

MINUTES OF MEETING

March 5, 2012

The regular meeting of the Whitfield County Board of Education was held at the Whitfield County Central Office on March 5, 2012. Board Chairman Louis Fordham called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m.

Present were the following board members:

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

Also present were the following staff members:

Danny Hayes	Richard Schoen
Dusty Brown	Audrey Williams
Judy Gilreath	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 asked everyone to observe a moment of silent reflection.

Inspiration/Pledge of Allegiance

Cindy Dobbins, principal of Cohutta Elementary, introduced 5th grade students Trent Brewster, Ellie Cross, Rachel Thurman, and their teacher Angela Hayes. Trent Brewster led the Pledge of Allegiance and Rachel Thurman presented the inspiration by reciting her Civic Oration speech about volunteerism.

Instructional Report – Cohutta Elementary

Mrs. Dobbins shared that the 5th grade students had been working on a Civil War project using puppets. She shared a video of a puppet show that had students, through the puppets, sharing information they had learned about the Civil War. The students presented their puppet show with other students and their parents.

Trent said he had a great time helping create the puppets. He showed the board members a Union Soldier puppet who he said had fought because he thought slavery was wrong. Ellie shared a puppet called Stonewall Jackson. She said she enjoyed doing the puppet video. She said she had fun while learning and that it helped them and other students relate to the Civil War. Rachel showed the board members the puppet named Robert E. Lee. She said the students made a biography about the characters after the video. She said people couldn't stop thinking about the Civil War after their presentation.

The students also shared information about another project they had worked on called "Back to the Future". They learned about great inventors during this project. The students shared how they divided into "tribes" to do the project which helped them learn to work with others. Each tribe was designated as a travel agency and their job was to encourage others to travel back to the past. The students designed a website and wrote a commercial. Each tribe was judged by students and staff at Coahulla Creek High School. Trent, a member of the winning tribe, said his group was able to relax a little from school. Rachel said the reward of having a day off at school made her tribe want to work harder to meet the goal. Tribes were decided by conversations between the students and the teachers on who they did or did not get along with to meet one of the goals of how to deal with conflict resolution. Trent said the conflicts were typical and his group did a good job of presenting. He added that working well together as a tribe was important because there was a tribe grade as well as individual grades. Rachel said the presentation of learning included ten tribes. She added that all parents were invited and they had to persuade them to use their

travel agency. Trent said it took a lot of creativity and shared that they also had to design a car that could go back in time. Ellie talked about a fundraiser the students were doing to help other students be able to participate in the field trip to Tybee Island. Mr. Hayes asked the students if they learned collaboration skills from the project that could be used in the work place. Trent said they did and it helped make them more successful and have more fun.

School Council Report

Andi Coker, parent member and president of the school council at Cohutta, presented the school council report. She said that the Whitfield County School System offers quality education to all students with customized instruction in a safe and caring environment. She emphasized how the staff members at Cohutta go above and beyond what is required and maintain quality instruction. She said smaller teacher to student ratios are becoming more difficult with the budget issues. She explained that the enrollment at Cohutta had increased to 351 students and a new second grade teacher had been added. She shared how new computer labs had been added, Cohutta Baptist Church had provided lunches to 80 students, Ellie Cross had competed and won the school system Spelling Bee, and she shared information about the Presentation of Learning. She added there had been incentives such as bracelets being given to students who had perfect attendance. The Doughnuts for Dads had also been a huge success. She shared several items the school council felt needed to be addressed such as roof repairs, air conditioning replacement, a covered area for bus pickup and drop-off, paving the rear parking lot, new fire alarms and carpet, better drainage in the playground, and reduced teacher to student ratio. She said it was hard to customize learning with so many students in the classroom. She emphasized she felt like a family member at Cohutta Elementary. Mr. Barton asked her if she had to choose one item that was most needed to be repaired what would that be. She said she would like to see a covered walkway but that probably the roof being replaced was the most important item that needed to be addressed.

Welcome/Recognitions/Presentations

NWHS AP Science, Technology, Engineering & Math (STEM) School and Achievement School

Northwest High School Assistant Principal and Athletic Director Brett Harper informed the board members that Northwest High School had been named a STEM school and AP STEM Achievement School by State Superintendent John Barge. To achieve the recognition of an AP STEM Achievement School, the school must have students testing in at least two AP math courses and two AP science courses. For the AP STEM Achievement School designation, 40% of the students testing in at least 2 AP math courses and 2 science courses, needed to score a 3 or higher. Mr. Harper said they were very proud of the students. He said the school offered AP Calculus and AP Statistics in math as well as AP Physics and AP Chemistry. Mr. Hayes thanked the staff members for pushing the kids to do more.

SEHS Science, Technology, Engineering & Math (STEM) AP Access & Support School

Karey Williams, principal of Southeast High School, shared information about the STEM AP Access & Support School that had been awarded to them by Superintendent Barge's office. For this designation 30% of the AP exams taken by students are identified as African American and/or Hispanic and 30% of the students taking the AP exams score a 3 or higher. She said the students at Southeast High scored 10% higher than the other students in the state of Georgia and 12% higher than national average. She said they were proud of the students and were working to promote AP and Honors classes to their current and incoming students. She informed the board members that Southeast High School was offering an AP & Honors information night to incoming students. Mr. Hayes congratulated the teachers and administrators for their hard work.

Youth Art Month

Art teacher Kristi Harvey shared with the board members that the month of March has been designated to be Youth Art Month to promote and encourage art education. She said students from both Eastbrook and Westside Middle had artwork exhibited in the State of Georgia Capital Art Exhibit. Whitfield County students also recently competed in the art competition through the Creative Arts Guild. She shared the results with the board members. The results are a part of the backup minutes and are currently posted on the school system website. Ms. Harvey, on behalf of Eastbrook Middle, presented the board members with a

piece of art in honor of Youth Art Month and as part of Board Member Appreciation. Mr. Fordham read a proclamation in honor of Youth Art Month.

Board Member Appreciation

Mr. Hayes read a statement from the Georgia School Boards Association about the many contributions and duties of board members. Cabinet members read letters to each board member that had been written by students in the school system. The board members were presented with a variety of items from individual schools and others. Mr. Hayes told the board members how much he appreciated all they do for the school system. Mr. Fordham said board members hear many negative things, but added the good far outweighs the bad.

Executive Session

Superintendent Danny 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:

Thomas Barton
Gary Brock
Louis Fordham
Rodney Lock
Bill Worley

Also present were the following staff members:

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

Return to Regular Session

The board having taken no action in executive session, returned to regular session at 7:40 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 – February 6, February 27, 2012

Approval of Agenda – March 5, 2012

School Fundraising Requests

Name of Group or Sponsor

Activity or Request

Antioch Fifth Grade	Fifth Grade Spring Dance
Coahulla Creek High Volleyball	1 st Annual Volley Games
Coahulla Creek High Band	March-A-Thon
Coahulla Creek High Soccer Team	Sell “corn in a cup”
Coahulla Creek High Athletic Dept.	Sell strawberries
Coahulla Creek High Tennis	Cupcake sale
New Hope Middle Chorus and Band	Charleston Wrap
New Hope Middle Drama	Jewelry raffle
New Hope Middle Baseball	Sell Choo Choo BBQ tickets
Northwest High Athletic Dept.	5K Race
Northwest High Band	Sell Krispy Kreme Doughnuts
Northwest High Dugout Club	Sell tickets to raffle on donated items

Southeast High Girls Soccer
Southeast High Boys' Soccer
Southeast High Softball
Southeast High Band Boosters
Valley Point Elementary PTO

Sell Otis Spunkmeyer cookies
Local Soccer League use of the SHS practice fields
Dodgeball Tournament
Sell strawberries
Annual Spring Carnival

Valley Point Middle Athletics
VPM Student Leadership Academy
Varnell 5th Grade Classes
Valley Point Middle Connections
Westside Middle Basketball
WCA Student Government

Sell blocks on the Legacy Wall to 8th graders or alumni
Host dance for DGE & VPE 5th graders
Kite Day
Sell products produced for Presentation of Learning
3 on 3 basketball tournament
Host Sweetheart Dance

Overnight Field Trips

Name of Group or Sponsor

Activity or Request

Coahulla Creek & North Whitfield Middle
Whitfield Career Academy 12th Grade

Band students to perform for judges at Six Flags
GA Aquarium, Coke Museum, Fox Theatre, Six Flags,
Participating in Math & Science Day at Six Flags

Hearing of Individuals

Tony Robertson – Requested the board consider updating the auditorium at Southeast High School

SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Teaching and Learning

Language Arts – Dee Goodwin

Dusty Brown, assistant superintendent of teaching and learning introduced Dee Goodwin, teaching and learning coordinator. Mr. Brown said that Mrs. Goodwin and Caroline Woodason had done an excellent job in designing and presenting the training for the Common Core and added he was very pleased with the results. Mrs. Goodwin shared information about the rollout of the Common Core, a new nationwide curriculum. She stated that changing what we do day in and day out can be overwhelming but the teachers and administrators were doing a really good job. She thanked the school system for providing the funding for the trainings that are in addition to the Webinar trainings provided by the state. She emphasized the importance of the face to face content level trainings. The elementary staff members are provided with a two day training because they teach content in all areas and a one day training for middle and high school staff members because they are content only. Ms. Goodwin stressed that the money has been well spent and that teachers feel supported by the Central Office. She added that she, along with the other Teaching and Learning members, designed what would happen in the trainings and then invited a focus group who gave feedback which they used to make changes to their design. On January 31st all administrators came to a training so they could see the importance of the shifts and how the rigor of the standards would be increased. Mrs. Goodwin said each participant is given a list of new vocabulary that is being used in association with the Common Core as well as an agenda. There will be a total of 22 trainings, all of which are being held at North Whitfield Middle. They have used a fitness theme in their trainings to help them be more engaging and relevant. Each teacher was given a hard copy of all the information for their use and according to the feedback the teachers were appreciative of that resource. All of the training was tied back to the school system's Vision, Mission, and Beliefs. Teachers were encouraged to connect current practices and the shifts that are needed. They were given examples that would help teachers see what rigor is and what it is not. Mrs. Goodwin explained that the Common Core Standards came to be because many high school students were going to college and coming back because they were not academically prepared. At the end of the trainings the group divides into language arts and math sessions. In these sessions they do an analysis of the standards discussing what is new and what is shifting. They also discuss the needed rigor. Greg Bailey shows teachers how lessons can be integrated such as how science integrates with literacy and math. The teachers are then able to provide reflections of the training which have shown teachers feeling confident and having the knowledge of where they go for support. Mr. Fordham said it

looks like there is a good balance of technical learning and a supportive leadership model for teachers. He asked Mrs. Goodwin to define rigor which she described as critical deep thinking. Mrs. Goodwin and the other teaching and learning team members were recognized by Mr. Brown for the many hats they each wear and the great job they do.

2012 -2013 School Calendar

Mr. Hayes recommended approval of the 2012-2013 school calendar as presented. Louis Fordham moved approval and Gary Brock seconded. Mr. Worley stated the school system had looked at other options such as the 160 day calendar and had looked at the pros and cons. He noted the fact that some students, when not in school, may not have enough to eat and that was a concern. The board approved the calendar as presented 5-0.

Operations Reports and Recommendations

Construction Update

Richard Schoen, assistant superintendent of operations, updated the board members on the ESPLOST projects. He mentioned the recent tour of the Eastbrook building site and said he hoped the board members had their questions about that project answered. He also shared information about the recent facilities study being conducted by architect firm Buckley & Associates. He said the cost estimates had been submitted to Tony Cook at the Department of Education. Mr. Schoen said they were making substantial progress. He informed the board members that the five year plan may have needs that could cost approximately 110m. Mr. Schoen added that the school system would be provided with a very in-depth plan. Mr. Lock asked Mr. Schoen how many schools needed either repairs to the roof or a new roof. Mr. Schoen responded that there were three schools that did not need roof repairs or replacement.

Support Services Reports and Recommendations

No items

Finance Reports and Recommendations

General Fund and Capital Project Reports

Ron Hale, chief financial officer, presented the General Fund as of February 29, 2012 and the Capital Projects Report as of January 31, 2012. He said all revenue budgets were on track and should end up as was projected.

Analysis of Bond Debt Service without ESPLOST IV

Mr. Hale also provided the board members with a new Analysis of Bond Debt Service without ESPLOST IV report. The report included information on the debt service date the total principal due at that time, the available funds, the estimated bond and the M&O millage that would be needed to pay the debt. He also indicated the homeowner impact in the report. He also informed the board members that he had researched the bonds and discovered they were non-callable. The analysis report of bond debt service was based on 2013 projections with no additional decline

Mr. Hale presented the above mentioned reports to the superintendent for approval. Mr. Hayes recommended approval of the General Fund and Capital Project reports as presented. Rodney Lock moved approval and Thomas Barton seconded. The board approved 5-0.

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 personnel

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

Previous Business

Vision, Mission, and Beliefs

Vision

Mr. Hayes said that at an earlier work session there had been a discussion about the need to take a moment to talk about the school system's Vision, Mission, and Beliefs. Mr. Hayes read the Vision which is as follows:

We envision a responsive school district that is focused on students and that is valued and respected by the community.

Mr. Hayes said the school system is striving towards this vision. As we are focused on being a learning organization, it is important to be responsive to our community and parents. Mr. Brock said the vision is to have higher graduation rates and improve grades as well as test scores. Mr. Hayes said grades are important but we were leaving a lot of kids on the sidewalks. It is important to provide them with skills so students can walk into a meaningful job after high school or higher education. Mr. Fordham said almost every organization has this same kind of thing hanging on a wall. He said he continues to be impressed that teachers reference the Vision, Mission, and Beliefs and are using it in their planning and discussions. Mr. Hayes said he wanted time to discuss each part of the Vision, Mission, and Beliefs so each section will be covered at a different board meeting.

New Business

No items

Board Member Comments

- Mr. Barton said there was a lot going on in the school system.
- Louis Fordham said board members needed to have individual meetings to get up to date on facilities.
- Mr. Fordham added that dialogue with Dalton Public Schools needs to continue.
- The board members thanked everyone for the Board Member Appreciation.
- Mr. Fordham thanked Cindy Dobbins for the presentations.

Adjournment

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 8:35 p.m.

MINUTES OF MEETING March 26, 2012

A work session of the Whitfield County Board of Education was held on Monday, March 26, 2012 at Valley Point Elementary. Board Chairman Louis Fordham called the meeting to order at 11:30 a.m.

Present were the following board members:

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

Also present were the following staff members:

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

Also present:

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

Amend Agenda

Superintendent Hayes recommended the board approve an amendment to the agenda to add “Executive Session” to the agenda as item #9. Thomas Barton moved approval and Gary Brock seconded. The board approved 5-0.

Inspiration/Pledge of Allegiance

Valley Point Elementary students Connor Perry and Azareli Chavarria led the Pledge of Allegiance. Chris Parker, principal of Valley Point Elementary, read from the book by Robert Fulghum, “It was on Fire When I Lay down on it”.

Instructional Report – Valley Point Elementary

Mr. Parker introduced teacher Rachel Hohol who shared that a new class had been developed called “Intervention First”. The class was developed because they realized after looking at student data, that there was a group of students who did not need to be retained in kindergarten but were not quite ready to be placed in a first grade class. The data supported the fact that without an intervention, the students would get further behind. Mr. Parker said they used Title Funds to pay for a parapro for the class which would enable individual level teaching for the students. Mrs. Hohol said there was a need to try something different to help the students learn. The students also had a huge lack of self-confidence and expressed a lot of “can’ts” at the beginning of the year. She said at the beginning the students would use two or three word phrases but now they are enjoying reading and talk a lot about their work. Mrs. Hohol also shared a video of what the students are doing in the classroom such as using a computer lab, choosing books from the library, and participating in reading groups. Reading Recovery has been beneficial for the students as well, according to Mrs. Hohol. The students are writing, collaborating, working in math groups, and doing projects to help them learn. The students wrote a narrative about their work using the “Green Eggs and Ham” book by Dr. Seuss. Connor Perry said he enjoyed the library because he could check out books and Azareli Chavarria said she also enjoyed reading books. Mr. Fordham asked how the plan was developed. Mr. Parker said they identified students that might not be successful at the next level by using G-Kids data and classroom data. He said he knew he had the perfect teacher to help the students. They used the Title Funds to fund a parapro which enabled smaller group work and more individualized time with the students. Mr. Parker said he gave Mrs. Hohol free reign to design the class because it wasn’t a kindergarten or a first grade class. The students, who in the beginning would have been retained, are ready to move to the next level and the school has data to back up that decision. Mr. Parker said the school was committed and challenged to give the students the support they needed

School Council Report – Valley Point Elementary

Amber Stephens, the school council chairman at Valley Point Elementary, informed the board members that the members had learned and discussed a lot of things from landscaping to budget cuts. She said it was imperative that there be smaller class sizes. She shared how she had a student in kindergarten that was just learning to read and was not getting a lot of one on one time. Mr. Fordham complimented the school leadership and the leadership in the community. He said everyone is contributing to the success of the students. He said it was exciting to see the teachers excited and engaged.

Hearing of Individuals

Susan Moore – Southeast High School Coaches - Open Records Act

Fran Swantic – Expressing support of Coach Gray at Valley Point Middle

Mr. Fordham stated that any time we have personnel changes we protect the privacy of individuals because of legality and out of respect. He added the school system is very concerned about parents and kids as well and encourage community feedback.

Review Board Agenda Items – April 16, 2012

Mr. Hayes reviewed and discussed with the board members the agenda items for the April 16, 2012 board meeting.

Exemption to Board Policy GAG

Dr. Judy Gilreath, assistant superintendent of support services, requested that an exemption be made to board policy GAG to allow Whitfield County School System teachers who work for a tutoring company after hours be allowed to receive compensation for tutoring their own students. The funds are not funded through local funds. Mr. Hayes and Dr. Gilreath explained it would be beneficial for students because of issues with transportation and the fact that the teacher knows the needs of the students. In the case of this exemption, Title Funds are being used and the tutoring is required because the school is a needs improvement school. Mr. Hayes recommended approval of the exemption to board policy GAG. Rodney Lock moved approval and Louis Fordham seconded. The board approved 5-0.

Purchase Order over \$25,000

The superintendent recommended the board approve the following purchase order. Gary Brock moved approval and Bill Worley seconded. The board approved 5-0.

Name	Description	Amount
Compass Learning, Inc.	On-line standards based curriculum academic support software	\$482,977.00

Construction Update

Richard Schoen, assistant superintendent of operations, updated the board members on the ESPLOST projects. He informed the board that at Eastbrook Middle they were in the process of working on a low maintenance courtyard, the polished concrete flooring is in the final stages, the fire inspections are about to take place and the June completion date is still expected. Mr. Hayes asked Mr. Schoen to update the board members about the concrete situation at Coahulla Creek High School. Mr. Schoen said there would be a meeting on April 9th or April 10th with several groups being represented. He added he is hopeful that after that meeting, a resolution to the concrete issue will be made.

Executive Session

The superintendent recommended the board move into executive session for the discussion of personnel. Thomas Barton moved approval and Rodney Lock seconded. The board approved 5-0.

Present were the following board members:

Thomas Barton
Gary Brock
Louis Fordham
Rodney Lock
Bill Worley

Also present were the following staff members:

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

Return to Regular Session

The board having taken no action in executive session returned to regular session at 1:35 p.m. Gary Brock moved approval to return to regular session and Thomas Barton seconded. The board approved 5-0.

Board Member Comments

Mr. Barton expressed his appreciation to the leadership of the school system.

Adjournment

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 1:37 p.m.