

# GREENE COUNTY BOARD OF EDUCATION

## Minutes

July 21, 2014

The Greene County Board of Education met in called session on Monday, July 21, 2014, at 8:30 a.m., at the James W. Parham Central Office.

Chairman Nathan Brown called the meeting to order. Kathy Crawford led the pledge to the flag and Mr. Brown led the invocation and noted that all Board members were present.

### III. New Business

- A. Approve giving a stipend of \$2,000 to a teacher in each of the four quads to be utilized as a sub bus driver.

On motion by Rick Tipton, seconded by Kathy Crawford

**Vote:** 7 – 0 Passed

Kathy Austin asked if this money would be coming out of the Transportation budget. Dr. Kirk responded that it would have to be paid out of the personnel line and there is money there to cover this cost. Ms. Austin also asked why we don't just come up with a scale to pay the ones who do drive and this is saying that we will give them \$2,000 whether they drive or not and wanted to clarify if we were paying them to be on call. David McLain responded that basically we were and that a scale would be an hourly rate and it would be difficult to do with someone on salary and that is why this is a stipend. He added that at this point he isn't sure if anyone would apply so it needs to be enticing for a teacher to want to do this. He said that there are openings for bus drivers and currently we have no one licensed to take the positions. Ms. Austin asked if there was a conflict with teachers being paid as bus drivers and Mr. McLain responded that he isn't aware of any conflicts and it is the same as other positions receiving a stipend. Ms. Austin also asked where these jobs have been advertised and Mr. McLain said that it has been put in the newspaper, online and flyers have been sent out to schools. Ms. Austin asked if we had checked with transportation companies and expressed concern about the teachers arriving late to their classes. Mr. McLain responded that they would not be late and there may be a conflict if there were staff meetings after school. She also asked if this would increase our liability and Mr. McLain said that they would have to get their license and it would take two months to obtain the license and these

teachers would only be used as bus drivers as a last resort. Dr. Kirk suggested that maybe we do this for a year and then come back and review the process. Ms. Austin said that she would like to get a report next year to see to see how it goes. Deborah Johnson said that she was concerned about someone from another school driving and then trying to get back to their classroom in time.

B. Approve additional teaching duties stipends for teachers taking extra classes in hard to staff positions

On motion by Rick Tipton, seconded by Kathy Crawford

**Vote:** 5 – 2 Passed (With Noted change of \$5,000 instead of \$4,217 per semester)

No-Austin, Johnson

Yes-Brown, Cobble, Crawford, Hopson, Tipton

Dr. Vicki Kirk gave hand-outs prepared by Mr. Bill Ripley and said that she would speak and answer questions in his absence. She noted that every year we lose good teachers in the summer and many times they are math teachers. She said that this request is another attempt to think outside the box and to make sure we get the best teachers in front of our students. She added that it is not a solution but a stop-gap while we have a chance to look for really good teachers and hire them as we have an opportunity. She said that some other districts do this as well and Mr. Ripley called other districts as well as Chuck Cagle to be sure we were within the law. In the contract it states that *“in addition the said person agrees to waive the statutory guarantee of minimum planning time during the course of the school day and teach an additional class at a rate of \$5,000 per semester”*. She said that is very close to ¼ of a teacher would cost and that is how that figure was decided. She noted that Mr. Ripley has developed a selection procedure that says *“if a vacated teaching position cannot be filled with a desirable candidate, the principal in consultation with appropriate supervisors and the director shall determine if the classes can be scheduled and assigned to other effective teachers within the building. Consideration for this addition duty will be based on each teacher’s effectiveness rating, years of experience and willingness to participate. The final determination will be made by the principal in consultation with the appropriate supervisors and the director and/or personnel department. The necessity and appropriateness of these additional duties will be determined on an annual basis based on factors such as student success, enrollment, scheduling and the job applicant for the positions. These duties will be contractually agreed upon annually with each participating teacher”*. Dr. Kirk asked that Dr. Cindy Bowman, Principal of South Greene, speak to the Board about this request. She noted that Dr. Bowman had brought this idea to her as a potential possibility for this kind of situation. She added that our need areas at this time are math and foreign language.

Dr. Bowman indicated that they had just lost a math teacher and she had called the math department in to ask for suggestions and brainstorming and they had come up with this idea of teaching additional classes. She said that these teachers were going to be able to teach the same thing they have been teaching without having to learn anything new and they are already experts in these hard to teach classes. She said that she has talked with other districts that have the same kinds of needs in the same areas and she feels that this is a win-win situation for the kids to have these experienced teachers. Dr. Kirk added that we are not willing to give up the position and that there are some good candidates coming into the job market next year with math certification and we are excited about this but they are not ready to be employed at this time. Deborah Johnson asked what had been done to recruit new teachers to come to Greene County. Dr. Kirk responded that the new software, Teachers-Teachers, sends out notifications out all over the country and that we also advertise locally and call universities and other districts in the area to see if they applicants. David McLain stated that another good question would be what are we doing to retain these teachers and as a former principal when you would lose a veteran teacher with excellent EOC scores and then bring in a new college graduate then you are starting all over again. He said that when you are able to retain these teachers the kids win. Rick Tipton agreed and said he felt that we had lost the teacher at South Greene because of the increase in salary. Kathy Austin added that was not the reason she had heard for why she left. Dr. Bowman said that the teacher had received a \$7,000 increase which would increase her retirement and that is the reason she had given to her when she left. She added that she was an excellent teacher and it is our loss and the kids' loss and that she is trying to find the best solution for this and wants the kids to have those high quality teachers in the classroom. Ms. Johnson added that we have had teachers from other districts come to our county and the one thing that some of the other districts commented about Greene County was that we provide the best health care benefits around and she felt that it all equaled out and that everyone was having a hard time. She said that it is not like Greene County is so far below everyone that nobody wants to come here. She stated that maybe we should be looking at more tutoring because our test scores are not that high to where we shouldn't be looking into offering our teachers the opportunity to make more money if they want to stay and tutor. She said our obligation is to provide the best education possible and as a teacher when you lose that plan time you cannot be as effective as you could be if you had the opportunity to plan. She also said she felt the best situation would be to continue to put ads in the paper and contact the universities for these positions that we have because there is still time. Dr. Bowman said she agreed but this position does not require a teacher just coming out of college and that it required a teacher with expertise in Algebra II and that knows the content. She said that she felt confident they could find a younger teacher to teach some other courses but at this time they felt this was the best solution for their school. She said that she would monitor this and didn't mind coming back

to the Board with this. Dr. Kirk added that we will not stop look and this just gives us some flexibility when we have a situation like this so we can fill the classroom with somebody who is a really good teachers. She said that our other option would be to hire someone who is not ready to teach this course and this is not good for our students. Ms. Austin said that she has concerns over the precedent we are setting because this is new and we have said we do not want fewer teachers, we want more teachers. She asked if they could not as one of the current teachers to take this difficult class and then hire a younger or less experienced teacher. Dr. Bowman said that they were told last year they would have to change their course sequence due to the PARCC test and now PARCC is not coming and what they are offering the kids is seven courses in Algebra I, nine courses in geometry, two bridge math classes, two pre-calc classes, one Algebra C left over class for kids who failed the previous year. She said she would love to have another math teacher and she feels this is a viable option because these teachers are excellent and the kids will have excellent teacher and she does not want them to have a teacher who is not ready to go into the classroom and for this year she feels this is their best solution. Mr. Brown said that he feels this is a good idea because Dr. Bowmansupports this and the math department wants to do this and see the kids succeed. Ms. Austin asked how many math applications we currently have on file. Dr. Bowman said that she had interviewed three math applicants recently, and there were numerous applicants but not ones that were highly qualified or highly effective. She added that she has to do what is best for the school and the math department is behind it. Ms. Austin asked if we were offering more money through differentiated pay for these hard to fill positions. Dr. Kirk responded that was not part of the plan from last year but we have in the plan to pay tuition for folks that would get an additional certification. Ms. Austin asked if this would increase class size and Dr. Bowman said that their biggest class size is 23 kids. Ms. Austin also asked about plan time and said the law changed and we are required to give individual plan time. Dr. Kirk answered that is to ensure a duty-free lunch and they would still have a block of time during the day, it just wouldn't be the typical plan time for a high school teacher. She added that is why the contract says they will waive their right statutory right to plan time and this would mean they would have to move their plan time outside of the school day. Ms. Austin asked if we are not going put our senior teachers in these more difficult positions and hire younger teachers, how are they going to get experience. Dr. Bowman responded that new teachers would start in the Algebra I classes and she has looked and has not seen anyone who has the expertise. Dr. Kirk added that training new teachers you would give them Algebra I to start with and then after a few years give them a section of Algebra II and partner them with a veteran teacher and let them plan together and begin to develop that expertise. She assured the Board that we will continue to look for good teachers and we want to hire the best we can find and we do like to look at our own graduates because there is an element of loyalty with them. She said this is not a permanent solution but it is one we might use from time to

time when we get in this kind of situation. Ms. Austin stated that she was not saying to fill this high performing math position but have someone come in and take the Algebra A position and then move the senior teacher up. Ms. Austin said that she is really protective of the tested areas and that she does not want to try and save money in this area by having fewer teachers. She said she would like to see one more teacher at all of the high schools and not less. She asked what the job description would be for this and Dr. Kirk answered that it is the teacher job description. Ms. Austin said that she had a problem with us saying that we are saving positions for potential graduates. Dr. Kirk responded that we are not saving positions or holding positions and we are not promising them anything, but it is her desire that we encourage people to come back to us. Ms. Austin said that she hoped this was not a precedent that we were going to become used to and not get another teacher. Tom Cobble thanked Dr. Bowman for coming to the Board and asking them to support the needs of the school and she has his full support. Deborah Johnson asked if they have looked into long distance learning and Dr. Bowman answered that Algebra II is a tough course and has an EOC attached to it and having that teacher in the classroom was best for the kids. Ms. Johnson said she would like to see us use more money for hiring bonuses to encourage new teachers, experienced teachers, experienced people that go back to school to get their teaching degree to come to Greene County and if you only hire from within you are not getting new ideas. Rick Tipton said that he would like to see, after the fall semester, how the teachers are doing and check on their well-being. Dr. Bowman said she would be glad to have them come in and speak to the Board. Ms. Johnson said that she does support them but in her heart she feels our first obligation is to provide the best education possible and that we should bump those other teachers up and hire new teachers for the low level math. Ms. Austin added that she is very proud of South Greene but she feels we need more teachers and not fewer in these areas because they are our tested areas. She said that is why differentiated pay was created to staff those hard positions.

Mr. Brown announced that all Board members have been registered for the Fall District meeting on Monday, September 22, 2014, from 5:00 p.m. until 7:40 p.m at Unicoi County High School.

Ms. Johnson thanked Dr. Kirk for sending them the new Legislation and asked if it could be on the next Board agenda so it could be shared with the public. Dr. Kirk said she could do a report on it at the next meeting.

Mr. Brown announced that the next regular Board meeting would be Thursday, August 28, 2014, at the Central Office at 5:00 pm. On Motion by Rick Tipton, seconded by Rex Hopson and with no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 9:27 a.m.