

CUMBERLAND COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
AND
CUMBERLAND COUNTY BOARD OF EDUCATION
JOINT MEETING
March 10, 2008, 7:30AM
Education Resource Center, Elementary Drive
Fayetteville, NC

PRESENT: Chairman Breeden Blackwell
Vice Chairman Jeannette Council
Commissioner Kenneth Edge
Commissioner John T. Henley, Jr.
Commissioner Ed Melvin
Commissioner Diane Wheatley
Commissioner Billy R. King
Members, Board of Education (Larry Lancaster, Helen Farris,
Donald LaHuffman, Frank Barragan, Mary Emily Royal, Macky
Hall, Greg West, Mac Williams, Kim Fisher)
James Martin, County Manager
Juanita Pilgrim, Deputy County Manager
Amy Cannon, Asst. County Manager
Grainger Barrett, County Attorney
Harvey Raynor, Deputy County Attorney
Marie Colgan, Deputy Clerk
Sara VanderClute, PIO
Marsha Fogle, Clerk
Dr. Bill Harrison, Superintendent, School System
Tim Kinlaw, Assistant Superintendent
Ricky Lopes, Finance Officer
Beth Maynard, Board of Education Clerk
Other School Staff

The Chairmen of the respective Boards called their meetings to order.

1. Response to Commissioners' questions

Dr. William Harrison, School Superintendent, said the Board of Education has adopted the following strategic priorities:

Safe Caring Schools
Academic Growth
Continuous Quality Improvement
Human Resources Development
Technology

He noted the Cumberland County School system is the 4th largest in the state with 53,724 students. Demographics of the school population:

47%	African American
2%	Asian
7%	Hispanic
1.85%	Native American
37.32%	White
4%	Other

He also noted that 31% of the school population is military connected.

He made the following observations in response to questions submitted by commissioners prior to the meeting:

The county school system is not losing kids – it actually has grown in numbers from 51,313 in 1998-99 to 53,757 in 2007-08. Note: the 2007-08 figure includes Pre-K.

The Department of Instruction allocated \$205,120,000 for school construction needs;

The school system saves money in its construction projects by using in-house construction management;

Public school students move to private schools for a variety of different reasons. 6.5% of students in Cumberland County go to private schools; 3.2% are homeschooled and 0.2 go to Charter schools. Expanded Governed Choice programs, program improvements, facility improvements and smaller learning communities may cut these figures back.

In the Spring of 2007, the school system sent out a survey to parents regarding the school system; based on the responses received – the school system received an overall 86% satisfactory rating.

Students graduating from school system received a total of \$28,000,000 in scholarships. Also our students have been accepted to 138 universities to include all of the military academies.

The drop-out rate for the school system is 2.47% (state average is 3.63%). Difficult to control the environment of a student at home; school system can provide a controlled environment from 8:00AM – 3:00PM. Steps taken to decrease the drop-out rate include partnering with outside agencies, smaller learning communities, programs such as Freshman Academies, Cross Creek Early College, Howard Health & Life Sciences High School, GAP Task Force, Career/technical programs, Fuller Performance Learning Center.

The school system has reassigned a total of 3,039 students from 2002-2007.

The closing of Young Howard Elementary School was a result of explosive growth in the Jack Britt area, success and growth of Howard Health & Life Sciences and declining enrollment in the urban area schools.

The Board of Education is somewhat divided on the issue of it becoming a taxing authority. It is still under discussion.

2. Regarding the Interlocal Funding Agreement discussion item, Dr. Harrison said it was his opinion that the interlocal agreement not be addressed until it expires in another three years.

Commissioner Henley said both Boards should look at the funding agreement as it relates to the Hope VI Project and similar type projects and their incremental tax growth. He said it is difficult to approve a worthwhile project such as this, based on the current agreement with the School Board, because currently all revenues would go to debt service and to the schools, and the county would realize a negative return. In addition, Commissioner Henley also said we need to look at the agreement as it relates to property tax and what happens if the county decreases the property tax rate. Does the school system still receive \$0.44 (half of the county's 88 cent ad valorem tax) or is that amount reduced accordingly? He said the formula needs to be tweaked to address a "property tax decrease". Commissioner Henley said it is not the county's intention, however, to decrease school funding.

2. Closed Session pursuant to NCGS 143-318.11(A)(4) – Economic Development Matter

The Board of Education voted unanimously to go into closed session for the above noted matter.

The Board of Commissioners voted unanimously to go into Closed Session for the above noted matter.

The Board of Education voted unanimously to go back into Open Session.

The Board of Commissioners voted unanimously (motion by Commissioner Edge, seconded by Commissioner Council) to go back into Open Session.

MEETING ADJOURNED: 9:10AM.

Clerk to the Board

