

**Minutes
Transylvania County Board of Education
February 6, 2017**

WORK SESSION

INVOCATION/PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE
CALL TO ORDER/WELCOME
TOPICS FOR DISCUSSION:

- FY18 Budget
- Master Facilities Plan
- Capital & Technology
- Student Growth by Quartile
- Social Media Update
- Strategic Plan / Surveys
- Scheduling Arrangements
- Spirit Initiative

The Transylvania County Board of Education held a work session/planning retreat at 5:30 p.m. on February 6, 2017 at the Morris Education Center. Tawny McCoy led in a moment of silence and Ron Kiviniemi led the Pledge of Allegiance. Chairman McCoy welcomed everyone and called the meeting to order. In addition to approximately five guests, the following board members and staff were in attendance:

BOARD MEMBERS:

Tawny McCoy, Chair
Ron Kiviniemi, Vice Chair
Marty Griffin
Betty Scruggs McGaha
Alice Wellborn

BOARD ATTORNEY:

Chad Donnahoo

MEDIA:

John Lanier, *Transylvania Times*

STAFF:

Dr. Jeff McDaris, Superintendent
Jenny Hunter, Administrative Assistant
Dr. Jeremy Gibbs, Chief Academic Officer
Brian Weaver, Senior Director, Human Resources
Norris Barger, Director, Business Services
Chris Whitlock, Director, Technology Services
Carolyn Barton, Director, School Nutrition Services
Kevin Smith, School Community Relations Coordinator
April Gaydosh, Principal, BES
Mark Ellenberger, School Resource Officer

FY18 BUDGET

Dr. McDaris gave board members a white paper brief outlining his vision of “what’s next” for the school system in technology devices and support, alternative school, potential new programs, teacher retention, leadership, transportation services, support staff, athletics, attracting bus drivers, buildings and infrastructure, and theme opportunities.

Dr. McDaris gave an update on ESSA and the possibility that states may be allowed to set their own plans for student accountability. He also shared an email from NCSBA legal counsel, Leanne Winner, regarding a study being done by the NC legislature to look at capital and current expense funding requests made by local boards of education going back to 2006-2007. While the researchers have access to the historical education budgets that were approved by county commissioners over the years, they don’t necessarily have information on the requests that LEAs initially made. NCSBA has created a survey instrument to gather this data from LEAs.

Dr. McDaris reported a concern that the state may be looking at block grants for principal salaries instead of a salary schedule.

House Bill 13 has been introduced as a proposed “fix” to class size legislation passed last year that would make it difficult for schools to fund art, music and PE positions. The fix would only provide approximately 75% of what was taken away.

Norris Barger provided a first look at initial budget drafts for FY18. He noted that based on the local funding formula, the school system is already \$258,000 in the red. There was considerable discussion about state textbook funding. It was noted that digital materials are no less expensive than printed materials due to book publishers’ monopolies.

Dr. McDaris reported that the new state treasurer seems to be advocating toward moving money within the state retirement system. This could have implications for the state education budget. Mr. Griffin noted there is a fear that North Carolina may take steps to use retiree pension funds for other things as some other states have done.

MASTER FACILITIES PLAN

The board discussed potential improvements to school facilities. The board would like to get started on Phase I projects as soon as possible in order to take advantage of current pricing; the cost escalation factor goes up the longer construction is delayed. The board discussed the possibility of using Certificates of Participation (COPs) grants for Phase I funding. The board plans to hold community input sessions this spring to help inform the public and build support for funding improvements.

CAPITAL & TECHNOLOGY

Chris Whitlock discussed plans to expand 1:1 technology by adding 800-1000 new devices in grades 3-5. As the 1:1 program grows, there is a strong need for more manpower to support the expansion. Mr. Whitlock noted that Transylvania County Schools has only 5 instructional technology facilitators (ITFs) and 4 technicians to serve the entire school system; this is a low ratio compared to other school districts and the business world. The goal is to have one ITF per school. Dr. McDaris reported that Transylvania receives less e-rate funding now due to a reallocation of the federal e-rate funds to school districts that made little to no preparation for their technology programs.

STUDENT GROWTH BY QUARTILE

Dr. Jeremy Gibbs gave a review of EVAAS growth index and achievement data. He reported that digging down into the data is very time consuming for teachers, and the district is exploring techniques to help teachers use the data in meaningful ways to plan and meet individual student needs.

SOCIAL MEDIA UPDATE

Kevin Smith gave a presentation on the importance of a directed communications strategy to the school system’s success. He explained how social media is used to expand our profile and control our message. Teachers and others have created a crowd of people who post the many good things about our schools on Facebook, Twitter, and other platforms every day. Mr. Smith gave a demonstration of how feeds are monitored to evaluate how posts are doing. He strongly

encouraged everyone to get on Twitter, noting that it is a great way to show pride in our community and our schools.

STRATEGIC PLAN / SURVEYS

Dr. McDaris reported that two online surveys are being developed to gather feedback on the TCS strategic plan. The first is based on the AdvancED survey tools and is being planned for late February or early March. The second is being developed by Dr. McDaris based on group member input and is planned to run in April. Dr. McDaris shared a draft of the AdvancED survey.

SCHEDULING ARRANGEMENTS

Dr. McDaris reviewed the year-long college-style schedule that is being considered for high schools. He reported that feedback has been generally positive, with some expressing concerns about teacher planning periods and less time for hands-on CTE labs. Others like the idea of having more time for homework assignments, enrichment periods, and less class time missed for sports. Board members discussed various pros and cons. Mr. Kiviniemi asked if any data is available showing the impact on achievement from the different types of schedules. Dr. McDaris emphasized that no decision on scheduling has been made at this time and there will be no changes for this fall.

SPIRIT INITIATIVE

The board agreed to postpone discussion of the spirit initiative until a future meeting.

There was no further business, and ON A MOTION BY MRS. MCCOY, SECONDED BY MR. KIVINIEMI, the meeting was adjourned at 9:33 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Chairman

Secretary