

Board Bullets

Highlights of the Cherokee County Board of Education Meeting held on Thursday, March 10, 2011, 6:00 p.m., at Hiwassee Dam School.

Thank you to those Principals and Administrators attending: Alissa Cheek, Cindy Bean, Bill Gaither, Tom Graham, Virginia Haynes, Arnold Mathews, Delaine MacDonald, Barry McClure, Phil Pressley, Andy Pyle, Boyd Shields, Paul Wilson, Randy Mann, Jodi Alverson, Kenny Garland, Terelle Harr, Jeana Hardin, Brent Hendin, DavAnn Hubbard, Karen Kephart, Carol Sims, and Gary Wright.

- Mr. Randy Barnett called the meeting to order.
- Mr. Tom Graham, Principal of Hiwassee Dam High School, welcomed all in attendance and Ms. Delaine MacDonald, Principal of Hiwassee Dam Elementary/Middle School, said the invocation.
- Mr. Winfield Clonts led the pledge of allegiance and Ms. Wanda Arrowood read the mission statement.
- The Agenda and Minutes were approved as presented.
- There was no public input.
- Ms. MacDonald, Brandon Muizulis, and Keith Hackler student representatives of Hiwassee Dam Elementary/Middle School delivered a very informative overview of how Brain Based Learning has made a difference in their lives.
- The Hiwassee Dam High School, Student Government Association appeared before the Board and presented detailed information about Academics, donations made by the TVA, club activities, statistics about the senior class and collegiate acceptance, sports, and staff accomplishments. Lastly, the SGA President requested funding for forthcoming technology projects. The Board approved their funding request.
- Dr. Lane recognized the outstanding athletic accomplishments of winter sports athletes that competed at the state level from HDHS, AHS, and MHS.
- Dr. Lane and Ms. Amy Morin recognized students from Martins Creek School for their academic achievement in finishing 5th in the Nation and 44th in the world in the World's Math Day competition and 7th in the Nation and 31st in the world in the World's Spelling Day competition. Mr. Morin and student representatives displayed visual aids and gave an enthusiastic overview of the level of competition and dedication needed to compete at the world level. Dr. Lane also recognized Ms. Morin for her outstanding contributions in preparing students for this competition.
- Mr. Kenny Garland gave an update of student testing for the 1st semester of 2010/11 school year as well as a fall 2010 CTE testing report. Mid-year testing revealed significant improvement in student achievement.
- Dr. Lane recommended that the Board approve a Resolution to request that members of the North Carolina General Assembly reconsider Senate Bill 8 and make modifications that address numerous concerns. He went on to say that Senate Bill 8 is a bill to change the way charter schools are addressed. Our primary concern though is the way that funds are distributed. If we take a look at what the present law establishes and the distribution of funding for charter schools, we'll see that portions of grants that our teachers and staff have written are required to be allocated to the charter school. Last year the legislature tried to fix some of this by changing the statutory language; however, Senate Bill 8 will undo some of the things that the general assembly has previously corrected. The portion of funds that could be moved last year are now even greater. For instance, child nutrition had not been one of those areas to be shared, but under this bill, it is. Certain program fundings that our schools offer that aren't offered at the charter school will be shared. Money earned from athletic and other activities in our gyms, for instance, which for us amounts to nothing more than trying to reduce money expended on costs associated with such activities will be shared under this bill. Since the inception of the local charter school, we've provided them with \$155,000 for transportation. However, transportation is not a requirement for them to provide; therefore, they haven't provided it. Accordingly, the

question is “why do they get the money?” We’re seeing our proportions of funds go down in a way that is hurting our district and Senate bill 8 will make all of the required fund sharing even more extreme. Keep in mind, this is just a snap shot of what Senate Bill 8 is attempting to do there is much more. So in order to demonstrate our concern of the effects of Senate Bill 8, a resolution is presented before the Board for consideration of approval so we can send it to the Governor, Speaker of the House, Senate Pre-temp, School Board Association and other appropriate party to show our support for changing the bill from the way it is presently written. We are hoping this Resolution will make a difference because if not it will significantly change the way education in North Carolina takes place and it negatively affect public schools. Mr. Chris Campbell added that House and Senate would be working to reconcile any differences and there have been some committee substitutes but the Senate Bill 8 is what is currently pending because of lack of action in the House Education Committee. He went on to add that the timing was right for the resolution and that the target concerns, such as sharing of funds from programs that the charter schools do not offer, were not fair or equitable. He added that the law had never been clear and had resulted in a decade of litigation. Consequently, one of the things the resolution is asking is for the legislature to simply be clear and fair. Lastly, Mr. Campbell informed the board that of 115 school boards across the state that have received the resolution, more than half have passed it. Mr. Erik Brinke stated it should be noted that the Board of Education is not anti charter school and that what the Board opposes is that if, for example, a school has a roof leak and there is an insurance settlement for repairs the money should not be shared with the charter school simply by virtue of accounting practices. Mr. Brinke further went on to encourage people with an interest in this issue to contact Representative West and Senator Davis and let them know that the lack of common sense in the bill is inappropriate and it should not be tolerated. Dr. Lane stated that in keeping with what Mr. Brinke had stated, competition is a good thing and that supporting a lifting of the cap to allow more charter schools under certain regulations to ensure that quality schools are created is good but not with inequity of the funding because it does not make for a level playing field. Dr. Ackerman asked if there was anything in the bill that stated grant money received by the charter school would be shared equally with our school system? Mr. Campbell answered no, there is no provision for the money received by charter schools to be shared. The Board voted to approve the resolution.

- Mr. Gary Wright gave an update on construction efforts ongoing at Andrews High School and the Hiwassee River Coalition erosion control efforts.
- Ms. Debbie Hogan, Policy Subcommittee Chair, presented three policies to the Board for second reading which were approved: 1310/4002 Parental Involvement; 3405 Students at Risk of Academic Failure; 7500 Workday. Additionally, Ms. Hogan presented three policies for first reading: 5027/7275 Weapons and Explosives Prohibited; 2121 Board member Conflict of Interest; 4400 Attendance.
- Dr. Lane provided the following: First, I want to note on the Superintendent’s Report that we have two students, one from AHS and one from MHS, that were submitted for the Senate Page Program per Senator Davis’ invitation. In recommending these two students we found that there was a lot of interest in this program, especially at AHS. We’ve learned that there is a program that Representative West sponsors so there is an opportunity for other students to apply. The field trips coming up are Hiwassee Dam Elementary and Middle School’s 7th and 8th Grade students to travel to Gee Creek, TN to participate in the Outdoor Classroom; Andrews Middle School’s 8th Grade students are also traveling to Gee Creek, TN to participate in the Outdoor Classroom, the Andrews Middle School 8th Grade students will also be traveling to the Tennessee Aquarium & I-Max theater in Chattanooga, TN; the Tri-County Early College Beta Club is traveling to Atlanta, GA; the Martins Creek Junior Beta Club is traveling to Amicalola Falls, GA; the Martins Creek 8th Grade Class is traveling to the Outer Banks, NC; the Ranger Middle School 8th grade class will be traveling to the Lost Sea in Sweetwater, TN; and the 8th grade team at Murphy Middle School will be traveling to the Outer Banks, NC. We appreciate the Mountain Youth School SADD but TRU efforts that appeared in the Cherokee Scout. Rick Carter, Music Teacher at Murphy Elementary School, recently had two of his 4th grade students participate in the North Carolina Elementary Honors Chorus. Kathryn Keily Jenkins and Rebecca Carter were two of only 188 students chosen from more than 500 students who auditioned from across the state. The girls traveled to Winston-Salem on November 5-7 for rehearsals and a final performance at the Stevens Center of the North Carolina School for the Performing Arts with renowned conductor Dr. Sandra Snow. Our solar array is planning to have a ribbon cutting and site tour from 2 to 4 p.m. on March 17th, St. Patrick’s Day at Martins Creek School. I’d also like to congratulate Jamie Barnett on

her efforts with the CTE plan. Wendy Edney, the regional coordinator informed me that our plan was the most comprehensive plan that she's had the pleasure to review and she noted that also we are one of the few systems that included CTE in the Governors RttT Grant. Also, she commented that our scores on our CTE exams are the second highest in western North Carolina separated only by a tenth of a point from 1st place. Great effort for Jamie Barnett and our CTE teams in bringing this all together. We've received the Governor's budget and the House is scheduled to have their budget passed in April and the Senate in May. This is a two year budget process because this is the long session. They will work a budget for this year and propose a budget for next year, and in the short session next year, they can work to fine tune that budget. The Governor's projection was very good to education overall. The states saw a 17% cut as a state aggregate; with some departments receiving as much as a 33% cut. Education, in her budget was cut 4.27%. If you include the discretionary reductions that we've had in the past, it makes that 8.57%, but these cuts have already been made. The 4.27% have not. When we look at the way the Governor funded that, she used $\frac{3}{4}$ of 1 cent of the sales tax temporarily imposed, yielding \$833 million. The general assembly however has stated that they will not approve anything involving a sales tax because they consider that an additional tax. So if we were to receive a fair share and it was allocated just across the school districts, our share would be an additional \$790,000. We're hoping, they will find other places to absorb this loss of revenue rather than passing it down to education. All together, it's about \$1,019,856 were looking to reduce. If you recall, stimulus will end June 30th, stabilization money will end as well. We do have EduJobs funds that the federal government provided with the intent at that time to hire as many people as we could with the money allocated to try to stimulate the economy. Our year was already underway and we knew additional budget reductions would be imposed this year so we set aside \$733,497 to be able to apply toward the impact from whatever budget we wind up getting. This is a one year application and after that it will not be available to us. This is a very concerning part to us. Beside the $\frac{3}{4}$ cent sales tax, the other thing she did was take lower payments to the state retirement system and made them over a longer period of time and that prompted the state treasurer to come out and indicate that we cannot be further underfunding the state retirement system at a time when it is already underfunded. I do not think that is going to be used as part of the income she has arrived at. The other part of the Governor's funding was also to distribute formula money, in addition to the great effort at reorganizing all the state agencies into streamlined agencies to get rid of redundancy. We expect the budget that comes out of the House to be about an 8% cut vice the Governor's 4.27%. Representative Tom Tillis, speaker of the House, and the Senate pro-temp leader as well, was talking about 10% cuts. If it ends up being a 10% cut the \$700,000 that we set aside will not be much of a cushion for what's coming. The Governor, and it appears the legislature, is trying to be somewhat protective of teachers, and the Governor also included in her budget protection for the teacher assistants. In the assembly we're hearing support for the teachers, but we don't see the same level of support for teacher assistants. One of the other proposals is to eliminate the entire Department of Public Instruction (DPI) which would be a \$72 million savings. I think a lot of us are trying to educate the legislators on exactly what DPI does and how that would impact us in terms of support, services, and funding. Cuts can be made at DPI like anywhere else, but you can't feasibly eliminate the entire department and expect this not to impact the schools. In the Governor's budget she has cut Central Office 10%, transportation 13.49%, instructional support 5%, non-instructional support 15%, and principals and assistant principals 7.5%. This is based on the 4.27% overall reduction. If we end up with the 10% cut, you can see these figures more than doubling and that will have a significant negative impact on education. What were asking is that the voters voice their concerns about this issue because it is they whom the legislators will hear. A one cent sales tax brings in over a billion dollars, and if we don't have it, that's a billion dollars in personnel that will need to be cut. The Governor's budget, also made bus purchasing part of the local responsibility. In the past we would buy the first bus then they would replace the bus at 20 years or 200,000 miles. In her budget that falls on the county government and that's going to be approximately \$170,000 that we didn't calculate at \$85,000 a bus that we're going to need to present to our local Commissioners. We will be meeting with our local leaders on the 24th of March at 2:30, and at that time we're going to try to go with what we believe the budget is going to be rather than what the Governor has presented. We're trying to look at what we anticipate based on what the legislature is telling us and that's between an 8 and 10% mark. Fuel has been estimated at \$2.71 in next years budget and we paid \$3.18 a gallon just on our last pick up. Prices are going up and if they continue, we are not going to be able to provide the kind of bus service that we are now as far as picking students up and dropping them off. Instead,

we'll have to have consolidated points and that's going to have a great burden on our parents who do not necessarily have transportation to get students to these areas. This is a sad state of affairs when we find ourselves in that situation. Fuel could easily go to \$5.00 a gallon according to AAA based on the unrest in the middle-east so the legislators are going to have to look at this allocation. In addition, they want us to start handling tort claims at the local level, but this is something that we just can't manage. There are a lot of concerns that we have. I've sent many emails to the General Assembly leadership about each of these issues trying to let them know what the impact of these things are from a superintendent's perspective. In that light, I'd like to appeal to all of our staff and parents to weight in often and heavy as they feel appropriate to let the legislators know how these budget issues will impact them. It's a tough forecast, and I don't think the budget is going to be released in a timely manner as it appears. The House is going to have their budget as will the Senate. The governor can veto, but it's an all or nothing veto, she does not have line-item veto capability. We know that the Senate has Republican strength enough to override a veto, but not in the House. That will require Democrats to join Republicans to override the Governor's veto. The next couple of months are going to be very tough.

- Ms. Debbie Hogan read the motion to adjourn to closed session. When the Board returned to open session, the following action(s) were taken:

- The Board approved the resignation and retirement requests of the following:

<u>Name</u>	<u>Position/School</u>	<u>Request/Effective Date</u>
Pam Gray	Teacher, AES	Resignation 06/14/11
Susann McWhorter	Teacher, AMS	Resignation 06/14/11
Robin Clodfelter	Teacher, AES	Resignation 06/14/11
Gay Carter	TA, Peachtree	Retirement 06/30/11
Kay Amos	EC Bus Driver, District	Retirement 05/01/11
Carolyn Reichman	Teacher, Martins Creek	Retirement 06/30/11
Denise Mallonee	Teacher, Peachtree	Retirement 06/30/11
Dorothy S. Davis	Teacher, AHS	Retirement 09/01/11
Brenda Jones	Cafeteria, Hiwassee Dam	Retirement 06/11/11
Terelle Harr	Chief Finance Officer, Central Office	Retirement 08/01/11

- The Board approved the Maternity Leaves of Absence for: Jessica Adams, 1st grade teacher, Peachtree, from 04/04/11 to 01/02/12; and Fallon Rider, SS teacher, AMS, from 06/02/11 to 08/17/11.

- The Board approved hiring of:

<u>Name</u>	<u>Position</u>	<u>School</u>	<u>Effective</u>
Jessica Wilson	Interim Teacher	Pre-K, MES	04/25/11
Jennifer Forchetti	Interim Teacher	MES	03/28/11
Phyllis LeMaster	Interim Teacher	Peachtree	04/04/11
Sandra Figueroa	Interim Teacher Assistant	Pre-K, Ranger	04/18/11

- The Board approved the following substitute bus drivers:

Richard Plemmons	Alton Lovingood	Larry Gramm
Justin Sneed	James Bolick	Andrew Burton
Pamela McNabb	Shannon Helton	Rex Stick
David Rogers	Earnest Cable	

- The Board approved the following Volunteers:

<u>Name</u>	<u>Activity</u>	<u>School</u>
Charles Warren	Baseball	MHS
Brian Wilson	Baseball	MHS
Kenny Haney	Baseball	District
Christopher Marrow	Baseball	HD

- Dr. Lane announced the following transfers:

<u>Name</u>	<u>From</u>	<u>To</u>	<u>Effective</u>
Brian Hoyt	TA, Ranger	Interim Teacher, Pre-K, Ranger	04/18/11
Kevin Carter	PT Child Nutrition	Temp Full Time Custodian, MHS	03/07/11
Chuck Cheek	PT Custodian HDHS	PT Custodian/Child Nutrition, HDHS	03/09/11

- The next meeting of the Cherokee County Board of Education will be held at Andrews High School, on April 21, 2011 at 6:00 p.m.
- There being no further business to discuss, the meeting adjourned at 10:00 p.m.