

THE ASHEVILLE CITY BOARD OF EDUCATION
SPECIAL CALLED BOARD MEETING MINUTES
October 31, 2012

The Asheville City Board of Education ("Board") held a special called meeting at 2:30 p.m., on Wednesday, October 31, 2012 in the Board Room at The Asheville City Schools Administrative Offices, 85 Mountain Street, Asheville, North Carolina.

Members present were:

Gene Bell, Chairman
Peggy Dalman
Precious Folston
Jacquelyn Hallum
Al Whitesides, Vice-Chairman

Comprising a quorum of the Board.

Allen H. Johnson, Secretary/Superintendent.

CALL TO ORDER

Gene Bell, Board Chairman, called the special meeting of the Asheville City Board of Education to order at 2:30 p.m. He stated that the purpose of the meeting was to receive the Exit Report from the AdvancED External Review Team. The meeting was then turned over to Dr. Mike Griffin, Lead Evaluator for the AdvancED External Review Team.

OPENING REMARKS

Dr. Griffin addressed the Asheville City Board of Education, Superintendent Johnson, Leadership Team, Directors, and Principals. He introduced the other members of the External Review Team and proceeded to thank the district for the warm welcome that he and his team received, and for the accommodations and the meals.

Dr. Griffin shared the following with the group:

- It was evident to the External Review Team that the district worked very hard and that they were prepared for the team's visit.

- During the presentation, they will here of numbers that are associated with each of the five Standards, numbers for the Effective Learning Environments Observation Tool, a new instrument that is being piloted and has no bearings on the accreditation decision. The district must be careful about what they read into those numbers, because AdvancED does not yet know. Not until they have gathered and compiled information from other school systems, will they understand what the numbers represent.
- At the end of the presentation, the External Review Team will make a recommendation to AdvancED to accredit or not to accredit.

PRESENTATION

The Asheville City Board of Education, Superintendent Allen Johnson, Leadership Team, Directors and Principals received an Exit Report from the External Review Team of AdvancED for the purpose of re-accreditation for the school district. The report was presented by Dr. Mike Griffin after a three-day visit to the district on October 28, 2012 through October 31, 2012.

A brief overview about AdvancED, the accreditation system, key elements for accreditation and the external review team were presented.

- Findings:

A review of the five Standards, the Effective Learning Environments and the Rubric's performance scale that was used: (1) Not Evident (2) Somewhat Evident (3) Evident, and (4) Very Evident

- Standard 1: Purpose and Direction (3.0)
- Standard 2: Governance and Leadership (3.0)
- Standard 3: Teaching and Assessing for Learning (2.58)
- Standard 4: Resources and Support Systems (2.88)
- Standard 5: Using Results for Continuous Results (2.2)

Effective Learning Environments:

- Equitable Learning Environment (2.31)
- High Expectation Environment (2.76)
- Supportive Learning Environment (2.88)
- Active Learning Environment (2.71)
- Progress Monitoring and Feedback Environment (2.6)
- Well-Managed Learning Environments Observation (2.95)
- Digital Learning Environment (1.8)

1. Stakeholders

The district received a very favorable report from one of their stakeholder groups, parents. 34 parents were interviewed by the External Review Team and according to Dr. Griffin, several of the parents spoke eloquently and are strong supporters of the school system.

2. Powerful Practices

The External Review Team shared three areas in which the district is doing very well:

- Strong Partnerships – Liaisons the district has with the external community: City Council, Parent Involvement, Housing Authority, Education Foundations and several others.
- AVID – there was clear evidence that the program has been in place for a long time (15 years). It was approached correctly and had a good start! Systemic, systematic and sustainable.
- Elementary Foreign Language Program - “I observed a second grade Spanish class,” Griffin reported, “and it was conversational throughout. Other districts are cancelling out on foreign language; you aren’t.”

3. Required Actions

The External Review Team recommended three “Required Actions” for the district to consider and implement:

- Define some the goals associated with the 7 strategies of the new Strategic Plan for the school district. Review the current strategic plan, prioritize goals within the plan, create measureable outcomes for each goal, and implement changes with a timeline for ongoing review and, where appropriate, revision.
- Evaluate the technology plan to ensure that it is aligned, sustainable, compatible, and effectively addresses learning, productivity, and communication.
- Conduct a comprehensive program evaluation to identify high impact initiatives that reduce the achievement gap, implement and monitor identified initiatives with fidelity and eliminate those programs that prove to be less effective.

RECOMMENDATION

Accreditation!

AdvancED will issue their recommendation to Asheville City schools at the end of the calendar year.

WHAT TO EXPECT

Asheville City Schools will receive a written report from AdvancED, further explaining all of what was presented in the Exit Report by the External Review Team within 30 days.

CONCLUSION

Dr. Griffin concluded with a quote from Albert Einstein: ‘Wisdom is not a product of schooling, but a life-long journey to acquire it.’ “ We wish you all the success in the world today and forward in helping your students along that journey to acquire wisdom.”

Superintendent Allen Johnson closed the special called Board meeting with a thank you to the External Review Team. “You have been very helpful. We will be a better school system because of your visit. I’m proud of you.” He also thanked the Board members, administrators and teachers and said “but now, we have more work to do.”

ADJOURNMENT

At 3:05 p.m., the special called meeting was adjourned.

Gene Bell, Chairman

Allen H. Johnson, Secretary/Superintendent