



OPEN WORK SESSION

By unanimous agreement the Somerset County Board of Education met at the University of Maryland Eastern Shore, Wednesday, January 4, 2012 at 5:40 p.m. to hold the Called Open Work Session. Present were Chairman Sumpter, Vice Chairman Miles, Dr. Whittington, Ms. Green-Gale, Mr. Wells, Superintendent Dr. Marjorie E. Miles and Melissa Tilghman, recording secretary.

AGENDA

1. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order by Chairman Sumpter at 5:40 p.m.

2. Roll Call

The roll was called by Melissa Tilghman indicating that all five Board members and the Superintendent were present.

3. Declaration of Quorum

It was declared that a quorum was present.

4. Education Change Paradigm Video

Dr. Miles began the meeting by showing the Board a presentation video outlining the need for technology advancement and educational reform within the schools. The Superintendent discussed the shape of education in Somerset County Public Schools. Several newspaper articles from previous years contained information that the community was aware that schools attendance, academics, and economics were declining. Chairman Sumpter questioned whether data has been obtained from the Maryland Department of Planning. The Board discussed community response to high school consolidation. Mr. Wells stated that Somerset County's tax dollars are not being adequately utilized and that change was needed throughout the school system. Dr. Whittington and Vice Chairman Miles stated that more information needed to be gathered when discussing school restructuring and/or consolidation such as: funding, improvement changes, transportation, curriculum, athletic classification, personnel, and improved academic courses and opportunities. The Board agreed with the plan but stated that a step by step process and timeline needed to be developed. Chairman Sumpter asked the Superintendent to generate a plan that would gain the community's support.

Dr. Miles expressed concern that past staff reorganization and administration transfers throughout the system has not been successful. She is working on implementing a teacher/principal evaluation timeline and building a vision of support, leadership and accountability. Central office staff will now have to complete Service Reports when visiting schools. The Service Report will be signed by the school principal.

Dr. Whittington requested that the Superintendent obtain information from an individual who has been involved in school restructuring before. Chairman Sumpter stated that the Board has to make a decision and cautioned them to make the right decision for the students of Somerset County. Vice Chairman Miles stated that school personnel should be aligned with what the goals are of the school principal and that administrative realignment should be an easy transition.

It was moved by Ms. Green-Gale, seconded by Mr. Wells and passed to approve Dr. Miles' request to go forward with developing a plan to consolidate the two high schools into one and have two junior high schools. Dr. Whittington stated that he is comfortable with an implementation date of September 2013, but budget and planning costs must be developed.

Dr. Whittington suggested that planning and public hearings were needed to inform the community of the planned proposal as well as the development of a timeline of implementation.

The Board agreed that a restructuring plan and timeline was needed to take to the Maryland Planning Division highlighting the advantages of a central high school.

The Superintendent suggested that she could request a waiver from the State and present the Plan to Maryland in 2013.

It was the consensus of opinion of the Board that the Superintendent could move forward with the Alternative Governance for Crisfield High School. Dr. Miles stated that she would be requesting the Board's approval to reorganize and relocate Central Office Staff. This would allow the Career and Technology Center to offer more courses if given the extra space. A Business Plan Management course is being considered. The Board discussed dividing the Facilities and Transportation Director into two positions.

Dr. Miles stated that an informational article will be published thanking the community for their attendance to the meetings and that input.

The Superintendent will get someone to meet to discuss school restructuring at 5:30 on January 10, 2012.

The Board was informed that a Gideon letter will be sent home to parents informing them of the Gideon Bible distribution. The Board will get a copy of the letter that will be sent home to parents.

Chairman Sumpter stated that he would like to readdress uniform expansion. The State School Construction has been working and researching the plan.

Dr. Whittington questioned the whereabouts of the "Black Schools" old students' records and requested

the rehangng of the photos of the past Superintendents.

5. Wireless Towers

It was the consensus of the opinion of the Board to approve the Superintendent's request to enter into a contract agreement for the Wireless Towers.

6. Adjournment

It was moved by Vice Chairman Miles, seconded by Ms. Green-Gale and passed to approve the adjournment of the meeting.