

MINUTES
THE ASHEVILLE CITY BOARD OF EDUCATION
SPECIAL MEETING FEBRUARY 16, 2016

The Asheville City Board of Education ("Board") held a special meeting at 9:30 a.m., on Tuesday, February 16, 2016 in the Board Room of the Administrative Offices, 85 Mountain Street, Asheville, North Carolina.

Members present were: Peggy Dalman, Chairperson, presiding
Leah Ferguson
Martha Geitner
Shaunda Sandford

Member absent was: Matt Buys

Comprising a quorum of the Board; also

Dr. Pamela Baldwin, Secretary/Superintendent;
Chris Campbell, Board Attorney

Staff present was: Dr. Terrence McAllister, Assistant Superintendent;
Donna Watson, Chief Finance Officer, Charlie Glazener,
Executive Director for Public Relations, April Dockery,
Executive Director for Teaching and Learning; Laura
Davis, Executive Director of Human Resources/High
School; and Jackie Taylor, clerk to the Board

Media: Julie Ball with Asheville Citizen Times

Guests: Parents, ACS Staff and Administrators

CALL TO ORDER

Board Chair Peggy Dalman called the special meeting to order at 9:35 a.m. and proceeded to welcome everyone who was in attendance.

CONSENT ITEM

Martha Geitner made a motion to approve consent agenda item A: Technology Bid #148-ITT -028 for the two new schools: Asheville Middle and Isaac Dickson Elementary. The motion was seconded by Shaunda Sandford and carried. The Board had no questions for Matt Whiteside who was present at the meeting.

RESTRUCTURE

Superintendent Baldwin and the Leadership presented the feedback received from the three main schools that will be impacted by Option #4 and other district input. A brief recap on reasons for the restructure that initiative the proposal included, the two new schools, growth, class size challenges at the elementary level, voice from stakeholder groups about secondary school option, and the academic needs and the future of Asheville City Schools to ensure Excellence with Equity for all students. She shared that the experience is both an exciting and challenging time for the school district.

April Dockery provided feedback from the three schools that will be most impacted by Option #4:

Asheville City Schools Preschool

- Expressed concerns about job security
- Phase-in process – more clarity on the existing kindergarten class at Hall Fletcher, and will there be a first grade next or add a kindergarten class

Hall Fletcher Elementary School

- Losing Community
- Volume of changes of the years
- Does not like the idea of having two campuses
- Moving too fast
- Concerns about the restructure process
- Communication has not been straightforward
- How did the leadership arrive at their decision for the restructure
- Too many changes to the school's community

Asheville High Schools

- Welcome the AHA program moving to a different campus, because of space
- Opportunity to bring back some of the programs that worked well when previously housed at the Montford campus
- Concerns on whether AHA students would be able to participate in extra-curricular activities

Ms. Dockery responded to a question on transparency during the restructure initial meetings, and stated that only Hall Fletcher expressed that it was an issue.

In her opening remarks, Laura Davis stated that the restructure provides an opportunity for the whole system to think about where they want the district to be in five to ten years; and proceeded to share some immediate responses that the Human Resources department would need to put in place for the 2016-17 school year regardless on whether the a decision is made about Option #4.

- The intentions for the preschool
- Hall Fletcher – what would be the process
- Asheville Middle - would they move to Hall Fletcher

- Hiring and transferring of employees for the two new schools
- What will happen to the preschool building?
- Licensure
- Recruiting individuals to fill gaps

Mention of teacher turnover rate was raised as a consideration with the restructure conversation. The Board was made aware that Letters of Intent will be mailed out to employees by March 1st to allow staff to decide on their future with the school system.

Chief Finance Officer, Donna Watson reviewed the budget timeline with the Board, and presented a list of things that will impact the budget, and in addition, reviewed funding concerns for the 2016-17 school year. Other concerns included maintenance and IT workload, and the payroll for the balanced calendar.

Teaching and Learning

Ms. Dockery reviewed her department priorities with the restructure initiative

- Academic Achievement – and remove barriers and set timelines
- Working on a primary model
- Curriculum support for Hall Fletcher
- Impact on Asheville Middle School
- Phase-in plan
- Build a true College and Career

Student Support Services

Dr. McAllister shared the perspective of his department and that is to first meet the needs of the whole child and stated that his department needs to know the next steps regarding:

- Magnet School Enrollment
- Pre-K Registration
- Child Nutrition
- Transportation

Superintendent Baldwin reminded the Board of the reasons by Option #4 is still the leadership's choice, and expressed her appreciation for the input received from the stakeholders. The leadership considered feedback about exclusiveness and in addition; they revisited data points dating back to last November. Option #4A was created based on conversations with stakeholder groups, but the cons out weighted the pros, one being that it eliminated the preschool option at the elementary level.

Board members shared their views on Option #4A and reminded the leadership that their charge to the district is to focus on closing the achievement which, does not start in kindergarten.

Dr. Baldwin reiterated the intention of the Leadership Team

- Requesting time and direction from the Board
- Time to work will those who will be impacted the most
- Make Option#4 a long-term fix for district

Board Chair Dalman expressed her appreciation to the audience and encouraged them to keep emailing the board with their concerns.

Board response to the Leadership Presentation:

- Leah Ferguson stated that she was in full support of Superintendent's recommendation of Option #4 also stated that board member, Matt Buys expressed that he would support the superintendent's decision – and she appreciates the leadership's expertise in making these decisions. The members concurred and thanked the leadership individually.
- Shaunda Sandford and Martha Geitner both agreed that eliminating preschool from the plan as stated in Option #4A is not acceptable, but they were not ready to make any decisions.

Leah Ferguson left the special meeting at 10:35 a.m.

Dr. McAllister reviewed what the enrollment phase-in plan and the decisions to prepare for 2016-17

- Kindergarten at Preschool building?
- First grade at Preschool building?
- Preschool at Hall Fletcher?
- Kindergarten at Hall Fletcher?
- 6th/7th grade at Hall Fletcher?
- Preschool at Jones and IDES?
- Additional teachers for upper elementary grades?
- Alternative programming 9-12?

Dr. McAllister presented and reviewed the three-bullet points with the Board for their consideration and approval:

- Approve key points
- Approve Next steps
- Approve Timeline

Charlie Glazener reviewed the next steps (school team meetings) and the proposed timeline with the Board:

- Four representatives from each of the district's nine schools
 1. PTO President
 2. Chairperson of School Improvement Team
 3. TOY
 4. Principal or A/P
- First Team Meeting on February 25
- Presentation to the Board during work session on March 3
- Board approval on March 7, 2016

Board Chair requested that the sessions be made available on the district's webpage for families and stakeholder groups to view.

Mr. Glazener also shared how the Communications Department will provide updates to the stakeholders on the School Team Meetings.

The Board requested that the Leadership Team revisit the dates listed in the next steps and timeline, and possible change the February 25 meeting date to an earlier date; and also move the February 29 work session date to March 3.

Following a review of the Key Points as presented by Dr. McAllister and restated by the Board Chair, Martha Geitner made a motion to accept the Key Points listed below. The motion was seconded by Shaunda Sandford and carried.

- Enhance academic achievement
- Address and plan for growth at all levels while maximizing facility capacity when possible
- Expand preschool options to elementary schools
- Address need for a non-traditional secondary school
- Consider feedback from community that a small middle school option be included in plan
- Consider feedback from community that SILSA remains on AHS campus
- Recognize that parking, parent drop off/pick up and yellow school bus traffic at both ACS Preschool and the Montford campus present challenges that must be addressed. For example, leaving barriers on Montford Avenue was originally approved as only a temporary solution.

Dr. Baldwin informed the Board that they will be provided with copies of the presentation.

The Board chair thanked Superintendent Baldwin and the Leadership Team for doing such a great job.

ADJOURNMENT

At 11:11 a.m., the special meeting was adjourned.

Peggy Dalman, Chairperson

Dr. Pamela Baldwin, Secretary/Superintendent

Approved by the Board on Monday, May 2, 2016