



Charlotte, North Carolina

January 27, 2009

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

The Charlotte-Mecklenburg Board of Education held a Regular Board Meeting on January 27, 2009. The meeting began at 5:27 p.m. and was held in Room 267 of the Government Center.

Present: Molly Griffin, Chairperson, District 5;
Kaye McGarry, Vice-Chairperson, Member At-Large;
Trent Merchant, Member At-Large;
Larry Gauvreau (District 1);
Tom Tate (District 4); and
Ken Gjertsen (District 6)

Absent: Joe I. White, Jr., Member At-Large;
Kimberly Mitchell-Walker (District 2); and
James Ross (District 3)

Also present at the request of the Board were Dr. Peter Gorman, Superintendent; André Mayes, Deputy General Counsel, Hugh Hattabaugh, Chief Operating Officer; and Nancy Daughtridge, Clerk to the Board.

Upon motion by Mr. Merchant, seconded by Ms. McGarry, 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 the litigation involving B.H.**

The motion was made pursuant to Section 143-318.11(a) of the North Carolina General Statutes and the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act.

The Board held a Closed Session meeting from 5:27 p.m. to 5:51 p.m.

Chairperson Griffin reconvened the Regular Board Meeting at 6:04 p.m. in Room 267 of the Government Center. CMS-TV Channel 3 televised the meeting.

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

James Ross (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; André Mayes, Deputy 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 Griffin called the meeting to order at 6:04 p.m. Chairperson Griffin 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. Merchant moved, seconded by Ms. McGarry, that the Board adopt the agenda as presented, and the Board voted 9-0 in support of the motion.

II. CONSENT ITEMS

A. Construction item.

1. Recommend approval of design contract for E07-08 (Johnston-Oehler Road) elementary school.

B. Recommend approval of appointment of administrative personnel.

Mr. White moved, seconded Mr. Merchant, that the Board adopt Consent Items A. through B., and the Board voted 9-0 in support of the motion.

Administrative personnel recommendations included the following:

- Johnny C. Ferrara named principal at Oakdale Elementary School. Mr. Ferrara has a Master of Arts in Education Administration from Marshall University Graduate College, South Charleston, West Virginia; Bachelor of Arts in Elementary Education from West Virginia State University, Institute, West Virginia; and a Bachelor of Arts in Arts Administration from Pennsylvania State University, University Park, Pennsylvania. Mr. Ferrara previously served as principal at Glenwood Elementary School, Kanawha County Schools, Charleston, West Virginia.

III. ACTION ITEMS

The agenda did not include any Action Items.

IV. REPORT/INFORMATION ITEMS

A. Management Oversight Report/Update on K-3 Intensive Reading and Secondary Literacy Strategies

Chairperson Griffin called upon Dr. Gorman to introduce the report. Dr. Gorman called upon

Ann Clark, Associate Superintendent for Pre-K-12 Curriculum and Instruction; Katy Dula, Director of Pre-K-12 Literacy and Writing; and Lisa Pratt, principal at Pawtucket Elementary School, staff to present an update on the K-3 Intensive Reading Program and Secondary Literacy Strategies. The report is a part of staff's *Strategic Plan 2010* periodic updates on various initiatives to the Board. Ms. Clark said Pawtucket Elementary has one of the finest implementations of the K-3 Intensive Reading Program in the district which is a significant part of this report and a highlight of the *Strategic Plan 2010*. Ms. Clark recognized staff members in the audience who were attending the meeting representing the Literacy Team at Pawtucket Elementary School and the Literacy and Writing Department for elementary, middle, and high school. Ms. Clark said the Intensive Reading Program was developed to incorporate intensive-reading instruction into the school day for kindergarten through third-grade students who are not reading on grade level. The plan also provides effective literacy instruction for students in grades four through twelve so all students are college-ready and prepared for the global job market. The program incorporates state programs (assessments) and local programs (remediation and acceleration) that support students. Ms. Dula reviewed national research on the importance of reading, CMS literacy criteria, and the Intensive Reading Plan. Research indicates effective literacy instruction includes the following:

- Early targeting of reading difficulty such as decoding, fluency, and vocabulary acquisition.
- Alignment of instruction to formative assessment.
- Differentiated instruction.
- Writing across all curricula.

Literacy is essential in providing students the ability to leave the twelfth grade college ready and prepared to compete in the global society. CMS wants to ensure all students are receiving effective literacy instruction. CMS literacy objectives include the following:

- All students reading on grade level by end of 3rd grade.
- 3rd through 8th grade students are proficient on the skills needed to be successful on the state's Reading End of Grade test.
- 4th through 7th grade internal Writing Assessments based on the state's new Writing Pilot.
- English I End of Grade is a graduation requirement.
- 10th grade state Writing Assessment is used to help determine Average Yearly Progress status.
- Graduation Project integrally tied to literacy.

CMS will meet those literacy needs by providing the following:

- Provide core reading instruction and additional time for intensive reading instruction K-8.
- Assessment for effectiveness of reading instruction.
- Provide literacy support for students in the 8th Grade Plus Program.
- Provide literacy support across all K-12 content areas.
- Professional Development.
- The Aspen Institute (ULLN-Urban Literacy League Network).
- Partnership with UNC-Charlotte (Southwest Education Alliance).

Ms. Pratt reviewed the K-3 Intensive Reading Programs at Pawtucket Elementary School, how the technology has helped her schools, and provided a sample student data growth chart

in Oral Reading Fluency and Literacy. Ms. Pratt said the philosophy at Pawtuckett begins from the basis that reading is the key building foundation and without it children will fail. The Intensive Reading Model is built around that concept. The program is named RIC which means Reading Intensive Care. This takes the stigma away for those students who need reading assistance and provides a caring environment. Pawtucket's Reading Program and School Improvement are aligned with the *Strategic Plan 2010*. The teachers at Pawtuckett use the Personal Digital Assistant (PDA) system which is beneficial for teachers. Ms. Pratt said the PDA system may be the best piece of equipment (tool) that CMS has purchased. It is a time saver and teachers can perform tasks in two minutes whereas previously it was very time consuming and required pencil and paper. The system helps to detect students who are struggling and the services they need. The reports provided are a monitoring system and reviewed throughout the year by the Instructional Service Team. Ms. Pratt invited all Board members to visit Pawtuckett Elementary School to witness the successes of the Reading Program and the school.

Ms. Dula said in grades four through eight, CSM continues to provide additional time for the students who need intensive reading instruction as well as acceleration for the students who are at or above grade level. The major focuses are on vocabulary acquisition, fluency, active reading strategy, differentiated instruction based upon the needs of the student, and higher order thinking skills and questioning strategies. Ms. Dula reviewed the programs used in middle school (Max and Academy of Reading) and high school (English I-IV, Foundation of English I, 8th Grade Plus Literacy, Literacy I and II, and Fundamentals of Composition Course). Writing to learn strategies include Writing in all Content Areas, State Writing Pilot in 4th and 7th grades, and 10th grade State Writing Assessments. A review process is in place to determine if the program is successful and the timeline includes periodic reviews of the K-3 Intensive Model by the Project Management Oversight Committee (occurs at least twice per year), district formative and benchmark assessments (occurs twice per year and data is used to determine how well students are performing), and the Accountability Department is in the process of completing the Evaluation Plan for K-3 Intensive Reading Model which will evaluate how successful the model is meeting the needs of the students.

Board members were invited to ask clarifying questions and make comments.

- Ms. McGarry asked if the literacy facilitators and instructional assistants are permanent positions at the school site? Ms. Pratt said those positions are permanent positions and are housed at the school site.
- Mr. Ross commended staff for the presentation and their enthusiasm. Mr. Ross asked clarifying questions regarding teaching agronomics (instruction on holding a pencil) and ensuring schools have an adequate number of books (meet library standards). Ms. Dula said there are writing strips in the schools and teachers instruct students on how to hold a pencil. Each school has an ample number of books and there is a library standard for schools. Mr. Ross encouraged staff to inform the Board if a school does not have an adequate number of books. Dr. Gorman said there is a standard for libraries and that will be included in the next report (Equity Report) to the Board.
- Mr. Merchant asked clarifying questions regarding grade level gains and Ms. Dula responded. Mr. Merchant said there should be an expectation that students would improve one grade level each year. He said an area of concern is that 38% of the Reading Academy

Schools (9 out of 24 schools) are not improving at least one grade level each year. Mr. Merchant asked Ms. Pratt what percentage of the K-3 students at Pawtucket started the year in the Intensive Reading Program? Ms. Pratt said about 30% started at the beginning of the year. Mr. Merchant asked clarifying questions regarding the percentage of students in a program and the impact on the success and buy in of the program at a school. Ms. Clark said each school has one literacy facilitator and the role of that person changes to be more student focused and teacher support based upon their allocation of time. Ms. Pratt said it is easier to schedule with a lesser percentage of students. Dr. Gorman said the report from Education Resource Strategies (ERS) will provide additional information regarding this question. The greater the number of students below grade level creates more stress on the program due to the total number of hours a literacy facilitator is able to spend with the students. Mr. Merchant believes the schools with the greater number of students below grade level need the resources the most. He hopes all the schools have the same level of buy in as Pawtucket Elementary School.

- Mr. Tate asked does the cluster of schools with the most students below grade level have additional staff? Dr. Gorman said, yes, through a combination of staffing models such as weighted-student staffing, the majority of the schools are Focus schools which have a student-teacher ratio of 1:16, and some of those schools are Title I schools that which have extra resources and those resources can be used for additional staff, programs, and materials. This varies by site and it is determined to meet the needs of the school. Mr. Tate asked clarification regarding the process to ensure the program is working. Ms. Dula said the Literacy Department provides monthly on going training for the literacy facilitators, reviews the data from the different assessments to understand the major issues the students are having problems with, and provides guidance for effective instruction/strategies to best meet the needs of the students. Dr. Gorman said the area superintendents also monitor the process and they coordinate additional training for the struggling principals with the model programs/schools. There is also support staff from the area offices that provide training/support for gaps in the programs. Ms. Clark said this process holds principals accountable for the types of positions they are requesting and they ensure it is tied to student achievement. The process includes checks end balances. Mr. Tate commended the program for its focus on the classroom and what is going on in the school. Mr. Tate asked if there was a need for out-of-school support of summer school for these students? Ms. Clark said there is a Summer School Program for grades three and five which are the gateway years and they are key grade levels in which we have an opportunity for that transition and summer support. Title I schools have the opportunity to attend a Summer Program which goes beyond the school year for Reading and Math. Title I schools can opt to continue instruction through the summer. Mr. Tate expressed concern that some of the students are in an Intensive Reading Program and are still not on grade level. Dr. Gorman said parental involvement is a key in helping students read at home and during the summer and that impacts this program but that is not happening with all of our students. Mr. Tate said he hopes the emphasis on reading does not negatively affect the other subject areas for these students. Ms. Clark said students are monitored closely because we do not want the other areas of instruction compromised.
- Mr. Gauvreau said beneficial to education is time on task. Students in other countries are going to school a lot longer than students in the United States. Students in other countries spend more time with a teacher because they have a longer instructional day and extended school year. He has encouraged the Board and Superintendents to consider this option but

that has not happened. He said Academic Charters on Intensive Reading were established under Dr. Pughsley, previous Superintendent, and other than a new name nothing has changed. He expressed concern that there are still too many students in CMS, especially after 6th grade, who are below grade level. He expressed concern that the classroom instructional day is still only approximately 6½ hours per day. He asked Dr. Gorman what has dramatically or measurably changed in regard to remediation in English and Reading? Dr. Gorman said the program reviewed by Ms. Pratt is a different format than what has been implemented before. The volume of time the non-readers are spending on reading instruction has increased and the amount of time varies depending on the level of the student. Dr. Gorman explained the reading block and the intervention process. This could amount to ninety minutes or forty-five minutes per day depending on the level of the student. Mr. Gauvreau hopes the increased time will improve academic achievement. Dr. Gorman said at this point we do not have the results for the end of grade Reading test. Mr. Gauvreau looks forward to seeing the data. Mr. Gauvreau encouraged the Board and staff to consider increasing the length of the instructional day because that will enhance student achievement.

- Mr. White commended the presenters for their enthusiasm and positive attitude. He believes students being exposed to an enthusiastic leader with a positive attitude can be catching. He said a good attitude is important but students can tell if it is not sincere. Mr. White commended staff for doing a good job and he hopes their efforts are successful.
- Chairperson Griffin thanked staff for a good report and she looks forward to visiting Pawtucket Elementary School soon.

B. Equity Report Update

Chairperson Griffin called upon Dr. Gorman to introduce the report. Dr. Gorman called upon Tyler Ream, Chief of Staff, to provide a brief overview of the 2009 Equity Report. Mr. Tyler said Policy ADA: Equitable Educational Opportunities, mandates that on an annual basis the Superintendent will provide the Board of Education with a report that summarizes equitable educational opportunities. The report typically focuses on the ten specific areas of facilities, technology systems, audio visual equipment, library books and media services, instructional programs and course offerings, instructional materials, co-curricular activities, textbooks, faculty, teacher-student ratios, and per pupil expenditures. The objective of staff is to provide the Board the following:

- Accurate data in relation to the adopted baseline standards
 - Some original standards remain while others have been modified in recent years.
- Specific data that focuses on the equitable environment of “schools serving students with additional needs, particularly students at risk of academic failure.”
- Section-by-section narratives that present the data with clarity, context, and candor.

Mr. Gauvreau left the Regular Board meeting at 7:19 p.m.

Mr. Tyler said staff has worked to align all sections of the report to the *Strategic Plan 2010*. The report also provides clear indications of current and future district efforts to maintain and improve equity in the defined areas. Staff strived to make the report accurate and readable. Mr. Tyler said staff would like feedback from the Board to ensure the data provided is what the Board needs to accurately assess equity in the district. The report largely measures inputs that are related to educational opportunities, instructional materials and supplies, media

equipment and resources, technology, facilities, and faculty. The only outcome specific section in the report relates to academic achievement. Last year, the Board asked that the report be revised in order to improve the clarity and readability of the report and staff developed a new format. The report is a three tier report that includes an At-A-Glance section for each area; a narrative section that includes background information, information regarding standards, performance against standards, and a conclusion with a summary of results; and the charts and tables as well as the report will be posted on the CMS Website. This report does not include Instructional Materials and Exceptional Children Instructional materials (Board members were provided charts and tables on a separate CD). Last year, that information was pulled from the report because the process being used to access equity in those areas was unable to accurately determine whether schools were meeting the baseline standards. Staff is revising this process and at this time staff is not ready to report on that information. Mr. Tyler reviewed the results of the evaluation process as follows:

- Four of nine areas are currently considered at-standard:
 - Technology Services
 - Audio-Visual Equipment
 - Instructional programs and Course Offerings
 - Teacher-student ratios
- Two of nine areas are improving but not yet at-standard:
 - Facilities
 - Faculty
- Three of nine areas are declining and not at-standard:
 - Co-Curricular programs
 - Library Books and Media Services
 - Textbooks

Mr. Tyler provided an overview and the results of each area. Mr. Tyler recognized staff that compiled the report and commended them for their hard work. Mr. Tyler said the mission of CMS is to achieve excellence and equity.

Board members were invited to ask questions and make comments.

Chairperson Griffin said this is the Equity Report that is prepared by CMS staff in accordance with Board Policy ADA regarding Equity. At the next Board meeting, the Board is scheduled to hear a report from the Board's appointed Equity Committee on Equity. Chairperson Griffin said she has asked Ms. McGarry to chair a committee to review Board Policy ADA and the Board's Charge to the Equity Committee. Chairperson Griffin called upon Ms. McGarry to make comment. Ms. McGarry said Ms. Griffin has asked the committee to review the purpose and scope of the Board appointed Equity Committee and make recommendations going forward. The review committee also includes Tom Tate, Trent Merchant, Dr. Gorman, Tyler Ream, José Hernández-Paris, CMS Diversity Specialist, and Barbara Pellin, Assistant Superintendent for Student, Family, and Community Services. The committee will meet and present recommendations to the Board at the Board Retreat scheduled in February 2009.

- Mr. Tate expressed concern that the Board received this information late Friday and with his work schedule it is difficult to review the materials in time for the next Board meeting. He would like to have the opportunity to ask additional questions after he has had an

opportunity to thoroughly review the materials. Mr. Tate asked how could media assistants and media specialists meet baseline standard when many of those positions were eliminated? Mr. Tyler said the standard relates more to the qualifications than the actual people and the number of people. Mr. Tate asked if any of the Equity Standards had been changed from the original adoption of Policy ADA? Mr. Tyler said a number of standards have been altered in terms of Focus Schools standards regarding the teacher-student ratio of 1:16. Dr. Gorman said that changed two years ago but that was not an official act in which the Board changed the standards in accordance of Policy ADA. That was a “defacto” change by way of Board direction in the budget process. The standards as a whole have not been reviewed since 2002. Mr. Tate said the Policy states that Focus schools would have the same faculty as the Schools of Distinction and the Schools of Excellence. He noted that the report lists that “all schools” and not just the Focus Schools would meet that criteria and that should be corrected. He expressed concern that the Focus Schools are well below those staffing criteria. He said the Equity Policy was developed to help CMS work toward equity especially in the Focus Schools and CMS has still not found a way to increase the quality of staff in those schools. He hopes this year’s budget process may provide action and funding that would help to increase the quality of staff in the Focus Schools because that was the purpose of the Board policy. Mr. Tate asked why had there been a decrease this year in the quality of staff at the Focus Schools? Dr. Gorman said this was directly related to the increase in the number of Teach For America teachers and they impacted teaching experience, National Board Certified teachers, and staff new to teaching. Dr. Gorman said this report is based upon the data that the Board has previously requested and staff would be happy to amend it to meet the needs of the Board. Mr. Tate asked if the Board would receive a report regarding Teach For America teachers. Dr. Gorman said, yes, the Accountability Department is monitoring those teachers and that report will be presented to the Board at a later time. Dr. Gorman said he would like direction from the Board on how they would like to use this data and how they want staff to use this data in reviewing the heavy focus of equity inputs and how that relates to comparing inputs and outcomes. Dr. Gorman said staff produced a document that is heavy in outcome based measures that was part of his evaluation which was submitted to the Board. The Board has now requested that not be done. Dr. Gorman asked the Board to provide feedback on the outcome based measures they would like staff to accumulate.

- Mr. White said this report and discussion is important but the rubber does not hit the road until the Board reaches the budget process and we must apply the funds to the appropriate line items. He said if a 1:16 teacher-student ratio is important to the majority of this Board then Board should inform the Superintendent early in the budget process so he can appropriately prepare the budget. He encouraged the Board to discuss these items because we will be facing a situation in which the money will be tight and not available to spend on all the items we want. The Board will have to focus the available funds on what is most important and what will impact the direction of the Board.
- Ms. McGarry said nationwide the Teach For America teachers have been chosen as the brightest and best in America and they have gotten results in the classroom. She said before teaching experience was a viable benchmark but that may need to change with the innovation of that program. She encouraged staff to track that data separately because Teach For America teachers are in the Focus Schools and they are getting results. Dr. Gorman discussed research regarding the impact of teacher experience on student achievement. An input for consideration would be how number of years of experience

impacts the outcome of increasing student achievement. This is the type of information that the staff will review and bring back recommendations to the Board and in turn staff would like the Board to provide clear direction for the future. Ms. McGarry commended the Teach For America teachers and believes they are beneficial to student learning. Ms. McGarry expressed concern that there are libraries with empty shelves. She encouraged that the hours of the school libraries be extended so that students can go to the library before or after school because the library is the hub of the school. She expressed concern regarding the elimination of the media specialist and media assistant positions because that impacted library services to students. Ms. McGarry hopes that the upcoming budget will reinstate the media assistants and media specialists in the schools.

- Mr. Merchant said he does not understand the purpose of this report. At one point there were legitimate concerns regarding the number of things that we had in a school but those issues have been resolved. He expressed concern that this is not an equity report and it burdens staff with bean counting with measures that are not applicable. This is essentially an operations report on how are we doing in the most mundane of areas. These standards were set in 2002 and the Board adopted a new Mission, Vision, and Core Belief statement in 2005 which was a change but we are still holding ourselves to the old standards of 2002. Meeting these measures will not equate to closing the achievement gap. He does not believe the report measures the right things because many items are outdated such as the number of VCRs and age of library books. The standards related to faculty are redundant measures with a huge overlap. A second year teacher would be negatively impacted by four of the criteria. Two of the other criteria, advanced degree and clear licensure, have no bearing on the effectiveness of a teacher. He encouraged the Board to review the purpose of the Board Policy and Equity Report. This reviews outcomes holistically but we are breaking down the inputs in a manner in which the parts never equal the sum. He does not believe CMS will ever have equal outcomes regardless of the inputs and the way we are approaching the inputs makes it impossible that there will be an impact on the outcomes. He encouraged the Board to review using a different set of matrixes for media centers (on-line access versus the number of books) and faculty (measure the balance of teachers). He encouraged the Board to review this in a manner that is relevant to where we are currently and where we are going as opposed to righting the wrongs of inequities that has existed in the system years ago.
- Chairperson Griffin said she recognizes Mr. Merchant's passion and interest in this area, and that is why she asked him to serve on the review committee. She hopes the Board can find a better way to ensure we have equitable opportunities in all the CMS schools.
- Mr. Ross said he would like the report to include why a standard was not met. He believes it is the responsibility of the Board to provide clear direction to staff indicating that the Board wants tracked or measured. He expressed concern that the report is what the Board previously asked for but now it appears that it is not what the Board wants. Dr. Gorman said the report is in compliance with Policy ADA. He said an option for the Board would be to take it from a compliance document to an action document of how it impacts student achievement. The Policy ADA includes the Equity Report should drive the budget for what the Board deems most important and that is a major purpose of the policy. Dr. Gorman does not believe the Equity Report provides all the Board members the information they need make decisions on policy and budget related items. Mr. Ross encouraged the Board to take responsibility to provide staff direction.
- Mr. Gjertsen said regarding staffing, when the policy was put in place the six measures

(licensure, advanced degrees, experience, etc) were an attempt to get to the concept of what is a quality teacher. We have stated that an answer for our struggling schools is quality teachers. In the last two years, we have changed from an accountability system in which we are evaluating teachers based upon the growth of students. The measure for a quality teacher is a teacher that is moving students more than a year. He said the measure from 2002 needs to be updated to reflect what we are doing today in regards to what we deem is a quality teacher. He said regardless of the measure, this is a report about compliance. He expressed concern that CMS has never been in compliance with the standard to balance quality teachers in the Schools of Distinction with the Focus Schools. He said we can update the standard, we can get the measure, we have the information but when are we going to actual do it? Dr. Gorman said for example, West Charlotte High School would be out of compliance on a number of standards over the last three years but that school has moved its aggregate percentage of students on grade level from 39% to 61% yet it does not meet compliance with this report. Dr. Gorman said we have tried incentives, strategic staffing, freedom and flexibility, and other measures to move staff. He has asked the Board if they would support him moving staff to balance schools but he had not gotten the full support of the Board. He said the approaches he has tried will not get CMS to the levels of the standards. He said unless we implement differentiated pay, larger leadership changes, and reassignment of staff against their will we will not be compliance with those standards. Mr. Gjertsen encouraged the Board to consider standards that may include level in which moving students is a measure of a quality teacher as this would also impact Teach For American teachers. He expressed concern that the Board has a Board policy that we as a Board do not support. He encouraged the Board to make the policy go away or put teeth in it to make it effective. He said several Board members believe the measures should be reviewed. He recommended the Audit Committee review the performance measures and the Policy Committee review the policy.

- Chairperson Griffin said she hopes the ad hoc review committee will develop recommendations. She believes this should go through the Policy Committee because it is a Board policy. She expects the ad hoc committee to be genesis of the next steps. Chairperson Griffin said she strongly supports outcome measures and growth in students as opposed to inputs. He hopes the report next year will be different involving new measures.

Dr. Gorman commended staff for their hard work.

C. Education Resource Strategies Report (ERS)

Chairperson Griffin called upon Dr. Gorman to introduce the report. Dr. Gorman called upon Jonathan Travers, Director/Consultant with Education Resource Strategies, to present the report. Dr. Gorman provided opening comments. Dr. Gorman said we are not exempt from the challenges that the nation is facing as a whole economically. The Department of Public Instruction has received a letter from former Governor Easley, which has been supported by Governor Perdue, that asks for scenarios of what a 3%, 5%, or 7% reduction would reflect. A one percent reduction from the state equates to \$7.1 million. Staff has developed a scenario that reflects a 5% state reduction which equates to \$35.7 million. CMS has also received a letter from Harry Jones, County Manager, requesting CMS to review options for a 5% reduction in county funding which would equate to \$17.6 million. As a starting point, staff is developing a scenario that reflects a 5% state reduction and a 5% county reduction in funding.

In most cases, it costs CMS more to operate each year than the year before because of student growth, sustaining operations, and opening new schools. Next year, CMS is scheduled to open six new schools (two middle and four elementary schools) and it costs more to open a middle school than an elementary school. CMS is also scheduled to open two high schools in eighteen months and a high school costs more to open than a middle school. Next year, sustaining operations and growth is projected to cost between \$18 and \$20 million. Hypothetically, should the 5% state and the 5% county reduction be realized that would equate to \$53.3 million in reduced funding for CMS. Dr. Gorman said there has been conversation regarding a federal stimulus plan that has not been approved. That plan would allocate dollars based upon a district's number of schools, free and reduced lunch populations, and Title I eligibility. That funding may equate to \$41 billion to be distributed throughout the country. The funding would be one-time money to be distributed over one or two years targeted for new facilities construction capital, Title I, and Exceptional Children Programs. The federal stimulus plan will not be the saver for school districts and will not balance out the cuts in state or local funding. Dr. Gorman said CMS is facing a tough budget time and we must review budget options. Staff began in September reviewing and evaluating the budget. CMS has been working with Education Resource Strategies (ERS) which has been entirely funded by a grant through the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation. ERS and staff has analyzed an overview of CMS' use of resources compared to other school districts and have provided feedback on what we have been doing well as well as ideas of how to make the most of our resources. They are also reviewing the use of free and reduced lunch percentages in allocating dollars. Dr. Gorman introduced Mr. Travers to present the information which was shared with the principals today. Mr. Travers will present the data today in preparation of the Budget Work Session scheduled for Friday, January 30, 2009 from 8:30 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. at the Leadership Academy. At that Budget Work Session Mr. Travers and staff will present additional information including some broad recommendations regarding changes to the budget. Following the presentation of that information, staff will seek direction from the Board on recommended budget implications. ERS will not recommend budget cuts but will provide information that will help the Board gain more knowledge to help us make better decisions. Staff will make recommendations to the Board and will seek feedback and direction from the Board. Dr. Gorman said staff will have to develop a plan that involves substantial cuts and reductions and they will need clear direction from the Board to guide that process. Dr. Gorman encouraged the Board to provide that direction sooner rather than later.

Jonathan Travers shared information about the research they conducted in CMS on how to improve instruction and student performance in CMS. ERS has worked with large districts throughout the country. He said CMS is a nationally visible school district and other large school districts throughout the country are very curious about CMS' abilities to take its performance to the next level. ERS is excited about the partnership with CMS. The process reviews the three areas of resource alignment (how can CMS better align and organize its district and school level resources to maximize performance for all students), resource equity (how CMS can continue to ensure resource equity across schools in the context of outcome accountability), and school leadership flexibility (how can CMS ensure its school leaders have the flexibility and support to create powerful school organizations in the context of ensuring equity across all schools). This is about how much and how well. The intent of ERS is to help school districts rethink its district and school level resource use. ERS has been doing this type of research for over ten years and has gathered lessons from working with some of the nation's

largest school districts. The fundamental approach begins with analyzing data from across the district and using that analysis to generate insight around resource strategy and working with district leadership to develop new ways to allocate and organize resources. The fundamental bottom line of this process is to improve instruction and student performance. The first phase is data collection, number crunching, and talking to people throughout the district. ERS began working CMS in September to analyze how to most effectively allocate district resources. The analysis was based upon data from the 2007-2008 school year. Research indicates that school districts must invest more in their highest priority areas if they want to see long-term transformation of student performance and that teacher quality must be a high priority area. Mr. Travers reviewed the research conducted in CMS on how to improve instruction and student performance in CMS. Major findings include the following:

1. The achievement gap in CMS is more across schools than within schools.
2. CMS resource use compares favorable to comparable districts.
3. Some CMS schools demonstrate national best practice resource use, though overall resource use is uneven.
4. CMS spends more on its smaller schools which are disproportionately higher-needs.
5. The way student-weighted staffing allocates extra resources to high poverty schools do not foster best practice.
6. Mandated courses disproportionately consume teaching resources in high schools.
7. Free and reduced lunch school performance and incoming student performance closely correlate.

The analysis suggests CMS strategic imperatives should include the following:

- Relentlessly on teaching quality.
- Strategic school leadership means strategic management of resources.
- Invest more in highest priority areas.
- Focus on long-term transformation.
- Focus on strategies over inputs.

Research and experience indicate high performing schools organize resources (time, people, and money) around the instructional model (academic time, individual attention, and teaching quality). Teaching quality is the key driver of student achievement. This can be accomplished through strategic management and budget imperatives to reach the instructional model. The framework for school-based instructional support to enhance teaching quality should include school-based expert support, collaborative planning time, and formative assessments using student data. Districts can make the mistake of cutting these elements even further in tough times but that can lead to a vicious circle (low level of school-based expert support to begin with > cut support further > limited or delayed student performance data/data limits ability to reprioritize support).

Recommendations regarding strategic imperatives include the following:

- CMS cannot achieve significant improvement without taking on low-performing schools.
- Current strategies are good prescriptions for the right diagnosis.
- Major resource realignments hold less opportunity for performance gain than changing how resources are used.
- Significant savings may not be found in central CMS functions.

- Central investments in instructional support (data, professional development, building teacher and leadership capacity) are critical to strategic resource use district-wide.
- Create or provide schools access to state-of-the-art school designs (course-offerings, staffing templates, and schedules) that strategically organize resources around teaching quality, individual attention, and academic time.
- Achieve clarity and consensus on how CMS defines teaching quality.
- Adopt strong evaluation and accountability practices to increase teaching quality across CMS.
- Class size may be a teacher quality trade-off. Small reductions in class size can work against teaching quality efforts (class size reduction equals the need for more high quality teachers plus dollars for additional professional development). Elementary schools that receive more Average Daily Membership (ADM) teachers through student-weighted staffing have greater need for instructional support and less favorable teacher to facilitator ratios.
- Most high school classes cost between \$500 and \$1,500 per student to offer but some courses cost much more. The most expensive classes in some high schools come from mandated offerings.
- Increase principal capacity, support, and flexibility to use resources strategically.
- Support schools in exploring more cost effective ways to offer elective and advanced courses that fit student needs.

Mr. Travers reviewed Policy implications of findings as follows:

- CMS cannot achieve significant improvement without taking on low-performing schools
- Major resource realignments hold less opportunity for performance gain than changing how resources are used.
- Input-driven equity measures constrain effective resources use.
- Evolving freedom and flexibility to strengthen support and guidance will enable principals to use resources more effectively.

Mr. Travers reviewed the ERS Takeaways as follows:

- Incoming student performance and free and reduced lunch hybrid for middle school and high school (not elementary school) will more accurately allocate resources based on student need.
 - Close correlation means small changes.
 - Trade-off: Improved accuracy versus greater complication/less transparency.
- Use of ongoing student performance not recommended.

Dr. Gorman thanked Mr. Travers and the Gates Foundation for their support to CMS. He hoped this helpful information leading into a budget discussion. This will be discussed in-depth on Friday and staff will present preliminary budget recommendations for the Board's consideration and feedback.

Board members were invited to ask questions and make comments.

- Chairperson Griffin said this was fascinating and eye opening. She looks forward to digging in deeper on this information at the Friday Budget Work Session.

- Ms. McGarry was impressed with the data. Ms. McGarry asked clarifying question regarding the comparison to other school districts and Mr. Travers responded. McGarry discussed freedom and flexibility. She encouraged that all principals be giving freedom and flexibility and that process would expose the principals with strong leadership skills from the weak leaders. Dr. Gorman said granting all principals freedom and flexibility does not align with the Board's Theory of Action which states freedom and flexibility with accountability. Dr. Gorman provided an example of a New York school district which provided all principals freedom and flexibility but they never moved out of a managed instruction environment. Ms. McGarry said she has a sense of urgency because if we do not move quicker as our world moves quicker we will fall behind. She wants results quicker.
- Mr. Merchant said the Board's Theory of Action was a great first step and it is not set in stone as it is an evolving document. The Board is required to review that document this year. Mr. Merchant thanked the Gates Foundation for their support. He also thanked Dr. Gorman and his staff for pursuing the process and presenting a great report. He said in reality this is the Equity Report.

ADJOURNMENT

Mr. Merchant moved, seconded by Mr. Tate, that the Board adjourn the Regular Board meeting, and by consensus, the Board agreed to adjourn meeting.

The Regular School Board Meeting adjourned at 9:20 p.m.

Molly B. Griffin, Chairperson

Nancy Daughtridge, Clerk to the Board