

Board Bullets

Highlights of the Cherokee County Board of Education Meeting held on Thursday, May 12, 2011, 6:00 p.m., at Murphy Middle School.

Thank you to those Principals and Administrators attending: Cindy Bean, Bill Gaither, Tom Graham, Virginia Haynes, Delaine MacDonald, Barry McClure, Mike Penninger, Boyd Shields, Paul Wilson, Randy Mann, Jodi Alverson, Jamie Barnett, Kenny Garland, Terelle Harr, Jeana Hardin, Sherry Henry, DavAnn Hubbard, Karen Kephart, Carol Sims, Libby Thigpen, and Gary Wright.

- Mr. Randy Barnett called the meeting to order.
- Mr. Barry McClure, Principal of Murphy Middle School, welcomed all in attendance. Joshua Starnes, student of Murphy Middle, gave the invocation.
- Mr. Erik Brinke led the Pledge of Allegiance and Ms. Debbie Hogan read the mission statement.
- The Agenda and Minutes were approved as presented.
- There was no public input.
- Ms. Karen Kephart and students of the Student Nutrition Advisory Council (SNAC) shared their experiences of serving on the SNAC committee. The members are: DJ Mock; Hannah Dickey; Cierra Johnson; and Chloe Nicholson.
- Dr. Lane recognized each of the SNAC members and presented them with Certificates of Achievement commending their achievements.
- Mr. Jason Forrister, Teacher of Murphy High School, and students appeared before the Board to speak of their Global Studies tour to Paris, France. Several students addressed the Board and spoke of their visit to France, lessons learned, and educational opportunities.
- Dr. Lane recognized the Murphy Middle School Battle of the Books team and presented the team members with Certificates of Achievement. The members were: Josh Sellers, Hayley Duncan, Coach Sandra Smith, Madison Mock, Joshua Starnes, Cassie Weaver, Vandna Patel, Trevor Barber, Foster Stroup, J.D. Owens, Coach Barbara Fowler, and Reagan Lindsay.
- Dr. Lane recognized the Murphy High School 2011 Poetry & Prose contest winners: Abby Larson, 1st and 2nd place Poetry division; Emma Timson, 3rd place Poetry division; Matt Lewis 1st place Prose division; Cameron Nix 2nd place Prose division; and Amaranth Brunner, 3rd place Prose division. Additionally, Dr. Lane recognized Amaranth Brunner for being selected to serve as a Senate Page for Senator Jim Davis. Dr. Lane presented each with a Certificate of Achievement and the first place winner of the Poetry and Prose divisions read their winning entries.
- Dr. Lane recognized Madison Ledford, student of Murphy Middle, for being accepted to attend the Duke University Summer Science Sleuths program and presented her with a Certificate of Accomplishment.
- Dr. Lane recognized the achievements of DeVante Sudderth, Murphy High School student, for being named to the 1-A All State Basketball team.
- Dr. Lane recognized the Murphy Middle School track team and commended them on winning back to back Conference Championship titles for both the Boys and Girls. The team is coached by Ms. Amber Ledford and Ms. Stephanie Foley. Dr. Lane recognized the members of the team who broke several conference records. These record breaking athletes are: Austin Foley-conference record in disc, (Record 123' previous record 120'); Kalin McRae-conference record in both 100m and 200m, (Times: 100m: 11.26 FR: 11.70 200m: 24.5 FR: 24.7); Kendra Henry-conference record in 100m, 200m and 400m (Times: 100m: 12.9 FR: 13.1. 200m: 26.8 FR: 27.1. 400m: 104.5 FR: 1.05); Sarah Nicely-conference record in long jump, (Record 15' 10" previous record

14' 10"); and Hannah Carson-conference record in high jump, (Record 5' previous record 4' 9"). Dr. Lane presented each of these students with a Certificate of Achievement.

- Dr. Lane recognized the Cafeteria Staff of Murphy Middle for receiving a perfect sanitation rating during a recent sanitation inspection. The staff are: Ms. Tiffany Beaver, cafeteria manager, Deena Kephart, Frankie Cornwell, and Oneta Sherlin.
- Dr. Lane proposed approval of a Resolution Opposing House Bill 344—Tax Credit for Children with Disabilities. He went on to say: We've had a tough time convincing the Senate and House that Public Schools are the core of the education system for the State of North Carolina. There's a lot of movement in Raleigh to offer lots of alternative type benefits---some of which are very good---because I don't think anyone could argue that we need to help children with disabilities. We in Cherokee County Schools have a mission to work closely and no one does it better, I think, than our teachers working with children with disabilities. One of the opportunities that the legislature has is to provide a tax credit for children with disabilities by tacking on a tax credit for all parents who may elect to choose an education other than public schools. This is also known as a voucher. The concern that we have is that the voucher will result in that much less money available for public schools, and children that are disadvantaged and of low socio-economic income do not have an opportunity to take advantage of those opportunities. So, the School Board Association of North Carolina has asked all School Boards to consider a Resolution voting against the tax credit just described. The Board of Education voted in favor of the Resolution Opposing House Bill 344. The resolution was approved.
- Ms. Terelle Harr appeared before the Board and requested approval of budget amendments for the Local Current Expense Fund, Federal Programs Fund, and Capital Projects Fund. All three budget amendments were approved. Additionally, Ms. Harr recommended that the Board enter into an annual audit contract with Turner, Ennis & Hatcherr, CPA's, P.A., of Murphy to audit accounts. The contract was approved.
- Ms. Karen Kephart appeared before the Board to explain reasons for possible consideration of meal price increases for 2011-2012 school year. She went on to add that one of the basic reasons for the price increase was to be in compliance with the Healthy, Hunger-Free Kids Act of 2010. This act calls for equity funding for school lunches.
- Mr. Erik Brinke questioned the rationale of the Act by asking if they were mandating the price increase in order to insure that we were not using funds for the free and reduced to subsidize the paying child.
- Ms. Kephart replied that it was.
- Mr. Brinke interjected that he believed they should focus less on the subsidizing of meal cost and more on the quality of the food. Because by increasing the quality of food consequently we would increase the number of children eating it. Additionally, Mr. Brinke stated that if it can be increased 10 cents and increase the quality of the food then maybe it is worth it to increase the price. He stated that he's concerned that it is more an issue of money and less of cost benefit and quality of food.
- Dr. Lane interjected that at the same time we have a depressed economy. Commodity prices are on the increase and that 6 cents is just to cover the increase in milk cost. So the move upward is not sufficient to cover the cost of the product being sold, yet there is no penalty that we can yet determine for not doing it. We believe it is in the works and coming. Our real concern is that we don't have additional resources to offset that so we ask for the modest increase to cover the cost because we have to pay market price. We try to do our best to take the free and reduced lunch payment that is higher to keep the paying customers' price lower.
- Mr. Brinke asked if the state was aware that it would take four years to achieve this goal.
- Ms. Kephart expressed doubt that it was known and explained further her reasoning.
- Mr. Paul Brown stated that in 2007/08 there was a 25 cent meal cost increase and questioned if there had been a rule change allowing only a 10 cent increase per year.
- Ms. Kephart explained that this was the first time the USDA had become involved in the meal cost increase.
- Mr. Brown asked if the current participation in school lunches was average.

- Ms. Kephart indicated that it had remained about the same with only slight fluctuation due to enrollment and added that the number of children qualifying for free meals who did not participate was unexpectedly high compared to those qualifying for reduced rate.
- Dr. David Ackerman asked if it was safe to say that we should consider raising it at least 6.3 cents to meet our needs.
- Ms. Kephart answered yes.
- Dr. Ackerman stated that if he is understanding this correctly that some increase is required. He stated that he's not worried about the USDA mandate, but wants to know that in Cherokee County there is a need for some sort of an increase to continue to maintain a self sufficient food program. He added that he supports the Cherokee County Schools food program and wants to see the best quality food and he does think price affects participation especially when the quality of food is always a hot button, but maintained this is one of the worst possible times to increase the price. Lastly, he stated that as a Board member, he would like to see the lowest possible increase at this time and perhaps when the economy is better consider an additional increase.
- Ms. Kephart spoke of looking at these issues during their next budget workshop.
- Mr. Randy Barnett asked if there was a percentage of our participation compared to other counties.
- Ms. Kephart indicated that there was some information. And explained some of the causal factors that contribute to non-participation. Also, she indicated she would acquire the requested data.
- Mr. Barnett replied that yes he would like to see that data.
- Mr. Brinke interjected that due to a diminishing return that quality begins to affect the account. He went on to say that this wasn't the fault of Ms. Kephart or any of the Cherokee County food service employees because they were doing the best with what they've got. He stated that perhaps we shouldn't worry so much about \$.10 increase and consider increasing the cost to \$3.00 because this level of increase would result in better participation because product quality increases making \$3.00 a bargain compared to eating at fast food restaurants.
- Dr. Ackerman said that perhaps this wasn't the time to discuss such things but at some time in the future the Board should consider thinking outside of the box and consider ideas along those lines.
- Ms. Kephart explained that there was only a reimbursement for free and reduced when qualifying students used it.
- Dr. Ackerman added that he believes the food service employees of Cherokee County do a tremendous job with what they have.
- Mr. Barnett asked if it was the consensus of the board to table the decision to increase the meal cost until the next meeting. All were in agreement.
- Ms. Debbie Hogan asked if information about each school's participation could be delivered at the next meeting.
- Dr. Ackerman stated that some time ago Cherokee County Schools entered into a Co-Op for purchasing foods and asked if: 1) has this helped save on cost and 2) give some assessment on quality of the foods, e.g., same, improved, declined.
- Ms. Kephart answered that there had been savings and that there was a larger variety of foods.
- Ms. Debbie Hogan, Policy Subcommittee Chair, presented four policies to the Board for second reading which were approved: 7100 Recruitment Selection & Retention of Personnel; 7810 Evaluation and Supervision of Employees; 7820 Personnel Files; 7900 Resignation. Additionally, Ms. Hogan presented one policy for first reading: 4311 Dress Code.
- Dr. Lane provided the following Superintendent's Report: Ms. Joslyn Parker and approximately 20, 7th and 8th grade students will attend the North Carolina State Jazz Festival in Hickory, NC on Friday May 13th. This is a state sanctioned competition held by the North Carolina Bandmasters Association. Murphy High School Show Choir. Ms. BettySue Cowan and the MHS Show Choir will visit Boston, MA from April 26 through April 30, 2012. Ms. Cowan has also provided a very detailed letter outlining the Choir's recent trip to California. Governor Beverly Perdue officially proclaimed May 1-8, 2011 as "School Bus Driver Appreciation Week." Murphy Middle School. Ms. Gail Hubbard, 6th grade teacher, donated a check for the Methodist Church's food pantry for over \$900 from their Wax Museum proceeds. Duke University Talent Identification Program (TIP) 2011 7th Grade Talent Search District Results: Zachary Jones of Martins Creek School qualified for the

program. Marble – Students at Marble Elementary School demonstrated their public speaking skills on April 5 as they took part in the Civic Oration speech contest sponsored by Modern Woodmen of America. Students competing in the contest at Marble Elementary shared their presentations on this year's topic, "An American Invention." All participants were commended by local contest organizers for their involvement and each will receive a certificate for their hard work. The first-place winner was Julia Mays. Second-place winner was Felicity Palmer, and Jake Hincke was third. Their names will be engraved on the school's plaque, and each will receive a trophy and gold award pin. They also advanced to compete in the county competition April 19 at Murphy Middle School. Gold award pins were presented to the next four ranking finalists – Kristin Rich, Dalton Hooper, Lane Timpson and Kitana Queen. Other participants in the school competition were Ronnie Bartlett, Jacob Brown, Dylan Edwards, Matthew Barton, Jack Newton, Caleb Roberts, Keegan Rogers, Matthew Roper, Korinne Sharp, Alex Blount and Cody Smith. Martins Creek School. Ivy Collins, a student of Martins Creek School, was recently awarded First Place in the Area I Association of Soil and Water Conservation District's sixth grade Conservation Essay Contest. For winning, she received \$50 and her essay was judged at the State level on April 15th.

Now, I'd like to speak for a moment on the budget issue. The House came out with their budget and the Senate had the opportunity to review it. When the House Republicans voted to approve, five Democrat legislators voted to approve also. This action means the bill has the votes to withstand a Governor's veto. I think part of the message that went along from the House to the Senate was that if the reductions remain at 9.6% then we'll stick with this budget; however, if the Senate chooses to make additional cuts, then the support will be pulled. The Senate did decide to make deeper cuts, in fact we saw in the budget for UNC university system a 15.5% reduction and for the community colleges a little over 10% and then for K-12 it was 10.9% as it came out from the Senate. If you look at the overall impact on K-12, community college, and UNC, the Senate went \$40 million deeper but they changed the allocation of that and gave the UNC university system \$87 million more. So the Senate was much kinder to UNC university system but they did that at the expense of K-12 which received a \$106 million deeper cut. We also saw that the community colleges received a \$21 million reduction from the Senate. So, this will go into conference before it goes on to the Governor for consideration. I can tell you that these cuts just get worse instead of better and I reiterate that the simple solution supported by 73% of North Carolinians is to extend that one cent sales tax. However, there isn't a good deal of evidence that the will of the people is being considered by the general assembly; therefore, we stand to be in one of the worst situations that we've ever had. When Governor Perdue was informed of the Senate budget her reaction was that she was shocked, disappointed and disgusted. "It clearly moves North Carolina backwards," she said. "It would put us close to if not dead last in the country in our educational investment and that is not a place that the Tar Heel State can afford to be in." I wholeheartedly concur and I continue to implore all of our staff and our community and parents to communicate that to the General Assembly while we can still make a difference. This is very real and is going to be very harmful to education if it doesn't change. I'm hopeful that the Governor will exercise her veto and the House Democrats that sided with the original budget will side with the Governor so at least we can get some negotiations on some realistic cuts because these cuts are not realistic to the future of education. For Cherokee County Schools specifically, we know that the House version of the budget will result in a \$1,209,000 cut and the Senate version, if approved, will go deeper and create a \$1,459,000 reduction. We do have Federal EduJobs funds which will off-set either one of these reductions for one year but the following year EduJobs money will not be available and we will experience the full brunt of the reduction for the 2012/13 school year. So as deeply as I'm concerned about the 11/12 budget, it's the 12/13 that concerns me most. For this coming school year we are \$600 thousand dollars short but for the 12/13 school year we're going to be the entire \$1.2 million plus the additional \$250 thousand

because of the deeper cuts. We're looking at a reduction of \$1.5 million for the 12/13 school year and \$850 thousand for 11/12 school year, (assuming the Senate cuts).

- 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 request of the following:

<u>Name</u>	<u>Position/School</u>	<u>Request/Effective Date</u>
Oneta Sherlin	Part-time Cafeteria, Murphy Middle	Resignation 05/05/11
Michael Campbell	Energy Manager, Cherokee County Schools	Resignation 08/01/11

- The Board approved the Career Tract Contract renewal recommendations as presented:

Recommended for 2nd Year

Barry-Toth, Lynn	HDHS
Haydon, Barbara	AHS
Huskins, Krysta	AES
Hammond, Brad	AHS
Picon, Chelsie	MES
Sumpter, Courtenay	District

Lovingood, Heather MES

May, Lisa	AES
Plappert, Frances	HDEMS
Rider, Fallon	AMS
Ware, Crystal	AMS
White, Debbie	MCS

Recommended for 3rd Year

Adams, Michelle	MES
Bristol, Lance	MHS
Moree, Karen	MHS
Parker, Joslyn	AHS
Reeves, Nathan	AMS
Sanders, Debbie	HDES
Starnes, Twyla	MCS

Recommend for Tenure

Allison, Kim	MYS/TCEC
Bristol, Justin	HD
Cabe, Sonya	MHS
Crosby, Carolyn	MHS
Crosby, John	MCS/Pchtree
Cutshaw, Ruby	AHS
Johnson, Hannah	AES
Mason, Cicely	MHS
Meiners, Will	AHS
Morrow, Kimberly	TCEC
Nelson, Thomas	MHS
Owens, Ben	TCEC
Secord, Beth	EC District
Solis, Lisa	AES
Watson, Nikol	Peachtree
West, Jenna	Marble

Recommended for 4th Year

Brockway, Cindy	Ranger
Brooks, Chad	MC
Clayton, Savannah	AES
Clonts, Adam	MES
Davis, Vivian	Ranger
Gutierrez, Ray	MHS
Jacobs, Debbie	MYS
Kemerer, Linda	AMS

- The Board approved renewal & issuance of the following school administrators Contracts:

Thomas Graham	Principal, Hiwassee Dam High School
John Higdon	Interim Principal, Andrews Middle School

- Dr. Lane announced the transfer of:

<u>Name</u>	<u>From</u>	<u>To</u>	<u>Effective</u>
Kevin Carter	Temp FT, Custodian, MHS	EC Bus Driver, Temp PT Custodian, MHS	05/02/11

- The next meeting of the Cherokee County Board of Education will be held at Central Office, on June 13, 2011 at 6:00 p.m.
- There being no further business to discuss, the meeting adjourned at 10:00 pm.