

New Hanover County School Board Meeting 10/3/17

This was a regular School Board meeting. Main points of interest were the discussion on guiding principles for redistricting, and a presentation on the FutureTeacher's Career Academy and a proposal to apply to the State for Restart Reform for Freeman and Snipes schools.

Meeting started 5:35 pm, ended 8:15 pm. All School Board members except David Wortman were present.

In the redistricting discussion Bruce Shell and Lisa Estep disagreed with the majority who wanted to make maintaining neighborhood schools their first guiding principal. They stated that while they favored students being able to attend schools in close proximity to their homes, they believed that redistricting should be planned to evenly populate schools (currently some schools are underutilized and others crowded) with a focus on raising academic performance and increasing diversity in low performing schools. Janice Cavanaugh proposed moving the Board's commitment to neighborhood schools from being the first guiding principal to being a part of the last guiding principal "attendance zone boundaries should minimize change for students." This proposal was passed 4-2 with Shell and Estep opposed.

The Board was presented with information about a Future Teachers Career Academy that will be created in partnership with the Watson School of Education, UNCW. This Academy will be housed at Isaac Bear with 20 students in the first cohort of 2018-2019, with plans to increase to 75 students. The goal of the academy is to increase the pool of highly qualified candidates available for hire in New Hanover.

Dr. LaChawn Smith requested approval by the Board to apply to the North Carolina State Board of Education for Snipes and Freeman to be designated as Restart Reform Model Schools. The Restart Model would authorize the NHCS Board of Education to operate both schools with the same exemptions from statutes and rules as a charter school, including additional calendar, class size, testing and hiring flexibility. These schools have experienced high staff turnover and the District would especially like the flexibility to change the school hours to allow for more ongoing teacher professional development.

Next month's meeting will be on 11/7/17 at 5:30 pm at the BOE Center, 1805 S. 13th Street.

Respectfully submitted,

Anne Eitelman