

MINUTES OF MEETING

January 9, 2012

The regular meeting of the Whitfield County Board of Education was held at the Whitfield County Central Office on January 9, 2011. Board Chairman Louis Fordham called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m.

Present were the following board members:

Louis Fordham – Chairman
Thomas Barton – Vice-Chairman
Gary Brock
Rodney Lock
Bill Worley

Also present were the following staff members:

Danny Hayes	Richard Schoen
Judy Gilreath	Audrey Williams
Dusty Brown	Eric Beavers
Ron Hale	Janie Osborn

Also present:

A list of the public in attendance is a part of the backup minutes.

Moment of Silent Reflection

Mr. Fordham extended his appreciation to Mr. Barton for pinch-hitting and presiding over the last board meeting and for the support and prayers for his family. He asked everyone to observe a moment of silent reflection.

Inspiration/Pledge of Allegiance

Michael Armenta, a student at Phoenix High School, led the Pledge of Allegiance. Fred Toney, principal of Phoenix High School, gave the inspiration. He discussed Bible verse Matthew: Chapter 25 and said it was not how much money you have, but how you use what you have as he discussed what Phoenix staff members were doing to help their students. He talked about the success of Phoenix and how the online learning had become the cornerstone of their program. He thanked the board members and the administration for allowing the program to expand and for their support.

Instructional Report – Phoenix

Mr. Toney said the staff and students loved the new facility. He shared that Phoenix had projected a graduation rate of 170 students this school year. As of the day of the meeting, Phoenix had 297 students actively enrolled. Mr. Toney informed the board that Phoenix had helped over 2000 students graduate. Dr. Beth Hayes shared that Phoenix had over 100 students apply to college at their 2012 Georgia Apply to College Day, had 150 plus students participate in the Summer School Credit Recovery program, and that they had received the GACHE (Georgia Appalachian Center for Higher Education) grants two years in a row and had been named the GACHE Best Practices school. She stressed that Phoenix staff members worked hard to make sure their students had the tools to survive. Dr. Hayes also said students were encouraged to be community volunteers and had participated in a blood drive and had been a part of the community outreach program.

Welcome/Recognitions/Presentations

Baylee Brock – First Place Winner – Northwest Georgia Creed Speaking Career Development Event

Baylee Brock, a student at Northwest Whitfield High School, was awarded a first place trophy at the Northwest Georgia Creed Speaking Career Development Event. She will be participating in the state competition in Macon, Georgia at the annual FFA convention. Baylee recited the National FFA Creed to those present at the meeting. She was presented with a certificate of congratulations on her accomplishment from the Whitfield County Board of Education. Her advisor, Janet Robbins, described

Baylee as a very active and successful member. She said Baylee had been instrumental in doing the “Farm to School Program”.

Georgia School Board Association Partnership Commendation

The Whitfield County Board of Education recognized community members Brian Cooksey and Georgia Northwestern Technical College for receiving a certificate of commendation from the Georgia School Board Association for their vision and partnership with the Whitfield County School System. Mr. Cooksey was unable to attend the meeting. Tom Bojo accepted the certificate on behalf of Georgia Northwestern Technical College. Mr. Fordham and Superintendent Hayes said Mr. Bojo had been instrumental in the successful partnership and praised his efforts and leadership.

Executive Session

Superintendent Hayes recommended the board members move into executive session to discuss personnel. Gary Brock moved approval and Bill Worley seconded. The board approved 5-0.

Present were the following board members:

Louis Fordham
Thomas Barton
Gary Brock
Rodney Lock
Bill Worley

Also present were the following staff members:

Danny Hayes Judy Gilreath
Dusty Brown Richard Schoen
Janie Osborn Audrey Williams

Return to Regular Session

The board having taken no action in executive session, returned to regular session at 7:15 p.m.

Approval of Consent Agenda Items

Mr. Hayes recommended the board approve the Consent Agenda items listed below. Rodney Lock moved approval and Gary Brock seconded. The board approved 5-0.

Approval of Minutes – December 5, 2011

Approval of Agenda – January 9, 2012

School Fundraising Requests

Name of Group or Sponsor

Activity or Request

Antioch ALPHA
Eastbrook Middle 8th Grade
Coahulla Creek Student Government
Coahulla Creek Student Government
New Hope Elementary
New Hope Middle 6th Grade
Northwest Bruin Girls Service Club
Northwest Baseball
Northwest Dugout Club

Northwest Baseball
NWHS AP Booster, Ping Pong Club
Southeast High Track Team
VPM Boys and Girls Soccer

Chili and Hot Dog Supper
Sell Chick-Fil-A breakfast items
Hat Days
Sell Valentine candy bags or flowers
“Crazy about Cookies” cookie dough sales
Collect loose change for Water Project in Africa
Sell bags of candy with Valentine
Pancake Breakfast
Corporate Sponsorship from sign sales, program ads, and marathon game
Sell tokens for bags of ice
Students pay \$2 to wear pajama pants once a month
Dinner/TV Giveaway
Sell Leprechaun candy bags

Valley Point Middle Baseball
Westside Middle Band

Dodgeball Tournament
Sell cookie dough

Overnight Field Trip Requests

Name of Group or Sponsor

Activity or Request

Cohutta Elementary
North Whitfield Middle Art Class
North Whitfield Middle 6th Grade

Burton 4-H Center, Tybee Island
Joining EBM trip to Washington, D.C.
Georgia State Capitol, MLK Jr. Historic Center, Coca-Cola,
CNN Studios, Centennial Olympic Park – Atlanta, GA

Bus Request

Name of Group or Sponsor

Activity or Request

Whitfield County 4-H Club

4-H students to Georgia Highlands College - Rome, GA

Hearing of Individuals

Dan Rogers – Encouraged the school system to improve communication and collaboration with parents and the community.

SUPERINTENDENT’S REPORTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Teaching and Learning

Pre-K – Caroline Woodason

Assistant Superintendent for Teaching and Learning, Dusty Brown, introduced Caroline Woodason to give the board an update on the Pre-K program. Mrs. Woodason informed the board members that the Pre-K program was completely funded by the Georgia Lottery. Currently there are eleven classes at nine locations with 242 students being served. Mrs. Woodason said that many students in the community are not being served because of the lack of transportation being provided by private programs and that there are approximately 75 students on the Whitfield County Pre-K waiting list. She stated the benefits of a Pre-K program are that the students who have been served in a Pre-K program out-perform their peers, are more likely to have lower truancy rates and are more likely to graduate from high school and attend college. Georgia Pre-K implemented a longitudinal research study which Whitfield County participated in and the results showed that Whitfield County Pre-K students were above average at the state level. The Georgia 2011 Legislature cut 21 days of instruction last year, according to Mrs. Woodason. Class size was increased by two students which resulted in increased expenses. The Whitfield County School System Pre-K maintained the same calendar and salaries by rolling over funds. Mrs. Woodason emphasized that these funds were all Pre-K funds and that no local funds were used. The school system has requested a Pre-K program in the Westside area. Mr. Hayes stated the school system was trying to create stability in the Pre-K program. Mr. Fordham asked if there were legal restrictions for funding. Mrs. Woodason and Mr. Hayes explained that the school system could fund their own Pre-K with local funds but state funding was for grades K-12. Mrs. Woodason shared statistics that for every dollar spent there was a gain of \$7. She added there were 200-300 students in the Whitfield County community that did not receive any type of Pre-K services. Mr. Lock asked if Pre-K students spent time with older students in the schools. Mrs. Woodason said that older students help with reading and help the younger students at lunch time. She said the result is that both students develop reading skills. Mr. Hayes thanked the work Mrs. Woodason does with the Pre-K program and expressed his appreciation for the efforts of all the staff members.

Operations Reports and Recommendations

Construction Update

Richard Schoen, assistant superintendent of operations, updated the board on the ESPLOST projects and presented them with the monthly ESPLOST report. He informed the board members that the Eastbrook Middle School was two-thirds in the dry. He added they were still slightly behind schedule but was still predicting an on-time completion. The Eastbrook Middle sewer force main was still in progress. A group

of Eastbrook staff members were involved in choosing the furniture, fixtures, and equipment. Mr. Schoen said there was no longer a need to have an office maintained by M.B. Kahn staff members at Coahulla Creek High School.

Bus Purchase

Mike Ewton, safety and security director and transportation director, updated the board members on a request made to the superintendent to purchase three new school buses utilizing funds provided by the State of Georgia bond sales. He explained the state reimbursement would be \$76,219.50 per bus but that the actual cost per bus would be \$93,852 because of the need to add air conditioning, radios, cameras, and other items that are needed. The International route buses would be purchased from Rush Motor Trucks and the Blue Bird transit bus would come from Yancey Bus Sales and Service. The total costs of all buses would be \$307,677 with \$228,658 being reimbursed by the State of Georgia. The \$79,018.50 balance would be paid by local funds which were budgeted for the purchase of buses. Mr. Hayes recommended the board members approve the request to purchase the three buses. Gary Brock moved approval and Rodney Lock seconded. Mr. Brock asked Mr. Ewton how the newly installed bus cameras were doing. Mr. Ewton replied that the cameras were receiving rave reviews and had allowed the transportation department to monitor issues that may come up as well as help with evaluations. The board approved the purchase 5-0.

Support Services Reports and Recommendations

Resolution for Title 20 Waiver

Dr. Judy Gilreath, assistant superintendent of support services, informed the board that this resolution requesting a five year waiver was needed so students would be allowed to use their personal electronic communication devices in the classroom. The Whitfield County School System believes this will maximize the technology resources and learning opportunities for students. The school system also believes that providing meaningful and engaging work for students will ensure higher levels of learning. Mr. Hayes said this was a way to give our students access to use technology items they already have. Superintendent Hayes recommended the board approve the resolution. Thomas Barton moved approval and Bill Worley seconded. Mr. Lock asked if there were concerns about students texting and emailing while in class. Dr. Gilreath responded that there was a policy already in place to address the issue of devices being used outside of instruction. Dr. Gilreath also responded that parents would be asked to sign a form giving their children permission to use their personal technology devices while in school. The board approved 5-0. The resolution is a part of these minutes.

Financial Reports and Recommendations

General Funds and Capital Project Funds

Ron Hale, chief financial officer, presented the General Funds report as of December 31, 2011 and the Capital Project Funds as of November 30, 2011 to the superintendent for approval. Mr. Hale explained that the General Funds report indicated \$2.5 million lower than last year but explained property tax revenue does not come in proportionately and the tax office didn't make a transfer of payment in December due to a furlough day the last day of the month. He explained that this was the middle of the fiscal year and we should be 50% on track and the system is at 50.23. School administration expenses were running 3% higher due to annual licenses of software. The ending fund balance is as expected. Mr. Hale explained that this is the next to the last month for ESPLOST revenue collections. He said there was a sense of optimism with the sales tax tracking for the month of December. Superintendent Hayes recommended the board approve the finance reports as presented. Thomas Barton moved approval and Gary Brock seconded. The board approved 5-0. These reports are a part of these minutes.

Human Resources Reports and Recommendations

Personnel Recommendations

Superintendent Hayes recommended the board approve the personnel actions as discussed in executive session to include certified personnel changes, resignations, retirements, leaves of absence, extended day and other personnel changes. The superintendent also recommended the board approve support personnel

recommendations, resignations, retirements, and other support personnel changes in this action. Bill Worley moved approval and Gary Brock seconded. The board approved 5-0.

Previous Business

There were no items.

New Business

First Reading of Board Policy GANA: Infectious Diseases and First Reading of Board Policy JGCC: Infectious Diseases

Mr. Hayes recommended the board approve the first reading of board policies GANA and JGCC: Infectious Diseases. Louis Fordham moved approval and Bill Worley seconded. The board approved 5-0.

2012 Board Meeting Calendar

Mr. Hayes recommended the board approve the 2012 Board Meeting Calendar. The board members recommended the work session meeting locations be changed on March 26th to Valley Point Elementary and the April 30th work session be changed to Varnell Elementary to allow board members to participate in the Whitfield Education Golf Tournament on April 30th. Gary Brock moved approval for the amended board meeting calendar and Bill Worley seconded the recommendation. The board approved 5-0.

Election of Whitfield County Board of Education Chairman

Mr. Fordham asked for nominations for Board Chairman. Thomas Barton nominated Louis Fordham and Bill Worley seconded the nomination. There were no other nominations. The board approved 5-0.

Election of Whitfield County Board of Education Vice Chairman

Mr. Fordham asked for nominations for Board Vice Chairman. Gary Brock nominated Bill Worley. Rodney Lock seconded the nomination. There were no other nominations. The board approved 5-0.

Board Member Legislative Liaison

Bill Worley nominated Rodney Lock to serve as the Whitfield County Board of Education Legislative Liaison and Louis Fordham seconded. The board approved 5-0.

Board Member Comments

- Mr. Fordham apologized to anyone in attendance that came to participate or hear a discussion about ESPLOST. He explained he had been contacted by the media about ESPLOST and from those discussions it was reported that ESPLOST would be on the agenda. He added there were big issues ahead for the board members and that they were scheduling strategic planning sessions to help them make their decisions.
- Mr. Worley said he liked the fact that all of the bids were included in the information they received about the heat exchanger at Valley Point Elementary.

Adjournment

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 8:00 p.m.

MINUTES OF MEETING

January 28, 2012

The Whitfield County Board of Education held a Board Professional Development at the Whitfield County Central Office on January 28, 2012. Chairman Louis Fordham called the meeting to order.

Present were the following board members:

Louis Fordham – Chairman

Bill Worley – Vice-Chairman
Thomas Barton
Gary Brock
Rodney Lock

Also present were the following staff members:

Danny Hayes
Caroline Woodason
Janie Osborn

Also present:

Rachel Brown – Daily Citizen News

Board Member Professional Development

George Thompson with the Schlechty Center facilitated the board member professional development. The agenda included the following:

- Seismic Shifts – How are major shifts and changes that are occurring impacting public schools and what are the images of schools?
- Establishing a Common Language – What do we mean by engagement, rigor, profound learning, and core business?
- District Design Team – What is the history, purpose, role and function of the District Design Team?
- Interaction with Design Team Members - Jill Ryerson, Angela Hayes, Tracy Mardis, and Marie Goss participated in this portion of the agenda.
- Setting Direction or Following Directives
- Reframing Accountability – How do we ensure a balance in assessing what we value with what is required by the state?
- Sustaining Direction – What are the implications from reading the Meg Wheatley interview?

Adjournment

At the conclusion of the board member professional development, the meeting was adjourned.

MINUTES OF MEETING January 30, 2012

A work session of the Whitfield County Board of Education was held on Monday, January 30, 2012 at Tunnel Hill Elementary. Board Chairman Louis Fordham called the meeting to order at 11:30 a.m.

Present were the following board members:

Louis Fordham – Chairman
Bill Worley – Vice-Chairman
Gary Brock
Rodney Lock

Board Member Thomas Barton arrived after roll call.

Also present were the following staff members:

Danny Hayes Audrey Williams
Judy Gilreath Richard Schoen
Dusty Brown Eric Beavers

Ron Hale

Janie Osborn

Also present:

A list of the public in attendance is a part of the backup minutes.

School Council Report – Tunnel Hill Elementary

Bert Coker, principal of Tunnel Hill Elementary, introduced Sandy Stroud. Mrs. Stroud, a parent member of the school council, presented the school council report. She stated she is involved at Tunnel Hill as a parent, a substitute teacher, PTO president, and stated she is very supportive and involved at the school. She shared a concern she had about the number of students in the kindergarten class at Tunnel Hill and how hard it was to use the space for small group work. She emphasized the staff members take their jobs seriously and do a great job and added that Tunnel Hill is a great school.

Inspiration/Pledge

Jennifer Leaderer and her students led the Pledge of Allegiance. The second grade ALPHA students also shared their learning through collaborative experiences as they studied the Pueblo Indians. They collaborated with Westside Middle School's 8th grade students and art teacher Mrs. Rochelle. The Westside Middle students helped the Tunnel Hill students sculpt story telling dolls. The Tunnel Hill students described the things they had learned. All second grade Tunnel Hill students were given the opportunity to learn how to sculpt and they also wrote stories about the Pueblo Indians. The best part of the learning experience was the sharing that had occurred. Mrs. Leaderer thanked the board members and administrators for allowing the staff and students to have the experience.

Instructional Report

Mr. Coker described how the staff members were using the results they received from the Measuring Academic Progress (MAP) tests to focus on individual needs of students. The testing helps them identify learning issues and plans are made to help the student. There is a school-wide intervention time each day from 7:50 – 8:25 a.m. Tunnel Hill staff members are using monthly data reviews to also help identify ways to help students. Mr. Coker said they encourage parent involvement. The school has sponsored a Nutrition Night that provided learning opportunities for students and parents for better health options. The school is using the "Fish Philosophy" through a book study as a result of a previous Bernhardt survey that identified a need for students to be nicer to each other. Several staff members have had technology training which they are teaching to others in the building. Tunnel Hill had an open house where they made cultural pizza, did service projects such as collecting money for Red Ribbon Week, collected food and money for the Humane Society, and helped soldiers serving overseas by mailing them letters and art work.

Hearing of Individuals

None

Archway Presentation

Melissa Lu, with the Archway Partnership, and Caroline Woodason, teaching and learning coordinator for Whitfield County Schools, updated the board members on the 2012-2013 Archway Education Initiatives that have been developed after many months of discussions and meetings. Mrs. Lu described how several years ago 300 folks had attended a meeting at the Trade Center for a question and answer session. As a result of the meeting, it was decided work needed to be done in three areas; education, environment, and economy/industry. She said there have been many fundamental conversations. Board Members and administrators were invited to attend a meeting with Superintendent Barge and First Lady Sandra Deal who will be in Dalton on February 29, 2012. They are meeting with Archway committee members and will be visiting schools in the community. The Archway Partnership Steering Committee members have also discussed meeting the needs of the students outside of the school setting to help them be more productive students. Mrs. Lu said better nutrition and healthy lifestyles were important and added that 69% of the students in the school system were on free and reduced lunches. Mr. Hayes said many kids come to school without having dinner the night before or breakfast. He added the summer feeding program numbers have risen as well. Mrs. Lu stated there are other needs such as technology. She said technology should not be viewed as a luxury but an equalizer to students. Many students are given assignments that involve work on

a computer of which many students do not have access. Mr. Hayes expressed his appreciation to Mrs. Lu on her leadership and ability to keep everyone focused.

Review Board Agenda Items – February 6, 2012

Mr. Hayes reviewed and discussed with the board members the agenda items for the February 6, 2012 meeting. Listed below are some of the items that were discussed:

Teaching and Learning

Mr. Fordham asked if virtual learning was to the point to where teachers could be teaching 500 students or was it still in the early stages. Dusty Brown, assistant superintendent for teaching and learning, said the school system was using virtual learning along with teacher instruction. Mr. Hayes added the Florida Virtual School had provided the large class learning opportunities and had recently struggled with that style of learning. Mr. Brown said the Whitfield County School System tries to provide individual opportunities.

Operations

Richard Schoen, assistant superintendent of operations updated the board members on the Coahulla Creek High School and Eastbrook Middle ESPLOST projects. Mr. Hayes asked Mr. Schoen to update the board members on the Five Year Facilities Plan. Mr. Schoen said it had been a pleasure to work with the architects and added that they were very knowledgeable. He added the architects had met with all of the maintenance supervisors and that the architects had been provided with a detailed list of work that had been completed in every building and school. The architects are expected to give the school system cost estimates of possible funding eligibility. The facilities plan should be ready to be submitted to the state by the end of February.

Support Services

Judy Gilreath, assistant superintendent of support services, informed the board that the policy changes listed under previous business were needed as a result of language changes that had been dictated by the state.

Finance

Ron Hale, chief financial officer, updated the board on the expected approximate \$7m budget shortfall. He said the Freeport Exemption change had resulted in a \$2.2m decrease in funds to the school system. There is also a 5% digest drop resulting in a 1.2m loss, increases in TRS (Teacher Retirement System) costs of over \$1m, step increases of approximately \$813,000, an increase in certified health insurance of around \$800,000, and a significant increase in insurance for classified employees of almost \$1m. Mr. Hale said if the austerity cuts that have been made by the State of Georgia the last ten years were restored there would not be a budget shortfall.

Executive Session

Mr. Hayes recommended the board move into executive session for the discussion of personnel. Rodney Lock moved approval and Bill Worley seconded. The board approved 5-0.

Present were the following board members:

Louis Fordham
Bill Worley
Thomas Barton
Gary Brock
Rodney Lock

Also present were the following staff members:

Danny Hayes Richard Schoen
Dusty Brown Audrey Williams
Judy Gilreath Janie Osborn

Return to Regular Session

Mr. Fordham recommended the board return to regular session. Gary Brock moved approval and Bill Worley seconded. The board approved 5-0.

Board Member Comments:

Mr. Brock said the board members had many challenges ahead of them. Mr. Lock asked when the budget would be ready for approval. Mr. Fordham and the other board members discussed the Board Professional Development that had occurred on January 28, 2012. Mr. Hayes shared information about the reapportionment of districts.

Adjournment

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 1:54 p.m.