



CALLED OPEN WORK SESSION

By unanimous agreement the Somerset County Board of Education met at Somerset 6/7 Intermediate School on February 2, 2012 at 5:15 p.m. to hold the Called Open Work Session. Present were Chairman Sumpter, Vice Chairman Green-Gale, Mr. Miles, Dr. Whittington, 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 7:00 p.m.

2. Roll Call

The Roll was called by Ms. Tilghman indicating that all five Board members were present.

3. Declaration of Quorum

Chairman Sumpter declared a quorum was present.

4. Pledge of Allegiance

Chairman Sumpter led the Board in the Pledge of Allegiance.

5. Public Participation

Mr. John Phoebus addressed the Board expressing his concern that the Board does not have enough information on either restructuring plan to make a decision. He stated that he is not in favor of the high school merger and that a budget advisory committee be developed. He also stated that parents are in favor of restructuring instead of a merger.

Mr. Kuebler presented a plan that he developed called the Somerset Community Plan which contained over twenty signatures. He stated that the presented plan was used in Snow Hill and Pocomoke and presented various concepts gathered on restructuring. All schools should adopt the engagement plan. He expressed that the Board ensure that the Superintendent has all the resources needed to empower principals to do their jobs. Mr. Kuebler stated that his submitted restructuring plans along with help of

the administrators, school staff and parents, would increase student achievement thus increasing AYP.

Several other parents, staff, and the community members addressed the Board. Some were in agreement with the idea of merging the schools while most were in opposition. There were concerns that students' identity would be lost, a concern of increased transportation costs, and the concern that parents and the community have not been kept informed or given the chance to provide input. The group all agreed that restructuring was needed and steps must be taken to increase student achievement and that parents, staff and the community must work together to develop a plan that will work.

Mr. Randy Laird informed the Board members that the elected officials along with the community will not support the Board if they choose to consolidate the two high schools.

6. Superintendent and Board Member Comments

Dr. Miles announced that the presentation presented by Mr. Kuebler will be put on the website. She stated that the teachers' union would be involved in developing a new plan and that data will continue to be gathered in regards to school consolidation while implementing a third plan of action.

Chairman Sumpter stated that the Board is still waiting for the State to provide additional information on the Governance Plan. He expressed that there are more problems in developing a plan other than AYP, but the Board must consider county cuts. Chairman Sumpter stated that the Board will consider hiring a consultant to help develop a Governance Plan. He thanked the commissioners stating that small rural counties are always mentioned at the State meetings and recognizes that Somerset County Commissioners are generous with the Maintenance of Efforts funding. Chairman Sumpter expressed that Somerset County Public Schools has the best teachers.

Ms. Green-Gale stated that the third option presented by the Superintendent was the best plan that has been introduced to help introduce student achievement and requested continued community support.

Mr. Wells thanked the community for their attendance and support and asked for community's continued support.

Dr. Whittington thanked the community for their support and attendance. He explained that it is not an easy task for the Board member to make decisions. Dr. Whittington asked the community to understand the Dr. Miles is not responsible for the condition of the schools and that the Board is interested in discussing the presented options with the parents, staff, and the community.

Mr. Miles also thanked everyone for their attendance and asked that everyone be available to work together to make decisions.

Dr. Miles thanked the central office staff for their diligent efforts in getting the presented plan done and long the hours it has taken to work on the budget. She stated that the plan developed will depend on funding from the commissioners.

New Plan of Action

It was moved by Mr. Wells, seconded by Mr. Miles and passed to approve the Superintendent's presented New Plan of Action. The vote was unanimous.

Adjournment

It was moved by Mr. Wells, seconded by Mr. Miles and passed to approve the adjournment of the meeting at 9:00 p.m. The vote was unanimous.

Dr. Marjorie Miles, Superintendent

Melissa Tilghman, Board Secretary