

**Northeast Regional School
Of
Biotechnology and Agriscience
Board Meeting Minutes**

Date: August 28, 2013

Time: 4:30 pm

Place: Vernon James Research and Ext. Center

Present: David Peele
Benjie Forrest
Mac Hodges
Joe Landino
Kenneth Harrell
Dwight Respass

Absent: Janie Spencer
Michael Dunsmore
Supt. Joe Davis
Lynn West
David Peoples

Chairman David Peele called to order the meeting of the Board of the Northeast Region High School for Biotechnology and Agriscience at 4:30 pm on August 28, 2013, at the Vernon James Research and Extension Center. Melinda White proceeded with roll call. Resource personnel present are Hal Davis, Principal of the Northeast Regional School of Biotechnology and Agriscience and Jean Woolard. Also present are parents Gerald Wynn and Wanda Murphy as well as Mary Wayt from the Roanoke Beacon Newspaper.

Joe Landino led the Board in prayer and in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Chairman Peele presented the agenda for additions and or deletions. With no additions or deletions the agenda is accepted as presented.

Chairman Peele then offered the July minutes for consideration and noted that the minutes are posted on the NERSBA website. Joe Landino motions with a second from Benjie Forrest to approve the July minutes as presented.

Public Comments: None

Finance Report – Michael Cowin:

Principal Davis reported that Michael Cowin could not be at the meeting to present a finance report but was planning on being at the September meeting. He complimented Mr. Cowin and Pitt County Schools for making the transition as fiscal agent from Washington County Schools to Pitt County Schools as painless and as smooth as it could be.

Legislative Updates – Dr. Peele:

Chairman Peele reported that the legislature did several things in the recent legislative session that will affect the school. The first item is that Paul Tines, Representative for Washington, Beaufort, Hyde and Dare County, had a corrections bill passed that DPI will now fund the Principals position as long as the school has 100 students. Discussions are now being held with DPI as to whether this is the actual salary that Principal Davis is making due to him being retired and drawing a reduced salary or the

full amount that a level 1 Principal would make. Tony Habit, with NC New Schools Project noted that typically the position should be funded at level 3 and feels that it should be corrected in the next session. Chairman Peele agreed that it would need to be corrected in the next session. The second item is an amendment made to Senate Bill 125 having to do with the Board of Directors. Senator Harry Brown, one of the authors of Senate Bill 125, wants to see more business representation on present regional school boards and all future boards of Regional schools. The legislation was changed to read that there will be at least as many business people on the board as there are education people. NERSBA presently has 6 (six) current board members from the education side and 3 (three) from the business sector so an additional 3 members must be selected to come from the business sector from the 5 participating LEA's. Chairman Peele has agreed to follow up on obtaining additional business board members and asked for recommendations for him to follow up on from the other board members. Joe Landino asked about Dwight Respass, a farmer, who is currently serving as the parent advisory member. Chairman Peele said that because he is the parent representative he does not count towards the business members needed for the Board. Chairman Peele noted that the new Supt. from Pitt County schools will be an ex officio member as well as a the member from NC State still to be chosen who will be an ex officio member as well. The third item is a safety plan adopted for charter and regional schools which encourages charter and regional schools to adopt an emergency response plan. Principal Davis will discuss this further in the agenda.

Report from Principal Davis:

Introduction of NERSBA Faculty:

Principal Davis thanked the Board in their support for the opening of the 2013-14 school year and complimented Tony Habit with NC Schools Project and his staff in helping prepare the faculty for the upcoming school year. Principal Davis introduced the faculty and staff for the 2013-14 school year.

Student Enrollment Update for 2013-14:

Principal Davis provided a handout to the Board showing the current enrollment by gender, race and LEA. He noted that 115 students are currently enrolled. Chairman Peele asked how many upcoming sophomores did not choose to come back for this year. Principal Davis noted that there were 7 students that made the decision to return to their home LEA's and two students that moved out of state.

Personnel Recommendations for 2013-14:

Principal Davis recommended Inga Spruill for the position of Administrative Assistant and Melva Lilley as a substitute teacher. Benjie Forrest motioned with a second from Kenneth Harrell to accept recommendations as presented by Principal Davis. With no discussion the motion was approved unanimously

NERSBA East Campus Site:

Principal Davis reported that the East Campus Site is working well for the freshmen class and is being utilized to its fullest capacity. One issue being addressed is the parking lot which is not large enough to accommodate 7 buses in the afternoon.

Principal Davis is working with Jerry Rhodes, Washington County Manager, to put in an additional driveway to accommodate busses.

NERSBA Transportation Plan:

Principal Davis thanked all 5 LEA's in their assistance with bus transportation. He noted that there are still some issues that need to be worked on regarding times buses are arriving to drop students off and working with other schools schedules.

Technology Plan:

Principal Davis reported that internet is working at the East Campus Site. Principal Davis reported that the sound system in the auditorium at the East site was damaged by the former occupants and that Soundside Group is working on getting the sound part of the system working. One piece of equipment needed to get the entire system working will cost approximately \$10,000. Benjie Forrest asked if the system belongs to Washington County and if so would they be willing to help pay to fix it. Principal Davis noted that he does not feel like they would be willing to pay \$10,000 at this time. He did note that Jerry Rhodes and county commissioners have been very receptive in helping with the needs at the East site. Tony Habit offered to try and find a volunteer to help fix the system and will be in contact with Principal Davis. Principal Davis asked Julie Gurganus to report on computer leasing. She reported that a lease for computers has been obtained for two years. South Bank Leasing has established the school on a two year leasing plan for teacher and student computers with a three year warranty and accidental protection for two payments per year. She also noted that it is within the budget approved by the Board. The computers have arrived at Soundside Group, will be imaged and then a Tech night for parents and students will be set up in the near future. Principal Davis noted that South Bank Leasing was not the first company approached for the lease for computers. The first company approached would not approve the school due to the school only being in existence for one year. Julie Gurganus noted that South Bank Leasing actually turned out to be less as they charge less for interest. She also noted that a technology plan for the school has to be submitted to the State Board of Education for their approval. Some revisions are being made and DPI has suggested that the school wait to submit a plan until the revisions are in place. Ms. Gurganus is hoping to have a draft of a two year technology plan to present to the Board by the October meeting for their review. Principal Davis noted that Ms. Gurganus has been working very closely with Linda Ulla with the Friday Institute to develop this plan. Principal Davis also noted that our sophomore students are taking two college online classes – English 111 and Biology 111 through Pamlico Community College. Ms. Gurganus noted that last January the State approved that if the students pass Biology 111 and Biology 112 the students will receive a dual credit – one for high school biology and one for college biology if the students pass the EOC. She also noted that the students will partner with Pitt Community College next year with a biotechnology class and the students will go to Pitt Community College certain days for the lab. The English and biology courses are prerequisites for the biotechnology class.

General Liability/ Workmen's Compensation Insurance:

Principal Davis reported that a million dollar general liability policy has been obtained from the Clement Company for the East site as well as workmen's compensation

coverage for all of the employees. He noted that the cost for the policies was less than what was approved in the Budget.

Critical Schools Response Plan:

Principal Davis reported that he has asked Ms. Anne Keys, Emergency Management Coordinator with Washington County to do an assessment of the East Campus and of the Vernon James Center to help develop a critical schools response plan.

Fall Semester Exam Schedule:

Principal Davis asked the Board to approve moving the final exam schedule for the first semester to before Christmas based on changes for test requirements recently made by the Department of Public Instruction. All exams for semester courses must be taken within the last five years of the semester with a full year course being taken within the last 10 days of the school year. The current approved calendar shows the last 5 days as being December 20th which is the Friday before the holidays and then January 6th – 9th. After talking with the Staff they would prefer that the students not return on the 6th to take exams on the 6th, 7th, 8th and 9th. She asked the state testing coordinator with the state if the school could adjust the calendar if the Board would approve it. The change proposed is start the second semester on January 6th and have the first semester end on the 20th which would allow the student to complete testing before they leave for the holidays. Mac Hodges motions with a second from Joe Landino to honor the request to change the calendar proposed by Principal Davis and Julie Gurganus. With no further discussion the motion is approved unanimously.

National FFA Convention:

Principal Davis asked with approval from the Board for a group of students to attend the National FFA Convention in Louisville Kentucky October 29th – November 2nd. Benjie Hodges motions with a second from Dwight Respass for approval of students to attend the National Convention. Motion is approved unanimously. Benjie Forrest asked how many students will be attending. Principal Davis answered that deposits are still being taken and that a definite number is not known at this time. He did note that Buffy Everette, FFA Coordinator is planning on chartering a bus in conjunction with other schools to transport students.

Secretary Tom Vilsack Visit:

Principal Davis reported that Secretary of Agriculture Tom Vilsack visited the school on August 15th which was originally scheduled to visit in June. Principal Davis noted that there was very short turn around time of the Secretary's rescheduled visit. He noted that the visit was very successful and positive in respect to the school. Mac Hodges noted that the visit had a great deal of media coverage. The Board thanked Mary Wayt with the Roanoke Beacon which wrote a positive article with respect to the school.

NERSBA Satellite Conference Day – August 30th:

Principal Davis reported that the first satellite conference day for the school will be Friday, August 30th. Beaufort County students will be meeting at the Beaufort County

Cooperative Extension Center, Pitt County students will be meeting at the Pitt County Cooperative Extension Center, Martin County Students will meet at Martin Community College and Tyrrell and Washington County students will be meeting at the Vernon James Center. He noted that the teachers will be implementing a program developed by the School of Science and Math on the engineering process.

Roper Peanut Festival – Saturday September 14th:

Principal Davis noted that the school will have a float and participate in the Roper Peanut Festival on Saturday September 14th.

Principal Davis thanked Mr. Gerald Wynn and Mrs. Wanda Murphy along with Mr. Respass, parents present at the meeting and members of the parental advisory committee, for their support and involvement in helping to make the school successful.

Chairman Peele asked about textbooks and if all textbooks have been ordered. Principal Davis reported that the textbooks were here and in place on the first day of school

Mac Hodges asked how the lunch situation was going with there being two sites. Principal Davis answered that for the most part it is going well.

NERSBA Instructional Facilities:

Chairman Peele asked for input from other Board members regarding “growing pains” that the school will have for the next school year and subsequent school years. He noted that there are short term and long term issues regarding facilities as the school grows. Joe Landino asked about the status of the grant with the Rural Center regarding the sewer system for the Vernon James Center. Chairman Peele answered that he spoke with David Peoples before the Board meeting but failed to ask him about the grant. He will send David Peoples an email to follow up on that. Joe Landino offered that the school cannot continue in two locations. He also noted that the Board needs to decide how much money they need before they start the process of solicitation for funds. Chairman Peele would like to see a presence remain – at least one class – at the Vernon James Center but that the sewer issue is a factor Chairman Peele asked if it was definite that portable units were not allowed on the East Campus site. Dwight Respass answered that he looked into this and that the amount of land actually purchased by Washington County was about an acre. He said it is adjacent to wet lands and that due to storm water runoff it appears that additional buildings are not an options for the east Campus site. Kenneth Harrell reported unofficially that a school might be available in Jamesville (Martin County) for next year. He will be able to give more information on this after the Martin County Board retreat in October. Benjie Forrest asked how many students the school in question would hold. Mr. Harrell answered approximately 300. Mac Hodges agreed that this would allow for school growth and would “buy time” for the school. Benjie Forrest asked if the school gained more space could the school increase class size. Chairman Peele said this was an option. Mr. Forrest noted that the reason he asked this question is that he was approached by

Perquimans County about partnering with the school and becoming the 6th school district to become a part of the school. He noted this was due in part to the positive publicity that the school has been receiving recently. Mac Hodges agrees that what Mr. Harrell is suggesting is good but that the Board needs to continue to look for other facilities in Washington County and surrounding counties. He feels that the long range plan should be to have a facility near the Vernon James Center but for the next school year there needs to be a solution with students all under one roof. He feels this is good not only for student moral but for faculty moral as well. Chairman Peel asked each board member to look for any vacant buildings in their respective counties that could be used for the school. He also noted that if portable classrooms will be necessary for next year then a location needs to be found in Washington County to accommodate the portable classrooms. Chairman Peele asked if portable units must be purchased or can they be leased. Benjie Forrest noted that portable units can be leased. Benjie Forrest noted that Michael Cowin, Finance Office with Pitt County schools can provide information on leasing portable units. Benjie Forrest will contact him for information. Joe Landino asked if the school in Jamesville is used will all students be housed in that location. Chairman Peele feels that one class needs to continue to be housed at the Vernon James Center to maintain a presence with the other two classes housed in Jamesville. Joe Landino asked about the architect that was scheduled to come to an earlier board meeting and discuss modular facilities. Tony Habit will contact architect and try to arrange for a presentation at the September Board meeting. Dwight Respass noted that there is a facility available on Moratoc Road in Washington County that could be used for a school but would require extensive renovations. Chairman Peele reiterated to the board members to look for facilities in their respective counties that could be used to house the school. Further discussion will continue at the September board meeting.

The next scheduled Board meeting is September 18th, 2013.

With no further business a motion is made by Benjie Forrest with a second from Dwight Respass to adjourn the meeting. The meeting is adjourned at 5:48 pm.

Minutes submitted by: Melinda White