

PRINCE GEORGE COUNTY SCHOOL BOARD
PRINCE GEORGE, VIRGINIA
February 28, 2017

A special meeting of the Prince George School Board was called to order on Tuesday, February 28, 2017 at the School Board Office at 6:00 P.M.

Members present:

Mr. Reeve E. Ashcraft, Board Member
Mr. Kevin S. Foster, Chairman
Mr. Lewis E. Stevenson, Vice Chairman
Mrs. Renee P. Williams, Superintendent
Dr. Lisa Pennycuff, Assistant Superintendent
Dr. Patrick Bingham, Assistant Superintendent
Mrs. Rebecca Kirk, Clerk of the Board

I. CALL TO ORDER

Mr. Foster, Chairman, called the Special Meeting to order at 5:00 P.M.

II. ROLL CALL

Roll call indicated the following School Board Members present:

Present: Ashcraft, Foster, Stevenson
Absent: Cox, Franklin

III. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Mr. Ashcraft made a motion to amend the agenda by adding Item V. Certification of Closed Meeting and Actions, renumber and approve. Mr. Stevenson seconded the motion.

VOTE: Ayes: Ashcraft, Foster, Stevenson
Absent: Cox, Franklin

IV. CLOSED MEETING – pursuant to Section 2.2-3711 of the Code of Virginia

- A. Student Matters – Section 2.2-3711.A.2
1. Student Expulsion Matter 27/16-17 (approximately 5:35 p.m.)

Mr. Ashcraft made a motion to go into a closed meeting to discuss specific student matters pursuant to the student exemptions of the VA Code §2.2-3711.A.2. Mr. Stevenson seconded the motion.

VOTE: Ayes: Ashcraft, Foster, Stevenson
Absent: Cox, Franklin

V. CERTIFICATION OF CLOSED MEETING [added to the agenda]

Mr. Ashcraft made a motion to go back into an open meeting and certified that nothing had been discussed in the closed session other than what was stated in the original motion. Mr. Stevenson seconded the motion.

VOTE: Ayes: Ashcraft, Foster, Stevenson
Absent: Cox, Franklin

Mr. Ashcraft made a motion that in Student Expulsion Matter No. 27/16-17 student shall be assigned to Project Choice for the remainder of the 2016-17 school year. Mr. Stevenson seconded the motion.

VOTE: Ayes: Ashcraft, Foster, Stevenson
Absent: Cox, Franklin

VI. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Mr. Foster led the audience in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Mr. Foster stated the Board had been in closed session. A Public Hearing had been advertised to begin at 6:45 to hear public comments on the superintendent's proposed FY2017-18 budget. He indicated the Public Hearing would begin at 6:55 to allow time for comments from the audience on the MYP/IB program.

VII. DISCUSSION

A. MYP/IB Discussion

Mr. Foster welcomed all to the meeting and thanked everyone for taking time out of their schedules to attend tonight's meeting. The board and staff will take notes during the discussion period. The MYP/IB program is a rigorous, project based learning program. The board has already heard many comments in support of keeping the program. The board will listen to comments this evening but will not make any decisions tonight. The board will consider the comments, gather data from staff, and will make a response at the March 13, 2017 regular school board meeting.

Mr. Ashcraft thanked all for coming out to have their voice heard on the MYP/IB program and the proposed budget.

Mr. Foster explained that the board wanted to hear as many people as possible during the period of time allotted for the MYP/IB discussion. Each speaker will be given 3 minutes to speak. Since several people had already signed up to speak, Mrs. Kirk, Clerk, read the names/addresses as the speaker walked to the podium.

Speakers in Support of the MYP/IB Program:

Stephanie Feldman, 4204 Woods Ridge Lane, Prince George, is a parent of a 5th grade PACE student. She has a gifted child and asked how would she accelerate her son's education if this program is removed? He has been working towards this goal to be accepted into the program and he was excited that he would have the opportunity to begin this program. Her son is academically gifted, particularly in math. She is concerned about the trend of academics if this program is removed. She also questions whether she stays in Prince George, home schools her child, or moves to another locality. She asked the board to please reconsider their decision.

Vickie Mitchell, 3210 Kiser Drive, North Prince George, emailed the Board today but also wanted to share her thoughts in an open forum. Her children have gone through the IB Program and it made them better, focused, independent, smarter, worldly, and gets them involved in community service at an earlier age. Volunteering in the community at an early age makes them better citizens. Some children are ready for a more rigorous challenge. The program offers students in middle school to take foreign language earlier and advanced math and algebra, she even had one child take pre-calculus in 10th grade. She suggested to the Board to consider middle school computer coding and technology classes as she referenced the existence of CodeRVA. She knows the division is under budget but if you have to remove the program, she encouraged them to keep parts of the program going to encourage the students academically. She also indicated that we have a large military population that transfer from different areas and when others look at schools in this area they look at Prince George to see what sets us apart from other localities. The IB program draws families to Prince George. "Hold onto this program to continue to give students a challenge in learning."

Francoise Bonnell, 7724 Hunters Ridge Drive, Prince George, thanked the Board for the opportunity to speak to them in support of the IB Program but also to suggest reconsideration of their decision to remove the program. She was not convinced that all the data relating to the program has been shared with the Board and has been assessed properly to show how valuable this program is to the students, parents, and community. She stated her children also benefited from the program. It is a rigorous schedule for students but our excellent elementary schools do a very good job preparing the students for the next level, fostering the love of learning. MYP/IB is a choice for academic excellence. She referred to the Carnegie credits for advanced math and foreign language. These credits show up on transcripts to college illustrating the student attended a rigorous program. She encouraged the Board to look at data: What was the graduate rate of IB Program students, how many graduates were in the

IB Program, how many students in IB program attended college or technical school, how many went into the military, etc.? She also questioned the data for those who performed community service and the impact of hours that had on the community. "Removing the program would also hurt the reputation of Prince George schools." People move to areas based on the programs in the schools. She urged the Board to talk to parents and teachers to hear how the removal of the program will impact the students. She asked that they reconsider their decision by reviewing tangible statistics. She suggested to keep the program in place for another year or two, put a committee together that consists of stakeholders to look at data from an analytical standpoint to make a recommendation to the Board. Lastly, she stated if the program is stopped now, she feels it will never be brought back.

Allison Adams, 2309 Chemin Road, Prince George, thanked the Board for giving her the opportunity to express her concerns. Her daughter is in the 7th grade and she came from the gifted program in Colonial Heights. There were no opportunities for her daughter so they moved to Prince George because of what challenges and opportunities the MYP/IB Program offers to students. Her child matured, progressed and excelled academically once they moved to Prince George. Prince George offers something different academically with the MYP/IB Program and it concerns her greatly if the program ends. She also spoke on parents not receiving a lot of notice on the demise of the program. A decision was made in December that the program would be phasing out and parents were not made aware appropriately. She also referred to the allocation of \$127,265 to the regional jail and wanted to know why that much money was being allocated there when it could be better spent on the IB program.

Marie Grant, 10813 Bland Ridge Court, South Prince George, said she chose to live in Prince George County because of the opportunities and exemplary school system. She was excited about the accelerated program and feels the school division needs to put something in place for the gifted children. She also expressed her disappointment about the Board's decision to eliminate the MYP/IB program.

Sharon Jadrnak, 12000 Larchwood Court, Disputanta, spoke in favor of continuing the MYP/IB program. Her child was in the IB program and she shares the same concerns that the previous speakers have voiced. She would like the Board to look at the pros and cons of the program, look at historical data, review the costs, and listen to the parents who are stakeholders in this program. She asked the Board to please reconsider its decision and reinstate the program.

Beatrice Thomas, 7347 Jessica Lane, North Prince George, is disappointed in the decision to eliminate the MYP/IB program. Her daughter is in the PACE program and the teachers were very encouraging of students to apply to the MYP/IB program and they expressed disappointment when the decision was made the program was phasing out. The strenuous course that the program offered places students in competition with other counties. Ms. Thomas and her family moved from Chesterfield because of the IB program and advancement of the schools. All of the speakers before her have made valid points and she also requests the Board to reconsider its decision to eliminate the MYP/IB Program.

Jenna Minor, 4300 Cedar Creek Lane, Prince George and Kayla Callahan, 8112 Quail Hill Lane, Prince George, both 5th grade PACE students at Beazley Elementary School expressed what the IB program means to them. They spoke about their plan to start the program and how excited they were to begin the IB Program. They also cited without creativity they would have nothing. Kids look forward to taking a foreign language and dreaming to go to college and excelling in math and they want this opportunity of advancement through the MYP/IB program. They are also disappointed the program is being phased out and thanked the Board for listening to them.

Sheila Minor, 4300 Cedar Creek Lane, Prince George, said the Board had previously heard from her at the February meeting in support of reinstating the MYP/IB Program. This evening she spoke on the Board being selective in maintaining programs. AP/dual enrollment helps students get ready for colleges and the MYP/IB program is also structured to get students ready for the next level. She voiced her opinion about varsity and junior varsity sports. There is no discussion to eliminate varsity and JV sports and these programs are expensive to run. Very few students get in college for their athletic ability but many students get into college for their academic records. She has worked with school budgets in several school districts for years and the division will continue to pay for the program in next year's budget. One more year will give staff the opportunity to re-evaluate the program. This is a rigorous, collaborative program that gives children insight of what lies ahead for the success of the student's education.

Nathaniel Mae, Jr., 5505 Silver Fox Circle, Prince George, is a current elementary 5th grade teacher at North Elementary School. He was present only to hear the discussion but felt compelled to speak on behalf of his students and co-workers. He has worked with many students preparing them for the IB Program. His students needed a program like the IB Program to push them and to accelerate their studies. He built his students up and coached them on how to get into the IB Program. Speaking as a parent, he has a 4th grade child who has been in PACE and SOAR since kindergarten. The child has been excited about the opportunity to get into the IB Program when she was of age. His family now has a decision to make, "Do we stay in Prince George County or do we move?" He wants his child to experience personal growth through the IB Program and all the opportunities it has to offer. He asked the Board to please reconsider their decision for his child and all other children who desire this educational advancement. It's an educational downward slope if you take the program away.

Jodi Hannuksela, 19901 Legend Road, Carson expressed how extremely shy her daughter was and when she heard of the IB Program she wanted to apply. Through the IB Program her daughter has excelled. Her daughter makes friends easier, is outgoing and attributes the change to the IB Program. The program helps students develop their own personalities and teaches speaking skills. She knows what the program has done for her child and the program could do the same for other children, and it's a shame that the program is going away.

Hollie Nase, 11309 Sweet Gum Lane, Disputanta is a teacher and parent of four. The IB program is not for every child. When she received notice that the program would be

phasing out, her 10th grade child was disappointed. Her youngest child may not want to participate in the program, but her other children did. The IB Program prepared her children for college courses, college application and scholarship process, leadership roles, volunteering, working in the community, and other opportunities they did not know about. She also asked for reconsideration of the Board's decision to reinstate the program.

Anna Mitchell, 3210 Kiser Drive, North Prince George wanted to share her experiences as a 10th grade student in the IB Program. The program has been a great influence on her life. She applied to the rigorous program and knew it would be a challenge. She was afforded foreign language earlier, writing skills have been improved, and she is ahead academically of other students. The workload is great but it is preparing her for the 11th grade and eventually college. The IB Program has been stressful, but it has helped her for the future.

Mr. Foster thanked all who spoke at the meeting.

VIII. PUBLIC HEARING ON THE SUPERINTENDENT'S PROPOSED FY2017-18 BUDGET (AS ADVERTISED)

Mr. Foster indicated the Superintendent presented the Proposed FY2017-18 Budget on February 7, 2017. The Public Hearing gives the community the opportunity to share their thoughts on the Superintendent's proposed budget. There are two budget work sessions scheduled for March 7 and 9, 2017 at 6:00 p.m. in the School Board Office Training Room. Mr. Foster opened the floor for public comments.

Jacquelyn Jones, 6008 Holly Trace Drive, Chesterfield, has worked in this school division for 24 years. She is a school psychologist and she spoke on the need for the Board to support the additional full time position for another school psychologist. This is a "need" not a "want" as the department is currently understaffed by at least 50%. The state guidelines call for 1 person per 1,000 students and we are operating with only 3 school psychologists. Each psychologist has increased their workload by 20-30% this year and the department is in great need of another person to provide the most comprehensive and complete assessment for each individual to serve the student in the best possible way. She also asked for the reinstatement for local travel reimbursement for school psychologists within the county for daily job responsibilities stating some days they travel to a school multiple times a day.

Sharon Jadrnak, 12000 Larchwood Court, Disputanta, spoke on substitute pay. She has been a substitute in several capacities within the school system, and she encourages higher pay for long term substitutes verses a day-to-day substitute. She outlined the differences for each, including the teacher responsibilities of the two. As a day-to-day substitute teacher, the substitute implements the daily work/lesson plans the teacher has left for the students to do. A long-term substitute teacher has to make lesson plans, give out lessons, teach, grade, etc. and it is all for the same pay as a day-to-day substitute. She did research on line and found that the surrounding areas offer a

higher rate for long-term substitutes and she would like to board to consider a pay increase for long-term substitutes.

Lisa Antis, 11915 Quail Run Lane, Prince George, spoke on the lack of exploratory options given to Moore Middle School students. Electives include computer applications, choir, band, family life, art, inventions and innovations and Intro to Technology. If an elective class is full, the child is forced to take an elective that he has no desire to learn. If money was set aside for IB Program and it is being dissolved where are those funds going? The budget should benefit everyone not just for a few select people or programs. The students with IEPs put in longer hours and work just as hard as those in the IB Program.

Vera Sue Brockwell, 15901 James River Drive, Disputanta, has driven a bus for 35 years. She commented drivers should get more money. With the shortage of bus drivers, drivers are doing double backs and some are doing triple backs. Some drivers do not get home until after 6:00 at night from delivering children home. Please consider giving drivers more money.

Gene Shanks, 9673 Blackwater Farm, Disputanta, has two children with autism. He requested the Board to look at ABA therapy services in all schools, whether it be a contracted service or hire employees to work with these kids. An ABA or BCA behavioral therapist would be a good fit for autistic children and he asked the Board to support this endeavor.

The Public Hearing comment period on the proposed budget ended at 7:10. Mr. Foster commented that he knew a lot of the people or grew up with those that that spoke this evening on both subjects. He was glad to see so many people speak passionately on the subject for their kids. "Education is always changing. Our needs are great and sometimes it boils down to dollars but other times it's just what is right." Board members are passionate about serving on the Board and doing what is right for all students. He thanked all for their dialogue and he asked for prayer, guidance, and strength. "This is not just happening in Prince George, it is happening everywhere."

Mr. Stevenson thanked all who participated in tonight's discussion. He reflected this is the largest crowd that the board has seen for any of its budget meetings during the time he has been on the board. Unlike state legislators, the school board does listen to what you have to say. He indicated that Mr. Foster and Mrs. Williams joined him recently in Richmond to talk with state legislators seeking funding help. "This Board is passionate about our county and our people." He came from Hopewell, his wife was from Prince George, and they chose to live in Prince George. His wife was a teacher in Hopewell for 11 years, and "we do a great job in Prince George." Budget years have been tough all but 1 year since he has been on the Board. "We continue to do more with less." He thanked the two elementary students for speaking.

Mr. Ashcraft said his colleagues had summed it up and said it all. He spoke about his two-year time on the board and the changes he has seen in the division. "This county does care about the kids and the schools" and he appreciated all who spoke and heard

their opinions. "You are the next generation for this county. Be involved in School Board and Board of Supervisors meetings, voice your opinions, and be heard!" He ended with questions to consider, "What can the community do, what can the school board do and what can you do to give back to the schools and children?"

Before going into the Budget Work Session, Mrs. Williams wanted to make of record that the Board had received emails and written comments from Tami Collins and Laura Davis.

IX. BUDGET WORK SESSION

Ms. Hicks provided the Board with information for Tab 8 of their Budget Notebooks, Capital Improvement Plan (CIP). This is information received from Davenport & Company, who is assisting the county with the CIP. Ms. Hicks referenced Page 5 of the report for school division items on tap for FY2017: Replacing windows at Harrison and South; FY2019: New elementary school replacing William A. Walton School; FY2021: New elementary school replacing L.L. Beazley School; FY2025: Comprehensive high school addition. All projects on the list are proposed pending funding sources by bonds. The Board had questions concerning debt service. The Davenport Report goes to the Board of Supervisors and then to the Planning Commission for consideration.

Mr. Stevenson stated Mrs. Williams did an excellent job when she presented the school division's needs to the CIP Committee. Replacement of Walton School was picked first over Beazley School because it is closer to the interstate and it could be sold as an industrial property.

Ms. Hicks also provided the Board with the Loan Amortization Schedule dated July 1, 2012 through July 1, 2022. For the benefit of the audience, this loan exists without a signed loan document. The School Board gave the county money back that year and the county gave us a loan and we are having to repay it back with interest.

Other items discussed included investigation for the water/sewer bill at North Elementary School indicated there is no leak. The old North building is still connected to the new school. The Board tasked staff to determine the school's use prior to opening the recreation building and the school's use after the building was opened. Staff is still researching and hope to have answers soon.

Late this afternoon Ms. Hicks received a document from the General Assembly. She has not had a chance to review and determine how this will affect our budget. The county is presenting their budget this evening. The budget document will be posted to their website tomorrow and at that time we will have a better idea what funds have been allotted for the school division.

Mr. Foster shared three areas for review: 1) step increase for employees 2) financial relief for staff; and health insurance. Ms. Hicks indicated a meeting with the health benefits administrator will be held on March 3rd.

Mr. Foster also indicated we need to figure out a way to fix the bus situation. Some considerations could be to look at start times (short term now or staggered start times in the fall), hourly wages for 180 day drivers, year round schools. Busing is as big of a problem as any of our programs. Lack of drivers is our problem. Other localities are doing staggered times and these localities have the same issues we have. On a positive note, Mr. Foster shared that our transportation technology, VersaTrans, is superb and is used by many localities and nationally.

There is a joint meeting between the School Board and Board of Supervisors Chairs and Vice Chairs on March 7, 2017. Joint meetings have been occurring quarterly and at this meeting they will discuss pressure points (raises, service, etc.) and common ground to bring ideas to each group. These meetings have been very productive and decisions will be made for what is best for county citizens.

X. ADJOURNMENT

Mr. Stevenson made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 7:49 p.m. Mr. Ashcraft seconded the motion.

VOTE: Ayes: Ashcraft, Foster, Stevenson
 Absent: Cox, Franklin

The meeting adjourned at 7:49 p.m.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, we set our signatures this 13th day of March, 2017.

Approved:

/s/ Kevin S. Foster – Chairman

Attest:

/s/ Rebecca B. Kirk – Clerk

CERTIFICATION OF CLOSED MEETING

WHEREAS, the Prince George County School Board has convened a closed meeting on this date pursuant to an affirmative recorded vote and in accordance with the provisions of the Virginia Freedom of Information Act; and

WHEREAS, Section 2.2-3712 of the Code of Virginia requires a certification by this school board that such closed meeting was conducted in conformity with Virginia law;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Prince George County School Board hereby certifies that to the best of each member's knowledge (i) only public business matters lawfully exempted from open meeting requirements by Virginia law were discussed in the 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.

VOTE

Ayes: 3

/s/ Rebecca B. Kirk – Clerk
February 28, 2017
Meeting Date