

## **ESSEX COUNTY SCHOOL BOARD MEETING**

The Essex County School Board met on July 14, 2014 for the Retreat/Executive Session at Bella's Restaurant at 2:00 p.m., and the Regular Session at the Essex High School Auditorium at 7:00 p.m.

### **CALL TO ORDER**

The meeting was called to order by Mr. Raymond Whitaker, Chairman of the Board.

### **ROLL CALL**

The Roll Call was done by the Clerk, Sharon Saunders.

Raymond Whitaker, Board Chair

Keren Ellis, Vice Board Chair

Liz Martin, Board Member

Denise Hammond, Board Member

Larry Lenz, Board Member

Sharon Saunders, Board Clerk

Dr. Scott A. Burckbuchler, Superintendent

Dr. Lori Watrous, Asst. Superintendent

Dr. Anthony Walker, Exe. Director of Student Services

Nan Alga, Director of Human Resources

Jon Barnes, Director of Technology

Mary Coggin, Payroll Specialist

Annette Thompson, Accounting Director

Community Members

Concerned Citizens

ECPS Faculty/Staff Members

### **EXECUTIVE SESSION**

On a motion by Denise Hammond, seconded by Larry Lenz, the Board entered into Executive Session.

### **OPEN SESSION**

On a motion by Keren Ellis, seconded by Larry Lenz, the Board returned to Open Session.

### **PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

The Pledge of Allegiance was led by the Chairman Raymond Whitaker.

### **Moment of Silence**

Board Chairman, Raymond Whitaker, asked everyone to join him in a moment of silence in memory of Beverly Byrd, who served ECPS as a paraprofessional.

### **PUBLIC COMMENTS**

Chairman Whitaker apologized for allowing public comments at the June meeting to exceed the time limit. On a motion by Denise Hammond, seconded by Larry Lenz, the Board approved the time for public comments to be extended to five minutes instead of three minutes.

Public comments were made by:

Brenda Diggs presented a group of concerned citizens with topics and questions that they would like to have addressed by the School Board.

Lindsay Saunders commented on college and SOL preparedness as well as concerns about high school seniors who are not allowed to graduate “at the last minute” due to failing test scores.

Claudia Gray thanked the Board for extending the time for public comments to five minutes. She commented on the new transportation policy, questioning who set the policy. Ms. Gray also questioned if funding has been requested for 2014-2015 Title I, and if Essex can provide SOL help in Reading and Writing instead of sending students to King William County.

Brenda Diggs returned to ask for a more cohesive process to improve the identification of special needs students. She commented on discipline issues, emphasizing, bullying and truancy. Mrs. Diggs also stated that teachers need more help with classroom management.

Corey Beazley questioned if ECPS has a safety plan in place and suggested seeking help from outside sources. He also commented on the high turnover of faculty/staff and suggested looking at recruitment, hiring and retention. Mr. Beazley’s comments continued as he questioned the outsourcing of the custodians, and questioned if background checks are conducted on the new employees hired by Service Master. He is requesting to know the amount of money outsourcing has saved ECPS and if additional money is incurred for the use of school facilities after hours.

Gail Wallace questioned why Ms. Mosley, High School Principal, was asked to leave; Why faculty/staff members are being transferred; Why faculty/staff members are being forced to retire. Ms. Wallace requests that the high principal be reinstated to her former position.

Carrie Bier commented on the overall morale of the faculty/staff, retaining staff and the lack of Professional Development.

Jacob Plummer commented that some issues were raised in a community meeting involving concerned citizens of the County. Those concerns included:  
False rumors that the superintendent received a \$30,000 raise; Salary difference between the former superintendent and present superintendent; Elimination of the SAFE and SAIL after-school programs; Parental Advisory Board under Title I - Does one exist? If so, who are the members and when are meetings conducted?

Brenda Diggs stated that ECPS has three African-American assistant principals but no African-American principals, and the community would like to see an African-American principal at EHS.

Denise Pauze questioned why ECPS is losing hardworking and dedicated teachers. She added that this kind of turnover could create turmoil for the students.

Jane Kurczak commented on the recruitment of teachers and the turnover. She added that ECPS has done and can do better.

Jessica Davis commented on the high turnover of faculty/staff. She feels that God is left out of the equation. Team work is needed to provide the best education for our children.

### **CORRECTIONS/ADDITIONS TO AGENDA**

There were no corrections to the agenda.

### **SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT**

Superintendent, Dr. Scott A. Burckbuchler, stated that he stands ready to listen to and speak with anyone who has concerns or questions. He shared that our school system has many challenges and the support of and partnership with the community is needed.

### **CONSENT AGENDA**

On a motion by Liz Martin, seconded by Keren Ellis, the Board approved the consent agenda.

Approval of Minutes  
Approval of Financial Report & Monthly Claims  
Approval of Use of Facilities Requests  
Approval of Fund Raising Requests  
Approval of Field Trip Requests

### **ACTION ITEMS**

#### **2014-2015 School Calendar Possible Make-up Dates**

On a motion by Keren Ellis, seconded by Larry Lenz, the Board approved the make-up days for the 2014-2015 School Calendar as presented by Dr. Lori Watrous, Assistant Superintendent. The dates recommended as possible make-up days are November 26, 2014, December 22, 2014, February 16, 2015, March 16, 2015, and April 3, 2015.

#### **Title III Federal Program Grant**

On a motion by Larry Lenz, seconded by Liz Martin, the Board approved the Title III Federal Program Grant as presented by Lori Watrous, Assistant Superintendent.

#### **ECPS Policy Manual Updates**

On a motion by Denise Hammond, seconded by Keren Ellis, the Board approved the policy updates, with the exception of, **JFC-R - Standards of Student Conduct**, as presented by Nan Alga, Director of Human Resources. JFC-R will be reviewed and discussed by the Board.

### **INFORMATIONAL ITEMS**

#### **School Board's Report**

Board Member, Denise Hammond, responded to Cory Beazley's transportation comment by stating that a lot of thought has been put into the revised bus policy. The wellbeing and safety of our students is priority. ECPS has been tasked with educating our students, but some students are more concerned and unsure about which bus they are riding on a daily basis. In the past, last minute calls for bus changes involved contacting the School Board for approval, and the School Board contacting the schools, with the risk of the bus being over crowded. The students need the safety net of knowing where they are going. The new policy gives the students a feeling of safety and security. Special consideration for bus changes is given in emergency situations. Transportation policies in other counties have been reviewed and found to be very strict.

Board Member, Liz Martin, thanked everyone for coming and for their interest in our schools. She added that attitude and concerns regarding change are healthy. She invited everyone to come back to future meetings.

Board Chair, Raymond Whitaker, stated that it is good to see everyone in attendance at the meeting. He added that the Board will respond to the questions and concerns of the public during the August meeting, and encouraged everyone to stay engaged as we move forward.

**EXECUTIVE SESSION**

On a motion by Denise Hammond, seconded by Liz Martin, the Board returned to Executive Session for the purpose of Personnel.

**REGULAR SESSION**

On a motion by Denise Hammond, seconded by Keren Ellis, the Board returned to Open Session.

**CLOSE OF MEETING**

On a motion by Denise Hammond, seconded by Keren Ellis, the Board adjourned.

**CERTIFICATION OF CLOSED SESSION**

**WHEREAS**, the Essex County School Board had convened a closed meeting of this date pursuant to an affirmative record vote and in accordance with the provisions of The Virginia Freedom of Information Act and

**WHEREAS**, Section 2.1-344(D) of the Code of Virginia requires a certification by this School Board that such closed meeting was conducted with Virginia law;

**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED** that the Essex County School Board hereby certifies that, to the best of each member's knowledge, (if) only public business matters lawfully exempted from closed meeting to which this certification applies, and (ii) only such public business matters as were identified in the motion convening the closed meeting were heard, discussed or considered.

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Clerk/Deputy Clerk (or Supt.) of Essex County

On a motion by Liz Martin, seconded by Keren Ellis, the Board approved the Personnel Agenda as presented by Mrs. Nan Alga, Human Resources Director.

**VOTE**

**AYES:** 5

**NAY:** 0

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Chairman

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Clerk/Deputy Clerk (or Supt.) Of Essex County