of the Willis Hare kids so we can close that facility. Also, come in and modify Central Elementary to get it closer to where the high school is. Those are the type of conversations that we need to have before we bring in the architects so that we can get them looking at the whole entire facilities project oppose to not doing that.

Dr. Bracy: I understand what you are saying, but all of my conversations thus far with them have been about a high school. They are coming prepared to talk about a high school.

Mr. Matthews: This timeline from the County is focusing on a high school. If we are going to change our goal we either have to abide by this timeline the County has given us or we need to change our goal and go back to the County and say we need to revisit it.

Chair K. Edwards: Let me be candid. The conversations I have had with the County Commissioners, they are not looking at this timeline. They are just appeasing us. I agree with

you what you said Mr. Matthews, but I have heard the conversations that are said outside these walls and I know everyone in this room has also.

Mr. Matthews: I am not surprised about these conversations, but I am wondering what light it is going to put the school system in if we don't meet our own goal they have given us. Have they have given us this in the pretense that we won't meet our goal?

Chair K. Edwards: We are going to take the proactive steps in meeting exactly what was asked.

Mr. Matthews: Then we need to meet with the architects.

Ms. Smith-Ingram: Before we meet with the architects, we need to identify three potential sites according to step #3 then we have to negotiate a purchase price.

Dr. Bracy: If we get into testing soil, the architect is going to want to have been approved by the Board as I am the architect for Northampton County Schools and I am building A, B or C.

Hite is not just going to come in and test the soil for me.

Dr. Rumley: It is like putting the cart before the horse.

Mr. Matthews: I don't know how you are going to give the Commissioners what they are asking for in #2 without having an architect on board.

Ms. M. Edwards: That is why I am asking the question, if we are looking at designs isn't there some room in there for us to play with looking at redesigning some of these buildings along with the possibility a high school to make a better fit for the county financially wise and what students we have? If we just look at the high school and we don't have enough students, we will need to have a "B" plan as well as an "A" plan. Whether we do "B" or not we will have it to look at.

Dr. Bracy: It sounds like the "B" plan needs to be part of my conversation. Whatever they put up on the wall I will communicate with them about my "B" plan.

Chair K. Edwards: That is exactly it Dr. Bracy. I am looking at the projections and our projections are less than 1,800 students by the year 2020. Mr. Matthews is right, we are going to do everything that we are asked to do, but when I look back we are still just talking about by year 2015 and nothing is built.

Mr. Matthews: They are off the hook and we are not.

Chair K. Edwards: Off the hook means no one is going to be there. Mr. Jenkins retires for the job he has done in June and the County Commissioners who are on the Board now will be gone. Also, the dynamics of this Board will change, as we are talking 2015 and there is another election in 2014. When we talk about where is the pocketbook with a new County Manager and a new slate of County Commissioners, because there is another election in 2016.

Everything we have been asked to do we will do, but when you say we will build a high school and yet, if we are real proactive, we will be looking at our number of students.

Mr. Matthews: I agree with all of that, but we have to meet their timeline or we will look bad.

Ms. M. Edwards: Dr. Bracy, you can add that along with your conversation when you meet with the architects about the possibilities.

Chair K. Edwards: When is the next architect coming in Dr. Bracy?

Dr. Bracy: Hite is coming in tomorrow at 11:00 a.m. and Skinner, Lamm and Highsmith is coming in on Wednesday at 9:00 a.m.

Chair K. Edwards: Is that open to Board Members as well?

Dr. Bracy: Yes, it is open to at least three Board Members.

Chair K. Edwards: Is there anything we need to do as far as closed session this evening?

Mr. Williams: We can wait until the Board Meeting on Monday which is coming up.

Dr. Bracy: I will still like to speak to Mr. Williams and Ms. Smith-Ingram after this meeting.

Ms. M. Edwards: I want to thank the Board for allowing us to use Northampton County High School on Saturday for my brother-in-law's funeral.

Dr. Bracy: I wanted the Board to know that I do have Dr. Rumley looking at a salary comparison to our positions and how our folks are being paid versus other counties. As soon as he gets that information I will share that with the Board.

Ms. Smith-Ingram: Is the Personnel Committee meeting on Thursday, because you know Ms. Squire's banquet is scheduled for Thursday at 5:30 p.m.

Mr. Matthews: We normally schedule the meeting at 5:00 p.m., because Ms. Taylor gets off work at 5:00.

Dr. Rumley: I have contacted seven personnel administrators and I am just waiting on the information back. I was hoping we would have that information for tonight.

Dr. Bracy: I can get Mel Cherry to set up a conference call for Thursday morning.

Ms. M. Edwards: Dr. Bracy, can we talk about the Garysburg School Property on Monday's Board Agenda? Is that something we can work on?

Chair K. Edwards: An email was sent to every Board Member by Attorney Malone from Attorney Misse` and it was an offer from the Garysburg Community. Did every Board Member receive that email?

Ms. M. Edwards: I did not receive one.

Chair K. Edwards: I will make sure everyone receives the email. A letter is contained in that email and it stated that the citizens of Garysburg are offering us \$75,000 over a 30-year term. I want to make sure that every member of this Board receives that email, because it was sent and I will forward it to every member this evening.

Ms. Smith-Ingram: Can that be put on the agenda for Monday so that we can take action under Information for the Board for Approval?

Chair K. Edwards: I don't see why it couldn't. There is one other thing, Dr. Bracy did we get the document completed, "What Every Board Member Needs to Know"?

Dr. Bracy: Yes.

Chair K. Edwards: Can we get that on Monday?

Dr. Bracy: At this time, Dr. Rumley needs to share an announcement regarding Dr. Mubenga.

Dr. Mark Rumley: I know most of you know, have met and interacted with Dr. Pascal Mubenga who came here when I did. He has the position of School Transformation Coach and he has worked regularly at all sites with your principals. He has done an excellent job here and is moving to the Reedy Creek Office, which is where the District School Transformation is housed. It is the secondary office building to the "Pink Palace" downtown in Raleigh. He is taking a lead position to supervise School Transformation Coaches across the state and the various districts and schools where those positions are housed. That move is effective now; however, no replacement has been sought or certainly has not been found. He is going to serve this district at least two days per week until such time we can find a replacement. I have asked that there not be a knee-jerk or a warm body put in this position. We need people to serve here and serve at the level that he served and with that kind of knowledge base. I realize we give up his five days per week for two, but at the same time we want that to be a quality person for the remainder of this term of 14-15 months of Race to the Top. He has done a good job.

Chair K. Edwards: Dr. Rumley, how long will Race to the Top run?

Dr. Mark Rumley: It will run through June 2014, unless the Federal Government does something. At this point, they have already discussed extending the goals and objectives for

another year. But, like every other federal and certainly our state mandate comes without money.

Chair K. Edwards: We thank Dr. Mubenga for all of the work he has done.

Dr. Mark Rumley: I certainly have enjoyed working with him and it has been a team effort. I will miss his work.

Chair K. Edwards: Is the search for his replacement DPI's responsibility or how does that work?

Dr. Mark Rumley: DPI will handle that and Dr. Bracy gets the final approval on that person.

Dr. Bracy: The Personnel Committee Meeting is scheduled to meet tentatively for a conference call on Thursday at 9:00 a.m. I will call Ms. Taylor tomorrow to confirm it.

Chair K. Edwards: Dr. Bracy, I thank you and your staff for the well-organized presentations. Thank you for all that you do.

May 1st Field Trip Deadline

Dr. Bracy informed the Board that as long as he has been here, we have had a May 1st deadline for all field trips. I would like to move that date, since May 1st is on Wednesday, to the last Friday of that week instead of stopping the field trips in the middle of the week. I don't see any harm in carrying it out to that Friday. I am asking the Board to allow the field trips to end the first Friday in the month of May henceforth.

It was the consensus of the Board to allow Dr. Bracy to move the deadline for all field trips to end the last Friday during the first week of May henceforth.

Dr. Bracy: I will inform the principals tomorrow.

Adjournment

On a MOTION by Ms. Smith-Ingram, SECONDED by Ms. M. Edwards, the Board adjourned the meeting at approximately 7:45 p.m.

Approved: April 8, 2013

Dr. Eric C. Bracy, Superintendent