

**PITT COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
GREENVILLE, NORTH CAROLINA
MAY 20, 2002 MINUTES**

The Pitt County Board of Commissioners met on Monday, May 20, 2002, at 6:00 PM in the South Central High School, Media Center, Pitt County, North Carolina.

Commissioners present:

Beth Ward, Vice Chairwoman
Glenn Bowen, Commissioner
Mark Owens, Jr., Chairman
Tom Coulson, Commissioner
David Hammond, Commissioner
Tom Johnson, Commissioner

Commissioners absent::

Terry Shank, Commissioner
Randy Royal, Commissioner
Eugene James, Commissioner

Staff present::

Scott Elliott, County Manager
JoAnne Burgdorff, County Attorney
Susan J. Banks, Clerk
John Bulow, Assistant County Manager
Melonie Bryan, Director of Financial Services
Thomas Lynch, Public Information Officer

Board of Education Members present:

Jim Hopf
Ralph Love
Jill Camnitz
Michael Dixon, Chairman
Mary Grace Bright
Ephraigm Smith
Walter Gaskins
Sidney Scott
Richard Tolmie
Barbara Owens
Don Carson

Absent:

Mike Burnette

Public Schools Staff:

Dr. Michael Priddy, Superintendent
Aaron Beaulieu
Dr. John McKnight
Barry Gaskins

Call to Order

Chairman Mark Owens called the Board of Commissioners meeting to order.

Chairman of the Board of Education Michael Dixon also called the Board of Education to order. Chairman Owens stated that the purpose of this meeting was to review the education compact, which is a five- year contract for funding of the schools. The agreement is for the two boards to meet together two times per year to look at the funding and the progress being made in the schools as set out in the education compact.

A prayer was offered by Commissioner David Hammond.

Chairman Michael Dixon stated a presentation was to be made to the Principal of the new South Central High School. A Scout presented the United States of America flag to the South Central High School.

The Pledge of Allegiance was then led by Barbara Owens, Board of Education member.

**Community Connections/Partnerships in Support of the Education Compact
Business Compact – Partners in Education Report**

Joel Butler, Chairperson, Greenville-Pitt County Chamber of Commerce
Susanne Sartelle, President, Greenville-Pitt County Chamber of Commerce

Philanthropic Report

Danny McNally, Trustee of the West Foundation

Faith Community Report

Sherice Gorham, Director, Stay Up While You are Out Program/Oasis of Hope Church
Pat Carter, Jarvis United Methodist Church/Sadie Saulter School Initiative

Mr. Joel Butler stated that the compact had been successful. The Chamber has formed a High Level Education Cabinet to help initiate the Partners in Education between the business community and the schools.

Ms. Susanne Sartelle spoke of the Chamber's new program, Partners in Education. The focus is to raise opportunities for achievement. Their vision is to have the most advanced educational system in North Carolina. Some of the cabinet members are Dave McRae, Charlie Russell, Janice Faulkner, Larry Seigler, Phil Flowers, Jordan Whichard, Jehu Taft, Sidney Locks and Ferrell Blount. The Education Excellence Committee has been formed and there will be subcommittees from this cabinet. The first meeting of the cabinet is scheduled for May 30, 2002. Ms. Sartelle said these are leaders as work. There will be a program research subcommittee, compact subcommittee, business education partnership committee and a summit subcommittee. They are requesting the support of the community for their partners in education initiative.

Mr. Danny McNally gave a report on the \$100,000 West Foundation Donation and how these funds had helped fund library books for the different schools. He stated that in 1999 there was a donation of \$220,000 made to the Pitt County Education Foundation for exceptional at-risk children. They have helped fund playground equipment at Falkland at-risk martial arts programs, athletic fields, libraries, and soccer goals.

Ms. Sherice Gorham reported on the faith community. She said there is a house in the Farmville district which works with students in suspension. They assist these students with keeping their work caught up while on suspension. They serve 120 children and some are repeat offenders. They serve students from Greenville and surrounding areas.

Ms. Pat Carter reported on the United Methodist Woman working in the schools. She stated that it began with social workers in the schools. She stated that they assist needy school children with class supplies, health kits and school kits. She said that Sadie Saulter School does a lot with very limited amounts of money. She said they have done a teacher appreciation luncheon, provided tutors and hope to meet with every Pastor in Pitt County during the summer.

A Year In Review

Dr. Michael Priddy, Superintendent

Dr. Priddy stated that he hoped people in the community would get energy from these people who have presented and encourage others in the County. He stated the joint mission from the Education Compact states "Board of Education will actively pursue with determination and persistence, high educational attainment for all Pitt County school children ..." and the "...Board of Commissioners will provide funding to ensure achievement of goals and objectives identified...."

Major benchmarks

1. A K-12 promotion policy in its second year of implementation that has eliminate social promotion in policy and is eliminating it in practice;
2. A completely new School Improvement Plan process that addresses the higher expectations and achievement called for in the Education Compact;
3. A new High School Student Assignment Plan that brings program equity to the six high schools in Pitt County and places us on a path of preparing young people for the 21st century workforce;
4. A public engagement process that facilitates active community involvement in the creation of options and solutions for the School Board to consider;
5. A licensed cadre of teachers who are well prepared to teach our children based on a clear commitment to salary supplements, bonuses, support for new teachers who must meet some of the highest standards in the nation, and a culture that encourages National Board Certification and postgraduate study;
6. A reliance on retired teachers as tutors who are able to provide individualized help to struggling students and the rejuvenation of Communities in Schools through the tireless efforts of one of our own, Terry Shank, with its commitment to mentors;
7. A budgeting program at the county level and at the school system level that has earned both groups significant public acclaim by national organizations that recognize the highest standards of financial reporting in the public sector;
8. A fiscal strategy employed by the school system that has allowed it (a) to furnish and equip four schools during the past 16 months without seeking additional funds through the County commissioners, (b) to provide significant additional fiscal resources to the classrooms and schools beyond what was available through direct, annual tax allocations, and (c) to help the County twice when funds were unexpectedly withheld by the State;
9. And, very importantly, a recent construction program using state bond funds and money borrowed through Certificate Of Participation to undertake and complete 9 significant, high quality construction projects that were, like the one today, on time and within budget.

Dr. Priddy stated that he wanted to thank the Board of Commissioners and commend them for their vision, fortitude, and prowess. He also stated that one variable for maintaining progress on the compact goals requires additional teachers but adding additional teachers to reduce class size or to reduce severe crowding is not possible because they do not have the space. A new, long-range educational plan is imperative. He encouraged the acceleration of the partnerships discussed earlier. He spoke of the new high standards being implemented through federal legislation, No Child Left Behind, will require unprecedented commitments from all sectors for the teachers and principals to have a fair shot at the new definition of "success."

Dr. Priddy spoke about the future and the lack of resources available to the County Commissioners. He said that the leaders need to be creative and have courage. For the School Board it means continuing to streamline and/or eliminate any expenditure that is no longer serving earlier purposes, to limit funding requests to those deemed essential and critical, and to seek to maximize those strategies that are working for us. In turn, for the Commissioners he said that means they must strive to continue to fund the resources needed to address the critical

needs identified by the School Board. He commended both the School Board and the Board of Commissioners for their leadership.

Pitt County Schools Local Current Expense and Capital Outlay Budget Report

Richard (Dick) Tolmie, Chairperson, Finance Committee, Pitt County Board of Education

Mr. Dick Tolmie stated there were no major expansions planned. There are no funds for new classrooms or buildings until Fiscal Year 2007-2008. The Board of Education approved the new study. They're goal is to retain most qualified people. He said the School Board has done the cutting on this budget prior to it being presented to the Board of Commissioners. They have \$900,000 new money for expenses, hospitalization increase by 30% and extracurricular supplements are included. There are no funds for local supplements for County employees. If the State increases teachers salaries by 1 ½ % they will need another \$150,000 in the budget. If the State changes the retirement benefit, they will need more money. The new South Central High School will cost \$910,774 annually and they will need funding for staff for the new high school at a cost of \$605,000. They would like to put in distance learning for six high schools and there are other department requests. The budget for capital outlay this year is good but next year will be \$461,000 short. Fiscal Year 2008 will be the first time funds for capital outlay will be available.

Pitt County Financial Overview

Scott Elliott, County Manager

Mr. Scott Elliott reported that the Education Compact is in its third year. To date \$4 million additional funds have been given to the schools in support of the education compact. By the end of the Education Compact, the county will have increased funding by \$9 million to the Schools. This year will have a \$1.7 million increase in funding to the schools based on the compact. Education is one of the Board of Education's highest priorities. He stated that the Board of Commissioners are dealing with multiple budget challenges due to the Governor withholding revenues, substantial investment losses, and sales tax revenues are down. He stated that with a study of the space in the county administration building by the administration for the Schools, they determined the value of space as \$365,000 per year. He stated he is proposing to reduce the \$1.7 million allocation by \$150,000 as a small measure. Pitt County proposes to start putting \$365,000 on the books as being given to the schools to be included in the per pupil allocation. Mr. Elliott said the County 's mission is to be a Leader in the State, Best in the East and he believes this proposed budget upholds the Board of Commissioners commitment to the Education Compact.

Discussion and Question/Answers

Commissioner Bowen asked how much money was in the schools fund balance. There is \$2 million in the schools fund balance. Commissioner Hammond asked about the goals and if they were being reached. Dr. Priddy directed Commissioner Hammond to the written report on their goals, objectives and measurements. Commissioner Hammond left the meeting at this time. Commissioner Coulson asked why there are no standardized goals. Dr. Priddy stated that the Board of Commissioners and Board of Education agreed to start with existing data and wrote challenging but reasonable goals. Each goal should be obtainable. He said the standards are going up. Commissioner Coulson said he would like statistical significant data from 1995 forward so he could do a review. Dr. Priddy stated that the first compact was to bring order to discussions. The second compact was a five- year agreement and the third compact is supposed to go to a higher level. Commissioner Coulson said he wanted to chart annual analytical analysis. Commissioner Ward asked about the local current expense budget. Mr. Tolmie stated that there was a redirection on efficiencies and no significant programs were reduced however there were requests for programs that did not make it into the budget. Dr. Priddy said they had over \$1 million in requests.

Mr. Tolmie said the Board of Education approved the following directives:

1. District lines on the proposed map will be aligned with appropriate parcel lines.
2. Open, in-county enrollment will be allowed at Ayden-Grifton, Farmville Central and North Pitt High Schools.
3. The creation of a Pitt County Schools High School Program Model.
4. High school programs of study at Ayden-Grifton, Farmville Central, and North Pitt High Schools will be put in place in an effort to attract additional students to these smaller high schools.
5. A modification of the allotment process will be put in place for Ayden-Grifton High School, Farmville Central and North Pitt High School to ensure that students in those schools are provided the same opportunities as students in the other high schools.
6. Move toward 80% of the student population participating in extracurricular activities and leadership programs.
7. A system-wide committee will be established to study and recommend a uniform schedule for the high schools to enable the program initiatives to be fully utilized.
8. A program and process will be created to engage the broader community in initiatives to strengthen the high school program of study in Pitt County.

Commissioner Ward asked about the classified teacher substitute rate. Commissioner Bowen said the Schools have \$2.4 million in fund balance. They cannot hold State and Federal money so the fund balance must be County funds. He would like to see those funds put towards the per pupil allocation. Mr. Tolmie said if it was spent there would be no fund balance. Dr. Priddy said the purpose of the fund balance is in case of a shortfall. Commissioner Bowen asked about the North Carolina Association of County Commissioners figure for per pupil allotment compared to the schools figure. Dr. Priddy said they get their figure from the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction. Mr. Don Carson stated that the schools fund balance is in line with other counties. Chairman Owens stated that this Board has encouraged the schools to have a fund balance. Commissioner Johnson said concerning the facility or space charge, the schools could pay the County and then the County could reimbursement schools so that amount of money is on the books. Mr. Tolmie said that if the Governor comes through with the salary increase for the teachers, they will have to find \$150,000 and they don't need the County taking another \$150,000 out of their \$1.7 million because that would put them in a bind. They would have to refigure their budget. Dr. Priddy said a major study was being done to provide a twelve-month analysis. He said adding new teachers will help with the behaviorally emotionally handicapped children. He said the federal government should be funding special need children but instead it equates to two cents on the property tax rate. Mr. Walter Gaskins asked the County to consider the personnel such as teachers, staff, teachers' assistance, maintenance workers and transportation employees. He said the County needs to step up to the plate for these people because they are not being rewarded. Commissioner Bowen reminded Mr. Gaskins that the Board of Commissioners gives the schools the money and it's the Board of Education's responsibility to determine how the funds are distributed.

Closing Remarks

Michael Dixon thanked Art Rouse, Principal of South Central High School, John McKnight and Charlie Russell for their work.

Chairman Owens offered appreciation to the Board of Education for hosting this meeting and commented them on the great facility of South Central High School. He said a lot of comments have been shared and they would see that the schools are given their fair share based on the compact. He also stated that he and Dr. Priddy had received a request from a private individual who wished to address the two boards at this meeting but was not permitted to speak.

Chairman Owens adjourned the Board of Commissioners' meeting at 8:45 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Susan J. Banks, CMC
Clerk to the Board