

Approved by the Charlotte-
Mecklenburg Board of Education
May 13, 2008
Regular Board Meeting



Charlotte, North Carolina

January 8, 2008

**REGULAR MEETING
of the
CHARLOTTE-MECKLENBURG BOARD OF EDUCATION**

The Charlotte-Mecklenburg Board of Education held a Regular Board Meeting on January 8, 2008. The meeting began at 5:34 p.m. and was held in Room CH-14 of the Government Center.

Present: Joe I. White, Jr., Chairperson, Member At-Large;
Molly Griffin, Vice-Chairperson, (District 5);
Kaye McGarry, Member At-Large;
Trent Merchant, Member At-Large;
Larry Gauvreau (District 1);
Vilma D. Leake (District 2);
Tom Tate (District 4); and
Ken Gjertsen (District 6)

Absent: George Dunlap (District 3)

Also present at the request of the Board were Dr. Peter Gorman, Superintendent; Regina H. Bartholomew, General Counsel; and Nancy Daughtridge, Clerk to the Board.

Upon motion by Mr. Merchant, seconded by Ms. Griffin, the Board voted unanimously of those present for approval to go into Closed Session for the following purpose:

- **To consult with the Board's attorneys on matters covered by attorney-client privilege including but not limited to the litigation involving (a) Ken Farrar and the McAlpine Group and (b) Jerry Reese.**

The motion was made pursuant to Section 143-318.11(a) of the North Carolina General Statutes.

Chairperson White reconvened the Regular Board Meeting at 6:08 p.m. in the Meeting Chamber of the Government Center. CMS-TV Channel 3 televised the meeting.

Present: Joe White, Chairperson, Member At-Large;
Molly Griffin, Vice-Chairperson, (District 5);
Kaye McGarry, Member At-Large;
Trent Merchant, Member At-Large;
Larry Gauvreau (District 1);
Vilma D. Leake (District 2);
George Dunlap (District 3);

Tom Tate (District 4); and
Ken Gjertsen (District 6)

Absent: There were no absences.

Also present at the request of the Board were Dr. Peter Gorman, Superintendent; Regina H. Bartholomew, General Counsel; Members of Executive and Senior Staffs; and Nancy Daughtridge, Clerk to the Board.

I. CALL TO ORDER

Chairperson White called the meeting to order at 6:08 p.m. Chairperson White welcomed everyone to the Board's first Regular monthly business meeting for the year.

A. Pledge of Allegiance

Chairperson White introduced Michael Cardone, a seventh grade student at Morgan School, to lead those present and in the viewing audience in the Pledge of Allegiance and speak to the January character trait "justice and fairness." Michael's hobbies and interests include singing songs of the 60's, 70's and 80's; drawing; and studying meteorology. He is a member of the Charlotte Mecklenburg Police Department's "Right Moves for Youth" Club. Michael is a native of New York and a huge fan of the New York Mets. He would like to attend college to pursue a career in Architectural Design or Meteorology. Chairperson White introduced Michael's parents, Frank and Patricia Cardone, and the principal at Morgan School, Stephanie J. Wade. Michael said "justice and fairness" means to demonstrate impartial, unbiased, and equitable treatment for all. Michael invited everyone to stand and join him in reciting the Pledge of Allegiance.

B. Adoption of Agenda

Mr. Tate moved, seconded by Ms. Leake, that the Board adopt the agenda, and the Board voted 9-0 in support of the motion.

II. REQUESTS FROM THE PUBLIC

Gray Guthrie, senior at Providence High School, shared his research on the 4x4 Block Schedule as part of his Senior Exit Project. He said the 4x4 Block Schedule is detrimental to student learning and has a negative impact on students and test scores. He encouraged the Board to reconsider the use of the 4x4 Block Schedule prior to the 2008-2009 school year.

Ms. Leake requested a copy of Mr. Guthrie's information.

III. CONSENT ITEMS

A. Recommend approval of minutes.

- December 17, 2007 Work Session.
- December 13, 2007 Closed Session.
- December 11, 2007 Special Meeting/Installation Ceremony.
- November 27, 2007 Closed Session (two sets).
- November 13, 2007 Closed Session.

- September 25, 2007 Regular Board Meeting.
 - July 10, 2007 Regular Board Meeting.
- B. Construction Items.
1. Recommend approval of design contracts for four new 2007 Local Bond Program elementary schools.
 2. Recommend approval of design contracts for stadiums at Olympic and West Mecklenburg high schools.
- C. Recommend approval of appointment of administrative personnel.
- D. Recommend approval of licensed/non-licensed hires for December 2007.
- E. Recommend approval of supplementary funding request from U.S. Department of Education for Gaining Early Awareness and Readiness for Undergraduate Programs (GEAR UP).
- F. Recommend approval of supplementary funding request from North Carolina Department of Environment and Natural Resources for North Carolina Mobile Source Emissions Reduction Grant.
- G. *Item Deleted.*
- H. Recommend approval of resolution for supplementary funding request from the Federal Government (Department of Education) for Federal Impact Aid.
- I. Recommend approval of amending boundary for new Hucks Road Elementary School.

Ms. Griffin moved, seconded by Mr. Dunlap, that the Board approve the adoption of Consent Items A. thru I., and a discussion followed.

Ms. Leake pulled C. and E.

Ms. McGarry pulled I.

Ms. Griffin moved, seconded Mr. Tate, that the Board approve the adoption of Consent Items A. thru I., excluding C., E., and I., and the Board voted 9-0 in support of the motion.

The Board discussed Consent Item C. Ms. Leake discussed the importance of hiring quality personnel and placing the strongest teachers and principals with the weakest schools and students. She said children must be a top priority in hiring quality personnel. She expressed concern regarding the promotion of individuals who have experienced failure.

Mr. Tate moved, seconded by Ms. Griffin, that the Board approve the adoption of Consent Item C., and the Board voted 9-0 in support of the motion.

The Board discussed Consent Item E. Ms. Leake asked for clarification regarding the Gaining Early Awareness and Readiness for Undergraduate Programs (GEAR UP). She asked how long has the program been in place; what are the evaluation results; who will head the program; what students will be impacted; how could other schools receive this type of support; what other school districts have used this program; and how were the schools selected and why? Dr. Gorman reviewed the objectives and criteria of the program. Dr. Gorman will provide information regarding school districts that have implemented the program. Ms. Leake asked if this program was similar to the volunteer program at West Charlotte High School in which they are working to bring about the same type of success for students without the

available funds? Dr. Gorman said this is a completely different program. Ms. Leake requested a comparison of the two programs. Dr. Gorman said the ultimate goal of both programs is to help more students to post secondary education. Ms. Leake said the goals at West Charlotte High School and others schools are high academic achievement, effective educators, and strong parent and community connections but they do not have the availability of the funds to support the volunteers. Ms. Leake requested a copy of the budget and how the funds will be spent.

Ms. Griffin moved, seconded by Mr. Tate, that the Board approve the adoption of Consent Item E., and the Board voted 9-0 in support of the motion.

The Board discussed Consent Item I. Ms. McGarry asked if the proposed boundary change included the entire neighborhood? Scott McCully, Executive Director of Student Placement Services, said, yes, the entire Cheshunt subdivision is included in the proposed change.

Ms. McGarry moved, seconded by Mr. Tate, that the Board approve the adoption of Consent Item I., and the Board voted 9-0 in support of the motion.

Dr. Gorman's personnel recommendations were as follows:

Appointments:

- Lisa Bowen named principal at E.E. Waddell High School. Ms. Bowen previously served as assistant principal at E. E. Waddell High School.
- Eric Ward named principal at Wilson Middle. Mr. Ward previously served as assistant principal at West Mecklenburg High School.

Transfers:

- Stanley Frazier named principal at Albemarle Road Elementary. Mr. Frazier previously served as principal at E.E. Waddell High School.
- Shelley Hinton named principal at Garinger High School. Ms. Hinton previously served as principal at Wilson Middle School.

IV. ACTION ITEMS

A. Recommend approval of 2008 meeting schedule for the Board of Education

Chairperson White called upon Dr. Gorman to present the recommendation. Dr. Gorman said this is the approval of the 2008 meeting schedule for the Board of Education and it follows the traditional format for meeting days with the exception of a couple of dates. The changes include meeting on the third Tuesday in April (April 15th instead of April 8th because of the schedule for Spring Break) and one meeting in December. The first meeting of each month will be held in the Meeting Chamber and the second meeting will be held in Room 267. Dr. Gorman said he would draft a letter to the County regarding the schedule. A discussion with Board members followed. Ms. Leake requested the costs for meeting in the Meeting Chamber versus the costs to meet in Room 267. She understood that the Board would have access to the Meeting Chamber for both meetings and using Room 267 should be less expensive. Dr. Gorman said the layout for Room 267 is more conducive to the Work Session format used for

the second Board meeting of the month. Ms. Leake asked if the Board paid the same meeting room costs as the County? Chairperson White said the costs are basically the same for all three bodies. Chairperson White said Carole Love, Manager of Board Services, has that information and she is not present at tonight's meeting. Ms. Love will provide that information at a later time. Chairperson White explained the process the Board agreed upon for Board meetings which included using the Meeting Chamber for the first meeting of the month and Room 267 for the second meeting of the month.

2008 Meeting Schedule is as follows:

- January 8 and 22.
- February 12 and 26.
- March 11 and 25.
- April 15 and 22.
- May 13 and 27.
- June 10 and 24.
- July 8 and 22.
- August 12 and 26.
- September 9 and 23.
- October 14 and 28.
- November 11 and 25.
- December 9.

Mr. Tate moved, seconded by Ms. Leake, that the Board approve the 2008 meeting schedule for the Board of Education, and the Board voted 9-0 in support of the motion.

V. REPORTS/INFORMATION ITEMS

A. Report on Budget Amendments for November 2007

Chairperson White called upon Dr. Gorman to present the report. Dr. Gorman said agenda Items A. and B. are the monthly reports and they are as presented.

B. Report on Financial Statements for November 2007

Presented with V.A.

C. Report/Update on the Strategic Plan Project Charter: EC Inclusion

Chairperson White called upon Dr. Gorman to introduce the report. Dr. Gorman called upon Dr. Jane Rhyne, Assistant Superintendent of Exceptional Children, to present the report on Strategic Plan Project Charter: Exceptional Children (EC) Program and Inclusion Practices. This report is a part of the Management Oversight report on Curriculum and Instruction and will provide clarifying information on Inclusive Practices. Dr. Rhyne introduced Gina Smith, Director of Grade Level Services for Exceptional Children, to present the report. She also introduced Valerie Williams, principal at Southwest Middle School; and Becky Funderburke, a teacher at Albemarle Road Middle School, to share their experiences with Inclusive Practices. Gina Smith said Inclusion is the understanding that all students have access to the knowledge,

skills, and values necessary to live productive lives. Inclusion is a philosophy. CMS is not a full Inclusion district. CMS provides a full continuum of Special Education services that include In-Class Support; Pull Out; Self-Contained Classes; and two separate schools, Metro and Morgan schools. Inclusion provides students with disabilities more opportunities in general education. CMS implemented an early focus on student achievement and that set the stage for Inclusive Practices. The district's Inclusive Practices Charter is working toward improved academics for students who historically have struggled in general education. The district developed and implemented a Balance Scorecard that called for achievement goals for all students. In 2001, CMS developed a Strategic Plan to address the needs of students with disabilities, particularly, in the area of Inclusive Practices. That plan has been continually supported over the years. Currently, Dr. Gorman's Strategic Plan 2010 has made the expansion of Inclusive Practices a priority. Those measures coupled with the *No Child Left Behind* Federal Legislation and the reauthorization of the Individuals with Disabilities Educational Act (IDEA) in 2004 created an environment where students with disabilities must have more access to the general curriculum. A comprehensive district plan has been in place since 2001. The plan began with hiring an expert consultant to help establish a baseline for where the district was in terms of Inclusive Practices and students with disabilities. The results of the data collected in 2001 showed that CMS was no better or worse than most large urban school districts. That information led to a methodical five year rollout of Inclusive Practices. That implementation included a commitment to staffing ratios that would be appropriate for students, particularly, as it related to special education resource teachers in every school. The plan established a complex professional development plan that included a Summer Institute where volunteer teams of principals, general education, and special education team members could come together for training. Continuous professional development has continued up to this point. This training has been well received. CMS has also made a strong connection to data collection and analysis. Other areas of focus include Positive Behavior Intervention and Support (PBIS) which is a process for creating school environments that are more effective, efficient, and relevant to the educational process. Another important component was impacting instruction for student with disabilities. Ms. Smith invited Valerie Williams to explain the philosophy used at Southwest Middle School for implementing Inclusive Practices. Ms. Williams said the process began with extensive professional development, utilizing co-teaching initiatives, and selecting children for the classes. The benefits of this process outweigh the challenges. The challenges include scheduling classes; the number of students versus available teachers; the number of special education students enrolled in a class (ideally four to six students); and allowing adequate lesson planning time for the co-teachers. The benefits include increased self-confidence; decreased discipline issues; increased content knowledge for special education teachers; increased student exposure to varied teaching styles; students who may not have qualified for the services benefit from the co-taught classes; and the climate of the school promote high expectations for all students. Ms. Williams said it is evident that all students in the school benefit from Inclusive Practices. Ms. Smith reviewed the results of the implementation of Inclusive Practices. Over the last four years there has been a 50% reduction in the number of special education self-contained classes that are needed for students with disabilities. Prior to 2004, the number of classes that were needed continued to expand from about 360 to 450. In 2004 after one year of implementation of Inclusive Practices, PBIS, and Research-Based Interventions, the number of classes began to decline rapidly from a high of 450 to about 225

classes today. Students with disabilities are spending more time in general education which means these students are receiving instruction in a least restrictive environment. Students with disabilities are being pulled out less for special education and are being included more in the general education classroom. Fewer students with disabilities are in self-contained classrooms. A least restrictive environment is a part of the continuous improvement performance plan. One major strategy the district uses is co-teaching. A general education teacher is paired with a special education teacher to teach general education students and students with disabilities. For at least one of the last two years, students with disabilities in co-taught classes demonstrated higher academic achievement in third, fourth, and eighth-grade reading and sixth, seventh, and eighth-grade math, biology, and U.S. History. General-education students in co-taught classes demonstrated increased academic achievement for at least one of two years in third, fourth, sixth, and eighth-grade reading, and third through eighth-grade math, algebra, geometry, and U.S. History. The CMS data research collaborated the national results which indicate the implementation of Inclusive Practices does not deflate the academic achievement of general education students. In spring 2007, Instructional Accountability and Exceptional Children conducted a survey to gauge the perceptions of principals, general education teachers, and special education teachers. Results indicated that all respondents wanted more professional development and more assistance with scheduling. All respondents also believed that children should be in the general education environment as much as possible. Ms. Smith said CMS has many areas of strengths that contribute to the successful results. One of the greatest areas of strength is the talented and caring teachers who work directly with the students. Ms. Smith invited Becky Funderburke to share her teaching experiences with Inclusion Practices at Albemarle Road Middle School. Ms. Funderburke said all students, with and without disabilities, benefit from Inclusion Practices. Students without disabilities who do not perform on grade-level benefit from the extra support and strategies that are implemented. They also get the opportunity to work with students that do have disabilities and they are learning social skills and how to interact with other people. Students with disabilities are getting closer access to the curriculum and they do not feel secluded because they are more a part of their grade-level which better prepares them for their End-of-Grade tests. The experiences of partnering with a regular education teacher are beneficial because teachers are able to evaluate each other and keep each other accountable. Students benefit from being a part of this partnership. Parental support and buy-in are key to the success of this concept. Ms. Funderburke said she has focused on ensuring parents were educated on the benefits of Inclusion and what their child would receive in participating in the classroom. Ms. Smith said other CMS strengths that are important to the concept include strong principal leadership with an attitude of advocacy for their schools; critical alignment to district plans as evidenced by Strategic Plan 2010; professional development that is ongoing, differentiated and multi-faceted; and that CMS is not a full Inclusion District. The fact that CMS offers a full continuum of all special education services for students with disabilities is beneficial to the success of this concept. Ms. Smith said challenges include ensuring students with disabilities have an appropriate special education supports and ensuring that continuum of service is always available; ability to get accurate electronic data to analyze End-of-Grade and End-of-Course scores for students with disabilities; and dispelling the myths. Communication with schools, parents, and the community continues to focus on ensuring what Inclusive Practices mean in CMS. The myths include that CMS is a full Inclusion school system; Inclusion is a money saving strategy; and all students with disabilities are served and co-taught

classrooms. Opportunities and future plans support the Strategic Plan 2010 and include continuous improvement; expectations of high academic achievement for students with disabilities; higher levels of school involvement by parents of students with disabilities; and building capacity of special and general education teachers and administrators in meeting the needs of all students.

Board members were invited to ask questions and make comments.

- Ms. Leake expressed concern regarding the greater number of black males in Special Education. She asked if those students were moved in and out of the program? She wanted to ensure that these students, if capable, were moved to regular classes on a full time basis. Ms. Smith said a first goal is to keep them in general education and not label them. Staff reviews the disproportionality in terms of which students are placed in which categories. Individual Education Process (IEP) Team meetings include discussions on the student's achievement and accomplishments throughout the year so if that student can be moved to a lesser restrictive environment that happens. Ms. Leake said we all have a disability. She would prefer eliminating the language regarding "disability" from the process because that is labeling students that they have a disability.
- Ms. McGarry said parents have asked about Inclusive Practices and expressed concerns regarding disruptive children in the classroom. She asked why would a disruptive student continue to be in a full classroom because that does not allow a teacher to teach? Ms. Smith said this process includes determining if a student is eligible for Special Education services. The IEP process includes an evaluation, particularly, in the areas of academic and behavioral and emotional concerns. There are students who are already identified as having behavioral and emotional disabilities and staff works closely with the schools to gather data to support that a student needs to be moved a more restrictive environment. Ms. McGarry said can this process take place mid-year or anytime during the year? Ms. Smith said, yes. Ms. McGarry asked what are the financial implications for the request for ten additional teachers in the 2008-2009 budget? Dr. Rhyne said approximately \$500,000 for ten teachers.
- Ms. Griffin said she has believed that Inclusion was the right thing to do and now this data supports that it is also the logical thing to do. Ms. Griffin asked how was the data developed that indicates higher academic achievement for general education students in co-taught classes? Ms. Smith said Instructional Accountability compared scores of students in co-taught classes (general education and special education) with a sample of similar students to determine those analogies. Ms. Griffin said the results showed a significant difference. Ms. Smith said, yes, it was statistically significant.
- Mr. Merchant said regarding the slides that indicate higher academic achievement in co-taught classes, were there any subjects in which academic achievement decreased? He expressed concern that many reports depict positive data and not the negative data. He would like to ensure the evidence of success is balanced with areas that need improvement. Ms. Smith said this data was compared to data in traditional classes as a contrast to co-taught classes. The Instructional Accountability data included some subjects in which there was not a statistical difference. Ms. Smith does not recall any subjects in which there was a decrease. Mr. Merchant said the report included positive feedback on Inclusive Practices from teachers. He asked has there been any negative feedback from teachers? Ms. Smith said in the survey results, there were positive and

negative comments but the majority of the comments were positive. The comments that were not positive were expected and included such items as wanted more professional development, did not have enough time to prepare with the co-teacher, and did not volunteer to participate in this initiative. This information is being shared with the Principal Advisory Group to develop strategies to address those concerns. Mr. Merchant expressed concern regarding professional development for teachers who have been a great teacher in a traditional class but now has a student who previously was in cross-categorical classes and now is in a traditional class. Ms. Smith said staff is aware of the impact of moving from a self-contained class to a more separate level of services. CMS offers on-site professional development. Master teachers and program specialists will work with a specific teacher regarding a specific student. Professional Development in the Learning Communities has been very successful. The Area EC Coordinators have planned several professional development initiatives for general education and special education teachers that focus on areas of concerns. Teachers have been responsive to these initiatives. Mr. Merchant said he is hesitant to buy-in to an idea before we are equipped to execute the idea. Mr. Merchant expressed concern because he has received numerous e-mails from teachers and parents with concerns about Inclusion Practices. He said parents are concerned because this process will change the way CMS deals with their students. He encouraged staff to be extra careful and gentle in communicating this process to parents because this is a major change for teachers, parents, and schools. He does not believe this process has buy-in at this point. He said CMS must be proactive and deliver substance to get that buy-in.

- Mr. Dunlap said a positive of this process is that students are exposed to more teaching styles. He believes students with disabilities may learn better under a particular teaching style. He expressed concern that this may not meet their learning needs. Ms. Smith said this was a positive for the teachers because it gave them an opportunity to provide students instruction in the manner that suits them the best. Co-teachers work together to determine the needs of the students in the classroom. Mr. Dunlap said he supports Inclusion because it challenges students to learn who we previously made excuses for. He asked regarding students with IEPs, have the number of parent complaints decreased as a result of Inclusion? He has heard many concerns from parents that their child's IEP is not being met and no one will listen. Ms. Smith said they are receiving positive feedback from the majority of parents and they are much happier at this juncture. She said there are issues and staff will work with that particular school to address those concerns. Ms. Smith believes parents on the whole feel better about this process.
- Mr. Gjertsen said the report indicates the co-teaching model is working well and better than the traditional model. He asked is this a pilot program or a new program, and how many students are in co-teaching as opposed to the traditional model? Ms. Smith said CMS is moving in this direction. CMS has been training schools over the past five years. There has been an increase and that depends on the school. Last year, there were about 75 to 80 co-taught classes compared to approximately 160 to 170 this year. Staff will continue to work with schools because each year students must be evaluated to determine which models will work the best for them. There is still a large group of students who need the Pull Out, more traditional model. That model will continue to be provided but it depends on the school.
- Mr. Gauvreau challenged the data. He expressed concern that CMS would suggest that

students did better on End-of-Grade results in a classroom environment utilizing Inclusion Practices. He believes there are better factors that could be used such as a regression analysis or controlling the variables. This information does not solve the problem and he does not believe the statistics. CMS previously used race as a dominant factor and that was wrong. He said CMS has never controlled variables for the educational performance of individual students. Dr. Rhyne said this information was based upon an analysis performed by the Instructional Accountability Department. It was completed statistically utilizing regression analysis. It compared students with disabilities in co-taught classes to students with disabilities from like schools regarding demographics, poverty, etc. It compared general education students in co-taught classes to general education students in schools in a traditional class. All the precepts for a good, sound, statistical evaluation were completed. Dr. Rhyne said these are real numbers and real achievement. Mr. Gauvreau asked was the difference Inclusion? Dr. Rhyne said when the Instructional Accountability Department completed the analysis and compared the data to students in non-co-taught classes using state assessments, End-of-Grade, and End-of-Course tests these were the results. Mr. Gauvreau requested a copy of the report. Dr. Gorman said the statistical significant factor was Inclusion.

- Mr. Dunlap asked if the analysis controlled for the other factors? Mr. Dunlap said it may not be cost effective but does CMS complete an analysis or testing to determine a student's learning style? He believes this would be helpful in advancing students academically. Ms. Smith said schools have an Intervention Team which is a pre-Special Education referral process. The process includes determining if students' learning styles are impacting why they are not achieving academically. There is no standard Special Education evaluation that schools use as a part of that eligibility process. Intervention Teams use this type of information in order to keep as many students as possible in the general education environment. Mr. Dunlap expressed concern that some students may not be in classes that they need and the classes they are in may not be meeting their needs based upon their IEP.
- Ms. Leake expressed concerns regarding the process, distribution of resources, and the availability of quality teachers.
- Mr. Merchant asked clarifying questions regarding the process for students who cannot master a certain subject in a certain grade? He hopes CMS does not have to jump through government hoops established by bureaucrats in Washington rather than doing what is right for a student. Dr. Rhyne explained the testing process and federal requirements for standard course of study. Mr. Merchant expressed concern that the process may be in direct contrast with the State Constitution that requires a sound basic education because this is teaching beyond that student's ability level. This may also be in direct contrast with the Board's Mission Statement regarding maximizing achievement. Mr. Merchant believes it is more important to meet the needs of the individual student rather than meeting federal requirements.
- Mr. Gauvreau asked how many classes will CMS have in 2010 with the co-teaching model to support Inclusion Practices? Ms. Smith said the goal in 2010 is to have the number of co-teaching classes that is appropriate for the number of students at that point in time. It would be unrealistic to predict a number at this time because it would depend on the needs of the students in that year and it will be based upon assessment. Dr. Gorman said the classes will continue to grow based upon the needs. Ms. Smith said all

the schools except the new schools that will open this year have been trained in this process. Professional development will continue to provide training for new schools, new principals, and new teachers. Staff is ensuring they have what they need and the implementation process is being followed. Mr. Gauvreau said Inclusive Practices is a key policy direction of the school system. Dr. Gorman said the Board has not adopted a policy on Inclusive Practices and only the Board can make policy. Dr. Gorman said the co-teaching model is a practice that staff is doing. Mr. Gauvreau asked if the Board had a policy regarding Inclusive Practices? Ms. Griffin said if we do, it is very general. Mr. Gauvreau expressed concern regarding the process and the direction it is going. Dr. Gorman said he would be glad to discuss this further with Mr. Gauvreau.

- Ms. Leake said co-teaching has been in CMS since the 70s and 80s. She invited the Board to see this process at Reid Park Elementary School and commended the teaching staff at that school.

D. Report/Update on Expulsions

Chairperson White called upon Dr. Gorman to introduce the report. Dr. Gorman called upon Dr. Ralph Taylor, Executive Director of the Alternative Education and Safe Schools, to present the report on expulsions. Dr. Gorman said as we review the forthcoming information, CMS faces challenges in the community with students making inappropriate decisions and behaviors. CMS wants to partner with our students and their parents to help them make better behavior choices to keep guns out of the hands of children and things of that nature. Every time that an expulsion comes to the Board, he is comfortable that the student will not reach his full potential. Staff must make decisions based upon safety for our students being a top priority. Dr. Taylor reviewed information regarding the number of students who have come before the Board for expulsions and the reasons for those decisions. The primary offenses that students may be excluded are possession of firearms, assault on staff members, and large quantities of drugs with the intent to distribute. Dr. Taylor explained the difference between expulsion and exclusion. Expulsion is to be removed from all programs permanently by the Board. After a student has been expelled for up to one year, every six months that student has the right to petition to the Board to return to the school. The student must demonstrate to the Board that he or she no longer constitutes a threat to the safety of other students and staff. Exclusion is a long-term suspension which lasts from 11 to 365 days, and the student is given a date for eligibility to return. Since CMS began holding expulsion hearings during the summer of 2007, the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Board of Education has heard the cases of thirteen students and expelled twelve. Nine of the offenses occurred during the 2006-2007 school year and four occurred during the 2007-2008 school year. Eleven of the hearings were for possession of a firearm on school property, one for an assault on a staff member, and one for assault on a student. Of the thirteen cases heard, nine of the students were in high school and four were in middle school. The Board will hear cases of another six students at a future expulsion hearing (four for firearms, one for a bomb threat, and one for trespassing, affray and possession of counterfeit drugs. Dr. Gorman said six is the number scheduled at this time but that could be subject to change because there are some students pending the process.

Board members were invited to ask questions and make comments.

- Ms. McGarry read the State General Statute regarding expulsions. She said the State

Board of Education adopted guidelines that define acts in conduct that may result in expulsion. She asked how does CMS determine its guidelines? Dr. Taylor said the guidelines are governed by the Rights and Responsibility Handbook and Board policy. Dr. Gorman said regarding how that is applied, he gave directive to staff to consider students for expulsion who have brought a gun or an explosive device to school; students who have been involved with an assault of a staff member; students who have been involved with a serious assault of another student; students who have been involved with large quantities of drugs or counterfeit drugs; and other cases that may be a comparison to those instances in the rules and regulations. Those recommendations are brought forward to the Board for consideration. Ms. McGarry expressed concern regarding the definition of a dangerous weapon because the State Board of Education includes razor blades and knives. She said if CMS included these as dangerous weapons there would be more cases for expulsion. She wants to know what is reasonable and fair in the school system. Dr. Gorman said he has requested expulsions for guns and explosive devices. There are other disciplinary steps which involve items that could lead to exclusion for up to 365 days and placement at other alternative school locations. Ms. McGarry expressed concern regarding the number of incident reports. She asked if any of those cases would be considered for expulsion? Dr. Gorman said it would depend on the case and he is the person that makes the decision for expulsion. She said some incident reports include BB guns and asked for clarification on the differences between a BB gun and a handgun. Dr. Taylor explained the difference. He said there are now some BB guns that are fairly dangerous that operate by a CO2 cartridge and they are actually pellet guns. Dr. Taylor said BB gun cases are based upon intent and they could rise to the level of expulsion. Dr. Gorman said if an act is egregious it will be brought forward. Ms. McGarry would like the dangerousness of a gun clarified in future Incident Reports. Ms. McGarry asked how many of the twelve students expelled had a criminal record? Dr. Taylor said he was not aware of any. Ms. McGarry asked if CMS currently had any felons in the classroom? Dr. Gorman said CMS does have students who have committed felonies and we must be careful in determining what is classified as a felony. There are certain crimes that are felonies which fall into categories to the Felony Review Program that Dr. Taylor reviews and there are other felonies that do not fall in those areas such as passing bad checks. We must be careful in using terms that can be applied in a blanket manner. Ms. McGarry said she would like to know the number of felons in the school system. She is not saying because they have a criminal record they should be expelled. Dr. Gorman said he would provide that information at a later time. Ms. McGarry said she would like this to continue to be a top priority. Ms. McGarry said she has suggested that CMS partner with the sheriff's department for those students who are beyond our current alternative school choices. She asked what are the alternatives for students who are expelled? She asked are charter schools an option? Dr. Gorman said he has discussed programs with the sheriff's department but they did not have funding to start a program. CMS has completed analysis on what it would cost to fund a program. Charter and private schools can accept expelled or excluded students.

- Mr. Tate said the Board's primary job is not to expel students from school but to educate. There is clearly a time that students will be excluded or expelled. Mr. Tate expressed concern that discussions on weapons in school usually imply that there is something wrong with the schools. CMS does not give students guns when they come to school.

There are some students who clearly need to be out of school but CMS does everything they can to educate all students. CMS should also work hard on educating the community on safety measures for having guns in their homes because students are bringing family member's guns to school. Parents must teach their children appropriate and safe behavior because children are doing what they see at home or in the community. Mr. Tate said the focus should be on education. He believes if a student is expelled, CMS, the Board, the community, and the nation have failed that child because bringing a weapon to school is not the answer.

- Ms. Leake expressed concern regarding the connotation that CMS is housing criminals or potential prisoners. She said the process and the decisions must be fair, legal, and consistent. She expressed concern that this is now handled through seven different Learning Communities. She said she has spoken with teachers and they feel safe in their schools. The Board's responsibility is to educate and CMS must hold parents accountable for discipline. Teachers are unable to teach when they have to spend the majority of their time disciplining students. She expressed concern regarding the violence in the community, on TV, and across the world. She would like alternative sites available for students who are suspended from school for one to ten days.
- Ms. Griffin said expulsion is a new tool being used by the Board but over the years the Board has excluded many students. She appreciates the new approach to consider expulsion more often. She said this is a part of Dr. Gorman's program and she would like an update on all aspects of the program as they are implemented throughout the year. Dr. Gorman said expulsion is the 5th Tier of a five tier discipline program. Dr. Gorman said a report is scheduled in the near future. Ms. Griffin thanked staff for what they do to keep our classrooms safe. She believes CMS is a remarkably safe school district. She said her five children have each had thirteen years in a public school classroom which equates to sixty-five years. They were never afraid to go to school or had an incident. She believes this is the case for the majority of students in CMS. She encouraged the focus to be on the safety of CMS rather than on the exceptions to the rule of safety. She looks forward to the report.
- Mr. Dunlap expressed concern for using words that excite people or causes people to fear. The word felon means different things to different people. Mr. Dunlap said he has spent twenty-seven years in law and there are many misdemeanor crimes that are more serious than some felonies. He believes people should understand the crime as opposed to using the terminology. He said the Superintendent recommends that a student be excluded but it is the ultimate decision of a Board panel. He has attended the expulsion hearings and he has an appreciation of the process. There are no easy cases and no easy decisions. There are cases in which you may not want to expel a student but you know that is not an option based upon the facts and the circumstances of each case. He also would like the focus to be on education.
- Mr. Gauvreau said in Spring 2003, he encouraged the Board to begin the process for expelling thugs and hoodlums but that did not happen. The Board is now expelling some of the thugs and hoodlums but not nearly enough. Some of the students are monsters and the schools need to rid themselves of them because the schools are an academic institution and safety matters. The Board should be acting swifter and with a stronger message. He encouraged the Superintendent to consider more expulsions for other items than just possession of guns and assaults on students or staff. The students that are chronic and

habitually aggressive in and out of the classroom should be expelled. Exclusions are not tough enough. Mr. Gauvreau said this is the tip of the iceberg and the Board should be tougher in expelling more students at a faster pace.

- Mr. Merchant encouraged the focus to be on the good news of the school system. He said if 20 students brought guns to school, 135,000 did not. He said if you are an advocate for expulsions and you cheer expulsions, the statistics suggest that you have just added several hundred thousand dollars of tax liability per student that you have expelled over their lifetime to Mecklenburg County. Expulsion is a last resort. He believes we focus too much on last resorts. He believes it would be more important to discuss the reasons the student has gotten to this point; making the curriculum more relevant; getting corporations to be more substantively involved; and educating the parents. When students violate the rights of other students to safely receive a sound basic education those offenders should lose their own right to receive a sound basic education. The CMS administration led by Dr. Gorman and the Board understand this and began taking action last summer. Mr. Merchant said CMS is on the right track but we need to be careful, methodical, and meticulous because we are talking about the lives of students. Mr. Merchant said CMS has a good process and he is satisfied with the steps that have been taken to move the process forward.
- Ms. McGarry expressed concern regarding doing more for students who bring loaded guns to school. She said a focus should also be on how to rehabilitate a student who may eventually get shot in a classroom because of the Board's real or perceived negligence. The Board must also be responsible for those situations as well and must take this seriously. The needs of all must over-ride the needs of one. The Board has the responsibility for all students in CMS. Ms. McGarry believes if more of the students who are hazardous to the health and safety of students were removed, CMS would have a better ability to recruit qualified teachers; to retain teachers; to bring more of the public back to the public schools; and parents would know their children are safe during the school day. She encouraged CMS to continue to make the schools safer.
- Ms. Leake expressed concern that students have problems but the budget cannot be increased for programs to help those students. She would like the budget to include opening sites for students who may not fit into the regular classroom. She believes all students should be provided some form of education. Some students who do not have the necessary structure may get into trouble. Some of these incidents could be controlled by having strong leadership and staff at the schools and it would also help to protect every child. She expressed concern that it costs \$34,000 a year to incarcerate a person but only \$7,000 to \$8,000 to educate students. She encouraged the community to support all young people and help them to become successful.
- Chairperson White said he agreed with the comments made by Mr. Tate. He believes the school system is a mirror image of the community of which we serve. He said recently the media reported that Charlotte had eight homicides in one week. He does not believe that people should be amazed that this also carries over into our school system. He said this is not going away and we must continue to deal with it. This Board is working hard to do that. He is not happy about having to expel students because he believes the school system's function is to prepare the young people of this community to become productive citizens. This cannot happen once a student has been expelled from school. He said there comes a point when a student has proven he or she is incapable of operating within the

school system and therefore alternative measures must be taken. He expressed concern that expelling students may propel that student from a part-time criminal to a full-time criminal. He said this type of action will make you not sleep well at night. He thanked the Board, Dr. Gorman and his staff, and Dr. Taylor for facing this tough issue. He said we all will continue to move this issue forward.

VI. REPORT FROM SUPERINTENDENT

Dr. Gorman reviewed Consent Item B.1. (Recommend approval of design contracts for four new 2007 Local Bond Program elementary schools). Dr. Gorman said when the Bonds passed in November, people wanted to know how quickly this would move forward. The new schools are Dixie River Road, Mt. Holly-Huntersville Road, Pavilion/Salome Church Road, and Youngblood Road/Steele Creek Road. He thanked staff for moving the design of these new elementary schools forward so quickly.

VII. REPORTS FROM BOARD MEMBERS

Kaye McGarry wished everyone a blessed New Year. She said as she continues to make decisions in 2008, she will continue to refer to her campaign promises that include her priorities, action plan, focus on children and families, and doing the job to the best of her abilities with the help of her colleagues. She thanked the teachers for their hard work in the classrooms and their contribution to student achievement. She welcomed feedback on issues of importance.

Vilma Leake thanked staff, students, and parents for allowing the Board to serve and respond to their needs. She thanked the CMS support staff in the district. She commended the students who reached out to support those students who need it the most during the holidays. She encouraged the community to continue to give and to focus on education. She thanked Dr. Gorman for his service and support of children throughout the district. She is happy to serve the community.

ADJOURNMENT

Mr. Gauvreau moved that the Board adjourn the meeting, and by consensus, the Board agreed to adjourn the meeting.

The Regular School Board Meeting adjourned at 8:35 p.m.

Joe I. White, Jr., Chairperson

Nancy Daughtridge, Clerk to the Board