

# Board Bullets

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Highlights of the Cherokee County Board of Education Meeting held on Thursday, December 8, 2011, 6:00 p.m., at Martins Creek Elementary Middle School.

Thank you to those Principals and Administrators attending: Alissa Cheek, Bill Gaither, Kim Gibson, Tom Graham, Arnold Mathews, Delaine MacDonald, Barry McClure, Phil Pressley, Boyd Shields, Paul Wilson, Jamie Barnett, Kenny Garland, Dave Gentles, Jeana Hardin, Cindi Herr, Shelley Hollingsworth, DavAnn Hubbard, Karen Kephart, Randy Phillips, Carol Sims, and Gary Wright.

- Mr. Randy Barnett called the meeting to order.
- Mr. Arnold Mathews welcomed all in attendance and delivered the invocation.
- Ms. Wanda Arrowood led the Pledge of Allegiance and Mr. Winfield Clonts read the mission statement.
- The Agenda and Minutes were approved as presented.
- There was no public comment.
- Ms. Amy Morin spoke of how students of Martins Creek School performed during the American Math Competition. She also played a short video clip of featuring Scott Flansburg (The Human Calculator) during his visit to Martins Creek School. Ms. Morin next introduced each of the top competitors from her 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> grade class; they are: Hailey Porter 32nd in the nation, 5th in NC; Erin Davis 38th in nation, 6th in NC; Jacob Bates 49th in the nation, 7th in NC; Zachary Jones 53rd in the nation, 9th in NC; Ivy Collins 57th in the nation, 10th in NC; Richard Noble 63rd in the nation 11th in NC.
- Dr. Stephen Lane spoke of the efforts of these students as well as Ms. Morin and then presented each with a certificate of achievement.
- Ms. Cindi Herr, Tobacco Prevention Coordinator of Cherokee County Schools informed the Board of Jordan Collins' being named as the winner of the "No Spit All-Star" Player of the Year! She went on to inform the Board of a combined effort to raise scholarship funds for both Jordan and Seth Curtis for college.
- Mr. Reid Conway, Western Regional Representative from the State Energy Department, recognized Cherokee County Schools for their stellar efforts towards energy education and making the school system a model for energy efficiency. Mr. Conway went on to say that Cherokee County Schools has been used as an example across the state.
- Dr. Jim Causby, presented Cherokee County Schools with the prestigious Energy Education Pacesetter Award, additionally, Dr. Causby delivered a ceremonial check depicting the net savings realized by the school system. The amount of savings was \$758,000.00. Dr. Causby went on to praise the efforts of Mr. Gary Wright and his team. Dr. Causby commented that it is rare for a school system to have accomplished so much in the area of operations and curriculum, but Cherokee County Schools has done precisely that. Dr. Stephen Lane graciously accepted both the plaque and check on behalf of the Board of Education. Mr. Gary Wright recognized Mr. David Gentles for his achievement of receiving his certification as a School Maintenance Electrician by the North Carolina Department of Insurance. Then went on to thank the members of his maintenance staff for their tremendous efforts towards energy savings.
- Dr. Lane informed the Board of revenues received from the Martins Creek Solar Initiative. He and Mr. Mathews revealed a ceremonial check depicting the net earnings since April, 2010. Earnings were: \$21,150.23.
- Mr. Kenny Garland and Ms. Jamie Barnett recognized those teachers of Cherokee County Schools who recently passed their NCBT. Teachers recognized were:
  - Lynn Deweese
  - Alaina Tallent

- Melissa Reid
- Carrie Ledford
- Kary McClure
- Mr. Gil Hargett requested that Mr. Bill Gaither be appointed to serve on the Pacesetters Board. The request was approved. Additionally, Mr. Hargett asked for the Board's support for a grant Pacesetters and the Cherokee County Health Department are working on for the Healthy Children's Initiative. The Board pledged their support of Pacesetters pursuit of this grant.
- Mr. Garland presented the proposed 2012/2013 school calendar to the Board for consideration. The calendar was approved.
- Ms. Jeana Hardin presented the 2012 Technology Plan to the Board for consideration and approval. The plan was approved.
- Ms. Shelley Hollingsworth requested approval of budget amendments for the Capital Projects, State Public School, Grant, and Federal Program Funds. The amendments were approved.
- Ms. Debbie Hogan presented several policies for first and second reading. Policy 3300 Time for Learning was approved. Policies 2110 Board Member Elections; 5210 Distribution of Non-School Material; and, 6140 Automated External Defibrillation were heard for 1<sup>st</sup> reading.
- Dr. Lane delivered his Superintendent's Report: I'd like to begin by saying that most folks here are acutely aware that our Small Schools allocation last year, after being promised \$1.55 million on the Governor's, budget, House budget, and Senate's budget was not delivered as promised. Instead on June 29<sup>th</sup> the account zeroed out. When we inquired into this, DPI had determined that they couldn't release the funds to us because we had been placed in a 7-year hold harmless period that dated back to land reevaluation that resulted in our being removed from the Small Schools funding qualification. When we went through the process and inquired into the legalities of this, we argued that the date for the start date should have taken us through the 2011-12 year. What DPI had done was to start the 7-year period from July 1, 2004 instead of June 30, 2005 which is the end of the fiscal year which we were not qualified. So our argument was that the 7-year hold harmless was not valid, that they had drawn down the funds from the legislature, and they had told us all year we were going to receive the funding. That is basically the history of that time on June 29<sup>th</sup>. We decided then that we were going to pursue resolution of this issue so we contacted Representative Roger West and Senator Jim Davis and Mr. West immediately set up an appointment for us in July with the Speaker of the House. We met with the Speaker's staff; accompanying me on that trip was Mr. Barnett, Dr. Ackerman, and Mr. Brinke and we made our pitch to the Speaker of the House staff, the attorneys and DPI personnel that were there and they readily agreed that there had been a big miscommunication that had occurred. So, the next day with our presentations and Mr. West's support, the Speaker of the House was ready to sign and support legislation to get us that money. When it moved over to the Senate President Pro Tempore office, Mr. Phil Berger, it was a different story. His attorneys believed that it had to come back to the legislature to authorize the funding which was going to convene in May. May would have been too late to have done us any good for this fiscal year. We started at that point calling everyone with a title, Senator Martin Nesbitt, minority leader of the Senate, was totally on board and supported us; Senator Don Vaughan, the deputy minority leader of the Senate, was also totally on board and supported us; we had Senator John Snow and Representative Roger West write a joint bi-partisan letter that laid out our concerns and were each very much an advocate for our position and that prompted further review by Senator Tom Apodaca, Chairman of the Rules Committee, who found an avenue for us to address our issue as a technical correction. Senator Jim Davis then set up a meeting for us to again meet with Senator Berger. During that meeting, in which Mr. Brinke and Ms. Arrowood accompanied me, Senator Berger indicated that he was going to change his position and in fact support us. True to his word, there was a vote in the House and Senate that same day while we were there on November 28<sup>th</sup>, and both voted in favor of us getting the funding. It then went on to the Governor and she has had it since November 29<sup>th</sup> and today, I received a phone call that the Governor indicated she had signed the House Bill into law and "for us to go get our money". I promptly contacted the State Superintendent and formally made our request and funding should come through any time. So what that does, the \$1.55 million, it allows us to continue the operations as they exist now. Because without it, the Board of Education was going to have to very closely look at the possibility of closing some of our school functions and facilities, including schools, if we did not get these funds or if the County was unable to bridge

the financial gap for us. Now, it's up to the County to deliver the proper land reevaluation that will allow us to re-qualify for these funds. Speaker of the House Thom Tillis has been with us in Cherokee County. Yesterday, a Town Hall meeting was held at TCCC and today, he congratulated the Murphy High School Football team on their 1A State Championship. He will be at Marble tomorrow at 9:00 am to visit the school and address the students. We have really made a point of how important Small School's money is and what it enables us to do that otherwise we wouldn't be able to do and that's to maintain our 14 community schools that are so important to us. I appreciate all the support of the principals because I know that losing Small Schools money was very tough on them and their staff. We will, after getting together with the County Manager in January, work through our 2-year budget and make some allocations to the schools. But the first step is to get the money from DPI, then work out the 2-year budget, and then make the allocations out to the schools. Mr. Randy Barnett thanked Dr. Lane on behalf of the Board for what he did to get the funding, and commented on his tenacity in pursuing it comparing him to a "bulldog". Mr. Winfield Clonths stated that he agreed fully with Mr. Barnett's assessment of Dr. Lane's efforts. Dr. Lane went on to say: It was a team effort and he appreciated all the support. In fact, when I came back from Raleigh, the Gunny had given me this piece of paper with a Dale Carnegie quote which read: "Most of the important things in the world have been accomplished by people who have kept on trying when there seemed to be no hope at all." And I think that characterized our mission quite accurately. We did it and we're very pleased that we were able to do it for the staff and students of Cherokee County. Thank you to everyone who assisted us. If I could just briefly mention some other highlights: Andrews Elementary has just received a \$400 grant from Civitan to be used in our Garden Project. Also, Mrs. Lisa Scott, Third Grade Teacher at Andrews Elementary, has received a \$2,400 grant from Levi Strauss Foundation to be used in her classroom and for the Garden Project. Jacob Gilbert auditioned for and was selected to perform in the 2012 American Choral Directors Association Southern Division High School Honor Choir. He will rehearse with the choir and perform at the ACDA Southern Division Conference on March 3<sup>rd</sup> in Winston-Salem. We are very proud of Jacob's accomplishments. He is an outstanding and extremely well-rounded student, and as you know, one of the newest Eagle Scouts in our county. AHS has been awarded a \$500 Exxon Mobile Grant for Math and Science. Thanks to Mr. Ray White from White's Exxon for nominating AHS. In these tough budget times, this money will greatly help their Math and Science Programs. MMS recently received a \$2500 grant from Big Lots of Murphy. The Big Lots policy is that the school that is closest to Big Lots get's a \$2500 grant, so out there was Mr. Boyd Shield and Mr. Barry McClure with their rulers trying to see who was closest. Mr. McClure won and got the grant. We're indebted to Big Lots for their generosity. Tammy Roberts, Counselor at HDHS indicated they were awarded the ARC grant for between \$5,000 to \$8,000. The big news in grants was that Ms. Pam Swain had submitted a grant for the School Based Health Center at Hiwassee Dam and it was approved for \$250,000.00.

- Ms. Debbie Hogan read the motion to adjourn to closed session.
- Ms. Debbie Hogan made a motion to return to open session. The motion was approved. When the Board returned to open session, the following action(s) were taken:
- The Board approved the following hiring recommendations:

<u>Name</u>	<u>Position</u>	<u>School</u>	<u>Effective Date</u>
Jacqueline Waters	PT Child Nutrition	AES	12/12/11

- The Board approved the Maternity Leave request for:
  - Kami Tipton; 4<sup>th</sup> grade teacher, Ranger Elementary School; Maternity Leave effective 02/21/12 thru 06/13/12
  - Jessica Adams; 5<sup>th</sup> grade teacher, Murphy Elementary School; Maternity Leave effective 01/02/12 thru 06/13/12
- Dr. Lane presided over the Board of Education election of officers. The following Board Officers were elected:
  - Chair: Ms. Wanda Arrowood
  - Vice Chairman: Mr. Erik Brinke
  - Scribe: Ms. Debbie Hogan
  - Policy Sub-Committee: Ms. Debbie Hogan, Chair
    - Dr. David Ackerman, committee member
    - Mr. Paul Brown, committee member
  - Facilities: Mr. Erik Brinke, Chair
    - Mr. Winfield Clonts, committee member

Mr. Randy Barnett, committee member  
Dr. David Ackerman, alternate committee member

Parent/Student Matters: Mr. Randy Barnett, Chair

Ms. Wanda Arrowood, committee member

Mr. Paul Brown, committee member

Legislative:

Ms. Wanda Arrowood, Board of Education Representative

Mr. Erik Brinke, Board of Education Representative

Mr. Randy Barnett, Board of Education Representative

- The next meeting of the Cherokee County Board of Education will be held at Tri-County Early College January 12, 2012 at 6:00 p.m.
- There being no further business to discuss, the meeting adjourned at 9:05 pm.