

The Alleghany County Board of Commissioners and the Alleghany County Board of Education held a joint session on Monday, May 10, 2004, at 8:30am in the Media Center of Sparta Elementary School, 450 North Main Street, Sparta, NC.

Present: Chair Eldon Edwards, Vice-Chair Warren Taylor, Commissioner Graylen Blevins, Commissioner Patrick Woodie, County Manager Don Adams, Clerk to the Board Karen Evans; Board of Education members Chair Charles Joines, Clarence Crouse, Betsy Dillon, Sonia Joines and Superintendent Duane Davis.

Chair Eldon Edwards called the meeting to order and asked for a motion to open the meeting for the purpose of touring the Sparta Elementary School facility, discuss space needs and discuss a resolution concerning legislation regarding school calendars.

Commissioner Warren Taylor made a motion to open the meeting. Commissioner Graylen Blevins seconded the motion. Vote 4:0.

Charles Joines called the meeting to order and asked for a motion to open the meeting for the purpose of touring the Sparta Elementary School facility and to discuss space needs.

Betsy Dillon made a motion to open the meeting. Sonia Joines seconded the motion. Vote 4:0.

Charles Joines welcomed everyone to this meeting.

Susan Murphy, Principal at Sparta Elementary School, explained the purpose of this meeting and problems the school is facing with the beginning of the August 2004 school year.

John Farrelly, Assistant Principal at Sparta Elementary School, reviewed a short-term plan that has been created to address the increased enrollment for the 2004-2005 school year.

The Board of Commissioners, Board of Education members, Don Adams, Duane Davis, Susan Murphy, John Farrelly and Karen Evans toured the Sparta Elementary School facility.

Susan Murphy and John Farrelly presented a PowerPoint presentation regarding the space issues and possible solutions for these issues.

Cindy Atwood, Title I Teacher, explained the construction progress that Sparta Elementary School has made since she started teaching 28 years ago. She described how the school was six separate buildings now combined into a single building. She talked about how the original plan for the most recent construction project was redesigned in order to save money. She further talked about the construction project was thought to accommodate their needs for a lot longer than 7 years. She asked that the Boards look 15-20 years down the road when they start discussing space needs solutions.

John Farrelly discussed building priorities and reviewed the options and recommendations that have been discussed about solving the space needs for the 2004-2005 school year. He thanked everyone for attending this meeting and asked if anyone has any questions.

Commissioner Patrick Woodie asked how enrollment is predicted.

Susan Murphy and Duane Davis talked about how enrollment had been declining for 30 years, the State started predicting an increase in enrollment even though the County's economic condition wasn't good and enrollment started increasing in accordance to the State's predictions. Mr. Davis talked about some things that has an impact on space needs other than increased enrollment; new mandated smaller class size, new programs and expansion of current programs to address the children's needs.

Janice Linker gave the Boards an update on a universal 4-year-old program, the current preschools programs and the projections of preschool doubling in size during the next five years.

Duane Davis stated that both Boards need to address the temporary fix and look at a long-term solution for the space issues.

Commissioner Patrick Woodie asked if increased enrollment is affecting Glade Creek and Piney Creek schools.

Duane Davis stated that currently Glade Creek is using a mobile classroom for a 2nd grade class, the Band has to use the cafeteria for class, and they will have at least two Kindergarten classes and two 2nd grade classes next school year. Mr. Davis explained that currently 19 have enrolled for Kindergarten next year at Piney Creek. He explained how the average classroom size is calculated for the entire school system.

Susan Murphy, John Farrelly and Janice Linker told the Boards about people moving into the County for this type of lifestyle and school system meaning increased enrollment.

County Manager Don Adams asked if the Commissioners could get a report of the average daily membership for each school for the last five years as well as peak enrollment at each school.

Duane Davis stated that he would get that information together. He further stated that credit needs to be given to the Commissioners and the County Manager for supporting education in the county.

Clarence Crouse stated that priority is on long-range plans for the county-wide system.

Commissioner Warren Taylor stated that he agrees with the recommendations for beginning strategic planning sessions to address problems on a long-term basis.

Chair Eldon Edwards explained that he appreciates this opportunity to tour the facility and see the space needs. He further explained the needs that the County was facing when this facility was constructed. He stated that he thinks a good job has been done with the space that the school has currently.

Commissioner Patrick Woodie stated that this is an immediate crisis but the Boards also need to look at long-term issues. He further stated that this is a nice problem to have because increased enrollment means that the County is growing and things are happening here to make people want to come to the county, and everyone needs to remember this when planning for the space needs.

Chair Eldon Edwards stated that he would like to comment on what a great asset the Cyber Campus is to Alleghany County.

Charles Joines stated that the new high school principal is amazed with the Cyber Campus, which says a lot since he came from a school with approximately 1,500 students. He further stated that he agrees with Commissioner Taylor about starting right now to plan for the solution. He explained that he was surprised to see the schools in this shape so soon after the major construction projects.

Chair Eldon Edwards stated that another good thing is the Wilkes Community College moving to their new location near the high school. He stated that WCC's move compliments the education system already in place at that location.

Chair Eldon Edwards talked about a proposed resolution regarding opposing legislation that would take away the local school board control over the school calendar.

County Manager Don Adams read the resolution.

Commissioner Warren Taylor made a motion to approve the resolution regarding local control over the local school calendar. Commissioner Graylen Blevins seconded the motion. Vote 4:0.

Charles Joines stated that they need help with this issue and urged everyone to contact our legislators regarding opposing this issue.

Sonia Joines mentioned that the media needs to get involved with the subject as well.

Commissioner Graylen Blevins stated that he feels that education being stuck in a closet is scary. He further stated that everyone needs to do what needs to be done for the children. He also said thank you to everyone for all that is done for the children.

Commissioner Patrick Woodie made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 10:29am. Commissioner Warren Taylor seconded the motion. Vote 4:0.

Clarence Crouse made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 10:29am. Sonia Joines seconded the motion. Vote 4:0.

Respectfully submitted,

Karen Evans
Clerk to the Board

ATTEST:

Eldon Edwards
Chairman

NORTH CAROLINA)
)
ALLEGHANY COUNTY)

RESOLUTION

WHEREAS, the North Carolina General Statutes give local boards of education the authority to establish starting dates for the school year, and

WHEREAS, local control over school calendars allows local boards of education to respond to the educational needs and calendar preferences of the children and families in the school district, and

WHEREAS, legislation has been proposed that would take away local control over school calendars from local boards of education,

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Alleghany County Board of Commissioners unanimously opposes legislation that would deprive boards of education of local control over their school calendars.

Adopted this 10th day of May, 2004.