

Minutes
Transylvania County Board of Education
February 1, 2010

Planning Retreat

Welcome / Agenda Review

1. School Funding / Competitive Bidding Issues
2. Closed Session
3. District Data Notebook Update
4. SACS / CASI District Accreditation Visit
5. NC Teacher Evaluation Process
6. Special Education Services / Licensure / HQ
7. FY11 Budget
8. Closing Thoughts / Next Steps

The Transylvania County Board of Education held its annual planning retreat at 5:30 p.m. on February 1, 2010 at the Morris Education Center. Present were Chris Whitmire, Chairman; Tawny McCoy, Vice Chairman; Shelia Norman; Cindy Petit; and Sue Fox. Also present were Dr. Jeff McDaris, Superintendent; Jenny Hunter, Administrative Assistant; Norris Barger, Director of Business Services; David Sutton, Director of Human Resources; Dr. Kim Elliott, Director of Elementary/Middle Curriculum; Dr. Scott Elliott, Director, Director of Secondary Curriculum and Career/Technical Education; and Lenora Carver, *Transylvania Times*. Mr. Whitmire led the Pledge of Allegiance, and Mrs. Norman gave the invocation. Chairman Whitmire called the meeting to order. Thanks were expressed to Dr. Kim Elliott for a successful 2010 Math/Science Fair.

School Funding / Competitive Bidding Issues

This item was postponed until a future date. Hazardous road conditions due to snow/ice prevented Attorney Chris Campbell from attending the retreat.

Closed Session

Postponed until a future date.

District Data Notebook Update

David Sutton presented updates on the following performance indicators:

- A. ABC's Growth and Performance Recognition Status
- B. Percent Proficient on K-2 Assessments of Reading, Writing and Math
- C. Composite EOG & EOC Proficiency Rates
- D. AP Performance Statistics
- E. SAT Results
- F. Cohort Graduation Rate
- G. Frequency of Dual Enrollment in College Courses
- H. VoCATS Proficiency Composites
- I. Annual Teacher Turnover Rate
- J. Average Annual Local Teacher Salary Supplement
- K. Percentage of Core Academic Classes Taught by "Highly Qualified" Teachers
- L. Percentage of Core Academic Teachers Completing "High Quality" Professional Development
- M. Random Drug Testing Results
- N. Volunteer Service Hours Contributed Annually
- O. Computer Access Ratios

Mr. Sutton reported that the following indicators are on the horizon:

- A. National Board Certification Rate
- B. Athletic Participation Rates
- C. United Way Annual Campaign Participation Rates
- D. Facility Inspection Results

SACS/CASI District Accreditation Visit

David Sutton gave a review of the upcoming AdvancED (SACS/CASI) District Accreditation Quality Assurance Review (QAR). The review is scheduled for April 25-28, 2010. The following timeline was discussed:

1. Sunday, April 25: QAR team meeting (orientation, planning)
2. Monday, April 26: District presentations and interviews:
 - A. Superintendent
 - B. Central office administration
 - C. School board members
 - D. Parents, business members, community members
 - E. Principals (not visited on Day 2)
 - F. Support staff
3. Tuesday, April 27: School visits
 - A. School leadership and SIT
 - B. Teachers
 - C. Parents, business members, community members
 - D. Students
4. Wednesday, April 28: Standards verification and team deliberations; oral exit report to the Board of Education
 - A. Superintendent
 - B. Others as determined by QAR team

The QAR team will be composed of 7-8 members. The school system will coordinate all travel, lodging, meals, meeting spaces, materials and other logistics related to the visit. Costs will include travel and lodging for QAR team members and the review fee of \$750. Mr. Sutton gave an overview of the continuous improvement process in Transylvania County Schools. A district self-assessment report is due on March 12, 2010.

NC Teacher Evaluation Process

Mr. Sutton gave an update on the new North Carolina teacher evaluation process. He reviewed the Professional Teaching Standards that were adopted by the State Board in June 2007, the McREL pilot, the statewide implementation timeline and the local timeline. Local training on each of the new standards has been taking place and will continue during the 2009-2010 school year. Implementation will begin with the 2010-2011 year. The Board reviewed a preliminary draft of Policy GCN/AFC (Professional Educator Evaluation Process) which has been rewritten to align with the new standards. The revised policy will go before the policy committee and the Board later this spring.

During discussion, Board members had concerns that the broad nature of the new state standards could create some risk for laxness by eliminating specific objectives. There were also concerns that the new standards could create a time burden for observers. Mr. Sutton and Dr. Scott Elliott reported that Transylvania's administrators have expressed those same concerns to the State Board of Education. Dr. McDaris remarked that the new system is focused more on the art and craft of teaching rather than the managerial aspects. Hopes were expressed that the new system, although different, would prove to be positive and exciting.

Special Education Services / Licensure / HQ

Dr. McDaris reported that Lisa Anderson, who had been scheduled to present with Mr. Sutton, could not be in attendance due to a death in the family.

Mr. Sutton reviewed special education teacher licensure. With the passage of *No Child Left Behind* in 2001, special education teachers had to be licensed and Highly Qualified (HQ) in not only special education, but also in *every* core content area that they teach. In response to this law, the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction developed its own Praxis 0511 test to enable special education teachers to meet the requirements. Recently, however, the federal government (USED) determined that the Praxis 0511 does not satisfy HQ requirements for special education teachers teaching core subjects in grades 6-12. The Praxis 0511 test was said to represent a lower content standard and to be less rigorous than the Praxis test for general education teachers. The net effect of this ruling is that there are now no middle school or high school special education teachers in TCS who are appropriately licensed or HQ under the new USED guidelines. Furthermore, there are none in the state of North Carolina. Because the standard for secondary core content delivery is too high for one person to satisfy, a licensure solution is not likely. For now, the solution will rest in a different delivery model in which core content specialists would work hand-in-hand with special educators to provide appropriate instruction for middle and high school Occupational Course of Study (OCS) students. Dr. Scott Elliott and Dr. Kim Elliott discussed various ways in which this might be implemented in TCS classrooms.

Dr. McDaris stated that he believes this ruling is rooted in the federal government's dislike of the North Carolina OCS program, which allows OCS students to earn the same high school diploma as all other students. Mrs. Petit stated that she did not agree with the USED on this matter, noting that 1) federal law requires an equal education for all students; 2) OCS students work much harder to earn their diplomas than other students; 3) the ruling seems to assign a lesser value to the OCS diploma. Dr. Elliott agreed, stating that the ruling sends an unspoken message that the federal government holds lower expectations for certain students.

FY11 Budget

Norris Barger presented the first look at the FY11 anticipated local current expense budget needs:

1	Decrease in fines and forfeitures	\$40,000
2	Health insurance 8.9% increase (\$4,527/FTE to \$4,929/FTE)	33,379
3	Retirement increase (8.75% to 10.53%)	73,469
4	Teacher step increase (4%)	57,862
5	Supplement increase associated with step increase	49,348
6	State discretionary reduction increase	<u>201,301</u>
	Total	\$455,359

Mr. Barger reported that Items 1, 2, 3 and 6 are certainties or near certainties. Items 4 and 5 are only possibilities at this time. He reported there has been some talk among lobbyists and lawmakers about restoring the teacher step increase from last year and giving an increase this year as well. Should this pass, the local teacher supplement, which is based on a percentage of salary, would increase correspondingly. North Carolina currently has a \$500 million deficit in revenues. It is very likely that additional state cuts will be required on top of the cuts already made this year. Dr. McDaris remarked that a push for teacher raises in such a grim budget year and in such a poor economy may not be the wisest move politically.

Mr. Whitmire asked about a line item for Child Nutrition assistance in FY11. Dr. McDaris stated that some local assistance would be needed for next year, although the amount is not yet known. Child Nutrition revenues are down significantly, and free/reduced rates are averaging at 56%--an all-time high.

Mrs. McCoy asked about teacher positions. Dr. McDaris reported that federal stimulus funds allowed us to save approximately 16 jobs. The money exists to sustain those positions for one more year before the funds disappear. Mr. Sutton stated that by moving people around when vacancies occurred last year, we were able to preserve all but two positions. Mr. Whitmire noted that capital outlay funds were used to save teacher positions as well. The Board discussed adding a line item for jobs preservation to the above list.

There was much discussion about the importance of communicating the school system's needs to the county commissioners early and often. Frequent updates as information changes could help to eliminate surprises, dispel rumors and avoid wasting time dealing with non-facts.

Mrs. Norman asked about the BHS turf issue. Dr. McDaris stated that this would have to be addressed as not just a school system responsibility, but as a community issue. Mr. Whitmire noted that inaccuracies and misperceptions regarding the school system's ability to pay for turf are circulating within the community. He emphasized that the school board has no way to raise the money that would be needed for this project; any funding of this endeavor would have to be a community effort. Mr. Barger noted that we need to do a better job of educating people about not only the turf but state lottery funds also. Most people believe that the school district receives a great deal of lottery money, and that is simply not the case.

Closing Thoughts / Next Steps

Dr. McDaris stated that Attorney Campbell's presentation on school funding / competitive bidding would be rescheduled. He informed members that some exciting presentations on curriculum/instruction would be coming this spring. Mrs. Norman asked about a parent education coordinator position. Dr. McDaris stated that Lisa Anderson would be providing information on that topic soon. Other topics that had been suggested but not included for retreat will be discussed at future board meetings.

Chairman Whitmire suggested doing a public relations campaign on what goes into a decision to cancel schools during bad weather. He stated that the more facts parents have about delayed starts, early dismissals, calendar, etc., the more it would help to dispel rumors, increase understanding, and reduce stress and upset during this very challenging winter season.

Dr. McDaris gave an update on ProActive. A new notification system will be replacing the ProActive system soon. The technology department is in the process of loading the TCS database into the new system. After training, the new system should be ready for use. The new system is the same type as that being used by the Buncombe County School district.

There was no further business, and the meeting adjourned at 9:55 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Chairman

Secretary