

Approved by the Charlotte-  
Mecklenburg Board of Education  
May 30, 2006  
Regular Board Meeting



Charlotte, North Carolina

March 28, 2006

**REGULAR MEETING  
of the  
CHARLOTTE-MECKLENBURG BOARD OF EDUCATION**

The Charlotte-Mecklenburg Board of Education held a Regular Board Meeting on March 28, 2006. The meeting began at 6:03 p.m. and was held in the Meeting Chamber of the Government Center. CMS TV Channel 3 televised the meeting.

Present: Joe I. White, Jr., Chairperson;  
Kaye McGarry, Member At-Large;  
Larry Gauvreau (District 1);  
Vilma D. Leake (District 2);  
George Dunlap (District 3);  
Tom Tate (District 4);  
Molly Griffin (District 5); and  
Ken Gjertsen (District 6)

Absent: Kit Cramer, Vice Chairperson

Also present at the request of the Board were Dr. Frances Haithcock, Superintendent; members of the Executive and Senior Staffs; Michele Morris, Associate General Counsel; and Nancy Daughtridge, Clerk to the Board.

**I. CALL TO ORDER**

Chairperson White called the meeting to order at 6:03 p.m. Chairperson White welcomed everyone to the Board's second meeting of the month. The meeting will be held in a Workshop format as previously approved by the Board. The second meeting of the month is scheduled to be held in Room 267 but because of the Public Hearing on the proposed 2006-2007 budget, it will be held in the Meeting Chamber for the convenience of the speakers. Chairperson White introduced Patti Head, chairperson of the Wake County Board of Education, who attended the meeting while visiting family in Charlotte.

**A. Adoption of Agenda**

**Ms. Griffin moved, seconded Mr. Tate, that the Board approve the adoption of the agenda, and a discussion followed.**

**Ms. McGarry moved to amend the agenda to add an item to discuss the process for the public meetings for the Superintendent Search scheduled for next week, and a discussion followed. Chairperson White reported the necessary information is not available at this time and could be released as soon as tomorrow. Gary Ray of Ray and Associates is**

coordinating the schedule and that has not been finalized. Chairperson White said the tentative dates the Board scheduled were April 4, 5, and 6 but all the candidates were not available. The Public Information Office will release this information as soon as it is available.

**Ms. McGarry withdrew her amendment.**

**The Board voted 8-0 to adopt the agenda. Ms. Cramer was absent.**

B. Public Hearing on proposed 2006-07 Charlotte-Mecklenburg Board of Education Budget

**Ms. McGarry moved to open the Public Hearing, and it was seconded by Ms. Griffin.**

Cel St. Pierre is an assistant principal at Metro School and represented the Charlotte Chapter of Phi Delta Kappa (PDK). Ms. St. Pierre listed the budget items the organization would like the Board to support because they will enhance the quality of staff performance and foster the academic growth for each and every student in CMS.

Donna Willis represented the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Association of Educators (CMAE). Ms. Willis said CMAE supports the Superintendent's budget. Ms. Willis presented additional recommendations to be added to the budget for the Board's consideration.

Alberta Grandison spoke on behalf of the hourly paid employees that include custodians, mechanics, cafeteria workers, and bus drivers. She expressed concerns about the increase in the cost of living, the hardships of being nine-month employees, and the unfairness of not having a raise in a long time. She asked the Board to consider a pay increase for hourly employees.

Niksa Grier has been a CMS school bus driver for seven years and her children attend CMS schools. Ms. Grier expressed concern that there is only a proposed 3% increase for non-certified workers. She asked the Board to consider a guaranteed salary increase for non-certified workers in the budget.

Donna Jenkins Dawson spoke as a concerned parent with three children in the school system. She spoke regarding the \$1 billion budget and offered suggestions to improve the school system and the Board.

Lisa Fisher represented the teacher assistants of CMS. She provided additional budget requests that would benefit teacher assistants for the Board's consideration.

Matthew Emmick is a representative of Teamsters Local #71 which represents CMS hourly employees. He asked the Board to add a wage increase for hourly employees in the County local supplement.

Gail Johnson represented the Association of Educational Office Professionals. She said they support the proposed budget.

Gail Tate is a parent of students in the school system. She expressed concern that the budget did not include cost of living raises and merit increases for all employees.

Hope Murphy is the co-PTA president at Cotswold Elementary School. They support funding for the foreign language students at IB schools. She requested a more rigorous language

program at Cotswold Elementary School.

**Mr. Dunlap moved that the Public Hearing be closed, seconded by Ms. Griffin, and the Board voted 8-0 to approve the motion. Ms. Cramer was absent.**

## **II. CONSENT ITEMS**

- A. Recommend approval of minutes
  - March 16, 2006 Closed Session
  - March 15, 2006 Work Session
  - March 9, 2006 Work Session
  - March 8, 2006 Joint Meeting
  - February 28, 2006 Closed Session
  - February 14, 2006 Closed Session
  - January 10, 2006 Regular Board Meeting
  - December 13, 2005 Regular Board Meeting
  - December 13, 2005 Special Meeting
- B. Construction Items
  - 1. Recommend approval of construction contract for Berryhill Elementary School
- C. Recommend approval of requests for student reassignment and release of students to other school districts
- D. Recommend approval of appointment of administrative personnel

**Ms. Griffin moved that the Board approve Consent Items A. thru D., seconded by Ms. McGarry, and the Board voted 8-0 to approve the motion. Ms. Cramer was absent.**

Dr. Haithcock presented the following administrative appointments:

- Linda Mintz named principal of Selwyn Elementary School. Ms. Mintz previously served as assistant principal at Community House Middle School.
- Robert Folk named principal of Coulwood Middle School. Mr. Folk previously served as assistant principal at Alexander Graham Middle School.

## **III. ACTION ITEMS**

- A. Recommend approval of acceleration of new school construction via request for Certificates of Participation to be issued by the Board of County Commissioners

Chairperson White called upon Mr. Gauvreau to present the recommendation.

**Upon motion by Mr. Gauvreau that the Board approve the acceleration of new school construction via requests for Certificates of Participation (COPs) to be issued by the Board of County Commissioners in the amount of \$69 million, and seconded by Mr. Gjertsen,** a discussion followed. Mr. Gauvreau said he has previously presented this motion for larger amounts to the Board and they failed. He is presenting the motion for a reduced amount in an effort to get the Board to take some action. He believes the Board should take action on this for a greater amount but he would encourage the Board to move on the lesser amount. The motion includes the new Hucks Road Elementary School at \$14 million, new Elon Park Elementary School at \$14 million, new Ridge Road Middle School at \$23 million, and renovations and general reconstruction at Cochrane Middle School at \$18 million. Staff has stated these are the prioritized schools. Mr. Gauvreau encouraged the Board to support

the motion and move forward. Mr. Gjertsen said CMS needs to build schools. He believes the cost of delay will cost more in the long run and noted that interest rates had an increase today. Ms. McGarry said the Board has delayed on this since last June. She believes each child in the County should have a seat in a school and this would be a first step. She said steps two and three would be to wait for the recommendations for future planning from the School Building Solutions Committee. Ms. McGarry encouraged the Board to act and to not delay any longer.

**The Board voted 3-5 and the motion failed. Ms. McGarry, Mr. Gauvreau, and Mr. Gjertsen voted in favor of the motion. Chairperson White, Ms. Leake, Mr. Dunlap, Mr. Tate, and Ms. Griffin voted against the motion. Ms. Cramer was absent.**

#### **IV. REPORTS / INFORMATION ITEMS**

##### **A. Report/Work Session on proposed 2006-07 Charlotte-Mecklenburg Board of Education Budget**

Chairperson White called upon Dr. Haithcock to introduce the report. Dr. Haithcock said the proposed 2006-2007 Budget recommendation was presented to the Board at the March 14, 2006 Regular Board Meeting and the Board held a Budget Workshop on March 15, 2006. Dr. Haithcock said staff had not received specific inquiries from Board members regarding the budget except for a request for donations paid by the school system to various entities. Dr. Haithcock said she has this information available and will provide it to Board members. Dr. Haithcock called upon Sheila Shirley, Chief Finance Officer, to answer questions from the Board members. Ms. Leake said she always been supportive of non-certified personnel and she has heard their concerns. She asked for a comparison of the hourly salary for bus drivers compared to other large districts. She expressed concern about the hardships nine-month employees face. She said CMS does not have summer school so that eliminates needing bus drivers during the summer to make them twelve-month employees. Dr. Haithcock said summer school is limited to several grade levels so there is employment for a small number of employees in each of the categories. Mr. Tate believes the Board should ask the Board of County Commissioners for the actual needs of CMS and hopes they will provide the needed funds so that CMS can continue to move forward. Mr. Tate noted that a huge amount of the requested funds are needed for growth. Mr. Gjertsen is concerned about the starting salary for teachers. He believes CMS is putting the burden on and relying on the state. He asked is there were something that could be done in Mecklenburg County to increase the starting salary for teachers beyond bonuses and incentives? Dr. Haithcock said this is a number one priority. The budget did take a small step to increase the beginning salary for teachers and to provide a small raise for excellent teachers in an effort to maintain quality teachers but this was not nearly enough. Staff had to be sensitive to the fact that the budget included \$29 million for growth to provide for new students, opening five new schools, and the cost of living increases. Dr. Haithcock supports increases for teachers, staffs, and hourly employees. She said the State has promised to consider a 5% or 3% increase for state employees. She said this is not a sure thing but it is an initial step. Ms. McGarry believes CMS can spend money more effectively and efficiently with shifting priorities and she does not see that happening in the budget. She said per pupil spending has increased from \$7,626 to \$8,069. She has reviewed per pupil spending across the nation. Some districts spend more money than CMS and get less achievement and many districts spend less and get much better results than CMS. Ms. McGarry is concerned that CMS is asking for more money but not reprioritizing where the money is being spent. She said central office is bloated and a review should be conducted to determine what is actually needed. She said the money should be shifted into

the classrooms with the teachers and students because that is where it is needed. Ms. McGarry noted that the High School Challenge funding this year was being requested as a grant versus as part of the budget as in the past. This funding is in addition to the additional \$32 million request over last year. Ms. McGarry asked what is the total amount of donations by CMS to nonprofit organizations in Mecklenburg County? Dr. Haithcock said as she mentioned earlier she has the donation information and will provide that to Board members. Dr. Haithcock said regarding per pupil spending, she asked Ms. McGarry to provide her the districts that spend less than CMS and have greater achievement results because it would be helpful for staff to review those best practices. Ms. McGarry said some of this information was reviewed at the Broad Foundation training and there were some districts that were spending a lot more. Ms. McGarry said the money was not making the difference and they were not getting student achievement results. Dr. Haithcock said regarding administration, as a result of the Citizens' Task Force recommendations, she had staff run an analysis of CMS' administration compared with other districts. She said initial information on this may be available for the Budget Workshop scheduled for March 29<sup>th</sup>. She said CMS is actually spending more in the classroom than most of the other districts that CMS would be compared to such as Wake County and Fairfax. CMS has considerably more money in the classroom and the school level than those districts and our administrative costs are less than any of those districts. Dr. Haithcock said if CMS is bloated we need to deal with it but we also must deal with the facts of how we compare to other districts. She said regarding the High School Challenge grant, for the past two years it has been in operation, it has been on a different budget cycle. Dr. Haithcock said staff is considering adding it to the earlier cycle. If that is done, it will be on a different cycle than the Board of County Commissioners established for the past two years. Ms. McGarry asked is that request in addition to the \$32 million request? Dr. Haithcock replied yes. Ms. Shirley said CMS staff is working with County staff to determine if they would like for CMS to include that in the budget document that goes to the County in April. Chairperson White asked Dr. Haithcock to share with the Board in the near future the new way that CMS will be using the High School Challenge funding. Dr. Haithcock said she would address this tonight or at the March 29<sup>th</sup> Budget Workshop. Ms. Griffin said regarding foreign language in all the elementary Pre-IB Programs, both Cotswold Elementary School and Lansdowne Elementary School were not included in the grant and would be on a different schedule. Ms. Griffin said she did not want to add to the budget but would like staff to review including foreign language at these schools. Dr. Haithcock said as part of the grant, all the IB Programs begin at different year cycles for authorization. CMS has had to delay the authorization of some schools because of budgeting factors. These schools will be ready for authorization in one or two years and will have foreign language at that time. Ms. Griffin said she understands this but would like all the schools to be treated the same. Ms. Griffin said she has reviewed the budget to find ways to reduce it but that is very difficult to do. Ms. Griffin expressed concern that there is a \$3 million loss in the sales tax refund. She said it is critical that the Board be active in Raleigh with the General Assembly in an effort to get this reversed. Ms. Griffin said everything is staff driven and it is very difficult to find cuts in the budget. Ms. Griffin agreed with Dr. Haithcock and said if the central administration is bloated she would want it reduced but she has not been able to identify those bloated positions. Ms. Griffin asked what would be the feasibility of reducing transportation costs by increasing the walk zone for students? Ms. Griffin said this has been reviewed previously and would like a current update for this consideration. She said regarding decentralization, which she supports, is there a way to seek funding from an outside source that would help with the planning so that it would be ready to start next year? Ms. Griffin believes there is an interest in the community for decentralization. Mr. Dunlap would also like to know where CMS is bloated. He expressed concern for the hourly employees who do not believe their 3% increase should be determined on whether the state approves it. Mr. Dunlap asked how

would a 3% increase impact the budget if the County bore that expense as opposed to the state? Mr. Dunlap said if the increase is not approved by the state he would like this considered in the budget implications. He said he previously asked for and received information on the costs to provide benefits for cafeteria workers and the costs were minimal. He said the food service program is an enterprise program and the cafeteria employees are paid from those funds. He requested an analysis on how much the cost of a lunch would have to increase so that benefits could be provided for non-certified cafeteria employees. Mr. Dunlap asked the Board to consider increasing the cost of lunches to provide cafeteria employees benefits? He said he separated cafeteria employees from the other non-certified employees because they are paid from the food service enterprise. Mr. Dunlap expressed concern that the DARE Program had been eliminated from CMS and would like to know how this issue is being addressed by CMS and the other governmental agencies. Mr. Dunlap believes administration has already addressed some of the requests from the teacher assistants and asked that this information be communicated to them. Mr. Gauvreau said the whole school system is bloated. Mr. Dunlap said this statement is too general. Mr. Gauvreau said a \$90 million increase in the budget is unthinkable with all the other issues happening in the school system. He commended staff for doing a good job on the budgeting process. He expressed concern that the budget gets a rubber stamp approval from the Board year after year. Mr. Gauvreau said the school district spends more per pupil than other districts and has too many buses, bus drivers, and teachers who provide things other than academic services. He believes these should be weeded out instead of increasing every year. Mr. Gauvreau believes CMS should have a zero-based budget. Mr. Gauvreau will vote "no" on the budget. Chairperson White would like facts to support the comments that CMS is bloated. He would also like the name of the school district that spends less per pupil, has higher achievement results, and deals with the same issues as CMS such as a 48% free-and-reduced lunch. Chairperson White said the school districts across the state are concerned about the sales tax refund and this is part of the North Carolina State Board Association's Legislative Agenda. He said the Legislators will tell you that we are not likely to get it but to keep fighting for it. Chairperson White expressed concern about increasing the walk zone areas for schools because it could upset parents, create safety concerns, and may not save much money. Chairperson White said for those Board members who want to add items to the budget, please make recommendations for the budget items to be cut. Ms. Leake is concern about how much money CMS spends for children. She does not believe CMS spends enough for all children. Ms. Leake said with the number of free-and-reduced lunch students in this district it is out of order to equate CMS to other districts. She expressed concern that people do not vote to support the Board's budget to educate students and complain about per pupil spending but do not complain about spending \$34,000 per year to incarcerate criminals. She believes education should be a focus. Ms. Leake said she has repeatedly expressed concern about students who are suspended from one to ten days not having a place to go to receive education during their suspension. She would like sites provided to keep these students off the street. She asked how much would it cost to have three or four sites for students who are suspended from school? Ms. Leake is also concerned about music in the middle schools. She asked how much would it cost to return music programs in the schools? She asked how much does it cost CMS for a teacher to become a National Board Certified Teacher? She asked how many of our National Board Certified teachers are in our Equity*Plus* schools? Ms. Leake said these teachers are paid 12.5% more than other teachers and they should work with the students that need it the most. Ms. McGarry asked will the Charter schools get their prorated share of the High School Challenge grant? Dr. Haithcock said there has been a ruling on the High School Challenge funding and she will provide that information at a later time as this has been a Closed Session topic. Ms. McGarry said regarding the bloated central office, we continue to hear that from the public. She said if that is justified, CMS is not

doing a good job in explaining that to the public and they should justify that to the public. Ms. McGarry believes administration knows exactly what needs to be explored further in regards to redistributing, cutting or combining, and perhaps putting positions from central office back into the schools and the classrooms. Ms. McGarry does not believe CMS is doing a good job and should be lean and mean. Mr. Dunlap said it is important to understand that the budget is requesting an additional \$31 million over last year and the majority of that increase is for opening and staffing five new schools to accommodate growth of the district. Mr. Dunlap said if the rate of growth for this county was not 5,000 new students each year these funds would not be needed. Mr. Dunlap said sustaining operating funds are the funds needed for this district to continue to operate next year the same way it operated this year in light of an increase in the cost of living. Unfortunately, we cannot freeze all costs such as fuel, electricity, etc. Mr. Gauvreau said the items mentioned by Mr. Dunlap are the marginal ends of a \$1 billion budget and they are the things that don't matter. The key pieces are the state and local monies applied to the human capital in CMS. Mr. Gauvreau expressed concern about the cost of the line item for decentralization because that is supposed to reduce costs. Chairperson White explained the process of decentralization and how it will cost money. Ms. Leake commended CMS for its major accomplishment of decreasing the drop-out rate. Ms. Leake said nationally high schools are not what they should be. She encouraged CMS to develop out-of-the-box ideas to make a greater change in the high schools. Mr. Tate said all but about \$2 million of the budget request is needed because CMS is growing. He said it is not unreasonable to ask for what is needed because of the increase in students. He said it is important to have quality teachers and CMS must pay to recruit and maintain excellent teachers. Mr. Tate said it is important to understand the additional funds are needed because we are growing as a school system. Mr. Gauvreau said it is appropriate for the Board to have discussion on important issues and the discussion time should not be limited. Chairperson White reminded Board members that a Board Budget Workshop was scheduled for March 29<sup>th</sup> at 9:00 a.m. Chairperson White asked Board members if they wanted keep that meeting scheduled or canceled.

**Upon motion by Ms. Griffin that the Board cancel the Budget Workshop scheduled for March 29<sup>th</sup>, seconded by Ms. Leake,** a discussion followed. Mr. Dunlap asked that the answers to the Board member's questions be provided as quickly as possible. Mr. Gauvreau said he did not go to the last Budget Workshop on purpose and he was not going to attend this one because there would be no meaningful discussion and nothing would be accomplished. Mr. Gauvreau supports having the Workshop canceled. Ms. McGarry wanted to ensure that she would receive the breakdown of the salaries of the various levels of nurses. Dr. Haithcock said she and staff would be glad to meet with Board members at any time to answer any additional questions.

**The Board voted 8-0 to approve the motion. Ms. Cramer was absent.**

Chairperson White asked Dr. Haithcock to provide an update on the High School Challenge. Dr. Haithcock said staff has been holding meetings with the three principals of the High School Challenge schools to identify how to get more impact from the available dollars. One of the problems in these schools is attracting and retaining quality teachers. At West Charlotte High School this year, there were thirty-two vacancies at the end of June to be filled. We are attempting to implement measures to assure this does not happen again. Dr. Haithcock said each principal has a \$2 million budget and they are accountable to ensure that the money has impact in their school; therefore, they should have the flexibility to make the hard decisions of where the money would be most appropriate. Dr. Haithcock said each principal developed a detailed budget that includes initiatives for attracting and retaining

quality teachers. A \$5,000 bonus based upon performance will be provided for internal people that have made high growth for a period of time to be determined. There will also be a \$10,000 signing bonus based on performance. Teachers must have a record in their previous school of having high growth in student achievement in the End-of-Course areas. The initiatives will attract high quality teachers to these schools and will be a more significant utilization of those dollars to provide a higher education. This will also provide the district an opportunity to see how the incentive initiatives are working. A discussion with Board members followed. Ms. Leake expressed concern about the number of first-year teachers in the High School Challenge schools who are not performing but receiving a bonus. She is also concerned about the absenteeism rate of teachers because students can't learn if a teacher is not present. She would like CMS to consider a staggered school schedule so that students can work. Ms. Leake believes the Board should do something different for the students who need it the most. Ms. Leake believes experienced teachers should be placed at these schools. Ms. Leake believes more should be done in this process to bring a different challenge that will impact the lives of the students in these schools because they are the ones who need it the most. Ms. McGarry is concerned about recruiting and retaining these teachers in a safe environment. She believes the safety issue and the behavior standards of students should be addressed as a high priority in these schools. Ms. Griffin believes it is important to have strong teachers who have had growth. She asked how will this incentive be fair to teachers who have not taught End-of-Course classes? Dr. Haithcock said this was considered with the existing performance pay plan and it is very difficult. One of the concerns is there is lack of reliability and validity on evaluation measures except where there are tests involved such as AP, End-of-Grade, and End-of-Course. There were several components for the schools that established a performance bonus. If the school made growth in their ABCs, there was a school bonus for all the employees in that school. In the pilot, there was a bonus for teachers who attended a certain number of hours of professional development and also had very good attendance. This was not at the same level as growth and student achievement but it did acknowledge those teachers and the good work that they do in those areas. Ms. Griffin asked that this continue to be reviewed. Mr. Dunlap is disheartened when his colleagues intentionally speak negatively about teachers, staff, and students at certain schools. Mr. Dunlap said there are different problems with different schools and the Board should be sensitive to the concerns of all schools. Mr. Dunlap is concerned that negative comments are being made too frequently. Chairperson White said regarding the comments about safety in our schools, he has three grandchildren who attend one of the High School Challenge schools. They participate in all activities of the school, they feel absolutely safe, love what they are doing, and have very good grades.

## ***ADJOURNMENT***

**Upon motion by Ms. Leake, seconded by Mr. Tate, by consensus, the Board agreed to adjourn the meeting.**

The Regular School Board Meeting adjourned at 7:50 p.m.

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Chairperson, Joe. I. White, Jr.

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Clerk to the Board, Nancy Daughtridge