# Minutes Transylvania County Board of Education October 20, 2008

# INVOCATION/PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE CALL TO ORDER/WELCOME BUSINESS ITEMS

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The Transylvania County Board of Education met in regular session at 6:30 p.m. on October 20, 2008, at the Morris Education Center. Present were Teresa McCall, Chairman; Mike Rogers, Vice Chairman; Bill Cathey; Jenni Pogue; and Chris Whitmire. Also present were Dr. Sonna Lyda, Superintendent; Jenny Hunter, Administrative Assistant, and approximately 70 staff members, guests and media representatives. Chairman McCall gave the invocation and Mr. Cathey led the Pledge of Allegiance. Chairman McCall called the meeting to order.

#### 1. Public Comment

Chairman McCall welcomed everyone and reviewed the guidelines for public comment. The following speakers addressed the Board:

 Donna Hooper, BHS parent, read a portion of a prepared statement listing the following concerns: 1) upper level graphics and foreign language classes only offered through virtual online or community college; 2) seniors taking graphics courses that do not fall within their career path; 3) a teacher being pulled from senior project mentoring duties after being placed on an action plan; 4) feeling that her child's educational avenue is being blocked and concern that BHS no

longer rates as a School of Excellence; 5) BHS students being a target of unreasonable disrespect; 6) lack of communication from school to parents regarding a student leadership course; 7) failure to address problems with class schedules, i.e., students denied access to upper level courses needed for college.

- Beth Pelletier, parent, expressed concerns about the "disturbing mass exodus of teachers and a number of firings." She stated that she was appalled to learn how poorly some teachers had been treated and the lack of consideration they received. She asked the Board why a small caring community cannot retain teachers. She feels that the school system targets teachers they want to get rid of. She reported that young, bright, promising teachers call the action plan "the kiss of death" and are afraid to speak up, lest they be next. She stated there is an ever-changing standards bar and asked why teachers get neither the right to fair, due process nor the nurturing they need.
- Brittany Cubero, student, spoke about the outstanding arts department at BHS, then begin speaking about a specific teacher. She was stopped by Chairman McCall and asked to refrain from mentioning staff members by name. Ms. Cubero did not resume her comments.
- David McNeill, parent, expressed concerns about Policy IK. Although he
  believes the policy was developed with good intentions, he does not think it is
  doing what it was intended to do. He reported that he had compared report
  cards for neighboring systems that accept the minimum state standards, and he
  found their scores to be comparable or better that Transylvania's. He asked the
  Board to consider this.
- Kelly Burns, parent, stated that teacher retention is growing at an alarming rate in this county. She sees action plans as the largest reason. In theory, they should help a teacher improve. In reality, they are like Donald's Trump catchphrase, "You're fired." She said that the situation is so bad that teachers are handed a box of Kleenex when they receive their action plan. She asked the Board to make sure that action plan recipients are not set up for failure. She warned that teachers need nurturing and help or we will lose them.

Mr. Whitmire asked for clarification on the leadership course. Dr. Scott Elliott reported that it is a new course that was developed in an effort to initiate more student leadership at BHS. It is an elective course, self-selected by students who want to be involved in student council, student government, and other leadership activities.

Chairman McCall thanked the speakers and directed them to contact the superintendent to schedule time(s) to discuss their specific concerns and/or obtain more information.

# 2. Good News Report

Dr. Lyda reported the following good news items:

 In celebration of American Education Week, all current and retired school system employees will be invited to Thanksgiving lunch as guests of the Board at the school cafeteria of their choice on November 20, 2008. ON A MOTION BY MR.

ROGERS, SECONDED BY MRS. POGUE, the Board approved a proclamation designating November 16-22, 2008 as American Education Week in Transylvania County. Mr. Rogers read the proclamation.

- Student artwork from BES will be on display at the North Carolina Center for the Advancement of Teaching (NCCAT) for the UNC Board of Governors meeting this fall. The works were created last year by the following students: Abigail Smith (grade K), Lilian Le (grade 1), Ezrah Brown (grade 4), Lucy Carpenter (grade 4), Carly Onnink (grade 5), and Cameron McCathern (grade 5).
- The Board recognized artwork from BES students that was on display in the board room.
- At the Land of Sky Band Competition on September 28 at Enka High School, 25 bands took the field in five different classes. The Brevard High School band placed first in Class 3A and took trophies in the following categories: color guard (second place), drum major (first place), percussion (third place), and horn line (first place). In addition, BHS placed second in the entire Silver Division of sixteen bands in Classes 1A, 2A, and 3A.
- Brevard Middle School has a new school song, thanks to Sally Germanaro, BMS music/chorus teacher. Sally wrote the song and enlisted her brother, Brian Fullen, one of Nashville's top session drummers and a Grammy Award winner, to produce and arrange the song. After adding a drum line to Sally's melody and lyrics, Brian sent the arrangement to other session artists who teamed up with a number of well-known musicians to complete the soundtrack. Sally is teaching the vocals to the middle school choir students who will record the song with the Nashville accompaniment. The recording then will be re-mixed and produced as a CD. A BMS student has designed cover art for the CD. Sally has copyrighted the song and given the copyright to the school. The school will sell copies of the CD to raise money.
- Rosman Elementary, Rosman Middle, and T. C. Henderson Elementary are
  collecting money to help a local family recover from a fire that destroyed their
  home. TCH is purchasing a new washing machine for the family, and RES and
  RMS are collecting money to purchase a tank of heating oil. Any leftover funds
  will be used to purchase gift certificates for groceries or other needs.
- Mr. and Mrs. David Collins of Brevard heard the Davidson River School Taiko drums and were very impressed by the experience. They have donated \$2,000 to DRS to help support the Taiko program.
- Laura Smith, marketing teacher at DRS, has been awarded a Bright Ideas Grant from Haywood Electric Company. The \$1,450 grant was used to purchase equipment to start a small business making customized vinyl lettering. The 24-inch digital die cut machine can reproduce anything that can be created on the computer, in sizes ranges from 3 to 24 inches for scrapbook toppers, posters, signs, etc. The machine arrived last week. The group is working on a business name and getting set up.

• Lisa Gillespie, business teacher at RHS, has also been awarded a Bright Ideas Grant from Haywood Electric Company.

Dr. Lyda introduced BHS student representative, Zack Cady, to the Board.

# 3. Resolution of Recognition, Thanks, Commendation and Congratulations ON A MOTION BY MR. WHITMIRE, SECONDED BY MR. ROGERS, the following resolution was approved:

BE IT RESOLVED by the Transylvania County Board of Education that recognition, thanks, commendation and congratulations be expressed to the persons named:

- Liam Schaefer, BES, for being accepted to the North Carolina Elementary All-State Honors Chorus
- Sarah Moser, BES Music and Chorus Teacher

# 4. Former Students in the Military

The Board reviewed the list of former TCS students who are serving or have served in the U.S. Military. Chairman McCall expressed appreciation to all of the individuals and their families for their dedication and sacrifice. The list will be read in its entirety at the November meeting.

#### 5. Consent Agenda

ON A MOTION BY MRS. POGUE, SECONDED BY MR. CATHEY, the minutes of the September 3, 2008 and September 15, 2008 meetings and the personnel report for October 20, 2008 (attached) were approved as presented.

# 6. Non-Faculty Coaches

ON A MOTION BY MR. CATHEY, SECONDED BY MR. ROGERS, the following non-faculty coaches were approved for fall sports 2008-2009:

Jimmy Jones, BHS Football First Responder Jason Rhodes, BMS Soccer (new) Paul Williams, BMS Soccer (new)

# 7. School Health Advisory Council 2008-2009

ON A MOTION BY MRS. POGUE, SECONDED BY MR. WHITMIRE, the following new members were approved for the 2008-2009 School Health Advisory Council:

Teresa Suddeth, RHS Student Representative (1 year term) Christy Diehl, RHS Parent Representative (1 year term)

#### 8. Technology Plan 2009-2013

The Board reviewed the district technology plan that was presented on September 15. There were no new changes to the plan. ON A MOTION BY MR. CATHEY, SECONDED BY MRS. POGUE, the Board approved the district Technology Plan for 2009-2013 as presented.

# 9. Safety Net Plans 2008-2009

Board of Education policy requires the presentation of Safety Net Plans for Student Accountability after the first month of school. New plans were presented last year. Dr. Scott Elliott and Mrs. Lisa Anderson presented changes and additions to the plans for 2008-2009 and answered questions from the Board. Dr. Elliott explained a new component of the plans, academic coaching. Academic coaching differs from remediation in that remediation typically takes place after failure. Academic coaching starts at the beginning of the semester. Board members commended the plans and pledged support for whatever resources are needed to provide academic coaching to students.

# 10. <u>Bids for Rosman Auxiliary Gym Renovations</u>

Norris Barger presented the October 8, 2008 bid tabulation for the Rosman auxiliary gym renovation. The low bidder was B. Allen Construction, Inc., with a total bid of \$326,084. This amount includes new bleachers, gym floor refinish, existing door replacement, and exterior step and rail renovations. Mr. Barger reported that B. Allen has excellent references and a reputation for bringing jobs in on time and on budget. He recommended the Board accept the B. Allen bid. ON A MOTION BY MR. WHITMIRE, SECONDED BY MR. CATHEY, the Board unanimously approved the bid of \$326,084 from B. Allen Construction, Inc., for the Rosman auxiliary gym renovations. The projected start date for the project is January 1, 2009.

#### 11. DRS ABC's Incentive Pay Plan 2008-2009

The North Carolina ABC's model for Alternative Schools Incentive Pay Plans mandates two achievement-based components and three local options. At least one of the local options must be an academic measure of student achievement. Plans must be approved by the local boards. Principal Donna Wilde Dr. Bo Williams presented the Davidson River School local option goals for 2008-2009. ON A MOTION BY MR. WHITMIRE, SECONDED BY MR. ROGERS, the Board approved the DRS local option goals for 2008-2009 as presented.

# 12. <u>Policy</u> GCN/AFC

Revised Policy GCN/AFC (Professional Educator Evaluation System) was presented for approval. Dr. Williams reviewed the latest revisions based on input from the last meeting and from the Board attorney. Mr. Whitmire and Mrs. Pogue suggested additional changes. ON A MOTION BY MR. WHITMIRE, SECONDED BY MRS. POGUE, the Board voted unanimously to return Policy GCN/AFC to the policy committee with the new recommendations. Mr. Rogers encouraged State House candidates Tom Thomas and David Guice to help return calendar control to local boards in order to address staff development needs.

# GCN/AFC-R

Revised Policy GCN/AFC-R (Professional Educator Evaluation System) was presented for approval. Mr. Whimire suggested additional changes to ensure clarification of an Action Plan to the employee's satisfaction. Chairman McCall and Mr. Cathey disagreed, pointing out that satisfaction is subjective and impossible to quantify. She suggested the recommendation go back through the policy committee and the Board attorney for review and consideration at the next meeting. ON A MOTION BY MR. WHITMIRE, SECONDED BY MRS. POGUE, a motion to this effect was unanimously approved.

#### **GCNA**

New Policy GCNA (Voluntary Resignation for Professional Employees) was presented as information. There were no new suggestions or concerns. Approval of the policy will be requested at the next regular meeting.

Student representative Zack Cady indicated that he needed to leave soon. Chairman McCall paused the policy discussion and gave Mr. Cady an opportunity to share his observations and/or concerns. Mr. Cady stated that there is a lack of communication and respect at Brevard High school among administrators, teachers and students. He sees this as inhibiting students' ability to succeed academically as well as the school's ability to foster the level of care needed at all levels. He then asked to dedicate his remaining time to other student speakers. Chairman McCall stated that although everyone had had an opportunity to sign up and speak during the designated public comment segment earlier in the meeting, she would allow a couple of speakers at this time provided they follow the established guidelines and mention no personnel by name or specific personnel matters. She gave a reminder that public comment is always available and welcome at every regular meeting.

- Student Meredith Byrd stated that teachers seem threatened by the way students are treated at BHS. She feels there is a problem regarding respect and speaking with administrators. There is a perception that the administration does not care about students.
- Student T. J. Burns reported feelings of hostility and lack of respect among all levels (students, teachers and administrators) at BHS. He said that students feel threatened that they will be reprimanded while simply walking down the hall.

Chairman McCall responded that no one should feel they are in a bad environment. She assured the students that these concerns are not taken lightly and that the Board, superintendent, and administration are concerned and care about students and teachers. She asked the students to call the superintendent's office and schedule a time to discuss their specific concerns in order to find a solution.

# **GCBDB**

Current Policy GCBDB (Employee Leaves and Absences) was presented for discussion at Mr. Whitmire's request. Current policy allows teachers to take an extended leave of absence once every two years in order to take advantage of unique travel or educational opportunities. Mr. Whitmire requested that the Board consider changing this to once a year to provide more benefit to teachers.

Dr. Lyda reported that principals had requested this policy many years ago. Mr. Cathey presented the other side of the coin, saying that students suffer if the teacher is out of the classroom for extended lengths. Substitutes generally cannot do all that the teacher does. Two or three weeks out of a 90 day grading period can negatively impact continuity. He feels that two years is a good rule.

Chairman McCall stated she would not be in favor of revising the policy. If an exception is desired, it should be handled individually and not through a policy change. She added that it is not the Board's job to micromanage decisions such as these. She agreed that extended absences can be detrimental to students, and believes the current policy is fair and not unreasonable.

Mrs. Pogue agreed that continuity is important to student learning, and allowing teachers to take one extended absence per year could add up to a large loss of instructional time overall.

MR. WHITMIRE MADE A MOTION to send Policy GCBDB to the policy committee for review. The motion did not receive a second.

#### JFC-R

Revised Policy JFC-R (Student Conduct/Discipline) was presented as information. Changes reflect the recommendations from the Bully-Free Task Force. There were no suggestions for additional changes. Approval of the policy will be requested at the next regular meeting.

# IIC

Current Policy IIC (Field Trip Approval and Cancellation) was presented for discussion at Mr. Whitmire's request. Mr. Whitmire expressed concerns regarding the non-sponsored status of field trips taken outside the continental U.S., particularly as affecting foreign language classes. He pointed out that the policy has not been updated in five years. Dr. Lyda reported that the decision not to sponsor international trips was based on the advice of legal counsel. Mr. Whitmire asked that the Board reconsider this issue, suggesting the use of disclaimers or other means that would allow the Board to support out-of-country field trips. Chairman McCall suggested the matter be discussed at the Board's annual retreat in February. Mr. Whitmire was in agreement, but requested that discussion begin before then. Chairman McCall stated that although she is fine with the policy as is, the first step would need to be a review by the Board attorney to clarify liability issues. ON A MOTION BY MR. WHITMIRE, SECONDED BY MR. CATHEY, the Board voted 4:1 to send Policy IIC to the Board attorney for a review of legalities in an effort to have the policy as a topic for discussion at retreat, said discussion being whether to provide some level of Board support for out-of-country travel (FOR: Cathey, Pogue, Rogers, Whitmire; AGAINST: McCall).

#### **IICA**

Current Policies IICA, IICA-R and IICA-E (Field Trips and Excursions) were presented for discussion at the Board's request. Mrs. Pogue asked for clarification on the May 15 cutoff date and the issue of motorized versus walking field trips. Dr. Lyda reported that the policy seems to be working well as is. She explained that the school system's activity buses are used heavily during the summer and time is needed in late spring for repair and maintenance. Additionally, May 15 impacts the end of year testing schedule.

# ΙK

Current Policy IK and Regulations IK-R (Student Accountability for Academic Achievement) were presented for discussion at Mr. Whitmire's request. Dr. Williams gave an update on the most recent information from DPI regarding testing and exit standards. He reported that word was received just this day that Standard Errors of Measurement would not be allowed in determining EOCs or EOGs. Some districts had been using one Standard Error of Measurement in determining performance. Dr. Williams stated that this practice would have to change under the new directive.

Mr. Whitmire proposed that the Board consider using the state minimum achievement level as Transylvania's minimum in order to reduce extra requirements on students. He stated that the extra requirements may not be fulfilling the intent of making students try

harder and could be hindering, not helping, some students. He suggested that Transylvania go with the state standard because it has had a lot of powerful minds behind it. He also noted that enrollment is dropping, and students can choose to go to Henderson or Buncombe Counties to avoid Policy IK. He believes that we need to look at how much benefit we are truly getting from having higher standards.

Mr. Cathey disagreed, stating that he had no problem holding students to a higher standard, nor had he ever seen a student's performance worsen after remediation. He observed that some students do not know what they can achieve unless they are pushed. He believes strongly that lowering standards would not be good for students.

Dr. Williams remarked that some may assume that failure on an EOC is based on the standard of 70-100% correct. Actually, both US History and Civics have a standard of 50% correct in order to receive a passing grade of 70.

Mr. Rogers remarked that he had been initially neutral regarding Policy IK, but after learning more about it, he is very decidedly in favor of the policy. He noted that SAT scores at BHS have exceeded the state average over the last five years. He estimated that \$2.6 million in scholarships were awarded to Transylvania students because they were challenged. Transylvania has outperformed the state 28 of 40 times. He believes the focus should be on reaching every socioeconomic group, not lowering standards, and that every possible resource should be provided for safety nets, remediation, and academic coaching. Additionally, the school system needs community volunteers and other resources to help connect with students whose parents are not involved.

Chairman McCall noted that Policy IK has been reviewed and revised eight times since its adoption in 1994. She noted that like any living document, the policy has imperfections, and would likely continue to be revised and improved. She called for a motion on whether to send the policy to committee for revision. MR. WHITMIRE MADE A MOTION, SECONDED BY MRS. POGUE, that given the impending changes from the state, to send Policy IK to the policy committee to see if it could benefit from these changes. The motion was defeated 2:3 (FOR: Pogue, Whitmire; AGAINST: Cathey, McCall, Rogers).

#### IKF

Policy IKF (Graduation Requirements) was presented as information. The policy has been revised to reflect the four-credit concentration area requirements that were discussed at the September 15 meeting. Mrs. Pogue suggested that other wording be used in place of the subjective phrase "that makes sense." Mr. Whitmire requested that the administration 1) ensure training for everyone involved with implementation of the policy; and 2) ensure clarity and ease of understanding for students and parents regarding the review process. Mr. Cathey pointed out that new procedures can be intimidating to some parents, and that steps should be taken to ensure all parents are informed of and understand the new requirements. Dr. Elliott will further revise the policy to incorporate these suggestions. Approval of Policy IKF will be requested at the next regular meeting.

#### ACAC

New Policy ACAC (Registered Sex Offenders) was presented as information. Dr. Bo Williams reported that Policies ACAC and ACAD (Student Sex Offenders) were developed by legal counsel. The policies must be in place by December 1, 2008 in

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order to be in compliance with the *Jessica Lunsford Act.* Dr. Lyda reported that Board Attorney Chris Campbell would conduct a workshop on October 27, 2008 to update school administrators on the duties and responsibilities associated with the new legislation. Mr. Whitmire asked about possible signage on school campuses. Dr. Lyda will ask the board attorney about this. Approval of the policy will be requested at the next regular meeting.

#### ACAD

New Policy ACAD (Student Sex Offenders) was presented as information. Approval of the policy will be requested at the next regular meeting.

# 13. <u>Important Dates</u>

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#### 14. Other Items

Chairman McCall welcomed Board of Education candidates and House of Representative candidates in attendance.

Dr. Lyda presented a request from Sharon Hogsed to revise the lease agreement that was approved on October 9. Mrs. Hogsed had originally indicated that rent was to be \$450 per month. The lease document had stated \$350 per month. Mrs. Hogsed requested that the lease be revised to \$400 a month. ON A MOTION BY MR.

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WHITMIRE, SECONDED BY MR. CATHEY, the request to amend the Hogsed lease to reflect a \$400 per month rental fee was unanimously approved.

Dr. Lyda presented a request from the Town of Rosman for the Board's help in paying for a power pole relocation. The power pole must be moved in order to install a new sidewalk along the highway adjacent to Rosman High School. The new sidewalk is a part of the Department of Transportation's highway redesign. The DOT is paying for the road and the Town is paying for the sidewalks. The cost to move the power pole is \$22,000. Norris Barger recommended that the Board apply \$6,000 that was originally budgeted for safety railings. He stated that there may not be a need for the railings, and should a need arise later, contingency funds could be used. ON A MOTION BY MR. CATHEY, SECONDED BY MR. WHITMIRE, the Board voted 4:1 to provide \$6,000 to the Town of Rosman for the power pole relocation (FOR: Cathey, McCall, Pogue, Whitmire; AGAINST: Rogers).

There was no further business, and ON A MOTION BY MR. CATHEY, SECONDED BY MRS. POGUE, the meeting was adjourned at 10:40 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,	
Chairman	Secretary

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# PERSONNEL REPORT 10/20/08

I. ACCEPT THE REPORT OF RESIGNATIONS/TERMINATIONS ACCEPTED/INITIATED BY THE SUPERINTENDENT FROM/FOR THE FOLLOWING PERSONS:

# Licensed Personnel

None

#### Classified Personnel

Raymond McCants, Custodian, BHS, effective November 1, 2008 Bernadette Merriman, Teacher Assistant, BHS, effective October 16, 2008

II. APPROVE THE EMPLOYMENT RECOMMENDATIONS MADE BY THE SUPERINTENDENT FOR THE FOLLOWING PERSONS:

# **Licensed Personnel**

Sue Fox, Interim School Counselor, RHS, effective January 20, 2009 (*tentative*), through March 2, 2009

Jackie Green, Interim Teacher, RMS, effective October 20, 2008 through June 17, 2009

# Classified Personnel

Evelyn Chapman, Office Support Professional II, MEC, effective October 27, 2008 Tonya James, Teacher Assistant, BHS, effective October 21, 2008 William Newell, Bus Driver, TCS, effective October 21, 2008 Mark Pace, Custodian, RES, effective October 21, 2008

III. ACCEPT THE REPORT OF TRANSFER OF ASSIGNMENT MADE BY THE SUPERINTENDENT FOR THE FOLLOWING PERSONS:

#### Licensed Personnel

None

# Classified Personnel

None

IV. APPROVE THE LEAVES OF ABSENCE RECOMMENDED BY THE SUPERINTENDENT FOR THE FOLLOWING PERSONS:

# <u>Licensed Personnel</u>

Laura Elliott, Teacher, BMS, unpaid leave pursuant to local Board policy GCBDB, effective November 21, 2008, through January 15, 2009

Sarah Reid, Teacher, RMS, short-term disability leave effective November 29, 2008, through November 28, 2009

# Classified Personnel

None

# V. APPROVE THE SUPERINTENDENT'S RECOMMENDATION FOR THE FOLLOWING SUBSTITUTE EMPLOYEES:

# Substitute Teachers

Sharon Cash

Carol Clay

Robert Clay

Megan Hutton

Karen Henderson

John Lucas, Jr.

Ben Marchman

Rick Ricketts

# Substitute Child Nutrition

Gloria Addis

Sherry Brown

Barbara Chandler

Tara Corn

Cleotilde Cuevas Salas

Grisel Juarez Zamora

# Substitute Bus Drivers

Pete Koffman

Sidney Propst