

MINUTES – FEBRUARY 13, 2008

The Caswell County Board of Commissioners met in special session at the Caswell County Civic Center in Yanceyville, North Carolina at 6:00 p.m. on Wednesday, February 13, 2008. The purpose of the meeting was to meet jointly with the Board of Education to discuss issues of mutual concern. Members present: George W. Ward, Jr., Chairman, Jeremiah Jefferies, Vice-Chairman, Nathaniel Hall, and C. Hester Vernon, III. Absent: William E. Carter, Larry G. Hamlett, and Kenneth D. Travis. Board of Education members present: June B. Dailey, Chairman, Gladys Garland, Vice-Chairman, David B. Byrd, Ross Gwynn, Sylvia Johnson, and Betty Sartin. Also present: Kevin B. Howard, County Manager and Dr. Douglas N. Barker, Schools Superintendent. Wanda P. Smith, Clerk to the Board, recorded the minutes.

CALL TO ORDER

Chairman Dailey called the meeting of the Caswell County Board of Education to order.

Vice-Chairman Jefferies called the meeting of the Caswell County Board of Commissioners to order even though there was not a quorum present at this time.

TOPICS OF DISCUSSION

Dr. Douglas N. Barker, Caswell County Schools Superintendent, provided and discussed the following information on graduation rate results:

**2006-07 4-Years Cohort Graduation Rate Results by Subgroup  
State Average**

	<b>State</b>	<b>Caswell</b>	<b>Alamance</b>	<b>Person</b>	<b>Rockingham</b>
<i>Subgroup</i>					
All Students	69.4	72.1	71.7	67.9	70.3
Male	64.9	66.7	66.1	65.0	66.3
Female	73.8	77.9	77.4	70.6	74.5
Native American					
Asian			85.7		
Black	61.4	69.4	63.8	66.0	67.3
Hispanic	53.6		44.4	50.0	48.6
Multi-Racial	65.4		66.7		64.0
White	74.8	74.8	78.9	70.8	72.7
Economically Disadvant.	65.9	60.7	63.2	66.4	64.2
Limited English Proficient			45.3	33.3	37.5
Students with Disabilities	49.4	56.5	48.0	48.5	43.9

(Results are not shown if there are less than 5 students in the group or the percentage is  $\leq 5\%$  or  $\geq 95\%$ ).

(Subgroup information based on data collected when a student is last seen in the cohort).

While 68 percent is the current four-year cohort graduation rate, that does not mean that 32 percent of the students have dropped out of school. A total of 5,413 students were known to still be enrolled in high school at the end of the year and did not receive a diploma. Given that approximately 15 percent of ninth graders are retained each year, some of those students likely will graduate in five years or more.

North Carolina education policy provides a conservative definition of high school graduates. Students who leave public high schools for a community college GED or adult high school program are counted as dropouts under state policy. Also, the cohort graduation rate does not capture students with disabilities who complete the 12<sup>th</sup> grade but do not qualify for a standard diploma and instead earn a Certificate of Achievement or Graduation Certificate. In addition, school officials are not allowed to tag a student as having transferred to another public or private school until the receiving school requests the student's records.

Dr. Barker reported that as of yesterday, 23,500 students dropped out of school in the State of North Carolina last year.

Upon questioning from Commissioner Hall, Dr. Barker answered that the Board of Education has said for years that the School System needs additional counselors, specifically, attendance counselors to work with parents and those students in the process of dropping out of school. Dr. Barker stated that the big job is to convince parents that education is the most important thing for their child to have in life. Dr. Barker added that the School System has one psychologist in the County for 3,000 students. Dr. Barker stated that the dropout problem is not a high school issue because it starts as early as kindergarten.

Dr. Barker provided and discussed the following information on AYP Targets.

### **AYP Targets**

Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) under the federal No Child Left Behind education law requires every state to set annual targets toward reaching proficiency in reading and mathematics. These targets are shown as percentages of students who score proficient or better on state tests. Every state sets annual targets with the ultimate required goal of 100 percent student proficiency in 2013-14. The AYP measure for a school requires every student group in the school to reach the target. If a school misses even one target, the school does not make AYP.

Dr. Barker stated that he felt that AYP is somewhat misleading in that each state gets to set its own goal. Dr. Barker added that AYP is not a national testing program and every state uses a different test to set its own goal as far as what they feel their students should

be able to achieve. Dr. Barker stated that the goal of the federal legislation was that by school year 2013-2014, every child in the classroom in the state would be proficient in all state tests. Dr. Barker provided a list of *Starting Points and Intermediate Goals Originally Set January 30, 2003*, and the results of testing in reading and mathematics for Grades 3-8 and for Grade 10, beginning with the school year 2001-02. Dr. Barker noted that the State increases the standard every three years and according to its model, everyone should be proficient by school year 2013-14.

Dr. Barker provided and discussed the *2006-2007 State and School District AYP Results*, as of November 15, 2007, showing that Caswell County Schools' total number of targeted goals were 42, with it meeting 37 of those targets, with it reaching 88.1% of its targets, yet not reaching AYP. Dr. Barker added that if one target goal is missed, the School District does not make AYP, and the School is then placed on the School Improvement List. Dr. Barker noted that last year in the State of North Carolina, only three out of 115 School Districts made AYP.

Dr. Barker provided and discussed *The Public School Forum's Friday Report* and shared the following results:

#### **2006-07 ABCs Statewide Results**

<b><u>High Growth</u></b>	<b><u>Expected Growth</u></b>	<b><u>Less than Expected</u></b>
24.3%	47.4%	28.2%

#### **2006-07 Statewide AYP Results**

<b>AYP Status</b>	<b># of Schools</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Schools that Met AYP	1,050	44.7%
Schools that Did Not Meet AYP	1,300	55.3%
<b>Statewide Totals</b>	<b>2,350</b>	<b>100%</b>

Dr. Barker summarized AYP as a testing program using results that the Federal Government has set up that says that there should not be a child that should not be able to perform well in school.

Commissioner Hall asked if the School System could account for the difference in ABC State testing results in black and white students. Dr. Barker answered that it would be hard to answer this, but statewide, normally blacks do not perform as well as whites on standardized testing. Upon questioning from Commissioner Hall as to whether the School System is addressing this, Dr. Barker answered that some speculate that more blacks fall into the area of being more economically disadvantaged than whites, while some speculate that some groups may learn more visually as compared to written. Dr. Barker added that some say that the tests are culturally biased.

Dr. Barker informed the Board that the ABC Program is a State program and is changed about every two years.

Dr. Barker provided and discussed the following information on the ABC Program:

### **2006-2007 ABC Information**

The ABCs accountability model measures school achievement in three ways: the percent of students' test scores at or above the proficient level (performance composite), academic growth (High Growth or Expected Growth) and Adequate Yearly Progress (required by federal law). The growth measure provides the basis for awarding incentive awards, but each measure is an important indicator of schools' success over time.

As part of the State Board of Educations' ongoing efforts to align academic standards with 21st century skills, several new assignments and new standards were implemented at the high school level in 2006-07 in Algebra I, Algebra II, Geometry, and English I. The high school performance information presented today is based on these new, more rigorous standards. This is similar to the 2005-06 school year when mathematics standards were raised for grades 3-8.

### **School Designations**

Schools earn designations based on whether they met growth expectations, AYP and the percentage of students' scores at or above proficiency (grade level). Honor Schools of Excellence and Schools of Excellence receive special banners to display their school status from the NC Department of Public Instruction and State Board of Education. Thirty-one schools did not have an ABCs status because they are special schools, and 90 schools are alternative schools with different progress measures designed especially for them. A total of 2,407 schools were evaluated under the ABCs.

<b>ABCs Designation</b>	<b>Requirements</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Honor Schools of Excellence	Expected or high growth; AYP; 90% or more of student test scores at or above proficient	83	3.45%
Schools of Excellence	Expected or high growth; 90% or more scores at or above proficient	8	00.33%
Schools of Distinction	Expected or high growth; 80-89.9% at or above proficient	462	19.19%
Schools of Progress	Expected growth or high growth; 60-79.9% at or above proficient	925	38.43%

No Recognition Schools	Neither expected or high growth met, 60^ at or above proficient	419	17.41%
Priority Schools	50-59% at or above proficient regardless of growth; and schools with less than 50% proficient and making expected or high growth	354	14.71%
Low Performing	Less than 50% proficient; below expected growth	45	1.87%

### **Incentive Awards**

The ABCs program provides incentive awards to teachers, principals, and other certified school-based staff, in addition to teacher assistants. In all schools that attain the High Growth standard, certified staff members each receive up to \$1,500 incentive awards and teacher assistants receive up to \$500. In schools attaining Expected Growth, certified staff members each receive up to \$750 and teacher assistants receive up to \$375. This year, funds for incentive awards will be released to local school districts today. Awards are expected to total approximately \$103 million.

### **School Assistance**

The NCDPI and SBE are redesigning the way the state provides assistance to all schools and districts, including those schools and districts identified as low-performing under the ABCs. In 2007-08, the Board will provide the schools and districts identified as being most in need with a variety of services, designed to support significant, sustainable improvements in student performance. These services will include: supported self-assessment of needs, instructional coaches and professional development for teachers, training and support for school and district leadership, and the coordination of existing state and federal programs that target resources to underperforming schools.

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(Chairman Ward entered the meeting at 7:15 p.m.)

Dr. Barker provided and discussed information on *Understanding the New ABC's Formulas* and stated that basically the difference is that the State raised the bar.

Dr. Barker shared with the Board charts showing Caswell County vs. State Average in different categories and grades for the School Year 2006-2007.

Dr. Barker shared with the Board information from the Internet on NC School Report Cards.

At 7:25 p.m. Chairman Ward called the meeting of the Caswell County Board of Commissioners to order.

Commissioner Jefferies stated that he felt that the Board of Commissioners should have more meetings with a positive attitude like this with the Board of Education and come together to determine what each Board can do as a group to help each other.

Dr. Barker stated that the School System does not have the resources to meet its needs and probably will never have all that it needs, but there are basic needs and they are doing the best they can to provide a good education for the children of this county and prepare them for when they go to college or prepare for a life time vocation. Dr. Barker added that when the County gets additional funding such as from Medicaid, he would hope that they would look at the Schools' needs such as a new welding shop and help them.

Commissioner Vernon stated that the School System needs more technical type courses because everyone cannot afford to go to college.

Upon questioning from Chairman Ward as to what the Board of Education needs from the Board of Commissioners, Board of Education Chairman June Dailey answered that they need money and a start would be to hire an Attendance Counselor.

Mr. David Byrd noted that the current School Counselors are not checking on children that are habitually absent from school, nor visiting their parents or investigating their situation as to why they are not in school. Mr. Byrd stated that one of the biggest problems in school today is the lack of parental support and lack of interest in their child.

Ms. Gladys Garland stated that absenteeism in school is a society problem and stems from lack of parental involvement and lack of adequate housing. Ms. Garland added that she feels that the Board of Education is doing a tremendous job with the amount of money they are receiving and expressed the great need for an Attendance Counselor.

Commissioner Hall stated that he had hoped that meetings like this could be held more often because he has questions, but was aware that there are no answers to some of them, and agreed that some of their issues mirror the community. Commissioner Hall added that he would like for the Board of Education to prioritize two or three major issues every year when presenting their budget to the Board. Commissioner Hall stated that some way the Board of Commissioners is going to have to commit to some dollars to start investing in some of these issues. Dr. Barker stated that he thought he had been prioritizing issues when presenting the budget to the Board in the past, but would communicate those priorities better in the future.

Mr. David Byrd informed the Board that the School System now has three nurses and it is alarming at the amount of medicine that has to be administered to children once and twice every day and noted that a School Nurse can detect physical, emotional, and mental problems with these children. Mr. Byrd expressed the importance of the Schools'

athletics programs and band and noted that sometimes this is the only thing that keeps a child in school and makes them feel good about themselves.

Dr. Barker stated that he did not feel that any of the departments and agencies in the County have all that they need, but somehow they have got to come to an understanding of what the community wants, what it has to have, and for what it is willing to pay.

Dr. Barker briefed the group on the four projects that were presented by the County to the Golden Leaf Foundation Board for funding from the \$2 million allocation which included a welding technology building for the School System.

Dr. Barker stressed the importance of Teachers' Supplements and stated that teachers will go where they can get the most amount of supplement and the County needs to be competitive to keep good teachers. Dr. Barker also discussed with the Board safety issues at the schools.

Chairman Ward stated that he would like for the Board of Education to present to the Board of Commissioners its top three priorities that will impact the children and move the County forward in education.

Chairman Ward thanked the Board of Education for the job that they do and for meeting with the Board of Commissioners to discuss these important issues.

THE ADJOURNMENT

At 8:40 p.m. Commissioner Jefferies moved, seconded by Commissioner Vernon to adjourn the meeting. The motion carried unanimously.

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Wanda P. Smith  
Clerk to the Board

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George W. Ward, Jr.  
Chairman

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