



Charlotte, North Carolina
November 23, 1999

REGULAR MEETING OF THE CHARLOTTE-MECKLENBURG BOARD OF EDUCATION

The Charlotte-Mecklenburg Board of Education held a Regular Meeting on November 23, 1999, beginning at 6:00 p.m. in the Board Room of the Education Center. The meeting was televised by CMS TV Channel 21.

PRESENT: Arthur Griffin, Jr., Chairperson;
John W. Lassiter; Wilhelmenia Rembert;
James H. Puckett; Vilma D. Leake;
George Dunlap; Molly Griffin;
Louise Woods; and Lindalyn Kakadelis

ABSENT: No Board member was absent.

Also present at the request of the Board were Eric J. Smith, Superintendent; James L. Pughsley, Deputy Superintendent; Susan R. Purser, Associate Superintendent for Education Services; Greg Clemmer, Associate Superintendent for Operations; other members of the Executive Staff; Leslie Winner, Board Attorney; and Carol K. Gerber, Clerk.

CALL TO ORDER

Chairperson Griffin, presiding, called the Regular Meeting to order at 6:00 p.m. and led the Board members in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Mr. Griffin: Thank you and please be seated. It feels very lonesome up here tonight as we've become accustomed to having upwards to 900 people joining us. We certainly appreciate those of you in the audience tonight, you're true public school patriots and we appreciate your being with us.

RECOGNITION OF JAMES OLIVER, CMS BUS DRIVER OF THE MONTH FOR OCTOBER 1999. I would like to call on a colleague, Mr. Dunlap, with respect to that recognition.

MINUTES APPROVED 10/10/2000

Mr. Dunlap: Thank you, Mr. Chair. The Board is pleased to recognize the Charlotte-Mecklenburg School System's Bus Driver of the month for October, Mr. James Oliver. Mr. Oliver has been a bus driver for two years and has been assigned to the Providence/Butler transportation area. He transports students to and from Matthews Elementary, Crestdale Middle and Butler High Schools. Mr. Oliver says driving a bus allows him the pleasure of staying busy, while at the same time earning a little extra money to spend on his grandchildren. His supervisor, Mr. Mark Manning, says that Mr. Oliver is not only a dynamic and professional driver, but he is also an efficient and dependable employee. He is an enthusiastic team player and a positive role model for other drivers. For being named the Driver of the Month he will receive an award of \$100 and is now eligible to compete for the Charlotte-Mecklenburg School System Bus Driver of the Year.

Mr. Oliver, this certificate says that you have demonstrated exceptional skill, safety and professionalism in transporting students in Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools. The interesting thing about this is when I look at the latest statistics about bus driver accidents versus automobile accidents, I think a whole lot more parents would feel better knowing that their students are being transported by bus drivers than riding in a car.

Thank you and if you would come forward to receive this certificate.

Chairperson Griffin: To recognize NC Art Educator of the Year 1998-99 I would like to call on my colleague, Mrs. Kakadelis.

RECOGNITION OF CINDY KLINGBERG, NORTH CAROLINA ART EDUCATOR OF THE YEAR 1998-99

Mrs. Kakadelis: Thank you very much. We are pleased to recognize one of our very special teachers, Cindy Klingberg, our teacher at Butler High School. Like Mr. Griffin said you have been named North Carolina Art Educator of the Year for 1998-1999 by the North Carolina Art Education Association. This prestigious award recognizes outstanding involvement in the promotion of Arts Education in the State of North Carolina through teaching experiences and the presentation of workshops, both locally and statewide. Cindy has taught Art Education at CMS since 1986 and it is almost easier to read the list of schools you have not served in than the ones you have, but I will try. In addition to Butler, you have taught at A.G. Middle, Lansdowne, Rama Road, Allenbrook, Ashley Park, Bruns Avenue, Montclair, Elizabeth, and Myers Park elementary schools. Cindy received her BS Degree in Art Education from East Carolina University. She presents workshops at most major Art Education Conferences held in the state. She is routinely called upon to teach classes and workshops at the Mint Museum and the North Carolina Museum of Art. She has served on the State Art Textbook Adoption Committee. She chairs the Scholarship Committee of the NC Art Education Association and her works have been featured for several years at the Faculty Art Exhibit at Queens College. What do you do in your spare time? Cindy's dedication and commitment to the arts are well known by her peers, but perhaps more importantly, her students recognize them as well.

One former student reported the following, "The first thing you notice when you enter Ms. Klingberg's room is the bicycle hanging from the ceiling, in fact there are so many interesting things hanging from her ceiling and displayed around the room that at first you just have to stop and stare. This classroom definitely gets you in the mood to create something interesting of your own."

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Cindy's parents, Bradley and Tracy Wells, are here tonight and her daughter, Jillian, as well as Dean Johns and Debra Cooper from the CMS staff and Cindy's principal, Joel Ritchey is also here. Would you folks please stand? We're glad you are here.

Cindy, on behalf of my fellow Board Members, thank you for the important work you do every day and congratulations on receiving this outstanding reward and I read, "The Charlotte-Mecklenburg Board of Education Certificate of Appreciation. The Charlotte-Mecklenburg Board of Education presents this Certificate of Appreciation to Cindy Klingberg in Recognition and Appreciation for Valuable and Devoted Service to the Schools of this System and the Young People of this Community".

Would you please come forward, Cindy? The Board congratulates Ms. Klingberg.

Chairperson Griffin: Continuing to build dreams through excellence we have another recognition. To present this award, I would like to call on my colleague, Dr. Leake.

RECOGNITION OF DR. CHARLES LaBORDE, RECIPIENT OF *JEFFREY LAWRENCE AWARD*, INTERNATIONAL NETWORK OF PERFORMING AND VISUAL ARTS SCHOOLS

Thank you, Mr. Chairman and thank you, Dr. LaBorde. Let me say thank you for all that you do with and for the children in our district. This award is granted to the head of a school who exemplifies an uncompromising commitment to excellence in Arts Education. It is named in honor of long-time head of the Professional Children's School in New York City. It is the most coveted award presented by the network. The award was created several years ago, but this is the first time a worthy recipient has been named. As most of you know, Dr. LaBorde is no stranger to this community; he has been a member of the Charlotte-Mecklenburg School family since 1979. He taught drama at Olympic Senior High School and West Charlotte High School and was an assistant principal at East Mecklenburg. He was principal at Myers Park Senior High and presently is serving as principal of Northwest High School.

Dr. LaBorde received a Doctorate in Theatre from Ohio State University and a Doctorate in Education Administration from the University of North Carolina. He is the recipient of numerous honors and awards among them the North Carolina Young Educator of the Year, Charlotte-Mecklenburg School Principal of the Year, Outstanding High School Drama Director in North Carolina, two National Playwriting Awards, many, many citations and directing and acting Awards. Rave reviews for your role in Tennessee Williams' magnificent play "Sweet Bird of Youth" at the theatre here in Charlotte.

Dr. LaBorde could not do any of this without the support of a devoted wife, and I'm going to ask Brenda if she will come and stand with him please. To you and your family, we are grateful for the contributions you have made to Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools and we are very proud to have you represent our schools and our community in this way. We could never say it any other way. Thank you, Dr. LaBorde and Mrs. LaBorde, for you and all that you do on behalf of children and congratulations on your latest award.

RECOMMENDED APPROVAL OF ADMINISTRATIVE APPOINTMENTS

Dr. Smith: There are no recommendations for tonight.

Chairperson Griffin: The next item is Item III. (A-G) Consent Items. What is your pleasure to get these on the floor?

Motion made by Mr. Dunlap, seconded by Mrs. Woods. Are there any questions? Hearing no questions or discussion, all those in favor of said motion indicate by show of hands. Madam Clerk, that is unanimous.

COMMUNITY BUILDING INITIATIVE REPORT

I would like to call on my esteemed colleague, Dr. Rembert, to introduce our guests who will make that report.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman, I would like to call on Mr. Mac Everett from First Union National Bank and recognize him, as I understand Mr. Everett has served as Co-Chair of the Community Building Initiative with Attorney James Ferguson. This initiative got started a couple of years ago and attracted broad-based community support and involvement and it involved a couple of other people who are present this evening, Rev. Claude Alexander and Ms. Diane English, who also helped to make this initiative one that involved our community around public education issues that helped inform a lot of what we have been trying to do in the school district.

We would like to thank you for your work, we know that it has taken a lot of your time, but we have benefited greatly from your expertise, your commitment to community service and your commitment to public education. We thank you very much and look forward to your report.

Mr. Everett: Thank you very much for your time. You've spent a lot of time together lately and we appreciate that very much on behalf of our community. Before I get to my comments, I would like to do one thing if I might, Mr. Chairman, and that is to thank the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools for the United Way Campaign you ran. It was an outstanding campaign. John Lassiter was deeply involved in it, Barbara Jenkins led it from the staff side, and it was a blockbuster. The folks here showed that, even in a time of turmoil, you can come together and focus on something that is important for our community and as Chairman of that Campaign, I thank you very much for that support.

Chairperson Griffin: Thank you very much.

Mr. Everett: I do have Claude Alexander and Diane English with me. Claude will have some comments in just a moment. Claude and I serve together on this Community Building Initiative and Leadership Team. Tonight, we will offer you a very brief look at the work of over 120 of our citizens who served in Phase II of this Community Building Initiative. Together they contributed almost 5,000 hours of volunteer time to address six specific community issues and the impact of those issues on race and ethnicity on community systems such as our police, our neighborhoods, the economy and our schools. Thanks to a couple of members of the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Family,

Barb Pellin, Rahman Khan and Susan Purser, for their work with this group. We also want to acknowledge that we know you have challenging times in front of you, not just what's on your plate now, but in the ongoing effort to educate 100,000 young people in this community, so we bring you these thoughts with that awareness.

As you may remember, the Community Building Initiative began in the spring of 1997 in response to some racial tension that developed around an event in our community. Mayor Pat McCrory and Chairman of the County Commission, Parks Helms, chartered this group to come together and look at the way we might respond to those kinds of events in our community. The Phase I culminated in a conference in December of 1997 that was attended by over 600 people in our community. Phase II grew out of the challenges identified in that conference and has strong broad-based support from the community. Our overall goal has been to continue an active community building process among people of diverse, racial and ethnic backgrounds in Charlotte-Mecklenburg. The Phase II Leadership Team selected six issues to address in this Phase II. Three of those look specifically as issues around our public education, one on brickland design and teaching methods, another on the equitable distribution of resources to our schools and the third on the growing disagreement about how and whether to integrate our schools. The teams were composed of citizen volunteers. These issue action teams looked at each of these three from throughout our community. They engaged in a process of investigation, study, relationship building and connecting with the community around their findings. Each team also engaged in a structured process of developing goals and strategies to address their individual issues. In the process, it was apparent that all three education teams had much in common and the three teams decided to merge their independent findings, their goals and their strategies into one working document entitled "Equity in our Public Schools". Later this week you will receive a copy of that report. The report will give you details of our work and my friend, Claude Alexander, will tell you more about our recommendations and what we offer in terms of partnering with CMS in support of our public schools.

Now the plan itself can't adequately reflect the commitment of the citizen involvement and the investment that these people made in building a more inclusive community of Charlotte-Mecklenburg. We are here tonight on their behalf and on behalf of the 16 groups that have funded our effort and the hundreds of citizens who have participated in community dialogues, focus groups, and intentional opportunities to build relationships and awareness across traditional differences. And now, I would like to ask Claude to tell you a little bit more about those recommendations.

Mr. Alexander: Good evening. In the process of serving on the Leadership Team of the Community Building Initiative, I also served as Co-Chair of Issue Action Team #3 which dealt with working with various constituents in identifying the concerns that play into the dissatisfaction of the integration of our school system. We had a broad-based group of concerned parents, grandparents, current and former educators, high school board members, even a private school headmaster and at least one attorney was involved within that group. During our process we sponsored four community conversations on school desegregation at three different sites throughout our county which utilized a model for facilitated information based community dialogue and feedback. I'm going to come back to that because I think that is important certainly as it relates to where we are in our current state of affairs.

Based on our research and the data that we gathered, we brought the equity in our public school to the Phase II Leadership Team, which was endorsed and was run in an ad in both The Observer and The Post. Currently we understand that there is a great pre-occupation with pupil assignment and although there is that great and immediate concern, there are other issues equally as important that you are confronting which we have had to try to deal with over at least one year. Among those being the development of a supportive educational environment and social equity. Involved in that is having a more engaged community, which is a multi-faceted process, having an effective staff and an atmosphere of inclusion, teacher training certification, faculty equity, facilities equity, equity assessment and marketing (how well you tell your story, isn't it amazing that you have previously heard prior to putting this Pupil Assignment Plan how bad schools are) and I'm sure that it has amazed you in the past couple of weeks you have heard how well those very same schools are. We need to be able to tell our story much better.

As we have committed in private, we commit now our willingness to partner in the following ways:

1) **Engagement and Community Education Awareness**

Using the Conversation Model developed in Phase II to bring the community together around the subject of education and what is under way to get the pulse of the community citizens. Public hearings are good at getting one level of information and that simply is what I want for my child, but we all know that a responsive government cannot simply respond to what I want for my child. Response must be what we want for our children. Public hearings don't get at that level of dialogue, but we have been able to test a model of bringing people from diverse backgrounds and sides of the county to deal with information around which you can get beyond the me and my to we and our.

2) **Using the Issue Action Team Model to Convene Parents, Citizens, Principals, Teacher and Administrators** to address specific issues, especially those that deal with creating inclusive and equitable public school communities. I would go further to add that the communities that will be most adversely affected need to be brought to the table before decisions are made so that they can have an input into the solutions that deal with the adversity of impact.

3) **Equity**

4) **Equity and Opportunity and Resources**

5) **Leadership and Professional Development**

And that includes training and support for teachers and administrators as they work to build inclusive, equitable public school communities.

As Mac said tonight, we bring you only a snapshot of what we learned and what we believe we offer through the Community Building process. We look forward to working with you and to another time when we can speak with you in greater detail as we work with institutions, groups and individuals to promote understanding about the need to address racism and build a more inclusive environment in Charlotte-Mecklenburg.

Mr. Everett: Thank you, Claude. This is the report I referenced earlier, I hope you will take time to look through it, there is some wonderful information that has been put together not by Claude and me, but by some very involved and committed community citizens. I hope you will take the time to look at it and we look forward to coming back and discussing this program with you. Thank you very much.

Chairperson Griffin: Thank you very much for that report. It is certainly timely and we receive those words with the diligence that this 1:00 a.m. crowd took last night with respect to coming away from their public hearing. It is our responsibility to care for our neighborhood; our neighborhood is Mecklenburg County. Thank you again for all that you do for the citizens of this community, it continues to not only be the place where 100,000 + students come each year, but many, many families and business look to as the kind of community they want to bring their family and business to. Thank you again for all you do on behalf of the children, families and citizens of Mecklenburg County.

Dr. Leake: Mr. Chairman, I believe we will be having a new addition to the 100,000 + children. Rev. Alexander and his lovely wife, who works here in the city, will have one more to add to our number and that's a joy. Congratulations.

Chairperson Griffin: Next we will have ITEM IV (B).

REPORT ON LEGISLATIVE COMMITTEE ON PROPOSAL TO GRANT TAXING AUTHORITY TO BOARDS OF EDUCATION

Ms. Molly Griffin, chairperson of the Board Legislative Committee, reported that the North Carolina School Boards Association (NCSBA) would be asking the North Carolina General Assembly to give local school boards the power to tax. The NCSBA has asked each school system to say whether they will "go along with" NCSBA in its proposal. According to NCSBA, Ms. Griffin reported 71.7% of schools systems responding are in support. She said that the Board Legislative Committee was recommending that the CMS Board also give its support.

Ms. Molly Griffin moved that the Board adopt an NCSBA Resolution in support of granting local school boards taxing authority. Mr. Lassiter seconded the motion.

The Board members discussed the proposed resolution. Mr. Puckett said that he agreed with the basic tenets of the resolution but felt that several arguments presented in it were weak. He criticized the ninth paragraph, which he said could be interpreted as saying, "If we cannot raise the funds, we are not doing our job."

Mr. Dunlap said that he could not support the resolution as it was written. He said that taxing is a community issue. Ms. Griffin asked Mr. Dunlap if he could support the concept of the resolution, but Dunlap said that he wanted to see how the taxation would be done.

Ms. Winner said that the General Assembly has created a study commission of its own on the issue of taxation, has provided a lengthy study, and is looking for support from at least 60 boards of education throughout the state.

Remarking on the complexity of the issue, Mr. Lassiter said that changing revenue sources also shifts debt. He said that school boards would have to become more rigorous in understanding the budgeting process. He said that if the Board of Education would both fund and educate, that would connect the voter with the policy maker. He encouraged the Board to vote with other boards around the state.

Ms. Woods said that taxing authority for school boards would promote accountability and would put funding in the hands of people responsible for it. She cautioned, however, that people might run for the Board of Education who want to lower taxes.

Referring to the paragraph in the Resolution on the *Leandro* case, Mr. Dunlap asked if the state provided funding for capital improvements.

Ms. Griffin remarked that in South Carolina, local boards of education have gradually been getting funding authority.

ADOPTION OF MOTION TO SUPPORT NCSBA IN ITS EFFORTS TO GAIN TAXING AUTHORITY FOR LOCAL SCHOOL BOARDS

Mr. Lassiter offered a friendly amendment to Ms. Griffin's original motion, that the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Board of Education supports the NCSBA in its efforts to gain taxing authority for local school boards. Ms. Griffin accepted Mr. Lassiter's friendly amendment. The motion to support the NCSBA passed unanimously.

For reference, a copy of the NCSBA proposed Resolution is on file in the CMS Board Office.

REPORTS FROM BOARD MEMBERS

Mrs. Kakadelis: I just have a short one. Friday was "Walk in My Shoes Day". I don't know how many people were able to do that. I was not able to go to a school because we had other meetings to go to but I was able to ride a school bus. Ms. Coffey was my driver and I did a South Meck run, a Beverly Woods run and a Quail Hollow run. The interesting thing I wanted to share with the Board Members was what I got on the South Mecklenburg run; it was the Pineville/South Mecklenburg run and so that morning as they were getting on at 6:30 AM, there was lively conversation on the bus and they were impressed, I think, to know that our Board cares enough that we go to the bus to get their input on pupil reassignment, so I had input on the bus that day.

Mrs. Woods: I also did "Walk in My Shoes Day" sort of briefly, I want to continue it in the next week or two, but I visited the 4-year old program at Albemarle Road Elementary which also has been mentioned in our Pupil Assignment areas. Dr. Smith, it is really exciting to see how the staff throughout the school is working together with the 4-year old program and I feel like that's happening throughout the district and I just think it is something we should continue to be proud of. It's exciting to see the bright eyes of the 4-year olds. I also have been to Tryon Hills for the last few weeks because I do a Parent Education Session there through United Community Services and I

found out some of the children are catching the bus about 6:25 or 6:30 AM. I believe we need to really look into that. I know we have been concerned about high school students catching the bus that early, but I'm even more concerned about the 4-year olds.

Dr. Smith: We'll take a look at that.

Mrs. Woods: And one other issue, the issue of social workers and other staff who need to transport children and in particular in our 4-year old program. If the children aren't there they go to knock on doors and bring the children back to school and we have an insurance issue related to that. We apparently don't have them covered with insurance and my understanding is that more and more employees are really afraid to provide that service. I think we may need to look at insurance for them and also for volunteers, as we want to use more volunteers to help us out, insurance for transporting students because sometimes you really can't provide the service without wondering.

Chairperson Griffin: Anyone else?

Dr. Leake: I wasn't going to say anything so I'm just going to piggyback. My concern is about secretaries who continually have to provide services to children who must take medication. That's a major concern and I brought this up sometime ago. We keep saying that the secretary's job is to be the secretary, not a medical assistant, so that they will not be legally liable for those persons who transport children also. Secretaries are most concerned and I've lifted this up on many occasions and hopefully we can look into that, Dr. Smith, and share it with the appropriate persons to see if the county can provide nurses in these buildings for our children. That's a must. If we have children on ritalin and everything else, we don't want to be held accountable for any mistakes that are made while answering the telephone or writing notes. That's my concern.

Chairperson Griffin: Mr. Dunlap

Mr. Dunlap: I am sure everybody on this Board knows Ms. Beasley. I spoke with Ms. Beasley recently with the issue as it relates to the bus on Craig Avenue. I would like to at least have some report on the status of what we are trying to work out with that community. We have been talking about that for at least a year now and I'm not sure where we are with what the plan is, how we are trying to work with the community to resolve that issue. I would like to have some type of report for feedback.

Chairperson Griffin: Any other reports from Board Members.

REPORT FROM THE SUPERINTENDENT

Dr. Smith: Thank you very much, I've got just a couple of items to share with you. As we deal with the student assignment piece, surely there are many other issues that have been brought to my attention by Board Members regarding the quality of the instructional program and what we do with and for children once we get the assignment decision made in preparation for opening the next school year.

I would like to touch briefly on two major themes that once we clear the dust on Student Assignment, we can come back perhaps at the Boards' pleasure in January and talk more in depth about instructional strategy or in advance if you would like. First, I would like to talk a little about the instructional strategies that we have in place. In developing for implementation in the coming school year, regardless of what the plan ultimately looks like, for Mecklenburg-County around instruction and the business of teaching and learning, what we intend to bring forth is what in large part was discussed and outlined in the CMS Vision document that was presented to the Board last March on March 9. It has very clear strategies and those will be further flushed out in detail for you in subsequent meetings, but revolves around what I would like to define as three major themes.

One is certainly the strategy for bringing equity and fairness and adequacy in materials and supplies to all schools. We are developing a process got formula driven allocation and an accountability structure to insure that all schools have not just what is required at a standard level, but what is required for adequacy to get the job done. That, by definition, means that you are going to vary in some cases to meet given needs.

The second element are the specific strategies that are being developed and designed to assure that we have a high quality teaching staff throughout Mecklenburg-County and specifically any lead core teachers in leadership at targeted schools that we can, in fact, deliver the curriculum and the instructional program by well-trained, talented, elite teachers, that have a proven track record with a history of success.

The third element is that the instructional strategies are defined. That isn't something we do after the fact, it is not something done by accident classroom by classroom, but it is done with intent in advance that we give teachers the time to prepare to deliver the instructional program, that we provide time this summer to make sure that the faculty is brought together, etc.

What we will be recommending and discussing with the Board is not something that is radically different, that's like we haven't thought about that yet. Now let's start thinking about what we do with schools. In our recent history, and I just share with you, we do have success that should be celebrated and would be celebrated in most communities around America and I point to just a couple of quick examples of the issue that tugs at all of us in this community – the schools that have large populations of low income children. I will share with you just an example where we have seen success. I give you Shamrock Garden's Elementary School which just last year had approximately 84%/85% free or reduced lunch children attending. Third grade reading was 67% Level III or Level IV versus the system's average of 72%; a gain of 45% two years ago. I think Ron Dixon is doing what we expect to drive that program and I share with you at the same school in 3rd grade mathematics at Shamrock Gardens, 60.6% of the student population is Level III & Level IV in 3rd grade mathematics, that's against the system's average of 67% up from 40% two years ago. The strategies are defined and being delivered.

At Highland Elementary School 95.7% free or reduced lunch eligible children, two years ago 37% in Level III & IV, 3rd grade, this last year 63% Level III & IV, again against a system average of 72%. mathematics, two years ago was 35% Level IV at Highland and this last year 71% Level III & Level IV against a system average of 67% so 4 points above the system average at Highland with a pretty significant population of what is defined as low income children.

Briarwood – 71.2% free or reduced lunch eligible children. Reading grade 3 at 72.2%, Level III or Level IV versus the systems average of 72.3%, they missed it by one-tenth of a percent. I am sure they will do better this year. In mathematics grade 3, 70.3% against a system average of 67.5%.

Again, I just share those with the Board as examples. We have, simultaneous to this discussion with community about student assignment, been working aggressively since last spring, really for the last three years, by getting an additional definition and further reinforcement as we moved through the Court case last spring and continue to push on the issue of equity, etc., assuring that regardless of how we finally settle on student assignment, the bottom line is we have to be successful with the individual children regardless of where they go to school or their background. That is the end game for us.

Another major thing that sometimes gets missed in the discussion of the debate is, I believe, what is very historic and very strong value in diversity in the Mecklenburg-County School System. I understand all the trappings of the lawsuit, but I think the fact that we, as a school system, need to be able to value one another regardless of who we are or where we come from, our race, religious background, our economic status and so forth, that we need to value one another and understand one another. It's part of the task of public education in my view and I think I share that with the Board and we have agreed to that in a couple of Board retreats with a pretty significant vote.

Hitting three major areas, staff is preparing to work on ways that we can demonstrate that value and diversity through curriculum and curriculum development, through employee preparation that employees need to understand how to communicate and work with one another and deal with people in a diverse environment and finally strategies that we continue to push with our children, giving them a chance to work and learn and grow through interaction with one another. So again, I think there are issues that we are prepared to bring to the Board for some further discussion when we get this thing resolved and get on to the preparation for the next school year. That's all I have right now.

Chairperson Griffin: Let me have just a very short reaction to that. I understand that pupil assignment is a major task for us, but student achievement is an even bigger goal and not withstanding something bizarre coming back at the beginning of the year, for me right now looking at the principle recommendation with respect to Pupil Assignment is sort of like going back to the military; in some instances where we have such high concentration it's like pushing kids out of a airplane without a parachute. For me to support that, I have to see that parachute before hand not after the fact and that is that we often times make promises that we don't keep because we simply don't raise the resources. We have to go somewhere else to another body and that body is not supportive of raising those resources. It is really critical to see what that parachute looks like with regard to location where students are and we're making tremendous progress in terms of systems averages but when you look at the gap between poor and non-poor or black and non-black, out of one hundred and something districts, we're 91 and I want to be #1, not 91. I'm real concerned as we talk about the system averages that we make sure that a lot of our youngsters are at the proficiency level in basic skills. I'm one member who really wants to see what that parachute looks like before we commit.

Dr. Smith: We can figure out a date to discuss it or work individually with groups, or however you want to proceed, but we're ready to go ahead and move on that piece.

Chairperson Griffin: Mrs. Woods

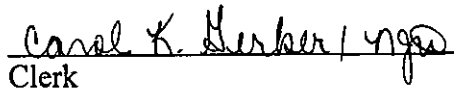
Mrs. Woods: As you said, Dr. Smith, we do have concerns with the high concentrations of poverty in certain schools and one of the things I have mentioned, and many others have mentioned several times, that with this plan what we need to do, rather than have a situation where we just continue to increase those numbers, but in fact try to set up as many schools as we can to go down rather than up, or those schools that are in the 40's and high 50's, my observation is, at least in my district, I've seen a couple of schools from 56 to 65. Very quickly schools that get above 50 to 60 and I want to see, as a part of this plan, some type of graduated scale. I believe that in certain points you have to click in with a certain amount, like 60, maybe 50% or 40%. I also think there needs to be some graduated scale as people in the community have mentioned that. Maybe you can have one or two percent free or reduced lunch, and maybe could you have a little higher class size if its necessary in order to be able to have a lower class size by the time you get to a 40% or 50% because the thing is we have to be sure that wherever children go all the parents have the same opportunities for acceleration and an excellent education. I just would encourage us to make that clear. Also, as you know, I have tremendous concern about the schools that we had projected wrong that in fact were in that mid-50 range in our projections, but started off at 60% or above and I still would like to ask what our plan is in terms of making some correction there because of getting the additional resources that are needed to those schools now, or as soon as possible so that in fact they hopefully will won't kick up to 70% next year so that the parents and students there can feel they can succeed.

Chairperson Griffin: Thank you, Mrs. Woods. If there are no other comments, we will go to the next item. **The Chair will entertain a motion that the Board goes to Closed Session pursuant to NC General Statue §143-318.11(a)(3) to consult with Counsel regarding Thelma Johnson versus Charlotte-Mecklenburg Board of Education.** Is there such a motion?

Motion made by Mr. Lassiter and seconded by Mrs. Woods. The Regular Board Meeting was adjourned to a Closed Session at 7:15 P.M.



Chairperson



Clerk

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