

Special Session
August 17, 2004

The Randolph County Board of Education met in special session on Monday, August 19, 2004, at 8:30 a.m. at Hampton Inn to conduct a work session.

Call to Order

Chairperson LaVerne Williams called the meeting to order. Board members in attendance were as follows: P. Guthrie, A. Lanier, T. McDonald, G. Lawson, B. Scott, and B. Coltrane.

ABC and No Child Left Behind Unofficial Test Results

Vicki Moss, Executive Director of Testing and Accountability, presented ABC Recognitions for 2003 – 2004, growth and performance status data. This information also included composite scores for years 2000 – 2004. She also presented AYP and subgroup performance data. The school system had 61 targets and made 57 of them. She also shared 2003-2004 writing scores, which were not included in the ABC model. Writing will be in the accountability model in 2004-2005.

Summer School

Assistant Superintendent Pat Foust reviewed State Board of Education policy on gateways and discussed problems with Summer Academy. It is difficult to recruit teachers, bus drivers, and support staff; the percentage of students passing the EOG test are not high; and scheduling is difficult. She provided suggestions for remediation during the school year rather than during summer months. With Board consensus, this will be done on a trial basis.

School Calendar

Dr. Russ Gobble reported that there were still questions about the legislation concerning the 2005-2006 school calendar regarding teacher workdays. He also discussed the need for flexibility with graduation. Since the calendar is restricted to not beginning before August 25 and ending by June 10, if many days are missed due to inclement weather they will need to be made up during Christmas, spring break, or added to the end of school. There was some discussion about a Saturday graduation for all high schools.

Bus Safety Update

Dr. Gobble reported he and Transportation Director Leslie Cox were planning staff development for bus drivers and coordinators in student management. A newsletter will be sent to parents on bus safety. He will meet with bus drivers regularly and will develop a crisis plan for drivers. New and improved camera systems will be installed on buses as funds allow. The bus driver incentive pay plan will also be reevaluated.

Attendance Line

Dr. Russ Gobble reported a request had been made to move an attendance line between the Coleridge and Southwest attendance area, allowing students to attend Southwestern Area schools. This change in attendance line would involve 19 elementary school students and 15 middle/high school students.

Discipline Data

Deputy Superintendent Cindy Schroder reported discipline data will be done online by the school for the 2004-2005 school year. She summarized discipline data for the 2003-2004 school year. The number of short-term suspensions decreased 13 percent from last year. There was an increase in the number of incidents for possession of alcoholic beverage and possession of a weapon. There were decreases in the number of incidents for rule violations, undisciplined, aggressive behavior, possession of controlled substance, and tobacco. The majority of students suspended were white males and the greatest number of suspensions were at grades 7, 8, and 9. The percentage of the student population involved in short-term suspensions was 4.9 percent. Thirty-seven students were long-term suspended. Of the 37, 31 students were suspended for one semester only. Controlled substances were the most prominent cause of long-term suspensions. Of the 37 students, 24 were ninth graders. The majority of students suspended long-term were white males. There were 137 crime and violence incidents in 2003-2004. There were 162 crime and violence offenses in 2003-2004, compared to 179 offenses the previous year. The number of offenses for weapons increased while assault on school personnel and possession of a controlled substance decreased. There were four offenses counting toward a "persistently dangerous school; however, none of our schools meet the criteria for a "persistently dangerous school."

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Dr. Russ Gobble, Executive Director, shared bus suspension and intervention center data. The number of bus suspensions had increased 47.6%. Dr. Gobble stated he felt new data collection procedures and repeat offenses had caused the increase in bus suspensions. The most common causes for bus suspensions were fighting/hitting/tripping, profanity/lewd comments, and failure to remain seated, disruption, and other. There were 1719 visits to the Intervention Centers. This cannot be compared to the previous year, because intervention centers did not operate the entire 2002-2003 school year. Disrespect, cutting class, disruption, and fighting were most prominent reasons for visits.

Personnel Update

Superintendent McRae reported the system had 13 vacancies. Of those, seven are new positions.

2004-2005 Budget

Finance Officer Marty Trotter distributed copies of the 2004-2005 Budget. The system received 8.66 percent increase in current expense funding over the previous year. The increase will increase supplements, cover additional summer custodial help, reimburse bus drivers for additional licensure requirements, and hire an additional HVAC employee. The system received less capital outlay funding than the previous year due to decreased enrollment. The Child Nutrition budget included the director's salary. County Commissioners approved an increase in the Archdale-Trinity Supplement from 7 ½ cents to 8 ½ cents. The Council will pay supplements on a percentage rather than flat rate. Teachers will receive a 4 percent supplement for the 2004-2005 school year.

High School Facilities Planning

Superintendent McRae reported that the Board of Commissioners will meet on Tuesday, September 7, at 4 p.m. to discuss funding for facilities. The board has discussed bond and COPS funding. COPS funding would speed up the timeframe for construction. Purchase of property for a new high school will depend on funding.

Property for High School

Bob Scherer shared information on three properties under consideration for construction of Northeastern Randolph High School. All three sites have been evaluated by the Boney Architects and each have advantages and disadvantages. No price negotiations have occurred. There is another parcel of land that has not been visited or evaluated.

Parking Fees

Bob Scherer reported that parking lots particularly at Eastern Randolph and Southwestern Randolph High Schools were in bad shape. He stated that maintenance and expansion of parking lots were expensive budget items and parking fees paid by students did not begin to cover the costs. Superintendent McRae asked the Board if they would consider an increase in student parking fees from \$5 per semester to \$15 per semester to help defray these costs. Member of the Board were reluctant to increase fees to improve and maintain what they considered to be a part of school facilities.

Principal Selection Process

Superintendent McRae suggested a revision in the principal selection process. At present, applicants are screened and three to six candidates meet with the committee. A problem can be created when the committee picks one top candidate, but the position is filled by a different candidate. Dr. McRae suggested that six to eight candidates be scheduled to meet with the committee, and that the committee narrow the field to two or three candidates from which the superintendent would select a recommendation.

North Carolina Working Conditions Survey

Superintendent McRae shared results of the North Carolina Teacher Working Conditions Survey for Randolph County. Randolph County scored above the state average in empowerment, facilities and resources, leadership, and professional development. Randolph County was below the state average in time (planning, teaching, and professional development).

Communication System

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Superintendent McRae reported that he and several members of the staff had attended a presentation of a web-based system designed to promote communication between school and home. The system would allow principals to contact homes of individual students, the system to announce weather related delays and closings, delays with bus routes, etc. The cost of the system is \$5 per student. The company would work to obtain corporate sponsors to reduce the cost. Even with corporate sponsorship, significant funds would be needed to obtain the system.

Eastern Randolph Football Devotions

Superintendent McRae reported that he had directed Eastern Randolph High School Principal Ed Todd to instruct football coaches that prayer before football games could not be school sponsored or supported and they or any employee of the school system were not to organize or participate in religious activity (prayer) before football games. He further instructed that students could organize and plan time for a devotion, that participation could not be required and participation would not be monitored. Dr. McRae reported that his directive was in accordance with federal laws.

Chairman

Secretary