

Board Meeting Highlights
Budget Retreat Work Session
February 29, 2016

The Gates County Board of Education met in a special called budget retreat work session on Monday February 29, 2016, in the conference room of the Gates County Board of Education Office. Madam Chair Glendale Boone called the meeting to order at 4:06 p.m. The following board members were present: Glendale Boone, Ray Felton, Leslie Byrum, Claire Whitehurst and Dr. Daniel Dickerson.

Mr. Felton made a motion to approve the agenda. Mrs. Whitehurst seconded the motion, and the board members approved the motion unanimously.

Dr. Williams presented packets to the board members with information about budget requests for the upcoming 2016-2017 school year. He indicated that he had used a different format than what was used last year. He felt that it was less confusing for the county commissioners. Dr. Williams indicated that we are only requesting \$7000.00 more this year, than the amount we were given last year. He did say that Mrs. Natalie Rountree, County Manager, had requested information concerning each of the schools' requests, and he provided that information to the board members. The board members questioned if these requests were listed by priority. Dr. Williams said that they were, with the top priority listed first. The board members suggested that they be listed with the top two to three requests, and then a five year plan for the others.

He then asked Mr. Rube Blanchard, Finance Officer, to give more details regarding the requests. Mr. Blanchard indicated that we do not have information about the state budget at this time, but he felt sure that there would be increases to retirement, health insurance and possible raises for employees. He used an average of 2.75% increase for retirement, 5% increase for health insurance and 3% increase for employees' raises, to determine a working budget. He also stated that he had moved several employees from local paid funds to state paid funds, which helped our budget considerably, since all the costs associated with these employees, such as retirement, workman's compensation and longevity, are then paid by state funds. However, maintenance personnel cannot be paid from state funds. He also scrutinized all the requests from each school and department, and eliminated some that he felt were not vital at this time. With all of this, he felt that the increase of \$7,000 over last year's budget would provide for our needs.

The board members requested that a breakdown of each category be given to the county commissioners, so they are aware of what each category consists of.

Mr. Blanchard stated that PRC 56 State Transportation funds are based on a formula of the number of buses that we have, and the number of students on each of the buses. With our county being very rural, this limits our funds received from the state. Therefore, local funds have to pay the difference. Even with fuel costs decreasing, this is considered in the formula, so therefore, does not help us. However, Mr. Cox, Transportation Director, has indicated that we should

receive approximately eight new buses in the next couple of years. This should help to cut our maintenance costs from local funds.

Each of the board members wanted to emphasize to the county commissioners that our top priority is to build a new middle school, and everyone has worked hard to cut costs wherever possible, to see this become a reality.

Dr. Williams plans to meet with the County Manager in the next couple of weeks, and will provide a final plan to the board members before meeting with her.

There being no further business, Dr. Dickerson made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Mrs. Whitehurst seconded the motion, and the board members approved the motion unanimously. Madam Chair Boone adjourned the meeting at 5:30 p.m.