

MINUTES OF MECKLENBURG COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

NORTH CAROLINA
MECKLENBURG COUNTY

The Board of Commissioners of Mecklenburg County, North Carolina, met in Special Session in Conference Center Room 267 of the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Government Center located at 600 East Fourth Street at 3:00 p.m. on Tuesday, April 27, 2010.

ATTENDANCE

Present: Chairman Jennifer Roberts and Commissioners Karen Bentley, Dumont Clarke, Harold Cogdell, Jr. Neil Cooksey, George Dunlap, Bill James, Vilma Leake and Daniel Murrey
General Manager John McGillicuddy.
Clerk to the Board Janice S. Paige

Absent: None

Commissioner Murrey was absent when the meeting was called to order and until noted in the minutes.

The meeting was called to order by Chairman Roberts after which the following topic was addressed: Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools' Priorities. This was a joint meeting with the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Board of Education regarding Charlotte/Mecklenburg Schools' (CMS) Performance.

(1) CHARLOTTE-MECKLENBURG SCHOOLS' PRIORITIES

Board of Education Chairman Eric Davis and School Superintendent Dr. Peter Gorman presented CMS's report, which covered the following:

- * CMS Strategic Plan 2014 Priorities
 - * Effective Educators
 - * Performance Management
 - * Increase Graduation Rate
- * Demographic Changes

Commissioner Murrey entered the meeting.

- * 2008-09 Academic Progress
- * Assessment Results – End of Grade
 - * Math – Reading – Science
- * Comparisons with Other Counties in the State
- * National Assessment of Educational Progress
 - * Trial Urban District Assessment
- * Assessment Results – End of Course
 - * Algebra 1 & 2, Biology, Chemistry, Civics & Economics, English 1, Geometry, Physics, Physical Science, & U. S. History
- * Assessment Results – Writing
- * Assessment Results – Career and Technical Education: VoCATS

- * Assessment Results – SAT and Advanced Placement
- * Assessment Results – ABC's
- * Adequate Yearly Progress – 2008-2009
- * Internal Quality Management

A copy of the report is on file with the Clerk to the Board.

Dr. Gorman noted the following in his closing remarks:

- * CMS is making progress, but “not nearly as fast enough.” He said there's more work to be done.
- * CMS is closing gaps.
- * CMS is growing but in some cases where students are growing, the gaps are remaining or expanding and in some cases the gap is being closed, but at the rate that it's being done, “it won't happen in a particular student's educational career where the gaps will disappear.”
- * CMS will take the data it has and focus on effectiveness and direct resources in a way that will offset that effectiveness.

Comments

Commissioner Murrey asked for a definition of the graduation rate, which was addressed.

Commissioner Murrey asked does the cohort change every year and if so, wouldn't that impact proficiency rates. *The response was yes.*

Commissioner Murrey said he was impressed with the progress that's been made and appreciated the focus that's been placed on reducing gaps, not only between the various interest groups, but how CMS stands with others in the state and nationally.

Commissioner Murrey said given the success CMS has had, he would like to see CMS continue to support strategic staffing regardless of what happens with the budget, since it's showing such good results.

Commissioner Dunlap asked how many students have to increase performance in order to move the bar, at least one point. *The response was one hundred children for EOG's, to move it up a percent.*

Commissioner Dunlap asked what did CMS attribute the gains to and how would those things be negatively impacted if CMS doesn't have a sufficient budget to keep moving in the same direction. *The response was having “great” teachers in the classroom and “great” leaders in the school; strategic staffing; curriculum and instruction reform strategies; the Pre-K program; strategic use of resources, and pay for performance.*

Commissioner Clarke commented on the tremendous amount of work that goes into collecting and analyzing data. He asked whether CMS would be able to maintain that valuable resource. *The response was cuts were made in that area and thus the amount of data made available would be less.*

Commissioner Clarke asked was CMS committed to pay for performance. *The response was yes but they would be moving very cautiously because they are developing a system with staff input.*

Chairman Roberts complimented CMS on the progress that has been made.

Board of Education member Joyce Waddell said she was glad the two bodies had come together, and she hopes joint meetings would continue to be held.

Commissioner Leake said she had concern for those areas of the CMS system that do not contribute to student achievement, such as the Learning Communities.

Commissioner Leake said CMS has said the “best” teachers need to be with the “weakest”

APRIL 27, 2010

children, but in her opinion CMS is not doing what it ought to be doing with respect to placing the “best” people with the “weakest” children.

Commissioner Leake commented on pay for performance and bonuses. Commissioner Leake said she’s never been a supporter of bonuses.

Commissioner Leake addressed re-testing and the teacher supplement that was provided by the County to CMS at one time.

Commissioner Leake asked if the state changed the requirements for teachers to be hired by CMS. *The response was the licensure rules have had some changes to allow for lateral entry for teachers to bring different licensure.*

Commissioner Leake said she would like to know the percentage of black children versus white children in CMS. *The response was 41.2% African American, 33.5% white, 15.9% Hispanic, 4.9% Asian, 4.1% American Indian or Multi racial on the 20th day of school.*

Commissioner James said he’d like information on the drop-out rate by race. *It was noted that the rate shown was not the drop-out rate but a calculation done by the state. Further, what’s shown was the number of students not graduating.*

Commissioner James commented on the gaps between African American and White students within CMS. Commissioner James said the gap was still “horrendous.”

Commissioner James said he would like for CMS to look at why the African American – White students gap on the elementary level was in the 40’s and why it appears to be 25% or more in the high schools. Commissioner James said he would like to see something done that could improve the gap between African American and White students. Commissioner James said he would suggest some sort of 24/7 school.

Chairman Roberts turned the meeting over to Vice-Chairman Cogdell and was absent for the remainder of the meeting.

Commissioner Cooksey asked about retesting, which was addressed.

Commissioner Cooksey commented on the gaps in reading and science on the elementary level. He asked what was happening for all categories in actual numbers without looking at the gap and with respect to minority students. *The response was the numbers were going up but not at an equal pace.*

Commissioner Cooksey said it’s important for people to know that the scores are going up, even though the gap might be increasing because of one group of students is being compared to another.

Commissioner Cooksey said sometimes too much focus is on putting students in the “same box” and saying “we want students that have these characteristics.” Commissioner Cooksey said students are different and not all students are destined to go to college. Commissioner Cooksey said some students are more inclined to go to a vocational institution, working for themselves to be entrepreneurial. Commissioner Cooksey said when you start putting students in that “box” it’s a disservice to the student.

Commissioner Cooksey encouraged looking at alternative paths to success for students, so that every student can find a path to success that “uniquely” fits their characteristics.

Commissioner Bentley asked how long does it take for programmatic changes to manifest itself. *The response was multiple years.*

Commissioner Bentley commented on Sugar Creek Charter School. She said it appears they’re really doing things well with a target population that CMS struggles with. She asked was it

APRIL 27, 2010

possible for CMS to look at what Sugar Creek Charter was and their best practices. *The response was yes. Further, that CMS has spent a great deal of time looking at the KIP Model which is a scalable model that has the most break-thru gains.*

Commissioner Bentley asked what was the funding per pupil in Wake County versus Mecklenburg County. *The response was CMS staff did not have that information at this time.*

Commissioner Bentley asked about the demographic breakout of CMS versus Wake County. *The response was CMS staff did not have that information at this time, however, Wake was substantially lower for the number of students that are economically disadvantaged.*

Commissioner Bentley asked what should the County be looking for in its balance scorecard with respect to measuring CMS performance. *The response was a series of things, one of which was how CMS works on their strategic plan towards the goal they produce for that, percentage of effective teachers, graduation rate, and growth of students, which is what's going to drive that.*

Board of Education member Rhonda Lennon expressed her gratefulness for today's meeting and noted that she has a good working relationship with Commissioner Bentley, district 1, which is the district she also represents.

Board of Education member Kaye McGarry referenced the percentage of schools making expected or high growth with respect to the ABC's. She asked how many of these would fall under Title I schools. *The response was CMS staff did not have that information at this time but would get it.*

Board of Education member McGarry commented on the state not giving the ABC bonuses and asked was it correct the state kept the longevity bonus. *The response was yes, according to the initial budget that staff has seen.*

Board of Education member McGarry said she's always wanted to know more about the longevity bonuses and why can't some of that be used for the ABC bonuses. She also wants to know how much is in the longevity bonus. Board member McGarry said she was aware this was something not under the control of CMS.

Board of Education member McGarry with respect to the graduation rate, vocational classes and preparing students for after graduation, said it would be good to have data following that year after graduation from high school. Board member McGarry said without such data, how does CMS know that they're preparing students for the next step in their lives. She said CMS should track whether a student attended a four-year college, got on the job training, attended a community college or technical school. *The response was the new secretary of education was putting that in place, so that students can be tracked.*

Commissioner Murrey asked with respect to the budget, what intervention or combination of interventions would most likely increase the graduation rate. Secondly, not just focusing on the gap, but on the groups that have lower scores, the minority groups and economically disadvantaged groups, what's most likely going to improve their scores and which intervention makes the most difference. *The response was the budget the Board of Education was presented by staff, has worked to keep some of those areas in, such as strategic staffing, and putting together a more formative assessment, so teachers have better snapshot data regularly. Dr. Gorman stated further, he was aware some folks will question the amount in the budget for developing the various assessments and adding something new, but they feel it's a priority for what needs to be done to close the gap and give that data. He said "for us it's about giving the teachers the best data in that human capital piece; of hiring the best folks and giving them the best data and letting them make the decisions." He said also in his budget that class sizes would go up. Dr. Gorman said CMS can't take \$90 million out this year and \$78.3 million out this coming year and not impact class size. Dr. Gorman said for them it's the teacher effectiveness initiatives. Dr. Gorman said for every extra dollar they received based on their scenarios, they would bring staff back, "effective staff."*

APRIL 27, 2010

Commissioner James left the meeting and was absent for the remainder of the meeting.

Board of Education Chairman Eric Davis echoed that strategic staffing was a key strategy, also getting effective teachers and principals, particularly in the most challenging schools, getting new leaders for new schools and performance management.

Chairman Davis said what worries him the most was the number of teachers that CMS had to displace. He said if that could be turned around, that would help.

Commissioner Murrey said he would summarize what's been said with respect to the budget and that what's important was strategic staffing, formative evaluations, new leaders for new schools. Further, that the variable that the County can look for when looking at different funding levels was student/teacher ratio going up or down and that if the County funds more it could have an impact on and make a difference. *The response was that's correct, that would be the first area of impact.*

Board of Education member Joe White said what's difficult and what the public doesn't understand is that there aren't really any "good choices" in light of the current economics.

Commissioner Cooksey left the meeting and was absent for the remainder of the meeting.

Commissioner Leake asked what was the cost of maintaining the Community Learning sites. *The response was that staff would report back with that information.*

Vice-Chairman Cogdell thanked CMS for its presentation and everyone for attending.

This concluded the discussion.

Note: The above is not inclusive of every comment but is a summary.

ADJOURNMENT

Motion was made by Commissioner Clarke, seconded by Commissioner Dunlap and carried 6-0 with Commissioners Bentley, Clarke, Cogdell, Dunlap, Leake, and Murrey voting yes, that there being no further business to come before the Board, that the meeting be adjourned at 5:03 p.m.

Janice S. Paige, Clerk

Jennifer Roberts, Chairman

Harold Cogdell, Jr., Vice-Chairman