

**SPECIAL MEETING
NORTHAMPTON COUNTY BOARD OF EDUCATION
Saturday, June 22, 2013**

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

Members Absent: Marjorie Edwards

Others Present: Administration, press and interested parties

The Northampton County Board of Education held a special meeting on June 22, 2013 in the Board Room of the Northampton County Schools administrative building. Chair Kelvin Edwards called the meeting to order at 9:10 a.m.

The Board's purpose for this called meeting was to hear the presentation from SFL+A Architects regarding the Feasibility Study, to hold a Public Hearing, and to discuss School Consolidation.

Approval of Board Agenda

Ms. Smith-Ingram: We have had various discussions about the Dress Code Policy and the Superintendent's Evaluation, but I don't see either of them on the agenda. I am okay with them not being on there, but I want to make sure that we set a time when we can do the Superintendent's Evaluation, because the end of the month is next week.

Attorney Rod Malone: Let me clarify that the two closed sessions on the agenda are for the evaluation. We were scheduled to begin the first one between 9:00 and 10:00 a.m., hold the Feasibility Study presentation at 10:00 a.m., and at the end of the meeting we would come back and finish the evaluation. I was not aware of the Dress Code Policy, although you can still add it in.

Ms. Taylor: Why don't we do the Superintendent's Evaluation and move the Dress Code Policy to another time?

Mr. Williams: I agree with that and it will give us more time to look over the Dress Code Policy.

Mr. Johnson: At the last NCSBA meeting I attended, it was stated that the new Superintendent's Evaluation has not been highly used across the state.

Attorney Rod Malone: I think a generic one could be used. I suggest that the Board, (1) eliminate the first closed session and put in the Dress Code Policy; (2) leave the second closed session for the Superintendent's Evaluation.

Chair K. Edwards: The meeting was posted to begin at 9:00 a.m. for closed session.

Attorney Rod Malone: You noticed the meeting and we should deal with closed session until 10:00 a.m.; start with the presentation at 10:00 a.m. as noticed, and you can add the Dress Code Policy.

Ms. Smith-Ingram: We should set a time to discuss the Superintendent's Evaluation at another time.

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

Closed Session

On a MOTION by Ms. Taylor, SECONDED by Mr. Williams and APPROVED, the Board convened closed session at approximately 9:20 a.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 6-0.

Open Session

On a MOTION by Mr. Johnson, SECONDED by Mr. Matthews, the Board adjourned closed session. The motion passed by a vote of 6-0. The Board's closed session ended at approximately 10:03 a.m.

Business Before the Board for Information

Presentation of Feasibility Study – SFL+A Architects – Chair K. Edwards announced to the audience that the Board orchestrated the Feasibility Study to be conducted and it was conducted by SFL+A Architects. Mr. Robbie Ferris with SFL+A Architects is here this morning to present those findings to the Board and public at this time.

Executive Summary

Mr. Robbie Ferris, Architect, informed the Board and audience that Dr. Bracy directed his firm to complete the Feasibility Study. Some of the things we looked at to evaluate the condition of the existing facilities were as follows: (1) Code compliance standpoint, (2) Deferred maintenance standpoint, and (3) Total Cost of asset ownership standpoint. We also looked at a lot of data in evaluating the options and ranking those options. There were six different options that were evaluated and two of those options ranked very high. The two options were Option 3 and Option 5, with Option 3 being the option that we recommended, but I will review all of the options. We did place a lot of emphasis on options that would improve student performance, teacher recruitment and retention. We looked very hard at total cost of ownership, because there are a lot of trends going on in this community and felt like those were very important factors in considering the options.

Actions Taken to Complete the Facilities Study

Some of the actions taken to complete the study were: (1) Looked at trends in the community so that we could understand the history of Northampton County Schools as well as how to rank the options being considered. (2) Conducted an on-site assessment of all of the schools and talked with staff in the schools. (3) Completed a detailed analysis of energy cost in the school system, as energy cost is going up. (4) Looked at the options from a cost standpoint.

General Conclusions About the Existing Facilities

The first conclusion was in regards to maintenance and custodial work. I applaud you for the changes you have made in that area of work and I think that is something you need to remain focused on. Facilities tend to age faster when the resources are not being put into the custodial and maintenance work. You actually have some nice facilities and there are a handful of your facilities that are relatively new and are in good shape. The county needs to spend the resources to keep those schools in good shape.

Another one of the conclusions was that Willis Hare Elementary School is definitely a building that should be replaced. The school system has done a lot to solve the issues short-term, but long-term that facility will cost you more money than a new facility or some other options that we looked at. Due to the low enrollment at Squire Elementary School you really need to consider replacing that facility or getting the enrollment up. There were no options that we have looked at and analyzed the cost in detail where it got the enrollment up. In the long-term, Squire is one of those schools that because of your enrollment trends, it should probably be closed. It is not that it is a terrible facility, but

it is very small and it needs some work. If you had the students, I might would have recommended it, but you really don't have the students to justify the expense of renovating that building.

With regards to Northampton County High School, even though the majority of the students live on one end of the county, the long-term plan needs to be one that locates that building more centrally in the county to include some other cost factors.

One of the questions that was asked of us in the study was, are there any short-term changes that are really critical? Our answer was, we did not see any reason to relocate students or to make any changes immediately. We believe that the school system needs to spend the time along with the County Commissioners to evaluate its long-term options and not make any decisions today that would impact those long-term options. We would say there are no immediate needs in the school district.

Enrollment and Student Performance Trends

Ms. Ferris referred the Board to page (4) stating that the school system has had a drop of one-third (1/3) of the student population, however the school-age population in the county has only dropped one-half (1/2) percent. It is not that we are losing students within the county it is that they are going other places. You have to ask yourself, do we want to do something about it and what are the choices that we have? Along with the student population we have seen a decline in test scores and teacher turnover, which is not uncommon. These are issues being faced by rural counties all over this state. You cannot have a strong community without a strong school system.

Summary of Options

Mr. Ferris referred the Board to page (7) stating that this information will show how we ranked the various options and importance multiplier that we placed on some of the factors.

<u>Attribute</u>	<u>Importance Multiplier</u>
Ability to recruit and retain teachers and students	2
Ability to impact test scores	2
Total cost of ownership over 40 years	2
Annual cost	1
Intangibles/other	1

He noted that recruitment, retention and test scores are all very important. Also, cost has to be a very important factor as this is a low-wealth county and that is why we put a #2 on cost of ownership and a #1 on annual cost. There were no intangibles that we ended up ranking any of the options. Please note also on page (7) that we are recommending Option 3. That is due to Option 3 having the highest score and with scoring; the higher it is the better. It also had the lowest total cost of ownership with a savings to the county of \$42,651,909. To make sure everyone is clear, any number that you see with brackets around it is a negative number and that is a savings. That means that Option 3 would save the county \$42,000,000 over the next 40 (forty) years, while Option 2 is the most expensive option at a cost of \$13,437,215 over the next 40 (forty) years. The next range that you see is that Option 1 would cost \$3,068,253; Option 4 would save \$12,619,973; Option 5 would save \$14,034,908, which is not as good as Option 3; and Option 6 would cost \$9,373,570 and it is the second most expensive of all the options. From a scoring standpoint, Option 3 had a score of 59 and Option 5 had a score of 53. Those two options are the ones we compared the most closely.

Mr. Ferris reviewed the options with the Board in detail as follows:

Option 1

~**Central Elementary School** - Convert Central Elementary School into a high school, add an addition as needed to become a new high school; Enrollment 523; Cost \$28,000,000 &

Proposed Grades 9-12

~**Gaston Elementary School** - Move the students from Squire Elementary School to Gaston Elementary School; Enrollment 410; Cost \$980,000 & Proposed Grades Pre-K-4

~**Squire Elementary School** – Close and relocate students to Gaston Elementary

~**Willis Hare Elementary School** - Close Willis Hare and relocate those students to Northampton County High School

~Move the existing high school students from Northampton County High School to Central Elementary School

~**Middle Schools** - The two middle schools would remain the same

Conway: Enrollment 389; Proposed Grades 5-8

Gaston: Enrollment 226; Proposed Grades 5-8

~**High School** - Convert the existing high school into an elementary school and locate Willis Hare Elementary and Central Elementary students to the old high school campus; Enrollment 657; Cost \$275,000 & Proposed Grades Pre-K-4

~**Other:**

Alternative School – Close existing Alternative School and construct a new one; Enrollment 28; Cost \$1,220,652 & Proposed Grades 7-12

Score of Option:

Total Score: 32

Advantages:

- 1) The annual cost for the first 26 years is average when compared to other options.

Disadvantages:

- 1) Converting Central Elementary into a high school has compromises that may not be easily overcome. The existing building will always feel like an elementary school.
- 2) The existing high school feels more like a high school than an elementary school.
- 3) Relatively high total cost of ownership.

Option 2

~**Central Elementary School** – Redistrict as a Pre-K-5; Enrollment 325; Cost -\$ & Proposed Grades Prek-5

~**Gaston Elementary School** - Redistrict as a Pre-K-5; Enrollment 370; Cost \$980,000 & Proposed Grades Pre-K-5

~**Squire Elementary School** – Close

~**Willis Hare Elementary School** - Close

~**Middle Schools:**

Conway: Convert Conway Middle School into an elementary school; Enrollment 539; Cost \$980,000 & Proposed Grades Pre-K-5

Gaston: Leave Gaston Middle School a middle school but redistrict; Enrollment 231; Cost \$1,001,000 & Proposed Grades 6-8

Cost to convert Northampton County High School into a middle school; Enrollment 231; Cost \$275,000 & Proposed Grades 6-8

~**High School** - Convert Northampton County High School into a middle school and build a new high school; Enrollment 523; Cost \$31,606,579.40 & Proposed Grades 6-8

~**Other:**

Alternative School – Close existing and construct a new one; Enrollment 28; Cost \$1,220,652 & Proposed Grades 7-12

Score of Option:

Total Score: 32

Advantages:

- 1) Elementary grades work well in almost every respect.
- 2) A new centrally located high school will improve test scores and recruitment and retention of teachers/students.

Disadvantages:

- 1) Northampton County High School is an old facility that will continue to have deferred maintenance issues until it is completely renovated.
- 2) Has the highest total cost of ownership.

Option 3

This option has the highest score and the most savings over time.

~**Central Elementary School** – Redistrict students; Enrollment 340; Cost -\$ & Proposed Grades Pre-K-2

~**Gaston Elementary School** - Redistrict students; Enrollment 375; Cost \$980,000 & Proposed Grades Pre-K-2

~**Squire Elementary School** – Close existing and redistrict students to Gaston Elementary

~**Willis Hare Elementary School** – Close existing and redistrict students to Central Elementary

~Middle Schools:

Conway: Add 3rd and 4th grade to this school; Enrollment 500; Cost -\$ & Proposed Grades 3-8

Gaston: Add 3rd and 4th grade to this school; Enrollment 472; Cost -\$ & Proposed Grades 3-8

K-8 schools are becoming very popular.

~**High School** – Close existing Northampton County High School and construct a new high school; Enrollment 523; Cost \$31,606,579.40 & Proposed Grades 9-12

~Other

Alternative School – Close existing and new construct alternative school; Enrollment 28; Cost \$1,220,652 & Proposed Grades 7-12

Score of Option:

Total Score: 59

Advantages:

- 1) A new centrally located high school should improve test scores and retention of teachers/students.
- 2) Grades 3 through 8 at Conway and Gaston will provide a strong sense of community identity.
- 3) Maximizes the use of existing facilities.

Disadvantages:

- 1) Annual cost is not the lowest during the early years, but is relatively low.

Option 4

~**Central Elementary School** – Redistrict students; Enrollment 340; Cost -\$ & Proposed Grades Pre-K-2

~**Gaston Elementary School** - Redistrict students; Enrollment 375; Cost \$1,001,000 & Proposed Grades Pre-K-2

~**Squire Elementary School** – Close existing and redistrict students to Gaston Elementary

~**Willis Hare Elementary School** – Close existing and redistrict students to Central Elementary

~Middle Schools:

Conway: Add 3rd and 4th grade to this school; Enrollment 500; Cost -\$ & Proposed Grades 3-8

Gaston: Add 3rd and 4th grade to this school; Enrollment 472; Cost -\$ & Proposed Grades 3-8

~**High School** – Renovate existing Northampton County High School; Enrollment 523; Cost \$19,800,000 & Proposed Grades 9-12

~Other:

Alternative School – Close existing and new construct alternative school; Enrollment 28; Cost \$1,220,652 & Proposed Grades 7-12

This option is similar to Option 3 except for renovating the high school versus construct a new one.

Score of Option:

Total Score: 40

Advantages:

- 1) Has a relatively low total cost of ownership and the lowest annual cost for the first 12 years.
- 2) Grades 3 through 8 at Conway and Gaston will provide a strong sense of community identity.

Disadvantages:

- 1) Northampton County High School is still old, and even though renovated, will not have as long a life as a new building.
- 2) Northampton County High School is not centrally located.
- 3) This option does not improve test scores or student and teacher retention at the high school level.

Option 5

~**Central Elementary School** – Remain as is; Enrollment 327; Cost -\$ & Proposed Grades Pre-K-4

~**Gaston Elementary School** – Add Pre-K; Enrollment 410; Cost \$1,001,000 & Proposed Grades Pre-K-4

~**Squire Elementary School** – Close school and move students to Gaston Elementary School

~**Willis Hare Elementary School** – Close existing and construct new school for 350; Enrollment 330; Cost \$15,400,000 & Proposed Grades Pre-K-4

~**Middle Schools:**

Conway: Remain as is; Enrollment 389; Cost -\$ & Proposed Grades 5-8

Gaston: Remain as is; Enrollment 226; Cost -\$ & Proposed Grades 5-8

~**High School** – Close existing and construct new high school; Enrollment 523; Cost \$31,606,579.40 & Proposed Grades 9-12

~**Other:**

Alternative School – Close existing and construct new alternative school; Enrollment 28; Cost \$1,220,625 & Proposed Grades 7-12

Score of Option:

Total Score: 53

This was the second best option.

Advantages:

- 1) Has the second lowest total cost of ownership.
- 2) Provides 3 new schools.
- 3) Provides a structure very similar to traditional elementary school/middle school structure.
- 4) Leaves room for elementary and middle school growth and change.

Disadvantages:

- 1) Has a high annual cost for the first 20 years.
- 2) Has excess space at elementary and middle school levels that you really don't need long-term, unless you go through a growth spurt.

Option 6

~**Central Elementary School** – Remain as is; Enrollment 327; Cost -\$ & Proposed Grades Pre-K-4

~**Gaston Elementary School** – Add students from Squire Elementary School; Enrollment 410; Cost \$980,000 & Proposed Grades Pre-K-4

~**Squire Elementary School** – Close and relocate students to Gaston Elementary School

~**Willis Hare Elementary School** – Close and relocate students to Conway campus

~**Middle Schools:**

Conway: Relocate Willis Hare Elementary School students; Enrollment 330; Cost \$275,000 & Proposed Grades Pre-K-4

Gaston: Remain as is; Enrollment 226; Cost -\$ & Proposed Grades 5-8

~**High School** – Relocate Conway students here and build a new high school; Enrollment 389; Cost \$275,000 & Proposed Grades 5-8

New High School – Construct a new building; Enrollment 523; Cost \$31,122,780.70 & Proposed Grades 9-12

~**Other:**

Alternative School – Close existing and construct new alternative school; Enrollment 28; Cost \$1,220,625 & Proposed Grades 7-12

Probably not the best option, but was trying to find an economical solution and build a new high school.

It was not very economical primarily because of utility cost.

Score of Option:

Total Score: 28

Advantages:

- 1) A new centrally located high school should improve test scores and retention of teachers/students.

Disadvantages:

- 1) Has the second highest total cost of ownership.
- 2) The old Northampton County High School facility will have continued maintenance issues until it is completely renovated.

Mr. Ferris asked the Board if they have any questions before he moves on with the rest of the study?

Chair K. Edwards informed Mr. Ferris that the administration is working on getting a document camera to display all of the options in a powerpoint for the public at this time.

Ms. Smith-Ingram stated that in viewing the six options, there was one option that was not shown. This is disappointing to me because it was one of the options that was opposed. Maybe that was a disconnect with you receiving that information. If I were to try to construct an Option 7, it would include the following:

- Convert Conway Middle School into an elementary school – Proposed Grades Pre-K-5; Cost \$980,000
- Convert Gaston Elementary to house Squire Elementary students – Proposed Grades Pre-K-5; Cost \$980,000
- Renovate Central Elementary School into a high school – Proposed Grades 6-12; Cost \$21,000,000

I don't know how quickly you can run that rubric to see how much that would cause us to spend. What composite total score would that give us, because we would be utilizing our best buildings and we would be closing Willis Hare Elementary, Squire Elementary, the existing Northampton County High School and leaving our four newest structures open.

Mr. Ferris stated that we may have evaluated that option, however, we looked at 15 different options, but we did not bring them all forward because some of them did not score very high and they were very costly. Let me repeat what you just gave me as follows:

Central becomes a high school – 6-12 grades (combination middle/high school)

Gaston Elementary becomes a Pre-K-5

Conway Middle becomes a Pre-K-5

Close Squire, Willis Hare and the existing Northampton County High School

Gaston Middle becomes a 6-8

The challenge there is that with Central Elementary you have enough existing capacity for grades 6-8 so you are basically building a new high school in this option. You are really making Central a middle school and then you have a new high school right next to it. We don't have an option where we made Central a middle school.

Ms. Smith-Ingram: As I recall, you have an option to renovate Central Elementary to a high school for \$28 million and build a new high school for \$31 million so it is not that much difference. It would cost less to renovate Central into a middle school.

Mr. Ferris: I do believe you could convert Central into a middle school for a relatively low cost, but I still think you are building a new high school in that scenario.

Ms. Smith-Ingram: The advantage would be that you are utilizing your better buildings in the long-term and in terms of upkeep and renovations. Please include in that option closing the Alternative School. It would not be building a new Alternative School with that option.

Mr. Ferris: The Alternative School is really tough, because it has 28 students.

Mr. Johnson: We are not talking about building an Alternative School we are talking about closing it.

Ms. Smith-Ingram: We really don't need an Alternative School as we are looking at utilizing our existing structures.

Chair K. Edwards: Mr. Ferris, thank you so much. At this time, we would like to allow the public to view the options and the conclusions about the existing facilities. Mr. Ferris, would you please restate a general overview of the options for the public as they view the powerpoint?

Mr. Ferris reviewed the Feasibility Study with the public as requested by the Board, beginning with the *List of General Conclusions About the Existing Facilities* on page 3 and *Options 1-6*,

on page 9. Following the powerpoint presentation, Mr. Ferris stated those are the options and asked if there are any questions?

Ms. Smith-Ingram: Mr. Chair, can Mr. Ferris go through and show the rubric that was used to assess the buildings under the section, *Feasibility and Cost Analysis*? This report will show the individual scores, where they stand at this point, and the community will know how your company rated each of the facilities in Northampton County.

Mr. Ferris informed the Board and audience that the Feasibility and Cost Analysis form that he would be reviewing is a form from the State Department of Public Instruction that gives definitions for the condition of the existing facility. They have forms that you use at various stages of evaluating buildings. This particular form is the first step in the process. Please note that in regards to a building, a total score of 18 or more indicates good feasibility and a total score of 10 or more indicates good site feasibility. Your school facilities were evaluated as follows:

Central Elementary

Building Description: Excellent Condition	Proposed Action: No Action
Total Score for Building: 24	Total Score for Site: 13

Gaston Middle

Building Description: Excellent Condition	Proposed Action: No Action
Total Score for Building: 24	Total Score for Site: 14

Willis Hare

Building Description: Very Poor Condition	Proposed Action: Optimize Facilities
Total Score for Building: 1	Total Score for Site: 8

Building does not meet the ADA code; almost every system in that building needs replacement; no adequate parking; some drainage problems; no environmental problems.

Gaston Elementary

Building Description: Excellent Condition	Proposed Action: No Action
Total Score for Building: 25	Total Score for Site: 13

Alternative School

Building Description: Poor Condition	Proposed Action: Optimize Facilities
Total Score for Building: 3	Total Score for Site: 7

Site is adequate for a low number of students; some drainage problems; some environmental problems.

Squire Elementary

Building Description: Fair Condition	Proposed Action: Optimize Facilities
Total Score for Building: 9	Total Score for Site: 12

Multiple buildings connected with exterior corridors, a safety concern; handicapped accessibility issues; some hazardous materials present, but not a threat.

Conway Middle

Building Description: Very Good Condition	Proposed Action: No Action
Total Score for Building: 24	Total Score for Site: 11

You have done a good job with this building; parking is not ideal; some drainage issues; some minor roof leaks; a good site score; a good building.

Northampton County High School

Building Description: Fair to Poor Condition	Proposed Action: No Action
Total Score for Building: 12	Total Score for Site: 7

Northampton County High School is in better shape since 3 years ago; maintenance and custodial issues need to be addressed; has historical or architectural significance (1950-1960's); is a candidate for replacement.

Mr. Williams: When you say this school needs replacing, are you in a position to give a marker for when that needs to happen or by when?

Mr. Ferris: It is a function of a variety of factors to include maintenance and things like that. You have to look at long-term how you are going to have the most impact and save the most money. Let that be your guide as to when you close those buildings.

Mr. Williams: One of our elementary schools, Squire, was constructed in 1957 and you gave it a historical value of 1. NCHS was constructed in 1964 and you gave it a value of 2.

Mr. Ferris: The reason NCHS's value is higher is because when it was built it was built to a very high standard and a very nice design architecturally. It is a very good candidate as a historical building. Also, the old Seaboard High School in Seaboard would have been a really high architectural significance, but it was closed and obviously it must have had other problems with it. Just because a building is significant architecturally, it does not mean you can afford to keep it.

Ms. Smith-Ingram: Willis Hare and Squire Elementary were built in 1957 and the high school was built in 1964. I don't understand in terms of historical significance in the same county why the high school is valued at a 2 and the other schools received a 1. All other schools received a 0.

Mr. Ferris: Gaston Elementary is not significantly historical or architectural. It is a good building, but it is not significant. On the other hand, if you submit NCHS to the Department of Interior and you say you want this building classified as a historical landmark, you can probably get it classified as a historical landmark. It is a very different building and you cannot compare it to Willis Hare or Squire. It has nothing to do with age it has to do with the quality of the building and the characteristics of the building. That was a really good question!

Ms. Smith-Ingram: Because there is an elephant in the room I am going on record to say that when the high school was built it was built in 1964 as the all white high school. At that time, where we were in our history as a country it does not baffle me at all that it was an all-out effort, state of the art architecture, because it was built specifically and only for white students. I am a little leery at this stage of the game looking at this and giving it a rating of a 2, compared to the other schools in the district. That is the only school that we have right now that was built in a historical moment in our history that was only built for some of our students and not all of our students. I would hate to think that played a role in this study.

Mr. Ferris: I can tell you now that I did not know that until now. That may have been why given where we were as a nation and why that is such a nice building. It does not change where we are today as we have a really nice building, but it is not cost effective long-term to keep it. That is just the practical reality of where we are today.

Mr. Lafayette Majette: Remember now, we only had (5) white schools in this whole county and (53) black schools in this county. When they built that school I was at W.S. Creecy School, a black school. You had a black high school in Rich Square and one in Garysburg. When you talk about historical, they built that school in 1960 and I started working in 1958 and they integrated in 1967. That is when they built that school because, Mr. Lowry was the Superintendent; therefore, that is why they wanted that high school over there. That is when the private school started when they integrated. They took students from W.S. Creecy School and moved them to the high school and that is when they were integrated. It is a historical school.

Chair K. Edwards: Thank you Mr. Majette for that historical information. I wish to remind the public that this is an official Board Meeting. All of this information is so valuable and pertinent to why we are here today. I would like for us to keep the focus and we will have a time to have questions and answers from the audience.

Mr. Ferris: Moving on to item (G), there were some mechanical upgrades done at the high school about 10 years ago, but all of those mechanical systems would need to be replaced if you were to stay in that building long-term. I did not see any hazardous materials that presented a current danger.

Ms. Williams: Did you talk to any staff members about hazardous materials?

Mr. Ferris: I did not talk with staff about asbestos or other hazardous materials. I went by my own observations and recognized that there could be something that I am not aware of. I am aware of an Asbestos Plan that the county has in place. Are you aware of some hazardous materials that are current?

Mr. Williams: I am referring to the last bullet under (H) that states, “asbestos or other hazardous materials present in building requiring removal.”

Dr. Bracy: There is asbestos in a lot of old schools underneath the tile. There is asbestos under the tile and I understand from the experts who came in to test it that if you don’t dig the tile up and break it in the air you don’t have to remove it.

Mr. Ferris: Asbestos is only a problem when you start renovating and tearing it up. Then you have to take it out when you renovate.

Dr. Bracy: There is asbestos under the old tile at Northampton County High School and there is asbestos under the old tile at Squire Elementary.

Mr. Ferris: There is no requirement to remove it. If you go in and renovate the building you would have to remove it as part of your renovation. There is no existing danger from it as long as it is stabilized. It is in schools all over the state in the tile and in the ceiling.

Ms. Smith-Ingram: In all of the research that I have done it says that those schools that were built before 1968-69 has the presence of asbestos.

Mr. Ferris: Even if you had a lot of money to spend, you would not go and remove asbestos floor tile unless you want to put new tile down then you take it out. People do remove asbestos off of boiler piping and such.

Ms. Taylor: We have talked about a centrally located high school, but I know in this package you talk about long-term goals. What are you saying for the short-term?

Mr. Ferris: For the short-term, I would leave things as they are. I would not make any changes right now. If I had found some significant safety concerns I would have suggested you make some dramatic changes quickly. Everything is working now; it is not ideal, but it is working.

Mr. Williams: You talked about the conditions of the schools and what impact that has on student learning and staff retention. The problem with student learning is much bigger and overall just having a good, healthy educational environment in the county and what that means. A lot of that seems to be tied back into the facilities. We are at a time where technology is important and the ability for a building to be able to handle certain technology. I don’t believe the current high school can handle anymore technology loads based on what I have seen in former reports. We are also at a time where the bathrooms in one school versus the other are totally out of compliance with the N.C. handicap accessibility codes. Where the current high school is located in terms of trying to recruit staff to this area is a problem. As a matter of fact, there are so many factors that go into that and some of that has been pointed out in your report. In one replied, would you not consider the former NCHS–West as an option as least for discussion?

Mr. Ferris: The school district gave me a map of where all of your students live and there are so many more of them living on the eastern end of the county. From my observation of both facilities, they both seem to be adequate and the newer school is the better one and is in excellent shape. But, from a travel time standpoint I think you have some challenges there with regards to so many more students living on the eastern end of the county. It would mean moving the mass population over to one side of the county and that did not seem to make sense. How much time a student spends on a bus is a factor and you will always have students with longer travel time, but

you want to try to minimize that. They are already there and it seems to be working; therefore, I would not change it if it were not working short-term. In the long-term, the issue of retention and test scores is a huge issue in this county, but buildings alone are not going to solve that problem. I don't have an answer to solve all of those problems, but there is a lot of work to be done there. If there was a change that I would have recommended, most immediately, it would have been doing something with Willis Hare. I did not think that was significant enough to do anything with, but I think you have to make a decision about long-term. It is not just about your buildings and what you are going to do with your buildings and how buildings impact test scores, student retention and teacher retention, but it is about what else are you going to do to solve those problems. At Central Elementary and Gaston Elementary Schools, you have great buildings, but is there something else we need to do to improve test scores at those levels. I don't have the answers to that, but I think that is the Board's decision and I am sure there are some conversations with the County Commissioners that need to take place.

Chair K. Edwards: Mr. Ferris, I wish to refer to item (B) Location, when you talked about the configurations of the schools that you alluded to a few minutes ago. Looking at the options, you recommended that Conway Middle remain as is in Option 1, convert Conway Middle into an elementary school, leave Gaston Middle as a middle school in Option 2, add 3rd & 4th grade to Gaston & Conway Middle in Option 3&4, Conway & Gaston Middle remain as is in Option 5 and in Option 6, states to relocate Willis Hare Elementary students to Conway Middle and Gaston Middle remain as is. In those options, you are aware that there was a NCHS-East and NCHS-West high school and when you look at those configurations NCHS-East is in fair condition. With either scenario, when you talk about children, a category and a location says not centrally located, most students will be bused from other areas. My question is that looking at the configuration of where we are, any options could be given to making Gaston Middle, which was grades 7-12, a configuration of grades 7-12 and grades 9-12 at the current Northampton County High School? Then no one is bused when you talk about children being bused from one end to the other. As I reviewed this study and it has been so beneficial, because we are at a hard time here in Northampton County to address all of the things that need to be addressed.

As I look at the Department of Public Instruction's rubric, under the circumstances of "leave as is" we are still busing over 150 students. Currently, when you look at configurations as we are talking about global, there are configurations where there are two campuses and your report is telling us that the buildings are okay at Northampton County High School and the building is good at Gaston Middle School. The configuration is the component I am speaking of and it does not necessarily have to be a middle school. It could be a 7-12 school, which is going back to when we mentioned a Pre-K-8. Any scenario when you say leave as is it would never stop the busing, but the ultimate goal is what you stated that it is centrally located. That is the component that we really must focus on and when I read the components about Central Elementary, you are right that it would never have the feel of being a high school. But, with Northampton County Schools owning the land, we could construct a high school beside Central Elementary School and not convert the current building. Listening to our constituents regarding the move, we still have not stopped one of the main focuses on the feasibility analysis site, not centrally located. That is the part that really concerns me about busing students far and we can look at the configurations of grades 7-12 or 9-12 and then ultimately a global model. When we talk about sports, right now we are the "Northampton County Jaguars" and that is who we are currently speaking. When you look at the Northampton County Jaguars from a sportsmanship component

and from a field component, you will still be a “Jaguar” and we can stop this busing. That is one thing with configuration that we need to look at.

Mr. Johnson: I read the Feasibility Study and I was able to voice my opinion of how it should be, but I thought we were going to have this discussion among ourselves prior to Public Comments or opening up to the public. If that is the case, I will make my comments now too.

Chair K. Edwards: Mr. Johnson, every comment is in open session. We cannot have a conversation among ourselves.

Mr. Johnson: Are we going to discuss it after or before Public Comments?

Attorney Rod Malone: You are definitely going to have a discussion following Public Comments. The only question I think you are raising is, you have received Robbie’s report before and had some discussion first, then you have Public Comments and then you have more discussion or do you just receive Public Comments first? It is however the Board chooses to proceed. The Board has had some conversation about these topics prior to receiving this report and you have some general sense of what you were expecting.

Mr. Johnson: We received this report on Friday; therefore, we have not had the opportunity to get together as a Board or as individuals, because we had to look at these things first. That is why I am trying to determine when we are going to make a decision.

Chair K. Edwards: Each Board Member received the actual report on June 20th or 21st.

Mr. Matthews: My question relates to Option 3. I understand from your presentation that your company is recommending Option 3 as possibly the best option for this Board to consider long-term or even short-term. It does include a new centrally located high school. I am really concerned with one thing in this report and I am wondering if you can help me with it. I am concerned about the small children, which would be the Pre-K-K students. If you consider the eastern end of the county it looks like the closest school that Pre-K-K students would be attending would be Central Elementary. My question is would there be any feasibility of Conway Middle in this option becoming a Pre-K-8 school to keep them closer to their home community?

Mr. Ferris: That is a good option, but it would cost to convert Conway to handle Pre-K. You would have a \$1 million dollar cost, but that is a pretty good idea.

Mr. Matthews: I just don’t like to see Pre-K-K having to leave too far out of their community.

Mr. Ferris: That is really a valid concern. To address your earlier question, the reason I did not consider the option you laid out was because you would have all of your middle school students traveling to Central and Gaston. You made me realize perhaps a weakness in Option 3 would be if you have Central with 6-8 and Gaston as a 6-8, then the children in grades 6-8 who live in the Conway area would be going to Central for middle school. I am not saying it is a problem, but if you have to rate things, that would be a disadvantage to that option. Yes, you are right it is a disadvantage to Option 3 as it is laid out and just a simple addition of Pre-K-K I think you could solve that, but you would still be good at the capacity with that addition.

Mr. Matthews: I would say a Pre-K-8 at Conway seems ideal.

Ms. Smith-Ingram: I just need an understanding of how we are going to lay this out, because what Phil and I were saying was try to have some common elements there. Mr. Johnson, do you think that the Board needs to talk together?

Mr. Johnson: I understand from our attorney it is not permissible for us to go into closed session to discuss it.

Attorney Rod Malone: As long as this is an open session you can discuss it.

Ms. Smith-Ingram: There were two Town Hall hearings and we listened to the public, but we did not have a discussion with the public. If we lay out the ground rules, Mr. Chair, could we start now creating the dialogue in a discussion instead of it being one way again? They listened to us and we listened to them and nobody is commenting. If we can this time have more conversation and break down the barriers? Mr. Chair, can we take a five minute recess, allow the six people who have signed up to speak and allow the Board Members to each give their own input? Let's open the floor for some back and forth questions.

On a MOTION by Mr. Matthews, SECONDED by Ms. Smith-Ingram, the Board APPROVED to take a five to ten-minute recess to give the public time to sign up to speak and after the recess reconvene to the Public Hearing with open dialogue. The motion passed by a vote of 5-1. Mr. Donald Johnson voted against.

Break

The Board recessed in a five-minute break at 11:55 a.m. The Board's recess ended at approximately 12:20 p.m.

Updated 2013 Capacity/Enrollment by Site Report

Chair K. Edwards informed the audience that Dr. Mark Rumley, District Transformation Coach, will give a powerpoint presentation regarding the 2011 Capacity/Enrollment by Site Report updated to our 2013 status. We will begin the Public Hearing after this presentation. Anyone who has not signed up for the Public Hearing may do so at this time. Dr. Mark Rumley informed the Board and audience that staff members took a look at the former report that was done, which involved a compilation of several studies that this Board and a former Board had completed a few years ago in 2010 to be specific. This report came forward through Mr. Matthews' office when he was serving as Assistant Superintendent and he presented this report to the Board in early January 2011. We took that work and we felt from a historical perspective it was important to keep that so that you would have a reference point of where you had been, but we also updated it based on actions that had been taken and decisions that had been made in light of new figures you see in the presentation relative to capacity and the number of students enrolled in different schools. The additions you will see in this report are in red ink and the former report is in black ink. Dr. Rumley presented the Updated 2013 Capacity/Enrollment by Site Report as follows:

History & Overview

- Spring 2009 - Board action resulted in closing 2 elementary schools, Rich Square-W.S. Creecy and Garysburg Elementary and reduced operations at Squire Elementary.
- The thought process concerning building a new centrally located high school became null and void when funding for the new high school was not able to be secured and as a result the following events took place:
August 2012 - Consolidated NCHS-East and NCHS-West housed at NCHS-East
NCHS-West became Gaston Middle School
- What will be the best plan for high school operations, without the new centrally located high school is the question? How should it be configured? Some new proposals include:
Construct a PK-12 School, 2 PK-8 Schools or a centrally-located high school (with possible renovation of the current Central Elementary School)

Enrollment

- Enrollment and financial resources are the main driving forces as to how to best accomplish this important objective. This updated report gives us a 7-year history versus the previous 5-year history that shows the number of students enrolled in the schools now along with DPI predictions going forward:

<u>School Year</u>	<u>Actual</u>	<u>DPI Prediction</u>
2012-2013 (Current)	2,220 (includes 137 PK)	
2013-2014	K1-12	2,047
2015-2016	K1-12	1,937
2020-2021	K1-12	1,643

- High School current enrollment - On June 7, 2013, the total enrollment for NCHS was 510 (total includes 331 students from eastern end and 179 students from western end); additionally, 23 alternative students in grades 9-12 gives a total of 533 students.
- A DPI Projected Enrollment Prediction and an updated DPI Projected Current Enrollment Prediction compared to the current enrollment were reviewed showing a continued decline in ADM.
- Charter Schools – We have noted that there have been some new Charter Schools given approval to open in Bertie, Halifax and Pitt Counties since this report was done in January 2011.

Financial Resources

- The NC budget shortfall was not entered because we were uncertain of where we are with our budget with the state at this time. Public school budgets have been cut for four consecutive years.
- Operating in Northampton County Schools with over \$800,000 less this year than last year.
- Two high schools were consolidated into one, effective August 2012 (NCHS-E & NCHS-W).
- Effects on programmatic offerings: a reduction in specific CTE course offerings if high school housed at NCHS-W facility beginning with 2013-2014 academic year.

Transportation

- Transporting to a western located high school may cause an additional increase in current transportation cost.
- A transportation map showing where every student currently lives throughout Northampton County was reviewed. A total of 507 high school students with 331 students on the eastern side and 176 students live on the western side.

Research Reports Updated

- SFL+A conducted another Feasibility Study – results came forth on or about June 19, 2013.
- The SFL+A Report encouraged merging the two current high schools into one.
- A new centrally located school was noted as the best option.
- Even without the new high school – a single high school was recommended.

Summary of Research & Reports – Reported issues concerning NCHS-East

- NCHS is currently operating at less than 60% capacity.
- Based upon early 2013 discussions with DPI engineer and findings from the 2010 written report, the current high school facility is solid and well maintained, but nearly 50 years old.
- A cost of \$278,502.00 has been spent on NCHS-East addressing needs identified in the reports (facility cost only).

Summary of Research & Reports – Reported issues concerning NCHS-West

- The reports did not sight NCHS-West as the single high school, but that does not eliminate it as an option.
- The report identified NCHS-West as in good condition and a newer facility.
- Needs cited at NCHS-West – (all shingled roofs were replaced with tin roofs; still leaking in auditorium section, gym roof will need replacing soon)

Staff Observations Regarding Some of the Currently Proposed Options

- If NCHS were to be moved to the West facility (currently Gaston Middle School), the following issues arise:
 - NCHS would operate at 100% capacity in grades 9 – 12 (including alternative school population), given present 9-12 enrollment.
 - Current Gaston Middle students in grades 5 – 8 would need to be moved (presumably to Gaston Elementary)
 - Current Gaston Elementary could not accommodate Grades 1 – 8
 - This might necessitate re-opening Squire Elementary, likely to full capacity
 - Otherwise, relocating students to other sites would be necessary, and this would involve both transportation and construction matters.
- High school programmatic impacts with and without site change were reviewed, which showed current eastern end site programs versus if shifted to western end program. It has a significant impact on current the CTE program, such as laboratory, equipment, etc.

2013 Capacity/Enrollment by Site

- Central Elementary School shows the highest capacity usage at 97.60% followed by Willis Hare Elementary School at 83.46%.

Additional Items for Discussion

- Western facility offers a full-sized auditorium (seats 550).
- Western facility situated on 10 additional acres.
- Western facility provides lab for culinary arts program.
- Western facility needs press box and field house repairs.
- Western facility needs bleachers for home side.

Chair K. Edwards: Thank you Mr. Ferris and Dr. Rumley.

Public Hearing

Chair K. Edwards announced to the audience that the Public Hearing will take place at this time. Any person interested in speaking during the hearing was given another opportunity to sign up.

Chair Edwards informed the audience that the protocol for speaking will take place at the podium and you will have five minutes to make your comments. We will definitely have respectful protocol and this is not about personal protocol. I will call the first speaker who signed up and when you have reached 4 minutes and you are still speaking I will raise my hand, when you have reached 30 seconds I will raise my hand again. Once you reach 5 minutes I will hit the gavel signaling that your time is up. Our first speaker is Mr. Lafayette Majette.

Lafayette Majette – “I don’t have a lot to say, because I have spoken so many times at these hearings and I am going to yield my time to Mr. Charles Tyner when he comes up. I just want to say to the Board Members whom I have been with a long time. Think about you can’t do anything without money. You can talk all you want to and get mad all you want to, because if you don’t have any money you are not going to build a school. Let’s educate children and stop bickering about what it looks like. As I look around this room, a lot of you did not go to school

like I did. You didn't go to a school that had one light hanging in the center of the room and we sit around here and talk about what our children can't learn. I wasn't the smartest person in the room and I wasn't the dumbest one in the room, but I was sometimes the meanest one in the room and I still got by. When I came along, we didn't have any nice floors and we swept with a broom. I attended W.S. Creecy School so I know where I came from. There was no heating system in our classrooms, just a big old stove in the room. Some of you might say, "Lott it is a new day." I will say it is a new day and you are running your mouth about a new day and some of you probably cannot pay your taxes and you are running around here talking about what we should have. Thank you Board and I yield the rest of my time to Mr. Tyner."

Chair K. Edwards: Thank you Mr. Majette and you had 3 minutes left. Our next speaker is Rev. Richard Webb.

Rev. Richard Webb – "I don't have much to say, but I just want to know at the end of the day are we going to hear from this Board? Is this Board going to give us their plan and their recommendation? Are we going to hear that today before we leave here or tell us where we are going from here? We are here and have heard all of the reports, where do we go from here? Are we going to hear the decision from the Board today? In my last remarks, I will say like Habakkuk and I quote from the Bible Scripture, "My answer, my instructions on a billboard large and clear so that anyone can read it and run and tell it." You need to right your vision and make it plain so we may see it and we will be able to run and tell it.

Chair K. Edwards: Thank you Rev. Webb. Our next speaker is Ms. Joyce Futrell.

Ms. Joyce Futrell – "I am one of the concerned parents here today and location does matter as far as travel and that is for all students not just for my child. I look at when my son was a student at Conway Middle School and we were 15 minutes away from school, but I had to get him up at 5:30 a.m. in order to catch the bus at 6:15 or 6:12 a.m. With boys, they don't like to sit still long as he is busy. He gets home in the afternoon at 4:15 p.m. and at the time he gets home in the afternoon a lot of days he didn't go outside because I am on him to get ready to do his homework. While he is working on homework, I am trying to cook and trying to help him if he has a question. Also, it took me longer to check his homework, because sometimes I would have to pull out my old resources of books, use the internet or sometimes call my daughter in Cary, especially when it came to some of the math problems. Even at nighttime and by them staying in class all day with work, sometimes with boys they don't even want to do their homework. I had to stay on him about getting his homework done, but he never had a day that he didn't do his homework. He turned his work in everyday, because I stayed on him about that. I said all of that to say, distance where the children have to travel does mean a lot even when the time changes. My son has to get on the bus when it is dark and I work over in Hertford County. Seeing those students on the bus in the evening or afternoon coming home and it is dark. There has to be some concern from the parents, because it concerns me and my child is not even on that bus. So central location as far as the middle school students and Pre-K students are, it does matter to parents, because no parent really wants their child to have to catch the bus in the dark in the mornings or get off the bus in the afternoons when it is dark outside. Do consider that as far as location if possible and I know money plays a role in it. When they stay on the bus for long periods of time and when they get to school, how much learning is going to go on if they have to travel a ways just to get to school? Again, do consider the distance and making it convenient for the students. If you educate students while they are sitting there, they will learn something. Thank you."

Chair K. Edwards: Thank you Ms. Futrell. Our next speaker is Ms. India Robinson-Martin.

Ms. India Robinson-Martin – “Good afternoon everyone. I have a couple to comments and statements to make and then I have a couple of questions. Whatever decision is made such as, the closing of schools, merging of schools, busing or whatever else the topic is that you consider and whatever our mission and vision is for the county, because when we sit down at my school for the school improvement plan, every decision we make is based upon whether or not that decision is going towards the mission and the vision. Whatever decision is made, that you make sure it is geared more towards our mission and our vision versus public money. Of course I am a teacher so I am going to be concerned about teachers. If the schools are closing or merging, will the teachers be losing jobs? I don’t really understand how that works. That concerns me, because I have a daughter in college so I really need a job right now. The idea that schools may merge is kind of concerning a little bit for me. I would like to be informed in a timely manner as to what is actually going to happen concerning teachers’ jobs. I would not want your job and I would not want to make that decision. My next question is, looking at the enrollment on the powerpoint, why is the enrollment at the Alternative School so low? I am asking because I am a teacher. There are some students who I might have felt like they needed another environment. If we have all of that room there for students, why keep them at the regular school when there is room for them there? I don’t know what all of the concerns are for that legally, but I am saying that is a lot of space for some people I know. I am a teacher and I want to make sure everyone gets the environment that he or she needs. My last comment is that the gentlemen who came up and did the study and he said the form in the book was a DPI form. If that is a DPI form that his company can use, then why can’t we get together to use that same form to do the study that they did? I think we are smart enough to do that and that is all I have to say.”

Chair K. Edwards: Ms. Martin, we want to answer those questions that you had. At this time, I will yield to Dr. Bracy.

Dr. Bracy: Let me answer your question about the Alternative School. Your principal needs to make a recommendation for long-term suspension to the Alternative School. That is how students get to the Alternative School.

Ms. India Robinson-Martin: “So possibly this upcoming school year if the Alternative School is still there my principal makes a recommendation?”

Dr. Bracy: They don’t stay there forever they go for an allotted amount of time. You must make a recommendation for alternative placement.

Ms. India Robinson-Martin: “Where does the criteria that you have to go by come from?”

Dr. Bracy: It comes from the Student Code of Conduct and your principal must look at it to see if the student violation fits the level to be sent to the Alternative School. The violation has to fit the criteria, because you can’t just put kids in Alternative School for certain reasons. Your principal understands that very well.

Chair K. Edwards: Ms. Martin, as far as the Feasibility Study goes, this Board wanted to look at an expert’s opinion behind our facilities and the Board is not an expert. While we do have facilities in maintenance, but when it comes to architectural design that is why we solicited for the Feasibility Study so that we would have experts in the field to give us the right recommendations.

Ms. India Robinson-Martin: “You are saying we don’t have those people and that form was only one piece of it right?”

Chair K. Edwards: For an example, drainage was a component of the study and if you take the average person and talk about drainage, how would we know what the capacity of drainage is on a campus?

Attorney Rod Malone: The administrative staff did put together the 40 page powerpoint you just saw on many issues to compliment what Mr. Ferris did.

Chair K. Edwards: Our next speaker is Mr. Charles Tyner.

Mr. Charles Tyner – “I have a few concerns that I just want to bring to your attention. Number one is the fact that we know that anytime we talk about school merger it is not easy. I do want to commend you for taking this upon yourselves without a choice, but I also want you to note that today you have facts. I certainly hope that while you are doing all of this deliberation about where our schools will be doing that you will just look at facts. Let’s take away all of the personal agendas and where we live, because I will tell you I love Willis Hare, but I see Willis Hare is doomed. I come today to say, look at the facts and let’s deal with the facts as we move forward in the elimination of our schools. You should have had this report already out so that we would have been able to have a better discussion, because this is new for some of us and it has to sink in for some of us and I am not the sharpest knife in the drawer, but I am sharp and I still can comprehend. Behind all of this, I see something else that is a challenge for us and I hope the Board Members can look at this and see that it is a challenge. I see the number of students will be decreasing in years to come. I ask you one question today, what are we doing in the buildings that is going to make our children stay in Northampton County Schools? What are we doing in Northampton County Schools that would make me say to my three grandchildren, who are at Willis Hare, that I don’t want you to go to the Charter School next year? We really need to have an answer to that. What is it in Northampton County Schools that would make students want to stay in this school system? We have got to set a mission and we have got to set plans that will make our school system top. What we have got to have at our schools is a plan that will have our students to do well. Parents want their children in our schools. The parents are here today, because they want their schools of course to stay in their communities and I know that you will do the right thing, look at the reports and you will have our students where they need to be. But, I do want to ask you to do some planning, because it is mighty late in the year to be making a whole lot of changes for the upcoming school year. Everybody knows that if you go and change some schools, for some people there are a lot of things you have to take in consideration. We know that change is going to come, but please note the time of the year and we just listened to one of our teachers who sounded a little disgusted about not knowing whether she will have a job or not. Somewhere, you need to put our teachers at ease about their jobs, because our county is in an uproar and Northampton County’s educational system is in an uproar. Whether anybody wants to admit it or not it is east against west, it is where we are going to move our kids or where are we going to be. You have the skills and the ability to keep our county level and keep students in Northampton County Schools. If you go doing a lot of changes, I have news for you. There are going to be some more Charter Schools that our children are going to. The Board will not have anything to be a Board over, because our children will be gone. Board Members, this year we need a plan of what makes Northampton County Schools better than any other school system in this area. We are expecting that and we have got to have it. What makes us want to send our children to Northampton County Schools? We have got to stop playing with it and we have got to have facts. You are going to Northampton County, because we are going to provide this, this and this and at the end of the year your child will be reading and your children will be able to do math. We have got to have it. Thank you for listening to me and I will be back. We just want what is best for Northampton County Schools. I have been here all of my life and I am going to expire here like Lott Majette. The fact of it is that Northampton County Schools has got to be #1 if we are going to keep students in this school system. Parents are trying to make that

decision today about whether their children will be in Northampton County Schools and my three grandchildren are included in that.”

Chair K. Edwards: Thank you Mr. Tyner for those comments. Our next speaker is Mr. Barry Harvey.

Mr. Barry Harvey – “The number one thing is about our children and that is one thing that worries me the most. My children are in public schools and I am not just speaking on mine I am speaking on behalf of everybody’s. When I think of mine, I think about everybody’s babies. What is going on now is too much of a last minute thing. I want you all to take the time to look over this more, not rush into this and really take the time to look into this and not make a decision now. As Mr. Ferris has stated in regards to the structure of the school, we can stay in the school and that would give us more time to make that decision. If he says we can stay in the school that gives us more time to make the right decision for our children. I am also speaking on the distance of the travel. Why make our children travel so far? We talk about test scores and if the children are traveling so far, who are participating in afterschool programs, academics or with job situations, the grades are going to drop automatically. There is no time to study and there is no time to think. They will have stress on them and we are setting them up for failure, because it is not fair for one end to go to the west end and one end to go to the east end. I feel that either way it is wrong. I know we are trying to do our best for our kids, but either way it is not fair. Mr. Ferris said we could keep everything the same, not make any changes right now and I also wish we could have the west end back on the west and the east end back on the east end to make it fair for everybody. You have parents saying it is not fair for this end or that end and I will just speak on both ends, because it is children who are involved. I just want you all to make the right decision and take your time, not this summer and not before this school year. Wait another year or two like Mr. Ferris said, “It does not have to be done now.” With the structure of the schools now there are things to be done to the buildings, but I am stressing it does not have to be done now. If you all can please do that for us as parents and teachers, because it is not fair to the teachers to have all the kids retained in classrooms. It is a lot more stress on students, teachers and the parents.”

Chair K. Edwards: Thank you for your comments Mr. Harvey.

School Consolidation Discussion

Chair K. Edwards announced that now we are at the point where we will have a Board discussion on operation and we did talk about exchanging dialogue. We will talk about the protocol for that.

Attorney Rod Malone informed the audience that instead of the question and answer period to keep the Board’s role intact, we proposed that the Board will conduct its discussion on the matter now prior to any vote. The Chair will open it up you will be allowed to make some comments based on what you hear them discuss over the next 30 minutes to an hour. They will not make any decisions without giving you an opportunity.

Chair K. Edwards announced to the audience that the floor is now open for total Board discussion on the matter regarding School Consolidation.

Ms. Matthews: Based on what I have heard during Public Comments in all these areas and what has been reported, I don’t see any urgency to make any changes for the 2013-14 school year. It will take a school year to evaluate and come up with a better plan. If we make any changes, it will be with the Alternative School and let the administration decide where that will be located. That will be my point that I can take away from this.

Ms. Taylor: Everything is pretty much stable for right now. I truly believe that we need a new high school. Willis Hare does need to be upgraded and Squire needs to be addressed, as all of these issues need to be addressed. Looking at the short-term, we need to do something possibly with the Alternative School. I am concerned about staff and teachers not being sure as to what their future holds. A lot of people have an uncertainty about their future. Just listening to the discussion about the distance students have to travel, there will always be a concern because of the way our county is laid out. I want all of our kids to have a chance to have the same education and that means being in one building and having the opportunity to take Spanish I & II, French, Chinese, dance class, automotives, etc. That is my concern. We have spent a lot of money on one school in particular last year and we have a lot of repairs to be done. As Mr. Ferris stated, the custodial and maintenance work needs to be the main focus in these buildings. We, along with the Central Office need to make sure that happens that we upkeep our buildings. If we can maintain the buildings that we have until we can actually build a new building. We need to do what we need to do for the long-term over the next five years, because we have spent all of this money getting these schools together and this year coming up we should be looking at spending money on student instruction. We don't even have a lot of smart boards in our classrooms. We need to upgrade our schools, because we are still using black boards. We need to get the things that our kids need and stop worrying about a building. I can also relate to what Mr. Majette said about the building. Churches are buildings, but it is the people in the congregation that makes the church. Looking at the students and the staff, the staff is the ones who are supposed to provide the service to our students, but we need to make sure they get what they need.

Mr. Williams: About a week ago, I attended both forums at Conway Middle and Gaston Middle. I heard some common comments and some that were not so common. I am glad that today the public is more relaxed giving us more credit for this very difficult job we have to do. This is a very difficult decision folks. We have spent numerous hours reading documents, talking to staff, talking to each other, praying, reading and sending e-mails. We are here today to make a decision about the masses of the people. I had a discussion just the other day with a concerned member of this community who is concerned about all of the children. As we were having that discussion I was reminded of the story about the "Good Shepherd". The "Good Shepherd" said, if I have 100 sheep and one of my sheep got lost I would leave them all there and go out and find that one sheep. When I come back with that one sheep I would have those people around me to help rejoice that I had found the sheep. You can look at those numbers on that board and we have to break that information down and make good decisions. I am hearing the same comments that I heard two years ago when I sat in the audience as a non-Board Member and I had three minutes to come up and speak to this Board. It was a difficult time then and it is a difficult time now. We are looking at all of the information and we are considering all of the people. We have to sit down make some sense of all of this and come up with what really is going to move all of the children ahead. Some of the comments made at the forums, I want you to know that I heard you. Those of you who voted for me I told you I was not a politician, but I am a humanitarian. What is the difference, because politicians make a lot of deals and sometimes it has nothing to do with people? Sometimes it has to do with personal gain. I don't have any personal gain by making a decision in either place. As far as I am concerned, I am in a role of being a servant. I asked God that if he would place me in this position to service you all that I would do that to the best of my ability. Will all of my decisions be great? No. Will they be good? No. Will they be poor? I hope not. We are going to take this information and try to make the best decision. A parent stated at one of the forums, sickness puts my child at risk if they are too far away. These

are the kinds of conversations that everybody does not hear about, such as the ambulance visits or the transports from the high school to the hospital. Some may say it was only a few. Well, I think 8-12 is a lot and what if you lose a life? Is it a few? I am concerned about the one lost sheep just like I am all of the sheep. Mr. Tyner, you made a good point about what are we going to do with the children we have in the schools. That has been a discussion around this board table at almost every meeting that we have. This is a concern and we are concerned about these things. I ask the public today, if you had to make the decision what would you do? This is a very difficult decision and when I think about children who are on the bus that is an issue. Conditions of the school, yes some of that is better, but when you have a father who is 84 and is going on 85 in a few months and who complains about his shortness of breath. Today he does not feel good and the number of hospital visits we have had this year with him you understand what asbestos does to people long-term. When I go into the high school and I feel okay when I am in there and I feel some kind of way when I come out of there. Then, I know what the students are talking about, because I to deal with severe sinus problems. When they say the asbestos is under the carpet, nobody knows anything about it and it is no problem until we have to remove it. What happens when you do have to move the carpet where a lot of the problems are causing respiratory issues? What happens when you pull up the carpet and you break a piece of the tile? What do you do? That room would have to be closed off or students are still exposed. These are the things that the public does not hear about. These are the things Clinton Williams gets in his vehicle and go and see about. I go and ask Ms. Whitaker to walk through the building with me. For those of you who are concerned about whether we are going to make a good decision based on the facts or not, based on your children, your needs, the dynamics of your family, because everybody cannot get in a car and go where they want to go when they want to get there. Whatever the number of students are that travel from the western end to the eastern end or vice versa, will you tell me which one of the sheep do you give up on and say he or she is not worth saving? Should it be your child or somebody else? Do we make those kinds of decisions? You have put us in a position of leadership and I promise you one thing that I will represent you well. As we make this decision today, I am going to keep every one of these comments and notes that I have written down. I am going to keep those things in consideration and I am going to consider every child in this county. Sometimes we should not wait for a very long time to get things done. Ms. Ingram often speaks with this Board all of the time, because we say we are going to do something and it takes us five years to do it. You can't always wait five years. Let me share with you what President Barack Obama said to both parties, "Political folks, we don't have time to play political games, because while we are playing political games and waiting to go back to the polls the American people are suffering and they need some relief and we need to give it to them." Whatever happens at the voting polls, I am going to be okay with that, but today because you have put me here, I am going to consider each of your children, each family member and the decision that we make. It is not about me, I am trying to do the deed that I am here to do. When you find out that I am not doing that very well I want you to look in the telephone book, find my number and call me and say, "Clinton Williams you are not doing what you are supposed to be doing by the students and the families in this county." I know that was a lot and I appreciate your time. I am going to work diligently to support each of you in this room and I am going to hear you when you speak. Thank you.

Ms. Smith-Ingram: I promise not to be before you long, but I want you to know that I am about to break protocol. This is a very emotional moment for me and even if this cost me my title or position. I am okay with that, because I fear God more than I fear any man made rules. I want

to tell you about August 2012. This young man, a yearbook was dedicated to him. A whole entire yearbook dedicated to this young man right here. He also received just today, the Eaglerific 21st Century Learner and Future Leader Award. He said, "When I grow up I want to be a carpenter." This young man was so excited about coming to school. He wanted to go to school in 2010 and 2011, but when he was evaluated he was rated as being profoundly delayed. He lived in Henrico, NC, which is quite a distance. Instead of going to Squire Elementary School, he would have to travel as a 3-year old, with significant disabilities, to Central Elementary School, because he was rated profoundly delayed. He needed access to the therapy and the programs they have available and they would only be available at Central. His parents were really delirious about this, because they said they wanted their child to go to school and because he is delayed he needs to be able to catch up. He qualified for Pre-K, but do we let him go to school or do we not let him go to school. The thought of our little, bitty, precious baby who was born at 11lb. and ½ oz. and who had overcome so many obstacles, are we going to be able to allow him to get on the bus and travel on what would have been a one hour bus ride? So the parents made a decision, my husband and I, no he can't go to school at 3 and he can't go to school at 4, but when he turned 5 years old in August we were excited about him being able to start school. So parents, I understand you when you are thinking about your babies having to get on a bus and travel. He also had a tracheotomy. I said, God forbid if that tracheotomy pops out. Is the bus driver going to pull over and pop it back in or is the aide going to see it? What is going to happen? We had all of these decisions to make. Now, he has transitioned, he has gone home to be with the Lord. There was a tremendous risk there for him and there was a protocol put in place for him when there is that risk. That protocol was not followed, but that's okay. Why I am here today is because there is a risk and when I know about that risk I don't want my child to be exposed to asbestos and I don't want your child to be exposed to asbestos. I got the feeling when we were at Conway Middle that many of you were upset at the thought of us closing Willis Hare Elementary. If you can see by the rubric from SFL+A, Willis Hare had the lowest score. Look at the Feasibility Analysis summarizing sheet, because I am an engineer by training and I am well versed at looking at the rubric and the numbers. If you would look at the scores on this sheet that a professional architecture firm evaluated the building, Willis Hare had a building feasibility of 1. Gaston Elementary had a score of 25 and our three lowest schools were Squire, Willis Hare and the Alternative School. If you look at Northampton County High School and some of the individual questions that we had when we were looking at the scores in terms of the historical ratings and the issue about asbestos, we are not a Board that I haven't fussed with about making decisions and taking too long to make a decision, because we get emotional. We don't want any kids to be bused. I hear your pain when you say you don't want kids to be bused and the thought of it upsets you again this year. But, there was a community last year who was outraged and very concerned about kids being bused. Mr. Williams goes to the school and I leave out early in the morning. You have elementary school students standing beside the road at 6:30 in the morning by themselves, because their high school siblings have caught the bus at 5:50 a.m. Before, the Board use to deliver the board packets to Board Members, but because I live so far away from Jackson, I get the highest travel. But I don't get my information until an employee in the area can bring it to me, because it is too much money cost wise for them to deliver me my packet, therefore, I get my information late. In all of that, I am saying that I am concerned about busing kids. If you voted for me because you want me to look out for your child and not look

out for the other children, I am glad I did not win by one vote because I would give you that vote back.

I was elected to support and look out for all children. I will not vote to send students back to Northampton County High School this year for the same reason that I stated in October of 2012. This Board was briefed that there was asbestos in that school. There was a contracting company who came to do some renovations in the school. People were complaining that the school was not ready and there was a problem. It was brought out at our October Board Meeting and we discussed that there was a problem with mold and asbestos and we needed to address it. I spoke to several Board Members about it and one Board Member said, "I can see moving the kids, but not mid-year. Let's make it through the whole year and talk about moving them for the summer." November and December comes along and the Northampton County Commissioners came to us about the Way Forward Plan. That plan required us to go back and look at all of our information and make a plan for how we are going to move this district forward over the next ten years. We need to stop coming to you one year and say let's deal with high school and come to you another year, let's deal with the elementary school and come to you 3 years from now, let's deal with the middle school. We are in such a dire state in Northampton County that we need to look at the numbers and make a decision that is going to benefit all of the students that is going to keep them safe. My job as a Board Member is to make sure quality education is provided and that our children are safe. The buildings that we are talking about closing, they all have separate open areas where you have to go outside to access another part of the campus. That is just no longer safe. With that being said, there was an issue of as long as you don't disturb it. We had a mold study done and Mr. Chair emailed the report to me at 9:00 p.m. last night. It was updated and every Board Member received it. In October, we hired a company called Trinity Environmental to come in and evaluate our mold concerns. There was mold in the building, students were getting sick, faculty was getting ill, because if you have respiratory issues that mold can really get to you. We had students, one in particular, who was homebound for a full year because she kept getting sick from exposure to the mold. I am not a doctor and I am not a physician, but I can tell you what the study showed because I deal with numbers. In October the penicillin aspergilla count was 1176 counts per cubic meter and in November that had tripled to 4644 counts per cubic meter. The total count of the types of mold that were present was 4859 counts per cubic meter in October and on November 26th they went in and evaluated the media center and there were 6426 count per cubic meter. It went up again to over 2000 counts per cubic meter. When I read the closing paragraph of the study, this is about your children. If you want your children to go back in mold and if you want your children to go back where they could be exposed to asbestos, that is your decision. I know that I don't want my child around mold. If Elias was still with us today, I would not want him around mold or asbestos. I have worked in industry and I have worked for companies as an engineer where OSHA came in every quarter. Those same companies are being sued today and having to pay out settlements, because of the mesothelioma that can develop from exposure to asbestos.

Ms. Smith-Ingram read the conclusion of the report to the audience from Trinity Environmental in regards to the mold underneath the carpet in the media center and she informed them that they could access the report through the Northampton County School System. When I look at the problems that we hear and I have looked at the data and the argument, I am all for taking a stand for the children. I stood here last year and said we should not bus anybody's child and we should not merge right now until we have built a centrally located new high school or we have renovated Central to become the centrally located high school. When we look at the

demographics and the data that we have, how can you guarantee that there are going to be 29 alternative school students? The Alternative Program does not have to be a separate building, while some of the options presented said build a new Alternative School. We need to build a new Alternative School just like we need to build a new prison. Ninety percent of the students who were assigned to the Alternative School this year were not there because they had behavior problems. They were there because they were too old for their grades. What do you do to address that? You invest in your educational programs to give the children what they need. You wonder why some of these kids act out, it is because they can't read and they can't write and no one has taken the time to give them the academic support that they need so they can pass their grade and not be 18 years old in the 9th grade. Now, when I serve children I am going to serve all children and the ones with learning disabilities. It hurts me to my heart that we are thinking about building an Alternative School. I worked in a district where we ran the Alternative School from 4:00 until 7:00 p.m. If you were assigned to the Alternative School, you did not get to play sports. Those students who went to school from 4:00 to 7:00 p.m. did not stay any longer than a semester. They said, "I want to go back and be with the other kids." Those are the things we need to be looking at that are curriculum based that have nothing to do with buildings. I have always said that these charter schools are not working magic, only best practices. If we don't put in that \$200,000 to \$300,000 that Willis Hare needs, but instead put it into the curriculum so we can better educate our children and prepare them for the future. That is what we need to do, but we cannot do that with seven (7) buildings open. I stand with you that I don't want anybody to be bused. One thing I am going to change my mind about is when MBAJ, SFL+A and the administration looked at our grade configurations two years ago, their number one option was to keep a 7-12 program and a Pre-K-6 program on each end of the county so that no kid would be bused. I stand with you and I say we need to have a Pre-K-12 program on each end of the county. We need to do this today, because it takes time for it to be done. We need to close Willis Hare, Squire and NCHS. We can't do it today, but we need to make the decision so that we can move forward. Willis Hare and Squire can't be closed next year, but we need to put the kids in a safer building. My preference is to move the high school just for one year so that those kids will be in a safe building. If I am conceded on that, I will support a Pre-K-12 program on each end of the county and putting them in the best buildings we have.

Rhonda Taylor: Under no circumstances did we ever talk about or discuss building a new Alternative School. It might be in the plans that you all asked for, because I did not vote to have a plan done for \$13,000, but we did not discuss that. Next, I had two children at the high school and one just graduated and he was there for four years. My child worked in the media center every day. If I thought there was any chance that one of my children, who attends Northampton County Schools, was in any danger of having asbestos or being exposed do you think I as a parent would have kept my child in Northampton County Schools? No, I would not have. Right now, my daughter is there and my children go to the doctor regularly.

Chair K. Edwards called for protocol. He announced to the audience that this is a Board Meeting and we reserve the right. The question component will come at the end of the meeting. Ms. Taylor has the floor.

Ms. Taylor: I would not jeopardize my children's health. Again, as I said previously, the same students that the Rescue Squad had to come to pick up at NCHS are the same students who were at NCHS-West. I am not trying to divide the high school or say any school is any better. We have teachers who have taught in that school for thirty years and some of them are out here right now and they are not saying they were afraid of being exposed to asbestos. Asbestos is in these

buildings, Northampton County High School and Squire Elementary. Is anybody complaining about the asbestos at Squire Elementary with the small children? All of the concern has come about asbestos last year when the schools were merged. Prior to that, there was no discussion about asbestos. Does this make me angry, yes it does? It makes me angry, because it seems like nobody cares about my children or anybody else's children who were going to that school until last year. Again, if I thought that my children were in any danger I could choose another school for them to go to. If my daughter said, "I am going to Hertford County," I would say to her, "you can go to Hertford County, but as a parent it is my decision." My children had the opportunity to go to KIPP, but guess what, what is wrong with the Northampton County Public School System? My son graduated with honors and I know the teachers were out there teaching. Our teachers care about our students in all of our schools, not just the high school, not just the middle school, etc. There is nothing wrong with our school system, but we need to stop bickering over some buildings. There is one more thing I want to mention and that is we have a CTE Program, Camp Get Connected, getting ready to begin. It is starting this week coming up. Guess what, the program is not mandatory; the kids don't have to go. Guess what, there are some many kids signed up and the camp is full. It is full from the eastern end to the western end and grades 2nd -12th. The parents are sending their kids to Northampton County High School. Why are they sending their kids there when they don't have to?

Ms. Smith-Ingram: It is free and they don't know.

Ms. Taylor: Well, they know now and when that bus rolls around on Monday, there should not be a child on that bus. You are crazy to send your child to that school. At Camp Get Connected, the kids will be there and they have been there before and it has been full every year. Did your kids get sick year before last when they went there? I have to look at the whole picture and guess what, if I am not elected next year as my term is up, but that is not going to stop me, because I still have a child. I knew the kids from the western end way before the schools were merged and I was concerned about them then. I will do for anybody's child and if I am not elected, it will not stop me from caring about the children and doing what I have to do. I have transported kids to the western end and the eastern end after basketball or volleyball games. I have no problem with that as long as my vehicle will run.

Mr. Williams: Ms. Taylor, your comments are certainly well taken. We have had a lot of emotional moments around this table. I sat at this table when we were having a discussion about the schools several Board Meetings ago. One of the comments you made at that time was that you too had concerns about the conditions of the high school. When you brought those comments to the Board that nobody paid any attention before and you were frustrated that now we were addressing it. I can't account for that, but I am here with you now as a Board Member and the concerns that you had at that time and the concerns that you have at this time I am going to do my best to support those concerns so that they are properly addressed. I don't believe that you would put your child in harm's way and perhaps you don't know the effects of the conditions of the school. I just don't want to find out later on. As I said, my Dad is 84 years old and he had no idea. He was taking care of his family and he loved his job. I don't know that he would say that had he known that today he would be having some of the difficulties that he has. I don't think we should expose any of our children to those concerns, while children may not be showing they are sick this year from last year. What happens is, later on down the road like my Dad just found out when he was 81, but this is a problem and a serious problem. It is such a big problem all over the United States of America. I am sure you see the commercials on TV all of the time that there is money set aside to reimburse those people. Between health and money, I

think I would rather have my health, but we don't need to let's wait and see. As a leader, I do not want to be accused of being a leader who had an opportunity to impact folks lives in a very positive way; yet I sat back and allowed something else to happen. It is a big problem and we do need to figure out what to do. According to the meeting that we had in this room with the County Commissioners months ago, it looks like it will be 7-10 years before a new high school is going reach this county. Mr. Ferris, you are right that the buildings do play a major role, but how far are we getting set back for 7-10 more years. A lot of major stuff happens in 7-10 years. That is a long time to wait and we do need to look at what we should do on today. I am here Board Members and Ms. Ingram I appreciate your presentation. Just like everyone else around this table, we do need to come together today and put whatever personal differences aside and come up with the best solution for our children.

Ms. Smith-Ingram: I just want to recap and that is not true about the same students are getting sick. In fact, there were several new students who acquired illnesses this year at the relocated high school that had never experienced those illnesses prior to being transferred. There have also been some students who went from one inhaler per month to having to go 4 to 5 inhalers per month. By the time we had the October meeting, we received a report that the Rescue Squad had been out to the high school 14 times before the end of October. I am not sure where Ms. Taylor received all of her data, but there were other parents concerned about their children and their exposure to risk. The reason I shared the mold and what the expert said that it could be trapped in the carpet in the Media Center is because when the company started pulling the carpet up and the tiles were coming up when they were stripping the carpet to put down the new floor. That is why the company had to put the carpet back down and leave it that way because it was going to unsettle the asbestos. I believe that you are the public and you should have known about it. My heart has been heavy and I have been laboring over this since October. Mr. Williams said it in the October Board Meeting and I made comments also, but by statutory requirements I was bound to only talk about it at that meeting in such a way that it was in closed session. At this moment, I just wanted you to know why I don't support sending the kids back to that high school. I would be supportive of a company coming in and getting that asbestos cleared out as much as they can, but I do not support sending kids back to that location. I am sorry if that offends anybody or makes anyone upset, but I have to deal with what I can live with. I have gone on record and you can pull all of the Board minutes and look at the comments made by Erica Smith-Ingram. Once those minutes are loaded by Ms. Harris and this administration, you can do a search and search my name. Every comment I have made has talked about the condition of the high school or these older three buildings. These three buildings are the last three buildings we had built before 1967. There is a strong possibility that the asbestos is still there and present. That is why I am voting to close Squire, Willis Hare and NCHS. Maybe not this year, but it needs to be by next year and definitely for sure and that is the decision that I am going to ask the Board to join me on making today.

Mr. Matthews: I really do not want the public to leave here in fear or unjustifiable frightened by anything. In another life, I was in charge of Maintenance and Facilities of this school system. I was the asbestos designee for this school system. There is some asbestos in Northampton County High School; there is asbestos in Creecy, Garysburg, Willis Hare, Squire and if you listen to Mr. Ferris' presentation there is asbestos all over everywhere you go. The issue at Northampton County High School is the floor tile. Any time you see a piece of floor tile that is a 9"x9" square; the probability is that is asbestos floor tile. You go in buildings everyday with 9"x9" floor tile in them, because they are all over everywhere. As long as that floor tile stays

intact there is no health threat. When asbestos fibers become friable or broken into small pieces that is when the potential for breathing in those fibers exist. In the early 80's, the Federal and State Government mandated an asbestos plan and this school system was forced to remove all asbestos in all schools and that was dangerous. All pipe insulation in the boiler rooms that contained asbestos had to be removed, because people went into the boiler rooms and worked. The pipes started leaking and you had to take the insulation off the pipes and you had to replace all of that pipe insulation. In addition to that, every three years the State Inspector Officer comes down here to inspect our buildings for the three-year asbestos inspection report. If they find anything out of the ordinary or any dangerous situation with asbestos, this school system or this Board will have to address the issue. Mr. Tillery is the asbestos designee for the school system now. I believe Mr. Gary Bell has also had that training and is the backup asbestos designee. The three-year inspections do still continue to take place. There is an asbestos plan in place. I just don't want the public to fear and panic about an asbestos issue, because it is everywhere. All of the asbestos at the Northampton County High School, other than the floor tile and the heating pipes underneath the building, has been removed. That means, as long as nobody goes in the crawl space underneath the building its fine, but in the event 10-15 years from now someone decides to raise the building or tear it down, you will have to go in that building and remove all of the asbestos prior to destroying the building. As long as it is intact and stays in the crawl spaces it is fine. Ms. Ingram explained to you about the Media Center. Mr. Tillery, I believe that replacing the carpet in the Media Center was one of the things on the list to accomplish last summer. That project got started, the carpet was purchased, the carpet was ready to put down, the company went in to replace the carpet in the Media Center and the floor tile started leaving the cement. The floor tile is glued to the cement and the carpet is glued to the floor tile and when they went to remove the carpet the floor tile began to break. When that happened, they glued the carpet right back down to the floor and said we can't take this carpet up until we have the asbestos tile removed. We did not have time to remove the asbestos floor tile and carpet prior to the opening of school. The place where they pulled the carpet up was about the size of a notebook and when they saw that the tile was breaking underneath it, they pushed it right back down and glued it to the floor and it was fine. The carpet may be responsible for the mold if any in the Media Center. There was the same kind of issue in the weight room at the high school. We were going to put down a new rubberized floor in the weight room. When they started taking up the floor tile (asbestos tile) in the weight room, they had to stop and remove that asbestos floor tile before they put the floor covering down. They had to isolate that room for days and put pressure on it while the floor tile was being removed. That is the process that it takes to take the floor tile up. If the floor tile is broken into little pieces, it eventually would be dangerous, but as long it stays on the floor and is not broken up it is not a danger. The mold and mildew report, I have a copy of it, and I would encourage you to get it and read it. Why they did find some mold and mildew in the Media Center, the report said it was in normal ranges and not too concerned about it, but just watch it. The conclusion to that is basically the indoor air quality inside that school was equal to the outdoor air quality around that school. The indoor air quality in the school was found to be fine. Everybody is their own person and some things bother me that don't bother you and some things bother you that don't bother me. In last October when a couple of Board Members mentioned the asbestos and the mold; therefore, we had the reports done and everything in the report that was recommended was handled. I dare say, there is probably mold in most buildings you go into. If hire this same company that did this report and

you go to any school on any given day, they are going to find some mold somewhere. I just did not want the public to panic because of the environments in the schools are safe.

Ms. Smith-Ingram: Where are we with the three-year cycle of the asbestos inspection?

Mr. Matthews: I would be guessing if say when that is, but we could check the last report.

Mr. James Tillery: The next asbestos inspection is getting into the process right now. As Mr. Matthews stated earlier, the asbestos that was in the school in the heating system was removed back in the early 80's. In all of the schools, asbestos is going to be contained in the floor tile. We have had some testing done on the floor tiles and it is pretty much like what has been said. If it was in the asbestos tile back in the 80's it is pretty much going to be in the asbestos right now until you remove it.

Mr. Matthews: Mr. Majette is gone, but Creecy School went through the same thing. It was the 9"x9" floor tile all over the whole school. If there is anyone here from Creecy, the hallway had been carpeted and the carpet became worn out in the hallway and it had to be replaced. We soon replaced the carpet because it was glued on top of the asbestos floor tile. We had to hire a company out of Florida to come during the summer and take all of the floor covering out. Of course, they had to do it by regulations and it was rather expensive. After they took all of the floor covering out, including the asbestos tile, they came back and put down the new floor tile. That is how the 12"x12" tile at Creecy came about that is there now. It is not unusual it is all over the state.

Ms. Smith-Ingram: It is not unusual like we said in the buildings that were built before 1968 and Squire, Willis Hare and Northampton County High School are the only three schools we have left that were built before that year and have a presence of asbestos. I want everybody to hear what Mr. Matthews continues to say, it is a costly process to remove that asbestos. We know we have to remove it out of the Media Center and that is just one location. Are we going to keep pumping money into an old school that we have to close within a year to three years that should have already been closed?

Mr. Matthews: Nobody is recommending that we remove that asbestos at this time, but for clarity down the road, asbestos is in that building in the floor tile. That is a liability that the school system has. Also, the Central Office Annex Building next door has asbestos. If you go to tear that building down or raise it, you will have to pay that dollar to have that asbestos taken out of that building before you can tear it down. If you sell the building as is, you will have to spend that dollar not to remodel, but to destroy.

Ms. Smith-Ingram: But, Trinity said that the carpet is the likely suspect for the mold problem. Keep in mind that was the November updated report and it has almost tripled. Imagine what it would be if we go in and check in March, April, May or June. We don't know what it is, but we know that between October and November it tripled and the spores in the mold that is trapped in the carpet we have got to get that up.

Mr. Matthews: Didn't they say that it was the time of the year that mold spores were higher in count than any other time of the year?

Ms. Smith-Ingram: They said that for the November report and they said it was higher than what would be normal. We just received the update last night.

Mr. Johnson: Since we are talking about mold, because I had a drainage problem with the sink in my kitchen. The plumber came in and he got into the space where we keep all of our chemicals. He said it looks like you have a little mold problem over here on the side. My wife is one of those persons who put down shelving paper on everything and it was stuck to the board. She pulled it up and she found mold and she became asthmatic. My daughter happened to be

here this weekend and she got down there, pulled it up and cleaned it up. The plumber said if you would take Lysol for mold and mildew and spray the spot it will kill it. He said to leave the doors open and let it air out before you put anything down and before I come back to repair your sink. Do you think I would have been in my house with my wife for 52 years knowing that there was mold down there and leave for her to suffer?

I went to a clinic this week and one of the comments made by some of the participants there was, "Let your ears do the talking until your mouth knows what to say." I have been quietly waiting to say what my mouth wants to say. I have heard this and that and I have seen the emails. I don't send emails to my Chair; I go and see him, because that is for him and I and not for the whole Board. If I have a problem, I go to the Chair. Not to let him know that there is a particular way that I want things done, because he is an intelligent individual. He has his own mind and he can go his own way. I am not the sharpest knife in the drawer, but I do know how to use common sense. I have heard today and I have seen some of the emails before we talked about it. Do you know on the emails, I was never included in any of them? I have also heard today that I am going on record, Mr. Chair; if there are no more comments from the delegation out here I would like to make a motion.

Chair K. Edwards: Mr. Johnson I would actually like to ask you a question. The protocol is that after each Board Member has had a chance to dialogue we will go back to the general public and we would have a one-minute discussion.

Attorney Rod Malone: What I thought we said that before the Board voted that the concept was that the Board would have some kind of motion on the table or had discussed a motion so they would have some sense of what the Board was doing. Then you would give them a chance to talk about what you are about to do, because right now they have no idea of what you are going to actually do. The idea was to give them some sense of what the Board is likely to do and then open it up for a minute for them to talk about the proposed motion.

Mr. Johnson: There is one other thing I would like to say. In July, I will be starting my 24th year as a Board Member. Never once have I promised anything to anybody. I don't vote for votes. It's everybody's right when they go to the polls to say, "I don't like him and I am not voting for him." That is the democratic process; let it go. I am not going to do anything, after my 24 years on the Board and my 52 years in education, to hurt children. I have had three children to go through this school system and I worked at Northampton County High School. I have 10 grandchildren and 5 of them go to a private church school, 2 of them go to a charter school, 2 of them go to public school in Wake County and I have a 1 year-old granddaughter who will be baptized tomorrow at my church. I have patiently listened to everyone and I appreciate your patience with me, but I will adhere to the protocol that has been set up by us to let the people speak if they have any questions.

Elder Ella W. Lundy: Board Members, I have to leave, but I wanted to say that I pray for all of you because you do have a tough decision to make. Look after every child regardless if they are on the eastern or western end of the county. You have that responsibility and don't let anybody bribe you and say I am not going to vote for you next year. You don't do things like that, because that is bribery. Don't be scared by any tactics. Mr. Johnson, you have done a good job just to sit there for 24 years!

Chair K. Edwards: I wish to thank everyone, as we will soon get to the Public Comments. I had a question about the carpet at the high school since we are in the question and answer mode. I would like to ask the administration about the carpet.

Dr. Bracy: The carpet and tile is going to be taken up by a professional.

Mr. Johnson: As I recall, at one time they had to close off the cafeteria at NCHS-East did they not Mr. Matthews, because of asbestos problems in the cafeteria?

Mr. Matthews: If you are talking about years ago, it was a stucco material around those skylights that contained asbestos and that was back in the early 1980's. That was some of the asbestos that was removed from that building. I think from memory that the company was ARS and a company that does that type of work has to meet federal requirements. That same company cleaned the boilers at Seaboard-Coates and removed the asbestos out of Creecy.

Chair K. Edwards: To the public and to my fellow Board Members, I certainly appreciate all of the passion and these forums have done great things for all of us. It helps bring us together as a county, because we understand how people think. We are here to be good stewards. Looking at the point of where we are when it comes to presentation we do rely on experts to give us their knowledge behind the expertise. I think the biggest question was asked about the Feasibility study. Why do a Feasibility Study? The first thing you have to do before you can close any facility is us have to do a Feasibility Study. According to the statute, you have to do a Feasibility Study whether it is one school, two, three or four. Second, we rely on the experts because they are the ones chosen in their field. Looking forward, there were some decisions made last year. The money we spent to renovate the high school and we see that dividends paid off because the building is in better condition. There was some discussion going around the carpet in the Media Center and is the building okay. As I look at the reports in my mind, the building is okay and it is fair. We said there are 9"x9" tiles anywhere you go. Yes, the indoor, outdoor quality is still a concern everywhere. As we look at where we are moving forward, I say that from an expert's point of view, Northampton County High School could be still utilized. When I say that I go back to what I stated earlier. One of the marks on the feasibility component is about equitable and fairness when it comes to busing in our county. One component of the analysis states it is centrally located. Not centrally located, students will be bused from other areas. Ms. Ingram alluded to the community was affected this past year going from west to east and she was right. It is still a concern and it is a concern that it was brought up in the Department of Public Instruction rubric that they provide and our architect utilized. Looking at that, it was alluded to about Pre-K-8 and Pre-K-12 on each end of the county or even centrally located. When we talk about equitable and fairness and are our buildings safe; in my mind our buildings are safe. I don't believe that anyone would rightfully put anyone's child in harm's way. As a 1984 graduate of the building we are talking about, I spent several years there and did not leave there some nights until practice was over at 9:00 p.m. I am 46 years old now and I am doing fine and that was Northampton County High School. I also allude back to a couple of our speakers who were at the forums and it was so enlightening to hear the passion and I do think that because of the length of our county it puts us all at a disadvantage. I heard the public speak candidly and I wrote down some of the comments like Mr. Williams and I re-read them, because it is a concern and that is what our public is saying. What I heard today was, "What are you going to do about the academics here in Northampton County Schools?" That is a task that we are going to work on about what are we going to do about the academics to make our students stay in Northampton County Schools. I look at objective things and looking at objectives there are certain things that I see that we can do to be successful in this county. I have heard from several of our Board Members and several of our constituents. If you look at the Alternative School, its capacity is at 12.73%. In this report it stated, build an alternative school. I could not possibly think about building an alternative school because as a fellow Board Member stated, "You can have an alternative program and you don't have to have a separate building." Also, the alternative school

is not a sentencing ground, because students do come in and they go out so when you look at the enrollment it does fluctuate. Does it require a full campus; in my mind it does not. Now, taking a look at our schools as follows:

Squire Elementary School at 34% capacity, 63 in Pre-K and 74 in Kindergarten

Gaston Elementary School at 75% capacity, a golden opportunity with only 137 students

What are we going to do for the academic success? Our Superintendent, Dr. Bracy, alluded to in an earlier Board Meeting in November that one of his goals is to start an Early College in Northampton County Schools. When you talk about academics, Early College is what we see as one success story globally. Our alternative programs could be on each end of the county, not just one location. I say that to say that I am prepared to make a motion.

Mr. Edwards made a MOTION that for the 2013-2014 school year to close the Northampton County Alternative School with no replacement building, close Squire Elementary School and relocate Pre-K and K to Gaston Elementary School, reconfigure Northampton County High School for grades 8-12, reconfigure Gaston Middle School for grades 7-12, while we work on the Way Forward Plan for a centrally located facility to stop the busing of students.

That way we have community stewardship and we are closing only two facilities while we work towards a more feasible option. I also feel that not as many teachers will be affected until we can get a centrally located campus.

Vice Chair Smith-Ingram: Since the Chair has authored the motion I will chair the motion. I will restate the motion as follows: For the 2013-2014 school year, close the Northampton County Alternative School with no replacement building, close Squire Elementary School and reconfigure Gaston Elementary School to Pre-K-6 grades, reconfigure Gaston Middle School to 7-12 grades, reconfigure Northampton County High School to 8-12 grades (8th grade Early College), while waiting for the development of the Way Forward Plan.

Attorney Rod Malone: Did you mean for Conway to go to grades 5-7?

Chair K. Edwards: Let me further clarify things. When you look at the Early College, Conway now has grades 5-8 and the Early College will be located on the campus of Northampton County High School, but not for all 8th graders. To further clarify, when I look at Willis Hare there is a historical commitment in that community and we don't have any place to put those wonderful students right now. When you talk about leaving things the way they are Willis Hare needs to remain as it is for right now, a Pre-K-4 grades. Central Elementary is at a 97% capacity and would remain as is, a Pre-K-4 grades.

Vice Chair Smith-Ingram: I will restate the motion again. For the 2013-2014 school year:

Close the Northampton County Alternative School with no replacement building

Close Squire Elementary School and reconfigure Gaston Elementary School to Pre-K-6 grades

Reconfigure Gaston Middle School to 7-12 grades

Reconfigure Northampton County High School to 8-12 grades (8th gr. will be an Early College)

Conway Middle School remains as is – 5-8 grades

Willis Hare remains as is – Pre-K-4 grades

Central Elementary School remains as is – Pre-K-4 grades, while waiting for the development of the Way Forward Plan.

Chair K. Edwards: When I mentioned the Alternative School and I said no replacement that means no structural replacement. We will still have the program, but it will be offered on each end of the county. That is for feasibility to stop transporting all of these kids for over 1 hour and 20 minutes. That is one thing that was really on my heart, because when you talk about the Alternative School we have great teachers and staff there headed by Principal Drummond.

When you think about bus time for those students and it is one school with one bus. When you talk about true bus time, can you imagine that?

Vice Chair Smith-Ingram: Mr. Chair, I wish to restate the motion again and call for a second.

For the 2013-2014 school year:

Close the Northampton County Alternative School with no replacement building

Close Squire Elementary School and reconfigure Gaston Elementary School to Pre-K-6 grades

Reconfigure Gaston Middle School to 7-12 grades

Reconfigure Northampton County High School to 8-12 grades (8th gr. will be an Early College)

Conway Middle School remains as is – 5-8 grades

Willis Hare Elementary School remains as is – Pre-K-4 grades

Central Elementary School remains as is – Pre-K-4 grades, while waiting for the development of the Way Forward Plan. Mr. Williams seconded the motion.

Mr. Matthews: For clarity, are you saying that 8th graders could be either at Conway Middle or at the high school depending upon whether they go into the Early College? Conway would remain grades 5-8 unless an 8th grader wanted to enter the Early College and then they would go to the high school.

Vice Chair Smith-Ingram: That is correct and we would still have 8th graders at Conway and 8th graders at Northampton County High School.

Mr. Matthews: Also, the current Gaston Middle School would become 7-12 and 8th graders from that school would also have the opportunity to enter Early College if they choose to do so.

Chair K. Edwards: Yes, every 8th grader would have the opportunity to attend the Early College.

Dr. Bracy: I think what the Board has to do is to make the Early College official in approval form in July.

Attorney Rod Malone: Can I ask that the Board Chair to consider for the purpose of the cleanness of what we are doing today, to modify his motion for Northampton County High School to be grades 9-12. There is no Early College as of today and when Dr. Bracy brings you the Early College agenda item then you can make the motion to make Northampton County High School grades 8-12. You need to do a friendly amendment to change Northampton County High School to grades 9-12.

Chair K. Edwards: I accept the friendly amendment.

Vice Chair Smith-Ingram: I will restate the modified motion. The motion was amended as follows:

For the 2013-2014 school year:

Close the Northampton County Alternative School with no replacement building

Close Squire Elementary School and reconfigure Gaston Elementary School to Pre-K-6 grades

Reconfigure Gaston Middle School to 7-12 grades

Northampton County High School remains as is – 9-12 grades

Conway Middle School remains as is – 5-8 grades

Willis Hare Elementary School remains as is – Pre-K-4 grades

Central Elementary School remains as is – Pre-K-4 grades, while waiting for the development of the Way Forward Plan. Mr. Williams **SECONDED** the motion.

Mr. Johnson: Mr. Edwards has turned this over to you to chair the motion.

Chair K. Edwards: Mr. Johnson, it is just part of protocol because I authored the motion.

Ms. Smith-Ingram: I wish to remind the Board that we did say to the community that we would allow a one-minute comment before we call for the vote on this motion. You will have one minute to state your concerns for or against the motion.

Mr. Matthews: Mr. Edwards has already mentioned that with the Alternative School, the motion is to close the building. Would it be a school, because it would involve a school number and a principal? Is it your motion to close the building and keep the school in a different location or is your motion to demolish the school all together?

Chair K. Edwards: The motion is to keep the school, the current staff and eliminate the building only. There would be an alternative school on each end of the county.

Mr. Matthews: You have to turn in your school number if you eliminate the principal.

Chair K. Edwards: It will be just like the high school, one number at two locations.

Vice Chair Smith-Ingram: I did want to comment that I believe there has been some discussion on the sports, athletics, band and all of the extra-curricular programs would remain as one; the Northampton County High School Jaguars. It will just be one high school at two locations. This is a practice that is done throughout communities. One of them is in Richmond, Virginia where Mr. Chair was the Principal and all of the kids that were farmed out to specialty schools came back to the home school to participate in sports. Also, that is how Southside Virginia does it with their Regional Governor's School where students can go out to the Governor's School and come back their home school like Greensville County High School and Brunswick County High School for the purpose of athletics.

Mr. Matthews: The idea is fine, but we had talked about providing curriculum academics to our students' needs; therefore, I would like to hear from the administration about how you are going to staff a comprehensive needed high school curriculum in two locations. They are the same issues we had when we merged the high school together and staff was an obstacle. Can it be done?

Dr. Bracy: We will look at staffing similar to what we did before. We will have to look a lot of virtual options. We will start looking at the matrix and come back together July 1st.

Mr. Matthews: Squire will be converting over to Gaston Elementary and my concern of what I think we will need some discretion behind it that the Pre-K will require a special education setting such as, bathrooms, classrooms, square footage, exits and things like that. Do we have time and money to either convert the school or put Pre-K pods on campus? Can we tackle that obstacle in this window of time that we have?

Chair K. Edwards: To answer your question Mr. Matthews from my experience in Virginia, as far as construction, absolutely not, but as far as looking at physical space to house possibly 137 students you could utilize mobile classroom spaces.

Mr. Matthews: Do we have the time and budget to do that?

Mr. K. Edwards: Yes, because we would be cutting off operation cost at Squire.

Mr. Matthew: I have one other concern and that is this Board has a Student Transfer Policy. Actually this concern goes back to July. What position would the Board take concerning the Student Transfer Policy, because I can envision that there are some students from East that prefer to go to Gaston and I can envision that there are some students from Gaston that prefer to continue to go to East. I don't want to create a problem for us down the road. What position is the Board going to take on the Student Transfer Policy?

Chair K. Edwards: I think the power of choice is a good thing. When you look at how the public has talked about it. We can say people do have a choice now and I think we do not need to take that away. If there is a student that desires to go to one school versus another they should be able to. In Vance County, they have an open door policy year-round. A student in Vance basically plays basketball during basketball season at one high school and transfers for baseball season at another high school.

Mr. Matthews: I am not opposed to it I am just saying we have that bridge to cross. The other thing that goes along with that is that our current policy says transportation is not provided by the district.

Vice Chair Smith-Ingram: Those were great questions from both of you and definitely things we need to look at.

Ms. Taylor: We just ended the conversation about 1 hour and a half on the bus. Let's say you have an 8th grader in Henrico who wants to take part in the Early College. How is that child going to get to Early College when you are busing children to a school that is unsafe?

Chair K. Edwards: In my mind, Early College will be offered on both ends of the county. What we are saying is there will be and Early College in the 7-12 configurations as well.

Ms. Taylor: I am not saying I am for it or against it, but you have children in let's say the CTE Program for automotives and children are still going to be denied an opportunity. Also, with the Alternative School, if a child is long-term suspended and sent to the Alternative School you are still on a campus.

Attorney Rod Malone: Being in an Alternative School Program it is a separate program. You are not under suspension when you are in the Alternative School; it is in lieu of suspension.

Ms. Taylor: I was thinking about the situation that happened last year. I am thinking about children's safety in regards to that.

Attorney Rod Malone: The reality of what may happen is that students that the Superintendent and the Principals now recommend alternative opportunities may lose those opportunities, because of the placement of the alternative school.

Ms. Taylor: For me to look at this as a whole picture, I think we need to look at other sites. I am just thinking about putting it on a school campus and I know Creecy could be considered.

Mr. Williams: Ms. Taylor, either way that child would be around other kids. We say these children are less deserving of a child being around them than others. Wherever you put it, that child is going to be around other children.

Ms. Taylor: What I am saying is not put them on the same campus with regular students.

Vice Chair Smith-Ingram: This is what I suggested in response to that is to offer the Alternative Program at a different hour from 4:00 to 7:00 p.m. on Monday through Thursday. That way they are not around the general population. Right now, we need to move the discussion forward and we can iron that out at another time.

Vice Chair Smith-Ingram announced that the Chair recognizes the community. You have one minute if anyone desires to speak to the motion on the floor.

Public Comments

The following persons addressed the Board during Public Comments:

Ms. India Robinson-Martin – Mr. Tyner mentioned earlier and he questioned, what are we going to do in Northampton County to keep the students in our schools? I don't know if we have a person on staff who writes grants. If there is a person or if we could hire a person like that maybe that person could write grants for different types of electives to provide options for our students that they would not normally have. Band is great and P.E. is fair, but what about dance or something else the kids might be interested in. I am requesting that on the middle school level. If we could have some other types of extracurricular activities, I think the kids would appreciate that.

Ms. Rhonda Moses: I have a question. In the short time that we are going to do this between now and August, will the Board have a final plan to provide the money and the time to make this

happen? I have lived through several of these consolidations and we have already shortened the work-week to four days. I don't care how many hours you put in there is a lot to be done. I am thinking of the sure number of computers and if teachers don't pack up properly all of their stuff will be stored in a room. I just need to know if we are going to have all of the resources when we need them to make it happen. We also have to consider that we have a new student information system coming on board and we do not have the database yet. What we have scheduled in May 1st for our students will be trashed. I just want to make sure that we will have time to make it happen.

Ms. Smith-Ingram: I am speaking now from the Board and where there is a will there is a way. If it is the right thing to do we are just going to have to make some sacrifices and do what needs to be done.

Ms. Rhonda Moses: I am not opinionating what the decision is, because that is your job. What I am saying is as you consider what the vote is, can that vote then trigger a plan that includes the money, the personnel and the resources to get the job done?

Dr. Bracy: I think what is critical Ms. Moses is that you, Joe, Dexter and Mr. Tillery get with me and let me know what the cost is going to be. If you need some additional help we will hire a company to help you. Let me know what that looks like financially. If you all will get that to me I will take it to the Board for approval for July 1st.

Mr. Dexter Harris: With the athletics being on one campus, are we still leaving everything at one location as the Jaguars?

Chair K. Edwards: Last year, I believe we played the Christmas Tournament on the campus of Gaston Middle. When I look at that we will leave it to the grapevine to figure it out. That is an example of where we did not play a game at Northampton County High School. I think we can work that out.

Dr. Bracy: Mr. Harris, will you get to me what your vision is for athletics and I will present that at the July 1st Meeting.

Ms. Smith-Ingram: Dr. Bracy, I know that you and your staff are going to do this, but if you play football on one end of the county, in all fairness it would be nice to play basketball on the other end. Just try to even it out. We are going to make one high school at two locations and the emblems will be consistent. They will all be Jaguars.

Dr. Bracy: Mr. Tillery, you know as part of your process if this goes through, all of the associated cost needs to go to the Board and please get that to me next week.

Vice Chair Smith-Ingram called for the question to suspend the debate on the motion and to take action on the motion before them. Chair K. Edwards seconded the motion. The motion passed by a vote of 6-0. We are voting on the motion on the floor and I will restate the motion.

For the 2013-2014 school year:

Close the Northampton County Alternative School with no replacement building

Close Squire Elementary School and reconfigure Gaston Elementary School to Pre-K-6 grades

Reconfigure Gaston Middle School to 7-12 grades

Northampton County High School remains as is – 9-12 grades

Conway Middle School remains as is – 5-8 grades

Willis Hare Elementary School remains as is – Pre-K-4 grades

Central Elementary School remains as is – Pre-K-4 grades, while waiting for the development of the Way Forward Plan.

The motion failed by a vote of 3-3.

Vice Chair Smith-Ingram asked, is there was another motion?

Mr. Johnson: Who is in charge now?

Vice Chair Smith-Ingram: The Vice Chair will turn the floor back over to the Chair.

Mr. Johnson: Looking at the SFL+A book on page 3 and it states, “while concerns exist as listed above we see no reason to temporary relocate students until a long-term plan is decided upon and approved by both Northampton County Schools and Northampton County Board of Commissioners.” Listening to all of the things and reading this, I make this proposal in the form of a motion.

Mr. Johnson made a MOTION to leave the schools as they are at the present time, with the exception that we close the Alternative School and leave it to the administration to decide where it will be located, that we look at Squire Elementary School and its reconfiguration once school has started, that we move Squire Elementary students if it is feasible and necessary to Gaston Elementary School, and look at mobile units that meet all of the specifications required by the state for Pre-K through Kindergarten students. Once that has been determined at the beginning of school, that we move immediately to move those students from Squire to Gaston Elementary School by Thanksgiving, if things can be delivered by then, if not move the date to Christmas.

Ms. Taylor SECONDED the motion.

Ms. Taylor AMENDED the motion to leave everything the way it is and work on the Alternative Program. We should work on everything else during this year for the students to go to the schools you are talking about. Right now, it is not enough time and I don’t care what we say. You are putting a lot of people on staff under pressure. I like your plan, but right now it is just too late. Let’s look at the Alternative Program this year and then next year let’s look at what Mr. Johnson suggested. I don’t want to put anyone under any more hardships than they already are.

Vice Chair Smith-Ingram: I am appalled that after all of this discussion that we are at a point where we want to leave it as is, because in leaving it as is you are causing high school students from the western end of the county to travel to the eastern end of the county once again. You are causing students, elementary and middle school, who are siblings of high school students who have to stand on a dark road waiting for their school bus because their older siblings have gotten on the early bus to get to the high school. If it is not okay to bus kids from the eastern end to the western end, even though we know it is a safer building and it doesn’t have the presence of asbestos because of when it was built, why do you think it is okay to bus kids from the western end to the eastern end? I can tell you that in this report Mr. Ferris, you recommended that nothing be done until we have a solid plan that is agreed upon by the County Commissioners and the School Board, which is what I have been demanding as a Board Member that we do since October, but when this came up in January, the Board Members did not want to deal with it in the Retreat. When this came up in March and April, we did not want to deal with it. The safety of children, their livelihood and education is at stake and if we don’t do it now when are we going to do it? If we don’t do it, who is going to do it? Mr. Johnson, Squire School was rated fair and the other schools that you have not talked about closing were rated poor. Out of all of the schools that got a descriptive, Northampton County High School did not have one. Mr. Ferris I would like to ask you, if you did the study and it showed that asbestos was present would you have rated it a “1” or would you have given it a “0”?

Mr. Robbie Ferris: I assumed there was asbestos in there, because I observed the tile. The assumption is that there is asbestos, but it is not friable; therefore, nothing needs to be done at this time.

Vice Chair Smith-Ingram: Mr. Ferris, you have just heard that the carpet has to come up. Dr. Bracy has said and Mr. Matthews has confirmed that it is going to be an expensive process. On

page 5 for Northampton County High School it states, "Hazardous Materials: (asbestos, lead, radon, indoor air quality)

~asbestos and other hazardous materials either not present or stabilized = 2

~minor problems with hazardous materials, management program in progress = 1

~asbestos or other hazardous materials present in building requiring removal = 0

Since we have to remove the asbestos in that school that would give the high school a "0" in that category instead of a "1" and bring that score down to an 11 instead of 12? I refuse to accept from you or anyone else in this room that there is no knowledge that there is asbestos that has to be removed. If your company knew this and marked the wrong number then that would be a problem.

Mr. Robbie Ferris: I wish to respond to that statement that I did not know you were going to replace the carpet. It was not discussed with me; however, I would say that if you replace the carpet if there is an asbestos issue then I would not consider that a major issue. I would consider it to be part of your maintenance issues. Please don't try to put words in my mouth.

Vice Chair Smith-Ingram: I am not trying to put words in your mouth, but when you give us a DPI rubric and it says, asbestos and other hazardous materials present in the building requiring removal, we have a required removal Mr. Ferris. Do we all at least concede that we have to remove it from the library?

Mr. Matthews: It is not a required removal, unless you are going to put more carpet down.

Vice Chair Smith-Ingram: Because of the mold that is captured in the carpet that is causing these elevated problems that went up almost over 2000 units between October and November of 2012, not by what I am saying, but by the reports that are in black and white. We have to remove the carpet and we just had the discussion about how costly it would be. Despite me having reservations because I do not want to vote to send anybody's child back into Northampton County High School, I compromise. This is the vote that is on the floor, but for us to be deadlocked is ridiculous and for us to sit here and continue to shut down schools that are of higher quality and keep schools open that are of lesser quality in terms of the building, it says something quite interesting about who we are and our character. This is ridiculous and I cannot believe we are entertaining a motion to move, dislocate and transfer some kids, but we won't do it for other kids. If you are not going to do it for one, you should not do it for all.

Ms. Taylor: When we met there were six options on the table, but when we came to a Board Meeting, you made a motion to close four schools. We never looked at the others, but had we looked at the others instead of focusing on this shut down we could have possibly kept one of those. Basically, what Mr. Matthews said when we were at the Retreat is what you all are suggesting now and we could have been focusing on that plan a long time ago, instead of closing four schools down and going through the motions.

Vice Chair Smith-Ingram: The motion was to start the statutory process.

Ms. Taylor: You never looked at the other options and that is my point. If we had looked at the other options we would probably not be sitting here now, because it is similar to what was being said a few minutes ago. I would not have had a problem, but I am looking at the timeframe for these people here, such as Ms. Williams and the Food Service Department.

There is a lot that you have to look at.

Vice Chair Smith-Ingram: When did we move the schools last year? It was the same time last year, which was at the end of July and the first and second week of August. If we have to hire additional movers to help us get it done, we can get it done. You wanted to do it last year when

it meant busing kids from the west to the east, but you don't want to do it this year, which is interesting.

Chair K. Edwards: The Chair recognizes that we are going to be civil, have protocol and allow one member to speak at a time.

Vice Chair Smith-Ingram: Since I was the last one to have the floor my last statement was, a vote to leave it as is. If voting to continue to bus our kids, it is not fair to those kids and those families who have to once again ride a school bus for over one hour plus. We will not know the testing results until October because of the new standards; a new type of curriculum we have gone to called the Common Core. We will not know right now the academic results that it had on our students, but I can tell you the affects that it has had on families. There are retired people in my community and my mother is one of them who have opened up her home from 5:30 to 6:30 in the morning to keep the children from having to stand in the dark to catch the bus. As you know, it is dark outside during that time of the morning and we have young children standing on the side of the highway waiting for a bus. We should not do that to anybody's child. With Mr. Edwards' motion, it prevented us, if nothing else's, from having to cause anybody's kids to be on a bus for over an hour and a half. It is just not fair and I don't know how any Board Member here could want that for somebody else children. It is not only absurd, but it is extremely unfair. It almost makes me question your ethics and morality.

Chair K. Edwards: The Chair just needs to bring a Point of Reference for all Board Members. The Point of Reference is that we are not a full Board at this time. We do have one Board Member who is not here and that is Ms. Marjorie Edwards. Mr. Matthews has the floor next.

Attorney Rod Malone: We cannot do that, because if the Board were to recess and reconvene let's say on Monday, is everyone available?

Mr. Williams: I will make myself available.

Ms. Smith-Ingram: I am available.

Mr. Johnson: I will be out of town. I was absent the other night from a meeting also. The Board voted to do what they felt was right and for that it was my fault, because my wife was in the hospital and I was in Raleigh with her. Therefore, to call for another vote due to the fact that one person is not here just because the majority has ruled and that is what the democratic process is all about.

Attorney Rod Malone: Mr. Johnson, I would agree with you if the Board had voted one way or the other, but it was a tie. The only reason for the discussion is because the Board did not make a decision. Had the Board made a decision, I would certainly not be suggesting that you recess and reconsider it.

Mr. Johnson: But, there is another motion on the floor that has not been voted on.

Attorney Rod Malone: That is fine and I understand that motion needs to be voted on. I was trying to determine whether, as part of this process, it made sense to consider recessing to have the full Board to consider all of this, because this is certainly a very important decision for the Board. That was my only point for asking the question, but if you are unavailable we could not schedule it for Monday.

Ms. Smith-Ingram: I call for a Point of Personal Privilege. Can we take a 3-minute recess?

Chair K. Edwards: A Point of Personal Privilege has been mentioned and we will take a 3-minute recess.

Recess

The Board took a recess at 3:10 p.m. The Board reconvened the meeting at 3:20 p.m.

Mr. Matthews: I am not in agreement with busing and long routes. If we reverse the busing routes we would have to sacrifice curriculum over staffing. We are already knocking on the door to open next year.

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

On a MOTION by Ms. Taylor, SECONDED by Mr. Matthews, the Board approved to leave the schools as is, except for the Alternative School and begin immediately with a plan of action for the 2014-2015.

On a MOTION by Ms. Smith-Ingram, SECONDED by Mr. Williams, the Board approved to recess the meeting at 3:29 p.m. today, until Tuesday, June 25, 2013 at 6:00 p.m.

Mr. Johnson: What about Ms. Taylor's motion?

Attorney Rod Malone: Ms. Ingram's motion supersedes that motion for the moment, because it is higher on the list of Robert's Rules of Order.

Ms. Taylor: My concern is that we told the public we would give them an answer today. We already know that one of the Board Members is not going to be here and another Board Member knows for a fact they cannot be here on that date. Therefore, what is the solution for moving forward?

Attorney Rod Malone: I can only speak to Robert's Rules of Order and I cannot get into the politics at this date and time. Robert's Rules would allow if the majority of the Board wants this meeting to be recessed until another time and just like this meeting was noticed the entire Board would have the right to be here at the recessed meeting.

Mr. Johnson: I am the Board Member who will not be here Tuesday, because I obligated myself to teach in Bible School and I cannot be here. If we have to do away with the meeting to-date because Ms. Edwards could not be here, then you cannot meet Tuesday because I cannot be here.

Chair K. Edwards: The first motion was a gridlock of 3-3; the second motion was 4-2 and the third motion is Ms. Taylor's motion.

Mr. Johnson: You say you are going to table Ms. Taylor's motion.

Ms. Smith-Ingram: Can the author of the motion speak to why I made the motion so that we can stop the speculation? The reason why I made the motion was because we have been deadlocked on a very big issue and we are probably going to be deadlocked for the rest of this day. I am committed and will be here all night if we have to, but I can tell the way we are going we are going to be deadlocked. Let's not hold the community hostage all day. Either we are going to have to make a decision or we are going to have to come back. We don't have a choice.

Attorney Rod Malone: Mr. Johnson, just so that we are clear in process; this was a properly noticed and called meeting. Ms. Edwards had the right to be here just like anybody else and the Board proceeded in her absence. If the majority of the Board were to vote to recess the meeting and schedule it to anytime that would be properly noticed and proper, the Board could proceed with the work of the Board on those items that are on the agenda. Because this is a Special Meeting, the Board is relatively limited to the items that were noted and the topics we are discussing. The Board could not really recess this meeting until Tuesday and take up five new topics for which you would not have known they were going to take up. But, they certainly could if the majority chose to do so, reschedule it for a time that even they knew you were unavailable they could technical do that, but whether they should do it that is not for me to answer. I can only speak about what they could do and that would certainly be the prerogative of the Board if they so choose.

Mr. Johnson: The last time we were at the public hearing at Gaston, a lady asked you a direct question, "When will we know what you are going to do?" You answered her and said, "Saturday at 10:00 a.m. we will have a meeting. You will know then what our decision will be." We have not lived up to our obligation yet and we are postponing it again. The longer we postpone it; no matter which decision is made it is going to be closer and closer to school starting.

Ms. Smith-Ingram: Mr. Chair, I call for the question on the motion that is on the floor to recess.

Chair K. Edwards: I call for the question to suspend the debate. The vote was 6-0 to suspend the debate. I call for the question to move to recess the meeting until Tuesday, June 25, 2013 at 6:00 p.m. The vote was 3-3 to recess the meeting until Tuesday, June 25, 2013 at 6:00 p.m.

The vote was 3-3; therefore, the Board Meeting continues.

Mr. Johnson made a MOTION to adjourn. I rescind my motion to adjourn.

Chair K. Edwards: The motion to adjourn has been rescinded.

Ms. Smith-Ingram: I call for the Orders of the Day and we are now back to Ms. Taylor's motion.

Mr. Taylor: We had several firms to do a study. The first firm said it will take 2 months, another one said 3 months and another one said it would take 7 days, but they did it in 14 days. What they said was, leave things as they are. If we are going to pay \$13,000.00 for a study we should at least look at their recommendations. Again, I am not saying let's not move forward I am saying we paid this money for this recommendation, they have a lot of work that they have to do and we will probably be deadlocked again, but that is my focus right now. We discussed a while ago and it was said that I would not vote for leaving kids at the high school. When the motion was made, they said leave the kids on the eastern end and take the kids back to the western end again. It is okay to leave the kids on the eastern end in that school. So what was different? I understand our focus is on the busing of students and if there was anything I could do about it I would do it. That is my concern.

Ms. Smith-Ingram: We commissioned a \$13,000.00 study of which we were told they would have this study to us within a 7-day turnaround. After we agreed to have and commission a \$13,000.00 study, after-the-fact the company who said they would do it said, "I told you it would be 7 days, but now I can't do it in 7 days. It is going to take 14 days." Let's not stop at the \$13,000.00 study, let's go back to the \$16,000.00 study that said what we should do, which is the very motion that Mr. Edwards put on the floor. The MBAJ Study said to keep a Pre-K-12 grade program on each end of the county so that you do not bus children. With that being said, I don't understand why we are deadlocked on a decision that would not bus the children.

Mr. Chair, I call for the question on the motion from Mr. Taylor. Could we vote on that and then move on with the Orders of the Day?

Mr. Matthews: I want to discuss the MBAJ Report, because we did exactly what the MBAJ report said to do in Option 5.

Ms. Smith-Ingram: No, MBAJ recommended Option 3 and I showed you the page the last time and you read it.

Mr. Matthews: I asked you to show it to me and you never did.

Ms. Smith-Ingram: Mr. Williams has a lot of items highlighted in the MBAJ Report. MBAJ and SFL+A are all saying the same things. We have antiquated buildings and the only reason we chose the plan that DPI and the administration looked at was because last year we were presented that we needed space for 650 students. Under no scenario did we ever have 650

high school students at the time that we were considering this merger. Because the numbers were exaggerated that is why the Northampton County High School was selected. That was the primary reason why, because it was the only building of the two high schools that could accommodate 650 students. We did not start the school year with 650 students and we have ended the school year with 507. Now we have the numbers, we have the figures and we know that either one of the schools will hold the high school students. When we used MBAJ, they recommended Option 3 and one of the reasons why the sitting Board did not do Option 3, when the report said have a high school with 7-12 at each end of the county, was because the east building could not handle an additional load of students. They said it could not handle 7-8 graders, but we came right back around, even though we said we did not want to do grades 7-12 and we put grades 7-12 on the western end of the county, but we did not put 7-12 on the eastern end of the county, because we said the building, due to its antiquated piping, plumbing, heating and ventilation, could not handle the additional load of students. Here we are a year and a half later, we don't add just 7-8 grader students we add four grades instead of two grades. We just have to stop and see if we can all get on the same page even if we have to come and have a meeting with each other and dialogue. At this point I wish to call for the question, because we have a motion on the floor that we need to vote on and if it does not pass can we go to another motion that might pass and hopefully it won't be deadlocked?

Mr. Williams: For a point of reference, if you want to look at the MBAJ Report on page 3 that recommends Option 3 and page 4 indicates Option 3.

Ms. Smith-Ingram: We get these studies done and a lot of times we don't follow their recommendations, because in the past we haven't always done things the correct way. We did it based on agendas and emotions, but this time I think we do have a quality Board here that is willing to let the past by-gones be by-gones. Now let's look at being fair to all of our students and if we are not going to bus kids from the east to the west then we should not vote to bus kids from the west to the east.

Mr. Johnson: Chair Edwards, last year I was sitting in your seat and we said that we would try this and nothing is ever etched in stone. We said we would try this for a 3-5 year plan and with that understanding we went out and we did spend quite a bit of money at the high school, but now we are coming back saying we want to be good stewards of our money to our Commissioners and our community then we are taking one year and throwing it away. I would agree, we aren't all on the same page, because we need to know what page we are on, we need to know what we are doing and we need to realize what we said a year ago. We said we would try it for a 3-5 year period, hopefully in the meantime if the Commissioners would come across with some money, because they are the ones who furnish the money for us. We had the meeting with the Commissioners, but they also said that you have a bond referendum in the past. They could hold that bond referendum for us for ten years and not do a thing; therefore, we have not accomplished anything and we won't accomplish anything until the Commissioners are on board with what we need to do to get what we need for our children.

Ms. Smith-Ingram: Mr. Chair, I call for the question on the motion on the floor authored by Ms. Taylor.

Chair K. Edwards: The question has been called to suspend the debate. The vote was 6-0 to suspend the debate. The motion on the floor was to leave the schools as is, except for the Alternative School and begin immediately with a plan of action for the 2014-2015. The motion was defeated by a 3-3 vote.

On a MOTION by Ms. Smith-Ingram, SECONDED by Mr. Williams, the Board approved that for the 2013-14 academic school year that we close the Northampton Alternative School with no replacement building, reconfigure Squire Elementary School as Pre-K-2 grades, reconfigure Gaston Elementary School as 3-6 grades, reconfigure Gaston Middle School as 7-12 grades and allow all other remaining schools to remain as is.

Attorney Rod Malone: Is this Chair Edwards' original motion?

Ms. Smith-Ingram: It is not Chair Edwards' original motion it has been modified. As the author of the motion, I wanted to stress that this proposed motion on the floor ends the busing of students in either direction unless by choice.

Ms. Taylor: My only concern is the lack of courses that students may get. I just want kids to be able to receive equal course offerings, such as automotives, dance, extracurricular activities, as well as advanced math courses.

Ms. Smith-Ingram: In making this motion I went back to what we talked about doing with the curriculum. We said that we would make one focus an early college theme, pre-college or college readiness and then we would make one campus vocational and allow students to transfer and travel between campuses, such as one semester a student might want to take Automotive II on the east campus. What if we are able to make it a STEM curriculum (science, technology, engineering, arts and math) and what if we have a stronger medical arts program on the western campus of the high school that would allow a student to travel to the hospital and be able to do their clinical or have a culinary arts program that allows them to the closer restaurants or be able to leave campus and go to take a community college course and come back on campus. I believe Dr. Bracy has something that he is bringing to us along those lines so that we can optimize all of our offerings for students. Let's us make sure we offer the option and offer the choice. This is the way we can expand and we can do away with family burdens of having our kids travel so far.

Ms. Taylor: What about the transportation back and forth, for an example if the culinary arts course is on the western end and I am on the eastern campus and I want to take culinary arts second semester?

Ms. Smith-Ingram: Transportation would be provided as a shuttle. We could us a bus like the athletes use that can be a shuttle bus or we can look at some of the savings we would have by closing some of the other campuses. If you have a STEM curriculum, the New Schools Project will give you the funding, not only just for the courses and resources you need for the courses, but for the professional development that the staff would get for seeking these STEM courses. I don't have to remind everybody about the whole administrative push on the national front that we have got to beef up our STEM field. There are over \$125,000 jobs that must be filled and we have got to start graduating STEM ready students. This is a way that we can get on the forefront. There is a model for vocational and technical high schools and there are different models, but that would be up to Dr. Bracy with his goals. There would be one area of focus at one school and another area of focus at another school and then for the kids to be able to throughout their high school career go to a strong program.

Ms. Taylor: In reference to Squire Elementary, will we be able to get the other grades back in to Squire if we go with Pre-K-2?

Ms. Smith-Ingram: Yes, because you have that one hallway that is open. At Squire School, you have the new 1999 building that is open. Correct me if I am wrong Mr. Tillery, but I believe we have the 1999 construction, which is a separate building and we have the office and the cafeteria open and the media center. That is on the central hallway where there are empty

classrooms and we could accommodate two more grades. Also, at Gaston Elementary School I am sure they can hold more than 3rd through 6th graders, because right now it is housing 1st through 4th. Gaston is holding four grades now and 3rd through 6th would be four grades. It is at 70% capacity right now and one more grade could cover that 30% capacity that we have available there. That configuration will take out that burden of cost to get Gaston Elementary ready for this school year whether we do it by mobile units or adding on to the school. Like Mr. Matthews was saying, you cannot get away from the square footage and bathrooms requirements for the Pre-K students without cost. Let me make a correction that Squire Elementary is only at 34% capacity and Gaston Elementary is at 74% capacity. Gaston can safely housing 1st through 4th now so we can safely say that it will accommodate the 3rd through 6th graders. That will make sure we are optimizing the efficiency of our buildings by utilizing our best schools.

Ms. Smith-Ingram: I call for the question to suspend the debate.

Chair K. Edwards: The question has been called to suspend the debate. The vote was 6-0 to suspend the debate. The motion on the floor is for the 2013-14 academic school year that we close the Northampton Alternative School with no replacement building, reconfigure Squire Elementary School as Pre-K-2 grades, reconfigure Gaston Elementary School as 3-6 grades, reconfigure Gaston Middle School as 7-12 grades and allow all other remaining schools to remain as is. The motion passed by a vote of 4-2. Mr. Phil Matthews and Mr. Donald Johnson voted against.

Attorney Rod Malone: I think you need a motion to do something about the attendance lines and to direct the Superintendent to notify and start the process of redistricting.

On a motion by Ms. Ingram, seconded by Mr. Williams, the Board approved to defer to the Superintendent and his administration to bring forth the redistricting lines to the Board as soon as possible to be presented at the July 1, 2013 Board Meeting so that parents will know which school their child would attend.

Dr. Bracy: Also, in July I would like to look at the course offerings at both high schools for the 2013-2014 school year and compare it to what we did this year.

Mr. Johnson: To piggyback on what Dr. Bracy said and with the financial crunch that the state is having, my concern is that we don't have a budget from the state. We have added additional classes, which means additional teachers and that means additional monies that we don't have. Where are we going to come up with the money?

Ms. Smith-Ingram: The one thing that we don't have is all the money we put in transportation for buses. That would be a start.

Chair K. Edwards: Mr. Johnson, we would start with transportation, because we were looking at over \$85,000.00 for fuel cost; therefore, you would start with a savings for not busing students for 1 hour and 20 minutes.

Mr. Johnson: You would also have to hire another principal, because you have two locations and one left one location.

Chair K. Edwards: One location is a non-tested area and you could put one principal between two campuses. You are talking about Pre-K-2 grades.

Ms. Smith-Ingram: I call for the question to suspend the debate on the current motion.

Chair K. Edwards: The question has been called to suspend the debate. The vote was 6-0 to suspend the debate. The motion on the floor is to defer to the Superintendent and his administration to bring forth the redistricting lines to the Board to be presented at the July 1, 2013 Board Meeting so that parents will know which school their child would attend.

Dr. Bracy: My only concern is the timing and we will only have four days to complete it. I will be out next week and so will Dr. Rumley. I promise the Board that we will start working on it this on Monday.

Mr. Williams: If you can have a portion of it done we can start on that.

The motion passed by a vote of 6-0 to defer to the Superintendent and his administration to bring forth the redistricting lines to the Board to be presented at the July 1, 2013 Board Meeting so that parents will know which school their child would attend.

Ms. Smith-Ingram: As we are moving forward I hope that we will continue The Way Forward Plan with the County Commissioners, because based on the SFL+A and the MBAJ reports we do need to look at what we are going to do for Willis Hare, Squire School and all of our other schools. Let us continue to keep it at the forefront as we move into 2014-2015.

Chair K. Edwards: In conversations with our County Commissioners and when they came forth, we all sat at the table in discussion of The Way Forward Plan. We need to continue keeping the focus of The Way Forward Plan of a central location. We do not want to lose sight of that vision of being centrally located in Northampton County. I would like to thank the public for coming and participating in the Public Hearing today.

Board Information

- Next Regular Board Meeting – July 1, 2013 – Board Room – 5:00 p.m. (Closed Session) – Open Session beginning at approximately 6:30 p.m.
- NSBA 2013 Southern Region Conference – July 7-10, 2013 – Destin, Florida

Adjournment

On a MOTION by Ms. Smith-Ingram, SECONDED by Mr. Williams, the Board adjourned the meeting at 4:30 p.m.

Approved: December 9, 2013

Dr. Eric C. Bracy, Superintendent