

Board Highlights September 4, 2015

The Gates County Board of Education met in a special called meeting on Friday, September 4, 2015 at the Gates County Board of Education Central Office. Madam Chair Glendale Boone called the meeting to order at 10:00 a.m. The following board members were present: Glendale Boone, Ray Felton, Leslie Byrum, Claire Whitehurst and Dr. Daniel Dickerson. Others attending the meeting were County Commissioner Madam Chair Linda Hofler, and Commissioners Henry Jordan, J. Ray Freeman, and Jack Owens. Also attending were Natalie Rountree, County Manager, Sandy Pittman, Financial Services Director, Joe Harrell, Director of Maintenance for Gates County Schools, Rube Blanchard, Director of Finance for Gates County Schools, and Dr. Barry Williams, Superintendent. Guests present were Dr. Jim Watson from WSRR Consulting Group, LLC and Randy Baker from Pinnacle Architecture, P.A.

Madam Chair Boone welcomed everyone and asked the commissioners and county officials to introduce themselves to our guests. Dr. Watson and Mr. Baker introduced themselves also.

Dr. Williams thanked everyone for their presence and their willingness to discuss the possibility of building a new middle school. He stated that it is important to focus on solutions rather than problems. He asked Mr. Joe Harrell to provide information about problems with the existing building.

Mr. Harrell spoke about the age of the building with the 8th grade campus being built in 1955-56. The 7th grade wing was renovated in 1975. There are many problems with the building now, including:

- the wastewater system
- mold and mildew in classrooms
- roof needs to be replaced
- bathrooms are not ADA accessible
- athletic changing room, built in the 1950's is not heated
- ceiling in 8th grade wing is in terrible shape

DPI engineers have been very helpful in accessing the building and have stated that it would take approximately \$1.5 million more to renovate than to build new. Mr. Harrell stated it will cost three quarters of a million dollars to replace the roof on the 8th grade building and one half of the 7th grade building. The school system has spent \$14,000 to \$15,000 on roof repairs recently. The DPI engineers will not officially condemn the building, but unofficially recommend that it should be replaced. We could face legal action from staff and students if these problems are not corrected.

Mr. Harrell stated there are positives if we decide to build a new building:

- we do not have to purchase land
- county sewer system is across the road
- we will not have to maintain a pump station

Dr. Watson and Mr. Baker offered some information on cost estimates.

The commissioners and board members discussed needs and possible funding. There was also discussion concerning the use of the 6th & 7th grade wings on the existing building, if a new middle school is built. The commissioners requested the Board of Education to provide additional information concerning population trends, detailed costs and sources of funding, for a future Commissioner's Meeting.

Dr. Williams stated this information would be provided, and Commissioner Hofler said they look forward to further discussion.

There being no further business Madam Chair Boone adjourned the meeting at 11:51 a.m.