

Minutes
Anson County Board of Education
Regular Meeting
Tuesday, May 29, 2012, 5:30 p.m.

The Anson County Board of Education met in regular session on Tuesday, May 29, 2012. All members were present. Others in attendance were Michael Freeman (Chief Operating Officer), Michael McLeod (Executive Director), Howard McLean (Executive Director for Teaching and Learning), Holly Berry (Chief Financial Officer), Mike Flake (Board Attorney) and Anne Hyatt (Clerk to the Board of Education).

I. Call to Order

Chairperson Lisa Davis opened the meeting and welcomed all visitors.

II. Invocation

Chair Davis asked Rob Rollins to give the Invocation.

III. Conflict of Interest Statement

In compliance with the requirements of Chapter 138A-15(e) of the State Government Ethics Act, Chair Davis reminded Board Members of their duty to avoid conflicts of interest and appearances of conflicts of interest under Chapter 138A. She asked if members of the Board knew of any conflict of interest or any appearance of conflict with respect to any matters coming before them during this meeting. Dr. Truman indicated a conflict of interest with the personnel report and therefore did not participate in the vote. There were no other conflicts of interest communicated by the remaining members. Chair Davis then requested that if, during the course of the meeting, other members become aware of an actual or apparent conflict of interest that they bring the matter to her attention. She further explained it would then be the member's duty to abstain from participating in discussion and from voting on the matter.

IV. Adopt Agenda

The agenda was unanimously adopted by the Board upon a motion by Russell Sikes, with a second by Daniel Wilson. Motion carried.

V. Approve Minutes

(Regular Meeting 04-30-12)

Rob Rollins moved the minutes of the regular meeting of April 30, 2012, be approved. This motion was seconded by Marilynn Bennett, and unanimously approved. Motion carried.

VI. Closed Session

- Matters Related To Personnel

Chair Davis entertained a motion that the Board go into closed session for the purpose of considering a personnel action that involves an officer or employee of this Board pursuant to North Carolina General Statute 143.318.11(a) (6). This motion was made by Beulah Pratt, seconded by Michael Livingston and unanimously approved by the board. The Board went into closed session at 5:33 p.m.

As discussion pertaining to personnel was conducted, Daniel Wilson made a motion to extend closed session past 6:30 p.m. so they could continue their personnel discussion. Bobbie Little seconded the motion. George Truman and Michael Livingston opposed the motion and Lisa Davis abstained from voting. The motion carried with a 6-2 vote in favor of continuing closed session past 6:30 p.m.

Upon a motion by Michael Livingston, seconded by Daniel Wilson, the board voted to move forward with hearing a personnel matter from Dr. Firn. The motion was approved by the board. The motion carried with a 5-3 vote in favor of the motion with Bobbie Little, George Truman and Marilynn Bennett voting against the motion. Lisa Davis did not vote.

- Attorneys Rachel Hitch with Schwartz & Shaw, PLLC and Mike Flake with Carpenter and Flake, PLLC were present and provided the Board of Education legal guidance on the matter.

Upon a motion by Daniel Wilson, seconded by Russell Sikes, the board voted to terminate Felix Blakney's employment with Anson County Schools. Beulah Pratt and Rob Rollins also voted in favor of the motion. George Truman and Marilynn Bennett removed themselves from voting. Bobbie Little and Lisa Davis abstained from voting and Michael Livingston voted against the motion. The motion carried with a 4-1 vote in favor of terminating Mr. Felix Blakney's employment with Anson County Schools.

VII. **Reconvene Open Session**

- The Board returned to open session at 7:29 p.m. upon a motion by Michael Livingston, seconded by Russell Sikes. There was no discussion. Motion carried.

Kandie Sparger, Chad Murphy, Chris Stinson and Deborah Davis were present to give a presentation on the transition to district commencement (which actually began with the Class of 2011). Ms. Sparger began by saying out of her 33 years as an educator with Anson County Schools, she has spent 10 of those years working as chair of the high school graduation ceremony. She added there is a lot of work and planning that goes along with commencement. Ms. Sparger said the only things that were not negotiable amongst the principals in early August 2010 was to maintain formality of ceremony, maintain strict dress code, maintain block seating for each school and allow schools to wear their school colors.

She explained a few significant improvements from last year. Ms. Sparger indicated high schools have district as well as individual school awards night. She said we have professional staging that increases seating availability, a professional sound system that projects above the noise level of the spectators, additional security officers, elementary principals seated as honored guests and in the future she said we may have kindergarten teachers walking in (because that's where it all starts). Ms. Sparger added we now have student speakers instead of adult speakers and have increased the number of junior marshals (they went from 10 junior marshals to 30 and will have 33 junior marshals from all the schools participating this year). She confirmed that honor graduates are honored in multiple ways. Ms. Sparger added (previously) honor graduates came in as a block of students and someone from the podium announced honor graduates to stand and be

recognized. She said that changed last year from group recognition to individual recognition. Ms. Sparger pointed out that honor graduates are submitted to the press, honor graduates wear special cords and when each child's name was called last year, the principal said the name of the child and "honor graduate" or "with honors". Ms. Sparger mentioned she has heard many times over the last month that honor graduates need to be honored and are not honored enough. She agreed they are very deserving. Ms. Sparger said she previously mentioned at least three ways honor graduates are honored. Ms. Sparger said it is important to recognize students with academic ability that have met and exceeded our expectations and the State's expectations. She said we have to be very careful how we recognize students and how we do it multiple ways and how to respect the academic integrity of all graduates. She said they have to plan for and celebrate all graduates and as much as we celebrate our graduates and call their names, we want to make each graduate feel special and honored that day.

VIII. Public Comment

PUBLIC COMMENT NOTICE

Public Comment is limited to five minutes per speaker. Speakers may offer objective comments about school operations and programs. The Board will not permit any expression of personnel complaints nor defamatory comments about the Board of Education personnel and students or against any person connected with the Anson County School System. Security issues and matters relating to negotiations/grievances will not be permitted.

Ms. Jackie Huntley was present to speak about her concern with not allowing students to attend the Early College whose parents have a college degree. She said it is not right to discriminate against any kid for any reason. She said there are other early college systems who allow students to be selected and they must only be able to read on grade level and want to go. She said she didn't understand why Anson County Schools couldn't allow the same.

Katherine Kendall was present to speak about her concerns that honor students who were graduating from the high school would not be leading their class in on graduation day. She said she would like to see the honor graduates who have worked so hard to be able to lead in their class. Ms. Kendall also said she heard the Valedictorian had to write a paper if she wanted to be able to give her speech. She said she understood the assignment was made available to students who wanted to make the speech in place of the Valedictorian. She said the Valedictorian worked hard and shouldn't have to write a paper to be able to give her speech.

Jennifer Ricketts spoke about the importance of allowing honor graduates to be honored by leading in their class. She said they have all worked hard to be an honor graduate. Ms. Ricketts said the Valedictorian speech is a tradition and should continue to be just that. She also added there needs to be more security at graduation.

Dale Nelson said he is running for the NC House of Representatives (District 55) and he is a huge advocate of education. He explained he wanted to introduce himself and to let the board know they have an advocate when he is elected to the state house in November.

Kailee Cole (AHS Student) spoke on behalf of the honor graduates group (Jessica Beachum, Caitlyn Jackson, Devin Smith and Neal Huntley). She explained her concern with honor graduates

not being allowed to walk in together as a group at graduation. Ms. Cole said they have worked hard and have been leaders on campus and should be allowed to be leaders at graduation. She further stated it was not right and needed to be corrected.

Cathy Jackson was present to speak about her concern with not allowing the Valedictorian to give the speech and it being turned into a contest. She also stated it is not taking away from any other student if the Valedictorian, Salutatorian and honor graduates lead their class in at graduation.

Chair Davis asked Dr. Firn and administration to take into consideration the thoughts and comments of those that spoke about graduation and reconsider some of the things we are doing at graduation and get back with the board by the end of the week.

IX. Chair's Report

- Public Engagement: Several members reported on public engagement opportunities where they have visited schools and attended school activities and meetings.
- NCSBA Virtual Charter School Resolution: Russell Sikes made a motion to approve adopting the NCSBA Virtual Charter School Resolution. Dr. Truman seconded the motion and it was passed unanimously. Motion carried.

X. Superintendent's Report – See Attached

XI. Meeting Recess

- Chair Davis called for a five minute recess at 8:24 p.m. The meeting resumed at 8:30 p.m.

XII. Superintendent's Report – Continued

- Budget Report (Holly Berry): Russell Sikes asked if Mr. Jim Kiser could give the board a cost for building a covered walkway at Wadesboro Primary School. Dr. Truman said it was originally in the blueprint to have a covered walkway at the front entrance but they didn't have a covered walkway to the buses so they moved the covered walkway to the bus loading and unloading area from the front entrance with every intention of replacing the front entrance covered walkway. Dr. Firn said he will work on getting that information for the June business meeting.
- Transportation: Mr. Freeman indicated they are looking at offering the classroom part of driver's education during the summer months so it doesn't interfere with student athletics and activities during the school year.
- Child Nutrition: Mr. Freeman and Ms. Griffin are still investigating (cost wise) of a universal breakfast. Mr. Freeman said as they are looking at data, he has asked Ms. Griffin to give a report at the end of the year. He further explained he wants to make sure they are financially solid when they start. He said they are also monitoring food shortages at one of the schools and ensuring there is an appropriate amount of food at all schools.

XIII. **Consent Items**

- Daniel Wilson made a motion to move the Personnel Report to new business for further discussion. The motion was seconded by Russell Sikes and unanimously approved by the board. Motion carried.
- Upon a motion by Daniel Wilson, seconded by Bobbie Little, the Consent Items were approved by the board (Approved Consent Items: Budget Amendments and Lottery Applications). Motion carried.

XIV. **New Business**

- Personnel Report
 - Certified: A1, A2, A3, A4 and A5
Russell Sikes made a motion to approve A1, A2, A3, A4 and A5. The motion was seconded by Daniel Wilson and approved by the board. Dr. Truman abstained from voting on A5 and Lisa Davis abstained from voting on A4. Motion carried.
 - Classified: B1
George Truman made a motion to approve B1. The motion was seconded by Marilynn Bennett and unanimously approved by the board. Motion carried.
 - Substitutes: C1
Bobbie Little made a motion to approve C1. The motion was seconded by Russell Sikes and unanimously approved by the board. Motion carried.
 - Transfers: D1 and D2
Bobbie Little made a motion to approve D1. The motion was seconded by Russell Sikes and unanimously approved by the board. Motion carried.
 - Dismissed: G1
Russell Sikes made a motion to approve G1. The motion was seconded by Daniel Wilson and unanimously approved by the board. The motion carried with a 5-0 vote in favor of the motion. George Truman and Marilynn Bennett abstained from voting and Lisa Davis did not vote. Rob Rollins left the meeting early and was not present for the voting of the personnel report.
 - Change In Status: H1, H2, H3 and H4
Beulah Pratt made a motion to approve H1, H2, H3 and H4. The motion was seconded by Daniel Wilson and unanimously approved by the board. Motion carried.
 - Attachment I - Probationary Teachers
George Truman made a motion to approve Attachment I (Probationary Teachers). The motion was seconded by Bobbie Little and approved by the board. Lisa Davis and Michael Livingston abstained from voting. Motion carried.

- Non-Renewals: J1, J2, J3 and J4
Marilynn Bennett made a motion to approve J1, J2, J3 and J4. The motion was seconded by George Truman and unanimously approved by the board.
Motion carried.
- Questions/Remarks from Dr. Truman
 - Dr. Truman said he remembered last year when Dr. Firn made a presentation at Wadesboro Primary School where he was meeting with parents and one thing he told parents was there was a misconception about Early College and there is no requirement that students are excluded if their parents have a college education and asked if he understood that correctly. Dr. Firn said there is a provision in the actual charter with our early college agreement that preference will be made to students with non-college attending parents. Dr Truman asked how long would we be under that charter. Dr. Firn said he will check with Ms. Berry since we are still receiving funding. He said when the funding runs out is when we may have the opportunity to make changes.
 - Dr. Truman said when it comes to commencement, even if it means we need to hire extra security, he said he thinks we need to have plenty of security that day.
 - Dr. Truman asked about the status of the Anson Education Foundation. Dr. Firn said he and Mr. McLeod are named officers. He said they have met and there is money sitting in the fund in dormancy and it has not been accessed. He said there have been no additional deposits.
 - Dr. Truman asked if we could review interschool communication. He said sometimes it is reported that certain people do not get information and the response to them is that it was posted on the calendar. Dr. Truman said in some cases we need go a step further and ensure pertinent communication takes place. Dr. Firn thanked Dr. Truman for his comments and assured him it had been addressed.

XV. **Adjourn**

A motion to adjourn was made by Russell Sikes, seconded by Michael Livingston. There was no discussion. The motion carried. The meeting adjourned at 8:54 p.m.

Lisa G. Davis, Chairperson

Dr. Gregory Firn, Secretary