

Minutes

Catawba County Board of Commissioners
Special Session, Tuesday, January 10, 2006, 12:00 noon

County Schools

Special session with three school boards of education

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The Catawba County Board of Commissioners met in special session on Tuesday, January 10, 2006, 12:00 noon, at the Catawba County Schools Annex, 2285 Anderson Ave, Newton, North Carolina. Dinner was available at 5:30 p.m. and the meeting began at 6:00 p.m. The Catawba County Board of Commissioners met jointly with the Boards of Education of the Catawba County Schools, Newton-Conover City Schools, and Hickory Public Schools.

Catawba County Board of Commissioners:

Present were Chair Katherine W. Barnes, Vice-Chairman Dan A. Hunsucker, Commissioners Glenn E. Barger, Lynn M. Lail and Barbara G. Beatty.

A quorum was present. No action was taken.

Also present were County Manager J. Thomas Lundy, Assistant County Manager Joellen Daley, Assistant County Manager Lee Worley, County Attorney Robert Oren Eades, Attorney Debra Bechtel, County Clerk Barbara E. Morris, Budget Manager Judy Ikerd and Finance Director Rodney Miller.

Members of the Board of Education of the Catawba County Schools, Board of Education of the Newton-Conover City Schools, and the Board of Education of the Hickory Public Schools were present. No roll call was taken. Superintendents Dr. Tim Markley, Dr. Duane Kirkman and Dr. Barry Redmond were present.

No chair of any of the Boards present officially called the meeting to order.

1. Welcome.

Dr. Tim Markley, Superintendent of the Catawba County Schools, welcomed all present. He asked the members of the schools boards, county commissioners, elected officials, school and county employees and members of the business community to stand and be recognized. Dr. Markley said that due to the anticipated growth in the county, the facility needs needed to be review. He said the featured speaker, Dr. Jim Causby, would address one of the resources for funding for these needs, the new state lottery. Another speaker, Dr. Eddy Daniels, head of the Challenger High School, would described this new, innovative program in the county which is a true partnership with the county school systems and Alexander County. Dr. Markley then asked everyone to get lunch and the meeting would then come to order.

At 12:42 p.m., Dr. Markley asked Dr. Duane Kirkman to introduce speaker Dr. Jim Causby.

2. Presentations:

A. Dr. Causby discussed the distribution plan for the lottery funds. The initial revenue estimates anticipated total receipts from lottery is \$1,214,285,714 – of that programs (not prizes or admin) should receive \$425,000,000. That amount will be divided into \$161,500,000 for school construction, \$40,375,000 for scholarships, \$201,875,000 for enhanced educational opportunities to students in public schools and \$21,250,000 in reserve. The school construction allocation per county will be determined by per average daily membership, effect county tax rates greater than 100% of the effective State average tax rate. Counties may not use these monies to pay for school technology needs. Under these calculations, the estimated distribution for Catawba County is \$1,319,035, \$338,957 for Hickory City Schools and \$216,543 for Newton-Conover City Schools.

The lottery estimates an annual allotment of proceeds to the public school construction of \$161 million. The formula used to allocate these funds has a negative impact on counties whose commissioners are not taxing their citizens effectively. In addition, since there is no non-supplant language in the lottery legislation, it is possible the corporate tax could be completely redirected to the general fund and away from public school construction as it was intended. The lottery funds are also so tenuous that the funding will not be adequate to fund the unmet needs for public school construction. Dr. Causby suggested four solutions to this problem:

1) The state should continue all current sources for school construction, including the designation of the two half pennies of local sales tax, the corporate income tax, and the lottery construction funding. 2) The state

needs to pass legislation in support of \$1.6 billion in school construction bonds using 50 percent of the lottery profits designated for class size reduction and pre-kindergarten programs to cover the school construction needed for the expansion of these programs. 3) In addition, legislation needs to be implemented to provide counties with other innovative options for revenue or financing for school construction, school renovation and to pay off school construction bond indebtedness. 4) Lottery proceeds that are designated for school construction should be consolidated statewide and used to pay debt requirements for a \$1.6 billion statewide school construction bond. The \$1.6 billion should be distributed to schools systems similar to the allocation formula used with the 1996 state school construction bond which included ADM, wealth of county and student growth.

B. Dr. Markley then introduced Dr. Eddy Daniels to discuss a innovative program which has been implemented to meet the needs of the counties' students. Catawba County received a grant for a program called Early College High School – where participants would earn college credits and high school credits at the same time. Dr. Daniels said Challenger Early College High School started last August with 101 students. There are currently 96 students in the program. The principals of the program are RIGOR, RELEVANCE, RELATIONSHIPS, EQUITY AND SUSTAINABILITY. These 96 students have posted double 100s (first school to do this in NC) – 100% of all students tested at 100% proficiency.

These students enter the program at 9th grade and complete college and high school simultaneously. The student can graduate in 4 years but some graduate in 5 – they will graduate with both a high school diploma and a two year associates degree which can be transferred to a four year institution. Most of these students are first generation college students and 40% are minority students.

3. Dr. Barry Redmond thanked all present and for attending this program. The meeting concluded at 1:46 p.m.

Katherine W. Barnes, Chair

Barbara E. Morris, County Clerk