

Approved by the Charlotte-  
Mecklenburg Board of Education  
January 13, 2009  
Regular Board Meeting



Charlotte, North Carolina

October 28, 2008

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

The Charlotte-Mecklenburg Board of Education held a Regular Board Meeting on October 28, 2008. The meeting began at 4:38 p.m. and was held in Room 267 of the Government Center.

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

Absent: Vilma D. Leake (District 2)

Also present at the request of the Board were Dr. Peter Gorman, Superintendent; Regina H. Bartholomew, General Counsel; Hugh Hattabaugh, Chief Operating Officer; Tyler Ream, Chief of Staff; and Nancy Daughtridge, Clerk to the Board.

**Upon motion by Ms. Griffin, seconded by Mr. Dunlap, the Board voted unanimously of those present for approval to go into Closed Session for the following purpose:**

- **To consult with the Board's attorneys on matters covered by the attorney-client privilege including but not limited to various litigation matters.**

**The motion was made pursuant to Section 143-318.11(a) of the North Carolina General Statutes.**

The Board held a Closed Session meeting from 4:38 p.m. to 5:20 p.m.

Chairperson White reconvened the Regular Board Meeting at 6:00 p.m. in Room 267 of the Government Center. CMS-TV Channel 3 televised the meeting.

Present: Joe I. White, Jr., Chairperson, Member At-Large;  
Molly Griffin, Vice-Chairperson, (District 5);  
Kaye McGarry, Member At-Large;  
Trent Merchant, Member At-Large;  
Larry Gauvreau (District 1);  
Vilma D. Leake (District 2);

George Dunlap (District 3);  
Tom Tate (District 4); and  
Ken Gjertsen (District 6)

Absent: There were no absences.

Also present at the request of the Board were Dr. Peter Gorman, Superintendent; Regina H. Bartholomew, General Counsel; Hugh Hattabaugh, Chief Operating Officer; Members of Executive and Senior Staff; Judy Whittington, Manager of Board Services; and Nancy Daughtridge, Clerk to the Board.

## I. CALL TO ORDER

Chairperson White called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m. Chairperson White welcomed everyone to the Board's second meeting of the month which would be held in a Work Session format.

### A. Adoption of Agenda

**Mr. Dunlap moved, seconded by Mr. Merchant, that the Board adopt the agenda as presented, and the Board voted 9-0 in support of the motion.**

## II. CONSENT ITEMS

A. Recommend approval of appointment of administrative personnel.

**Mr. Dunlap moved, seconded by Mr. Tate, that the Board adopt Consent Item A., and a discussion followed.**

Ms. Leake pulled Consent Item A.

The Board discussed Consent Item A. Ms. Leake said she had just received a copy of the appointments. She expressed concern that the new personnel appointments were no longer invited to attend the Board meetings because she and the community enjoyed seeing them attend the meetings. She wants to ensure CMS hires the best people for the schools and the district. She asked questions regarding the new appointments and Dr. Gorman responded. She requested salary information on the two appointments. Dr. Gorman will provide that information at a later time.

**The Board voted 9-0 in support of the motion.**

Dr. Gorman's personnel appointments were as follows:

- Susan Norwood named Executive Director of Teacher Incentive Fund (TIF) – Leadership for Educator's Advanced Performance (LEAP). Ms. Norwood previously served as Secondary Talent Development/Advanced Studies Specialist.
- Jeffrey Jackson named Director of Inventory Management/Internal Audits. Mr. Jackson has a Bachelor of Science in Business Administration/Management, Limestone College, Gaffney, South Carolina. Mr. Jackson previously served as Materials Control Supervisor with Celgard, LLC, in Charlotte, North Carolina.

## III. ACTION ITEMS

- A. Recommend approval as requested by Mrs. McGarry, At-Large Representative, that Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools refrains from using the questionable FRL numbers in determining teacher and other resource allocations for schools within CMS

Chairperson White called upon Ms. McGarry to present the recommendation.

**Ms. McGarry moved that the Board approve that Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools refrains from using the questionable Free and Reduce Lunch (FRL) numbers in determining teacher and other resource allocations for schools within CMS, seconded by Mr. Tate, and a discussion followed.**

- Ms. McGarry expressed concern that the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) has interpreted the statutes to say that further auditing of the Free and Reduced Lunch Applications is illegal even though the results of the CMS random sample indicates there is a potential of 62% fraud.

Dr. Gorman called upon Hugh Hattabaugh, Chief Operating Officer, to update the Board on the review of other options or alternative measures as possibilities to use in the process of resource allocations. Mr. Hattabaugh said in October Dr. Gorman provided the Board information in the Board Update regarding a collaborative project with Education Resource Strategies (ERS) and CMS which is funded and supported by the Gates Foundation. The project objective to develop alternative methods of strategically allocating funds to schools is the primary focus. Recommended modifications to the weighted-student staffing formula is an expected outcome at the conclusion of the project. The project began in September with the Superintendent assigning project managers (Sheila Shirley, Chief Financial Officer; Robert Avossa, Area Superintendent of the South Learning Community; and Mr. Hattabaugh as the Area Superintendent of the North Learning Community at the time). The process included data collection and analysis in October; case studies of eighteen CMS schools (seven elementary, six middle, and five high schools); and interviews with CMS Central Office personnel. The first phase of the project will culminate in January during the CMS budget development process integrating practical, structural changes to the allocation system to better match resources to needs. The process will provide an additional metric as an outcome to align with the Free and Reduced Lunch percentages that are currently being used. Dr. Gorman said staff will present that report to the Board prior to making allocations for next year.

Board members were invited to make comments and ask questions.

- Ms. McGarry said she appreciates the ongoing efforts to find alternative methods to allocate resources. She believes this is past due and CMS must stop using the FRL numbers because that number does not have integrity and it is used to distribute millions of dollars of resources and teachers to the 174 CMS schools. She has an obligation to the taxpayers and she will ensure that number will not be used. She looks forward to using other methods and she will not let this slip through the cracks.
- Ms. Leake asked if this process would reduce the resources for the students in the districts that need it the most; what is the Gates Foundation providing; is this a means of getting around providing quality teachers, smaller class sizes, and the other amenities necessary to provide a good education for the students who need it the most; and how will we ensure that we are not shortchanging the children who need it the most? She wants to be

accountable to the children in the district as well as the taxpayers. Mr. Hattabaugh said ERS has completed intensive research studies with large urban districts throughout the country (Atlanta, Cincinnati, Boston, and Los Angeles) and the intent is to leverage and maximize resources to the students with the greatest need. This includes maximizing personnel, time, and resources at all schools. The cross section of schools reviewed included elementary, middle, and high; small and large schools; poverty concerns (low, medium, and high poverty); and over performing and under performing schools. The principals at those schools had to be in place two or more years so that they had a past record of how they allocated resources at the school. This process used a qualitative focus method that reviewed quantitative data within the district. Ms. Leake said part of the problem with low performing schools is not because students are hungry but because we do not provide quality teachers and principals in the neediest schools. Ms. Leake hopes this process will not deviate from what we need to do and should do for the students. Dr. Gorman said this report is in response to the agenda item as requested by Ms. McGarry and to inform the Board that staff is reviewing alternate funding models. Staff is also reviewing where dollars are being better used than in other locations; how that can be duplicated; how to get the resources to where they are needed the most; and the areas showing the highest level of student performance. ERS is reviewing how CMS is implementing and using budgeted dollars. Ms. Leake encouraged Dr. Gorman to act upon those findings to put the people where they are needed the most. Dr. Gorman said he will present a budget to the Board that will be aligned with the findings. Ms. Leake said this is not about budget but about moving people where they are needed the most. Dr. Gorman said this year, he implemented a Strategic Staffing Plan that moved teachers and that plan will be expanded in the future.

- Mr. Gauvreau said this agenda item is specific to refraining from using questionable FRL numbers. He said this information has been presented before and it is interesting but it is not to the question at hand. He appreciates the fact that the district is reviewing new methods to group these students but he is concerned that this will continue to contribute to CMS refusing to allow those students to have a sense of individuality. This issue is about FRL lunch and this district to immediately stop using it in a questionable manner. He does not need an audit to tell him that this is a problem and he will support motion.
- Mr. Tate said this agenda item does not include fiscal implications and he believes those numbers could be huge. Mr. Tate asked Dr. Gorman to provide an estimate of the fiscal implications? Dr. Gorman said CMS uses FRL numbers to allocate various resources and staff could review using other formats for reporting Title I. CMS uses FRL numbers with the federal government related to Title I and Title I is a multiple million dollar program. He said Staff could verify if the federal government would allow CMS to use another factor to apply for Title I funds. Mr. Tate asked would this also impact the Focus Schools? Dr. Gorman said staff allocates dollars and resources for Focus Schools, weighted-student staffing, principal performance matrix, Bright Beginnings priority, and TIF/LEAP. Mr. Tate asked if the intention of the motion was to stop using FRL numbers effective today? Mr. Tate asked if so, does that mean CMS must return the Title I dollars allocated for this year? Dr. Gorman said he could not answer that because this is Ms. McGarry's motion. Ms. McGarry said she wants to obey the law but she knows this number has no integrity. Mr. Tate said he did not know that for fact. Ms. McGarry expressed concern that CMS utilizes that number to distribute millions of dollars into the schools? She believes allocations have been inaccurately distributed and the sooner that CMS stops using those

numbers the better. She can't say to stop it today at midnight but she would like it to be soon. Mr. Tate expressed concern that should the motion intend for CMS to stop using FRL numbers this school year because CMS is in the middle of the school year and the FRL calculation has already been used to allocate funding in a variety of areas. He said there may be other methods to distribute Title I funding but virtually every school district in the state and the country uses FRL numbers. CMS may become the only school district in the nation that would not be using that number if this motion should be approved. He expressed concern that the motion does not include a timeframe to outline if this is for this year or next year and the fiscal implications. He will not support the motion in its present form. He said CMS must have resources for the students who need it the most and the closest predictor we have at this time for achievement is FRL. The FRL numbers for our district as well as other school districts throughout the country have been the best predictor available. This number has helped CMS allocate resources and to stop using that number CMS would have to have some other indicator already in place. He does not know that the FRL numbers used by CMS does not have integrity. He said it has been an annoyance to continually discuss auditing FRL and this is saying we want to undermine the educational experience of students by cutting out resources for the students who need it the most. He has no idea what this will cost and when it will take place so he will not support the motion.

- Mr. Gauvreau said at some time we must take action because we know we have questionable FRL numbers and it is throughout the school district. He encouraged the Board to direct the Superintendent to take action. He expressed concern that every aspect of CMS is driven by how much money a student has in his pocket. He encouraged the Board to make a statement to not continue to use FRL numbers. He believes there are thousands and most likely ten thousand or more students who do not really qualify for the FRL Program. He is concerned that the research by the Gates Foundation will result in another variation of the same results. He said the Board not taking action on this item is irresponsible.
- Mr. Dunlap is concerned that this item has involved so much discussion. He said Mr. Tate asked a good question that no one wants to address. Mr. Dunlap asked what happens to the programs funded by Title I if CMS refuses to use FRL numbers as an indicator? He expressed concern for the number of students who receive resources as a result of their participation in Title I Programs. He said the people refusing to use this as an indicator are saying they want to get rid of those dollars. CMS has over 135,000 students and they are all subsidized in some fashion regardless of their household income. Every educational institute is subsidized in some fashion. He said to specifically target the students on FRL and those who participate in a Title I Program as a way of disenfranchising them is wrong. He encouraged the Board to move on until there is some means that we will be assured that the resources will be allocated where they are needed. He said over the years, he has made his own suggestions. He suggested that CMS deal with the students who had achievement issues since that is a clear indication of who needs the resources because many of the students on FRL status are achieving. He believes CMS should continue to use FRL numbers until they have an indicator that has been documented to work better than the FRL numbers and it will not penalize the students who are participating in Title I Programs.
- Ms. McGarry also wants the truth. She believes fraud is evident in Free and Reduce Lunch throughout the state but no one is coming forward to do the right thing. CMS is the second

largest school system in North Carolina and they should be a leader in acting with honesty and integrity. If CMS has allocated resources inaccurately they must make some changes. The Superintendent was hired to run the school system with integrity and if that is not happening CMS is following through with a status quo mentality. This involves millions of dollars that perhaps have been misallocated and it is time to the right thing.

- Mr. Tate said the Superintendent is reviewing options for a better method. He believes it is important to find those options before canceling this method. He encouraged the Board to wait for the report from staff and ERS. He said CMS has reviewed achievement and that data directly tracked with FRL numbers. Dr. Gorman said out of sixty elementary schools only four schools were eliminated. It was a one-to-one correlation with the middle schools. In the high schools only two schools were eliminated. Mr. Tate said based on that information we would have approximately the same needs and allocations as we do with FRL lunch status. He encouraged the Board to wait until there is a better method of allocating funding prior to eliminating using the FRL numbers.

**The Board voted 3-6 and the motion failed. Ms. McGarry, Mr. Gauvreau, and Mr. Gjertsen voted in support of the motion. Chairperson White, Ms. Griffin, Mr. Merchant, Ms. Leake, Mr. Dunlap, and Mr. Tate voted against the motion.**

B. Recommend approval to adopt the 2009-2013 Technology Plan

Chairperson White called upon Dr. Gorman to introduce the report. Dr. Gorman called upon Susan Johnson, Chief Information Officer, to present the recommendation to adopt the 2009-2013 Technology Plan. Ms. Johnson said technology works in many aspects of the operations of the school district. This report will focus on the school educational services area. The 2009-2013 Technology Plan is ultimately focused on using state dollars to affect the achievement of our students and to bring technology into the classroom for the teachers and the students so that they can be prepared to be digital citizens. CMS works in a regulatory framework and North Carolina General Statute requires that North Carolina school districts submit a new district technology plan to the Department of Public Instruction every five years. CMS has been operating under a plan originally written in 2004, which has been modified each year to make typical adjustments necessary in the fast-moving field of technology. The 2004 plan expires in June 2009 and the new plan will be in effect from July 2009 to June 2013. The plan uses a template provided by the Department of Public Instruction and it sets five major goals: public schools will produce globally competitive students, will be led by 21st-century professionals, will be healthy and responsible, leadership will guide innovation and schools will be supported by 21st-century systems. Ms. Johnson provided a review of the proposed 2009-2013 Technology Plan.

- What's new
  - Expansion of Interactive Whiteboards.
  - Introduction of Web 2.0 Technologies.
  - Motorsports Academy.
  - Expansion of DIBELS to all K-2 classrooms.
  - Hotchalk in the Media Centers (NBC News Archives).
  - Replace school servers (majority of computers in the schools are maxed out and cannot be updated).
  - Managing for Performance Program.

- Technology Plan Funding (Plan is necessary to receive state funding).
  - Funding is a five-year forecast (awaiting settlement of Fines and Forfeitures Lawsuit).
  - Microsoft Settlement funds are being used to expand the Interactive Whiteboard Program and to conduct a Research and Development Project in collaboration with Curriculum and Instruction using Laptops.
- Technology Plan Gaps (must be addressed in new visions).
  - Plan does not address comprehensive refresh of the technology infrastructure (network, personal computers, laptops, servers, and the other devices used to run technology in the district).
  - Plan does not prepare students and teachers to use technology (Professional Development for teachers and training for students).
- Technology Plan Future.
  - Technology visioning process (What is needed to happen in the classroom for students to be most productive and to be well prepared to enter the workforce and be successful).
    - Stakeholders (Board of Education, senior administrators, teachers, parents, students, and business leaders in the community).
    - Focus on the future.
  - New strategic initiatives.
    - New definition for equity.
  - 2009-2013 Technology Plan is a fluid plan that can be updated yearly (with approval from the Board of Education) and submitted to the Department of Education.

**Ms. Griffin moved, seconded by Mr. Tate that the Board approve the proposed 2009-2013 Technology Plan, and a discussion followed.**

Board members were invited to ask questions and make comments.

- Mr. Merchant asked what is the total dollar amount? Ms. Johnson said it is difficult to say because there are a number of items that are in the Technology Plan that will be requested of local funds in the upcoming budget such as the upgrade for NCWise. Mr. Merchant asked if this was forecasted in current dollars? Ms. Johnson said, yes, and that is one of the flaws of the process. Mr. Merchant encouraged staff to include more outside stakeholders in the vision process such as the Visualization Center at UNC-Charlotte. He believes it is important to include “out there” people to insure the process includes horsepower and knowledge to stay ahead of the curve. He said by the time technology gets out of the incubator and into the classroom and the business functions of education it is obsolete. He hopes staff is thinking about the types of interaction and skills students will need in future. Ms. Johnson said one of the critical outcomes in technology visioning is it is difficult to assume that every child needs a laptop because that may not be the delivery device of the future. She wants to ensure a picture of services or actions a child can take in which the teacher and student can collaborate 24-hours a day, seven days a week if that is what is necessary to educate that child. She would like to include options in which a student can attend classes anywhere in the world and receive credit at CMS. We must describe what we want that environment to look like because education is fundamentally changing. Many students in the state are attending Virtual High Schools and Colleges. Students at the Performing Learning Center are able to do much of their class work on-line through NovaNet. She believes this type of work should not just be available during

school hours but also in the evening and on weekends. Including those possibilities changes the transaction and the feel of education. Ms. Johnson said this process will include top talent from Microsoft, UNC-Charlotte, and people who wear the “out-of-the-box” type hats. The meeting will be held at IBM in Charlotte. The process is seeking to be as inclusive as possible but also to develop a plan that can be visualized that will allow a strategy to be put in place to drive forward.

- Ms. Leake expressed concern that some schools are not being supported with technology because they are not equipped with computers or labs. She wants to ensure students are provided technology support today. Ms. Johnson said CMS has over 42,000 computers on-line in the district every day. The district equity ratio is one computer per every five students. Ms. Leake expressed concern that this is not the case for every school. Ms. Johnson said based upon the school reported Asset Management Report every school had at least a 1:5 ratio and the Focus Schools are closer to a 1:3 ratio. Some schools may not choose to put the computers in a classroom and may prefer to place them in a lab instead. Ms. Johnson can provide the Board with an inventory of the computers by school. She said staff takes the ratios very seriously.
- Ms. Griffin appreciates that the plan is meant to be fluid and will allow for change in the future. The 1:5 computer ratio is the standard that has been in place for several years and it has budgetary implications. Ms. Griffin said the report indicates that ratio is not self-evident and it may need to be changed going forward. Ms. Johnson said it is not self-evident and we are not sure if that is still a valid measure of equity. For example, when introducing Interactive Whiteboards into the classroom it makes you question if the 1:5 ratio is meaningful. Ms. Griffin asked if there is a standard for Whiteboards and will the new schools and Focus Schools be more likely to have Whiteboards? Jerry Shepardson, Director of Instructional Technology, said last year the Technology Department used some of the state Technology funding in an anonymous grant type of process in which teachers could apply and a number of Interactive Whiteboards were awarded to classrooms. This technology will have tremendous fiscal implications in the classroom because the Whiteboard costs approximately \$4,000 not including the laptop. The distribution was fairly wide and Garinger High School had the largest number of placements with twelve Whiteboards; West Mecklenburg High School received five Whiteboards; and E. E. Waddell High School received four. These are not large numbers but based upon the budget the Technology Department receives from the state it was the best we could do. This year, CMS has Title 1 funding and it has provided for a large number of Whiteboards for those schools. Albemarle Road Middle School will receive twenty-two Whiteboards, Cochrane Middle School will receive twenty Whiteboards, Eastway Middle School will receive thirty-eight Whiteboards, and Martin Luther King, Jr. Middle School will receive thirty-seven Whiteboards. This will be a large infusion into the Focus schools. Ms. Griffin said does this process include the twelve hours of training required for using Whiteboards? Mr. Shepardson said, yes. The initial grant process included teachers receiving a Whiteboard and a laptop computer, and the teachers committed to attend training on Saturdays with no stipend. Those teachers will now be paid a stipend to help train other teachers in the process. Teachers are coming back saying they need more training and staff is accommodating those needs. Ms. Griffin said this is all very interesting. She encouraged the Board and Dr. Gorman to consider including this in the budget for next year. She noted that many schools have PTAs that have raised funds to purchase Whiteboards.



- Mr. Dunlap commended Mr. Shepardson for his knowledge on technology. Mr. Dunlap encouraged staff to consider having the upcoming meeting at a local university rather than at IBM. He expressed concern that when using businesses and they know you are developing a new process they may want to get the edge on the intellectual property and that could result in them receiving big dollars. Not using a particular company's facility will play fair with all who may be a stakeholder. Mr. Dunlap said with the delivery method of Virtual Learning and Whiteboards education as a whole will change and our stakeholder group will be larger than anticipated because we are focusing on technology. He said should CMS start using the current technology being used on college campuses in which teachers and students are expected to work on-line, CMS should not hold teachers accountable for an 8-5 workday and pay them for that schedule because this new technology will require evening and weekend work. This new technology will drive changes in the current operations of education. Ms. Johnson said technology is not going to drive the business of education. The business of education will drive technology and we must ensure we get the cart before the horse. Mr. Dunlap said access is a key. The student who has the technology may perform better because they have the access. CMS has a school in which all the students have access but there are many schools in which students do not have access. He said as we recognize our limitations to the access, we must also review our classroom structure for providing access. He asked if a school only has five Whiteboards, are classes rotating through that classroom to ensure access to that technology? Ms. Johnson said that is one of the decisions and rules that need to be put in place within each school. A number of the schools have installed the Interactive Whiteboards in the Media Centers so that all classes may have access to them. It would be great to have one in each class. Mr. Dunlap said this has the potential to be a large contract. He expressed concern regarding the reasoning for granting a four-year contract for technology services when technology will be constantly changing. He hopes the plan addresses that concern.
- Mr. Tate thanked staff for a good report. He said the Board receives reports that include volumes of paper and some Board members would prefer technology that would allow paperless Board meetings. Mr. Tate asked what is the status of that process? Dr. Gorman said Judy Whittington, Manager of Board Services, is in the process of working with several different groups (including the City and the County) in evaluating different software. Ms. Whittington said she has also discussed this with Ms. Johnson and Ms. Johnson suggested waiting until January when SharePoint becomes active. Ms. Johnson said this is in progress. The district will go live on a new e-mail platform December 1<sup>st</sup>. Her staff will begin a pilot on November 6<sup>th</sup>. If that pilot is successful it will go into effect December 1<sup>st</sup> and all CMS employees will have access to the new Microsoft Outlook 2007 e-mail system. The next step will bring on-line SharePoint Services which is another collaborative workspace concept. Ms. Whittington will use SharePoint for managing the paperwork for Board meetings. The process will include both Board members and the public having access to the information. Mr. Tate said in regards to equitable access to resources, he appreciates that there are Whiteboards in some classrooms. He expressed concern that there are many students who do not have access to computers outside of school. He asked what is CMS doing to provide access for those students and parents who do not have access to a computer at home or at a library? Ms. Johnson said that is important but it is a secondary issue. Research in the Charlotte-Mecklenburg metropolitan area indicates there is over an 85% penetration of computers in the home. Ms. Johnson

believes CMS and the funding must focus on ensuring the resources are available in the schools. CMS could then work with other partners who focus more on the community in the hope that they can leverage their resources to increase that penetration ratio. Ms. Johnson said there is an explosion in the use of cell phones and students are using their cell phones to access the Web. Mr. Tate said there are only fifteen school-based technology facilitators. He asked what is the goal for the number of full-time school-based technology facilitators? Ms. Johnson said the goal set by DPI is at least two technology resources in every school and more for schools with large populations such as our high schools. DPI would prefer approximately two in every school.

- Ms. McGarry commended the technology system at Cary Academy and she hopes they will be considered as a stakeholder for CMS. She asked if CMS is considering implementing a pilot program similar to Cary Academy. Ms. Johnson said, yes, that is part of a small project that Curriculum and Instruction is reviewing and developing a plan. Ms. McGarry expressed concern that some teachers are not being properly trained or technology competent to use workbooks and Whiteboards. She said some teachers are doing well and getting the results. She encouraged rather than have two technology support people in each school to consider using media specialists or teachers who are contracted for an hour per day. Dr. Gorman said some of this format is currently being used.

**The Board voted 9-0 in support of the motion.**

#### **IV. REPORT/INFORMATION ITEMS**

##### **A. Management Oversight Report on Middle School Reform Initiatives**

- Chairperson White called upon Dr. Gorman to introduce the report. Dr. Gorman called upon Ann Clark, Associate Superintendent for Pre-K-12 Curriculum and Instruction, to present the report on Management Oversight on Middle School Reform Initiatives. Ms. Clark said the report will include an update from five middle school principals who are leading a middle school reform effort as a result of a year spent planning during the 2007-2008 school year in a restructuring initiative through Title I. The principals are in the early months of implementation of their designed reform model. Ms. Clark introduced Chris Cobitz, Director of Assessment, who will be available to answer questions regarding student achievement data and trends. Ms. Clark said each principal will provide a brief overview of their reform model and recognize staff attending the meeting. She said under No Child Left Behind, a Title I school that fails to meet Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) Goals set by the state for five consecutive years in math or reading is required to develop a restructuring plan to be implemented the following year. Five middle schools underwent the restructuring process for 2008-2009: Wilson, Cochrane, Bishop Spaugh Community, J. T. Williams, and Eastway middle schools. Ms. Clark reviewed the AYP targets for reading and math as well as the End-of-Grade scores for reading (the anticipated scores that will be released next week) and math for the five schools from 2003 to 2008.

Board members were invited make comments.

- Ms. Leake expressed concern regarding the projected low reading End-of-Grade scores for 2008. Mr. Cobitz said these are preliminary numbers but he does not expect the scores to change. The numbers are lower than in previous years but the state

implemented a new reading test in the 2007-2008 school year to measure the new reading curriculum that was also implemented in the 2007-2008 school year. When the state implemented the new test they also changed the expectations for students. The definition of performing at grade level is different for the 2007-2008 school year than it has been for the past ten or more years. As a result, it is difficult to compare the 2008 performance to the 2007 performance. Ms. Leake expressed concerned for the success of students in the district. She believes these five schools need strong leadership and the best teachers because these results show non-success. This is a reflection on the school system and Central Office staff because they were to measure and evaluate based upon performance in the schools. Mr. Cobitz said when the state changed the standard for the reading test they also changed the AYP target. For a school to meet its performance expectation for AYP Reading in 2007-2008, they needed to have 43.2% of their students proficient in reading. Ms. Leake discussed the importance of impacting the success of students in the critical areas of math and reading. She wants to ensure the scores improve and someone is held accountable.

- Mr. Dunlap commended the Superintendent for recognizing there were issues at some of these schools and as a result Dr. Gorman has taken action by placing new administration at some of these schools. He encouraged the Board to allow them an opportunity to make adjustments and hire staff that will help the initiative to raise student achievement at these schools. It is not a surprise to him that some students are doing poorly. He knows some of these students struggle with the tests. He asked what is the status of the initiative 8 ½ grade? He does not believe it is fair to move these students to high school and then blame the high school principal because they are performing poorly. He said we must recognize there is a problem and develop a strategy to fix it. He expressed concern regarding the new tests and understanding the difference in the scores.
- Mr. Merchant encouraged the Board to allow staff to present the rest of the report. Dr. Gorman said he would like staff to present the complete report prior to additional Board questions. Dr. Gorman said the state will be releasing for the first time dual purpose scores. This will include a reading score per school on the new scale and, for the first time ever, a score based upon the old scale. This will provide an apples-to-apples comparison and those scores will be released in the near future.
- Ms. Griffin clarified that the report will provide reform efforts that are new this year and the scores provided are based upon historical data. Ms. Clark said, yes, that is correct there was not a reform effort in place last year.

Ms. Clark said the planning process began last year and part of the process included new leadership in both the principalship and assistant principal teams in some of these schools. Ms. Clark introduced the principals to present a recap of their school's reform initiative as follows:

- Tyrone McDonald, principal Bishop Spaugh Community Middle School.
- Valarie Williams, principal Cochrane Middle School.
- Anne Brinkley, principal Eastway Middle School.
- Ron Dixon, principal John Taylor Williams Middle School.
- Eric Ward, principal Wilson Middle School.

Mr. McDonald reviewed the implementation of the restructuring process which occurred in several different phases. Staff focused on the fundamental changes in the instructional

program which included the adoption of the Quantum Learning for Teachers Program. The Quantum Learning Model is a comprehensive model that covers educational theory and classroom implementation; integrates research-based best practices in education in a unified whole making content more meaningful and relevant to students; and centered on brain-based research. This is powerful system with eight core components and intensive efforts focused on teacher retention, teacher recruitment, professional development, and building solid relationships within the school and the community.

Ms. Williams said upon her arrival at Cochrane Middle School she conducted a needs assessment. She found several areas that needed improvement which included students skipping school; low parental involvement; low teacher attendance; lack of school pride; and low morale. The school held a Title 1 Parent Night which consisted of sharing information (assessment and EOG data) and receiving feedback from parents and teachers on what they wanted included in the new restructuring plan. They wanted more hands-on activities in the classroom, increased communication with teachers, and students prepared for high school. Each student received a learning style assessment. As a result of the feedback and data, the school was restructured into three small schools (Global Technology which is directly aligned with Garinger High School; Math, Science, and Environmental Studies which feeds into Harding University High School; and International Business and Culture School which feeds into Garinger High School. Ms. Williams is proud of the students, new staff, and the parents at Cochrane Middle School. She looks forward to the successes the school will achieve in the future. Ms. Williams said through the new implementation process, these scores will not be the scores for next year.

Ms. Brinkley was appointed as the new principal at Eastway Middle School on July 21, 2008. She has implemented reform changes that include the house concept in which students have a connection with the teacher. The building is divided into three houses and students remain in the same house for three years. Each house has a team of teachers, approximately 300 students, and one administrator with 6<sup>th</sup>, 7<sup>th</sup>, and 8<sup>th</sup> grades. The process aids in an establishment of teacher student rapport; the professional learning community uses formative assessment for improved student achievement; and the data is used to drive instruction and promote student focus. Ms. Brinkley is excited about the changes at Eastway Middle School and believes this process will create an explosion of test scores.

Mr. Dixon was appointed the principal at John Taylor Williams Middle School in March. The restructuring plan was developed based upon the areas of concern which included continued low achievement scores, lack of consistent high academic expectations for students, and the high number of student suspensions and referrals. The restructuring plan is divided into eight components that included reconstitution of staff; reorganized master schedule to maximize student instruction; implementation of the Advancement Via Individual Determination (AVID) Program; refine use of Academy of Reading and Math Programs; use of common assessments for Language Arts and Math classes; assessment of Exceptional Children Program and use results to more effectively meet the needs of the students; revamp school-wide student behavior plan; and implementation of Professional Development Plan based upon the restructuring plan and the needs of new teachers. The process is focused on high quality instruction, culture, and ensuring exceptional teachers.

Mr. Ward has been principal at Wilson Middle School since January. Upon arriving at Wilson he conducted several surveys and completed an assessment to understand the perception of the

staff and the community. The results indicated that students lacked organizational skills, communication skills, and the readiness for overall high level thinking. The students that were excelling were currently participating in the AVID Program. He chose implementing the AVID Program on a school wide basis because the majority of students feed into West Mecklenburg High School and West Mecklenburg High School also uses the AVID Program. AVID is both nationally and internationally renowned. AVID is not a remediation program. It focuses on rigor and places students on a path to take high academic classes. It is not only a program but also a philosophy. It levels the playing field for minority and low income students. The process also includes the implementation of strategies for teacher buy-in and sharing best practices with non-AVID teachers; accountability; on-going professional development; parental involvement; and vertical articulation with West Mecklenburg High School (feeder high school). Mr. Ward believes the students of Wilson Middle School will rise to the challenge.

Board members were invited to ask questions and make comments. Chairperson White encouraged the Board members to only address the reform initiatives that have been presented by the principals.

- Mr. Dunlap said best practices are best practices. He expressed concern that the presentations did not define one best practice because each school implemented its own best method of education. He believes based upon all the research someone should know what is the best practice and the best practice to achieve student learning should be implemented everywhere. He commended the principals for taking on awesome tasks. He encouraged staff to define that one best practice to achieve success. Dr. Gorman said all the strategies that the principals selected were researched-based best practices and there was no one best practice that worked for all students. There were some best methods that were implemented at every school such as Open Court 2008 *Imagine It* for students in grades K-5. Principals were asked to review what worked best for their school and implement that process. Each principal incorporated feedback from staff, students, and parents and the restructuring plans are different for a purpose. Mr. Dunlap asked do each of the principals have total autonomy? Dr. Gorman said, no, but they have more freedom and flexibility than a traditional principal based upon what they were asked to accomplish and they work in collaboration with their area superintendent. Mr. Dunlap expressed concern that if the principals are allowed to pick their path but they have someone overseeing their steps who will be held accountable if they do not achieve success. Dr. Gorman said the principals are being held accountable to use practices that work, communicate, involve the community, and produce results.
- Mr. Gauvreau said he has no confidence that these are reform initiatives and the numbers speak for themselves. He has been saying since 2003 that the state test scores and exams are fraudulent. The reform effort should begin in the elementary schools because students cannot read in middle school, and that is fundamental to their educational performance. He does not believe there is anything new in this report.
- Ms. Griffin asked were principals allowed to pick their own strategy and was there an approved list? Ms. Clark said a requirement of the restructuring process is the principals must use research-based program or strategy that produced evidence of success. Some of the components of the restructuring plans were programs such as AVID and others were strategies such as the Cooperative Learning. Teachers are expected to use a variety of

strategies. Some of the components went beyond programs and strategies such as the restructuring of the leadership team and faculty at the school. Each principal had a Department of Instruction facilitator and consultant that were assigned to work with them and their teams. Ms. Griffin asked did any one consider extended-day or KIPP style model. Dr. Gorman said that model was discussed but no one implemented a longer work day. Ms. Griffin asked clarifying questions to individual principals regarding their restructuring plans and the principals responded.

- Ms. McGarry commended the principals for being leaders. She encouraged them to continue to lead because people will follow when they have support at the schoolhouse level. She expressed concern that until the principals have total freedom and flexibility they are missing the boat because they would have more buy-in from staff if their staff knows they are the decision-maker. She is not sure these are reform initiatives but she believes the principals know the best practices that will work for their students and the strategies they are using for implementation are important. She encouraged Dr. Gorman to allow all the principals to participate in this initiative. She believes principals need flexibility in order to be successful.
- Mr. Tate commended the principals for their hard work in restructuring their schools. He is pleased about the potential for successful results. He is grateful that the principals have been given some freedom and flexibility to define a plan that best fits the students and staff at each school. He commended Dr. Gorman for beginning the initiative of providing principals freedom and flexibility.
- Mr. Merchant asked for a one-page summary on Quantum Learning. He expressed concern that the information on the internet is like marketing materials similar to Amway. Dr. Gorman said he would provide Mr. Merchant a one-page summary and invited him to tour the school. He commended the principals for their devotion in accepting the challenges for restructuring the schools. He is a little suspicious regarding educational lingo because some of it has been used off and on throughout the years. He encouraged the principals to be courageous enough to push back and to use the aspects of the researched-based approved methods that work and to eliminate the rest. He does not want the principals to be caught up in compliance-based methods and detailed reporting methods. He expressed concern that the state expectation for reading scores is only 43% efficiency. He does not believe that should be the case because losers compare themselves to other people and comparing yourself to others is the greatest excuse for failure. He said set a goal, go for it, accept no measure of failure, and you will be successful. He encouraged the principals to push for the aspects of the plan that they believe will work. He also encouraged them to not let the state mandates get in their way and to do what is necessary to use them to their advantage. He discussed the importance of getting staff buy-in and the staff that does not participate should be eliminated. He also discussed the importance of getting support from their supervisors and if that does not happen they should go directly to the Board. He looks forward to a report one-year from now with dramatically improved scores.
- Ms. Leake commended the teachers and the staff of the schools because they help to make the principals successful and carry the load to ensure students are educated and disciplined. Her main concern is about the children. She said some principals think they know everything but they do not know anything. She encouraged the staff members to voice their concerns to the principals. She is concerned that CMS has low performing schools. She said CMS has committed to provide resources and the best staffing and there should be

no low performing schools. She encouraged staff to not only ride through the community but to also talk to the people and parents of the community. She expressed concern that that the west side of the district has poor performing teachers, students, and principals. She said the west side of town has been asking CMS and the Board to provide the needed resources for the students on the west side for the past twenty years. She discussed the importance of parental involvement and encouraged parents to get involved in the classrooms and schools. She expressed concern regarding the number of teacher absenteeism in the schools because that contributes to low performance of students. She said CMS spends thousands of dollars on programs but they should focus on teaching the basics of reading, writing, and arithmetic. She expressed concern that many of these students cannot read but they will be promoted to the next grade and those principals will be held accountable for the non-success of those students. She expressed concern that Cochrane Middle School does not have the needed staff and equipment to properly teach a Science and Math Program. She asked what will change to make that program successful? Ms. Leake discussed the importance of supporting education and children.

- Mr. Gjertsen said he has long believed that if you maintain high standards; maintain accountability; and evaluate and meet the needs of the students to be successful you will actually impact student achievement. He believes the restructuring plans meet this criteria and he firmly believes these schools will report success next year. He is pleased the principals are not using a cookie-cutter approach.
- Chairperson White thanked the principals for being willing to accept the challenge of restructuring the schools. He said implementing change is not easy and it often is not popular. He said there is no one best practice and encouraged the principals to do what is best for the students in their schools. He asked what is important is does it work for those students because it does not matter if somebody else does not like it or understand it. He hopes the principals will have the freedom and flexibility to build their team at their school to best meet the needs of the students that they are dedicated to serve.

Dr. Gorman thanked the principals and staff for attending the meeting. He said principals making professional decisions and developing a plan is the same format used at West Charlotte High School, West Mecklenburg High School, and E. E. Waddell High School last year which provided results that were strong. He said these are great people and he is pleased they have taken on this challenge.

Mr. Gjertsen left the Regular Board meeting at 8:45 p.m.

**B. Report on proposed boundaries for 2009-2010 and 2010-2011 school years**

Chairperson White called upon Dr. Gorman to introduce the report. Dr. Gorman called upon Scott McCully, Executive Director of Student Placement Services, to present proposed boundaries for the 2009-2010 and 2010-2011 school years. Mr. McCully thanked his staff for their tireless efforts in developing the process and maps as well as working with the community. He also thanked the community for their participation in the process and valuable feedback. The recommendations for the 2009-2010 school year includes two middle schools and three elementary schools. The recommendation for the 2010-2011 school year includes one elementary school in the southwest area. The process began last spring and staff has held several community meetings. Staff posted boundary discussion options on the CMS Website on August 29<sup>th</sup> for community review. That information included a timeline, meeting dates,

and locations so that parents could prepare. The first Community Meeting was held on September 25<sup>th</sup> and there were two meetings held in each region (Northeast and West). The purpose of the meetings was to obtain meaningful feedback on boundary discussion options.

Mr. McCully presented the boundary recommendations as follows:

#### **New Elementary School Northeast Region**

- New Salome Church Road elementary school opens 2009-2010 school year.
  - Relieves overcrowding at University Meadows and Newell elementary schools.
  - Cuts University Meadows Elementary School attendance area in half.
  - To further relieve Newell Elementary School attendance area a small portion has been assigned to Hidden Valley Elementary School.
- Rising 5th grade may remain at current school.
- Sibling guarantee only applies at the new school assignment.
- School will open at full capacity at 98%.

#### **Alignment of New Ridge Road Middle School with Croft Community School Boundary**

- Align adopted Ridge Road middle school 2009-2012 boundary with previously adopted 2008-2009 Croft Community Elementary School boundary.
- Reassign twelve students from Ridge Road middle school to J. M. Alexander Middle School.
- This recommendation would reunite those students with their peers.

#### **New Middle School West Region**

- New Belmeade middle school opens 2009-2010 school year.
  - Relieves overcrowding at Coulwood and Wilson middle schools.
- Kennedy Middle School boundary is adjusted to align with the new Dixie River Road boundary.
- Rising 8th grade may remain at current school.
- Sibling guarantee only applies at the new school assignment (No sibling guarantee).
- New Belmeade middle school would be the feeder for Whitewater Academy, Pawtucket Elementary School, and Allenbrook Elementary School.
- The students in the southern part of the Wilson Middle School attendance area will be assigned to Kennedy Middle School.
- School will open at 87% capacity.

#### **New Elementary Schools West Region**

- New Mt. Holly-Huntersville Road elementary school opens 2009-2010 school year.
  - Relieves overcrowding at Paw Creek and Mountain Island elementary schools.
- Rising 5th grade may remain at current school.
- Sibling guarantee only applies at the new school assignment.
- School will open at 89% capacity.

#### **Three New Elementary Schools Southwest Region**

- New Dixie River Road elementary school opens 2009-2010.
  - Relieves overcrowding at Steele Creek Elementary School.
  - School will open at 87% capacity.
- New Youngblood/Steele Creek Road elementary school opens 2009-2010.
  - Relieves overcrowding at Lake Wylie and Winget Park elementary schools.



- To further relieve overcrowding some students currently assigned to Steele Creek Elementary School will be assigned to Lake Wylie Elementary School.
  - School will open at 98% capacity.
- New York Road/Red Fez Club Road elementary school opens 2010-2011.
  - Relieves overcrowding at Winget Park Elementary School.
  - School will open at 94% capacity.
- Rising 5th grade may remain at current school.
- Sibling guarantee only applies at the new school assignment.

### **Alignment of High School Boundaries to Middle and Elementary Schools**

- Align West Mecklenburg High School and Olympic High School attendance zones with the new Dixie River Road and Berryhill elementary schools attendance zones as well as the new Belmeade Middle School/Kennedy Middle School for 2009-2010.
- Rising 12th grade may remain at current school (automatic with the new policy approved by the Board).
- Sibling guarantee only applies at the new school assignment.

Board members were invited to ask questions and make comments.

- Mr. Dunlap commended staff for making this process smoother and smoother. He expressed concern regarding the split on Highway 16 for students attending Mountain Island Elementary School being reassigned to Paw Creek Elementary School to allow for growth. Mr. McCully said the purpose of this recommendation is to provide some relief to Mountain Island Elementary School and increase the population at Paw Creek Elementary School. Mr. Dunlap asked for clarification regarding the community's boundary request. Mr. McCully said there is a secondary request with this recommendation that involves the middle school and not the elementary school. The community is comfortable with this recommendation. The community is asking that a portion of the area (Beatties Ford Road) currently assigned to Coulwood Middle School be assigned to Bradley Middle School. Both areas are currently assigned to the Hopewell High School. Staff has reviewed this option and it is posted on the Website as one of the community options. Staff is concerned about this option because Bradley is a distance away and CMS would be obligated to provide transportation for those students, and Bradley is currently at 125% capacity and this would increase capacity to 134% utilization. Mr. Dunlap expressed concern that the community has an issue that school utilization percentages do not include the use of mobiles and many schools utilize mobiles. Mr. McCully said CMS uses mobiles in order to achieve its target for capacity but its goal is to use the core facility of the school which is designed for a certain number of students. CMS provides a guarantee for students and some schools must use mobiles to meet that attendance commitment. Mr. Dunlap discussed his concerns regarding average school capacity and not accommodating the needs of the community. Mr. McCully said the school utilization target is 100% but we have had schools at 200% capacity. CMS currently has 20,000 students in mobile units and those students are being accommodated outside of the core capacity of the school. CMS must provide transportation when students are assigned to a home school area. For this instance, Bradley Middle School is a very large attendance area and the potential for growth is great. Dr. Gorman said CMS will not eliminate mobiles completely and we are on track that by the end of 2010 to take 200 mobiles out of use. CMS is trying to

lower the number of mobiles and utilize the school at 100%. Mr. Dunlap expressed concern that community may not want to bare that expense. Mr. McCully said staff has acknowledged that community request and it is posted on the Website.

- Ms. McGarry said she previously met with Mr. McCully and he addressed her questions.

Mr. Gauvreau left the Regular Board meeting at 9:10 p.m.

- Mr. Merchant asked for clarification regarding the utilization and number of students in boundary for Wilson Middle School and Mr. McCully responded.
- Ms. Griffin commended staff for looking ahead to accommodate future growth and new schools in the recommendations as well as making the assignments as stable as possible. Mr. McCully said it is a difficult balance to relieve some of the most overcrowded schools while anticipating growth and new schools because no one wants to attend a new school that is overcrowded the first day of school.

### **ADJOURNMENT**

**Ms. Griffin moved that the Board adjourn, and by consensus, the Board agreed to adjourn the Regular Board meeting.**

The Regular School Board Meeting adjourned at 9:15 p.m.

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Joe I. White, Jr., Chairperson

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Nancy Daughtridge, Clerk to the Board