

**Minutes
Transylvania County Board of Education
February 3, 2014**

PLANNING RETREAT

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Wrap-up

The Transylvania County Board of Education held its annual planning retreat at 4:30 p.m. on February 3, 2014 at the Morris Education Center. In addition to approximately seven guests, the following board members, staff and media representatives were in attendance:

BOARD MEMBERS: Tawny McCoy, Chair; Cindy Petit, Vice Chair; Sue Fox; Ron Kiviniemi and Mike Rogers

STAFF: Dr. Jeff McDaris, Superintendent; Jenny Hunter, Administrative Assistant; Dr. Scott Elliott, Assistant Superintendent; Norris Barger, Director of Business Services; Audrey Reneau, Director of K-8 Curriculum; Jeremy Gibbs, Director of Human Resources; Tammy Bellefeuil, Director of Student Services; Chris Whitlock, Director of Technology Services; Meredith Licht, TCAE; and Andrew Shook, School Resource Officer

MEDIA: Kevin Smith, *Daily Waterfall*

WELCOME / CALL TO ORDER / AGENDA REVIEW

Vice Chairman Petit welcomed everyone to the meeting and reported that Chairman McCoy would be a few minutes late due to jury duty. Mr. Kiviniemi led in a moment of silence and Mrs. Petit led in the Pledge of Allegiance. Mrs. Petit called the meeting to order. Dr. McDaris reviewed the agenda.

TEACHER TENURE AND 25% PLAN

Dr. Scott Elliott gave an overview of the options being considered for selection of the 25% of teachers and other instructional support educators to be offered four-year contracts and salary increases pursuant to the 2013-2014 Appropriations Act, SB 402. He reported that TCS has 226 eligible teachers that meet the criteria and may offer 56 teachers the four-year contracts. A survey was sent to all certified staff on October 28 to determine the likely acceptance rate of the contracts if offered, factors or criteria which should and should not be included in the selection process, and other input. A public information session was held with Board Attorney Dean Shatley on December 11. The Educator Effectiveness Work Group that was originally scheduled to meet on January 25 (canceled due to snow) will meet on February 18 to determine a final selection methodology for recommendation to the Board.

Dr. Elliott reported that based on the survey responses, approximately 48% of teachers plan to reject the four-year contract if offered; approximately 11% plan to accept the contract if offered; and approximately 42% are unsure if they would accept or reject the offer.

The Board reviewed three options for the selection process that are being considered at this time. Dr. Elliott described the various criteria and recommendations that are being looked at to try and make the process as objective and uniform as possible. Board members favored Options 2 and 3 (see below) and Recommendation 8 (only consider longevity/years of experience when attempting to break a tie between two or more teachers when only one spot in the selection pool remains).

Options 2 and 3

- Ten pools are established (1 for each school's classroom teachers and 1 for all non-classroom teachers in the district).
- Only summary evaluation data is considered (Option 2); OR consider summary evaluation data along with other objective indicators of performance (Option 3).
- Begin the process with a written opt-in/out notification for each teacher identified as eligible for selection. Only opt-in teachers are selected for contracts so as to maximize the number of contracts awarded by those who desire contracts.
- Allow a four-week grace period prior to June 30.

Mr. Rogers asked why a teacher would opt out of the selection pool. Mrs. Licht explained that by signing the contract, a teacher would be voluntarily giving up tenure and the right to due process, including a fair dismissal hearing.

Dr. Elliott presented a timeline of specific actions that must take place by the end of the current school year. Board members expressed their strong opposition to what the state is doing to teachers by enacting this piece of legislation. They also commended Dr. Elliott for an admirable job in developing an implementation plan to deal with a very difficult situation.

TCS COMPENSATION STUDY AND NEXT STEPS

Mr. Gibbs gave an overview of what has been learned so far from the TCS compensation study and presented possible directions for the future. The following goals and recommendations were discussed:

- Develop a local salary schedule for every job classification that does not already have one. Set salary structures that the budget would reasonably support.
- Stay competitive by increasing the local teacher salary supplement by one-half percent each year in order to reach the goal of 10% by FY17. Make this a local budget priority each year.
- Continue to support tuition reimbursement for teachers pursuing advanced degrees. Consider offering tuition assistance to teacher assistants who want to become teachers as well as incentives for classified staff who want to pursue advanced training and certifications in order to attract and retain the highest-caliber employees.
- Continue supplements for coaches, additional pay for band directors and teacher mentors, and consider providing compensation for other additional duties such as club sponsorships, department heads, etc.
- Succession planning is vital. Increase the pool of educators who are interested in moving into leadership roles (assistant principal, principal and administration). Find ways to support and develop future leaders through possible partnership with WCU or other leadership programs.
- Address pay parity for administrator positions by diversifying titles and setting salary ranges based on specific duties.

- Six of the 14 current TCS school administrators live out of county. Approximately one-fourth of all TCS teachers live out of county. Support economic development and other measures that would allow TCS employees to afford to live in Transylvania County.

Board members were supportive of the goals listed above and stated that they look forward to seeing the new salary structures to be developed.

FY15 BUDGET FIRST LOOK

Mr. Barger presented a first look at budget numbers for fiscal year 2014-2015. At this time, there are many unknowns in terms of state and federal funding. There was some discussion about the possibility of raising school lunch prices next year. Dr. McDaris reported that federal reimbursements have not been keeping pace with actual costs per plate. That plus rising food and transportation costs and decreased revenues have created a deficit in the Child Nutrition program. Dr. McDaris reported that the free/reduced rate averages around 60% county-wide. Raising lunch prices would not begin to make up the deficit that has been experienced over the last two years.

Mr. Barger reported that he and the TCS athletics director will be performing a comprehensive athletic facilities study this spring. He gave a reminder the Board would need to update its master facilities plan before presenting anything to the public relative to a bond referendum. Mr. Kiviniemi recommended having a new master facilities study done as soon as possible. Mr. Barger reported that hopes to get the study done this summer. The Board had its first look at the FY15 capital needs list which currently totals \$22,800,722.

Mr. Rogers stated that he was very pleased with the improvements to the BES front entrance security and requested that the RES front entrance project be moved up on the list. Mr. Barger gave a report from a recent meeting with the RES principal and others regarding plans for improving security at the school.

Mr. Rogers asked about security for the BHS front entrance. Mr. Barger reported that due to the open design of the BHS campus, the bulk of the project would need to be included in a bond. However, the hallway doors and public entry doors would have access control by the end of the year. Mr. Barger reported that the ultimate goal is for a person to be able to go anywhere on the BHS campus without going outdoors. The scope of such an enterprise would require professional architectural planning and design.

Mr. Barger reported that he is looking into a possible partnership with WCU to introduce solar-produced power if it can be shown to be cost effective. He noted that some districts have had much success with solar power.

BOND REFERENDUM

Dr. McDaris reported that this item was originally intended as a follow-up to the joint meeting that was planned for January 28 and then canceled due to snow. He reported that he and the county manager have been meeting regularly to discuss a possible bond referendum. Board members agreed to postpone discussion on this item until after the joint meeting with the commissioners has taken place (new date to be determined). Possible dates for the joint meeting were discussed.

WRAP-UP

Dr. McDaris noted that Mrs. Dony's Merrill's last day was January 31. He and the Board extended their very best to Mrs. Merrill in her retirement from the school system. The Board also welcomed Mr. Chris Whitlock as the new Director of Technology for Transylvania County Schools.

There was no further business, and ON A MOTION BY MR. KIVINIEMI, SECONDED BY MRS. FOX, the meeting was adjourned at 9:30 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Chairman

Secretary