

September 26, 2012

At the special meeting of the Board of Supervisors of Prince Edward County, held at the Robert Russa Moton Museum, 900 Griffin Boulevard, Farmville, Virginia, on Tuesday the 26<sup>th</sup> day of September, 2012; at 5:30 p.m., there were present:

Board of Supervisors

William G. Fore, Jr., Chairman  
Howard F. Simpson, Vice Chairman  
Howard M. Campbell  
Pattie Cooper-Jones  
Don C. Gantt  
Robert M. Jones  
Charles W. McKay

School Board

Russell L. Dove, Chairman  
Dr. Timothy W. Corbett, Sr.  
Susan S. Lawman  
Linda L. Leatherwood  
Dr. Ellery Sedgwick  
Darin Thomas  
Lawrence C. Varner

Absent: Jim R. Wilck, Board of Supervisors, Osa Sue Dowdy, School Board

Also present: Wade Bartlett, County Administrator; Dr. K. David Smith, Superintendent; Cindy Wahrman, Division Director of Finance; Angela Foster, Board Clerk; Dr. Mike Chandler, Facilitator; and Dr. Martha Walker, Facilitator.

Chairman Dove called the School Board meeting to order.

Chairman Fore called the special meeting to order as a joint meeting with the Prince Edward County School Board.

Chairman Dove offered opening remarks, stating that the School Board looks forward to engaging the entire community to address the concerns regarding the school system and to collectively take steps to enhance the educational opportunities of the children of Prince Edward County.

Chairman Fore offered opening remarks and thanked the School Board for meeting with the Board of Supervisors; he stated the Board of Supervisors and the School Board wish to identify steps and actions that can be taken to ensure the Prince Edward County Public Schools are capable of making a positive difference on behalf of the children and the community. He then turned the meeting over to Dr. Mike Chandler and Dr. Martha Walker, Facilitators.

Dr. Chandler gave an overview of the process taken by the Board of Supervisors and the School Board regarding the assessment exercises; both Boards endorse public education as being a primary function, purpose and

outcome of the interests to the citizens of Prince Edward County. Both Boards agreed that having a meeting would be the first order of business which establishes this as a priority to all.

Dr. Chandler and Dr. Walker reviewed the survey summary and discussion summary reports from the assessments, and encouraged comments from both the Board of Supervisors and the School Board.

The Board of Supervisors used the survey summary as a starting point for their conversation; topics included enhanced communication, accountability and performance management. Discussion during the assessment meeting included issues concerning public school enrollment factors; the question of parental involvement with the children and with the schools and community involvement; and creating a culture committed to academic excellence. Actions were identified: encourage the School Board to complete the assessment exercise; meet with the School Board; sponsorship of a community forum; alignment of the boards; and accountability standards (academic performance and excellence). The Board discussed creating a spotlight on education during each Board of Supervisors meeting; creating and assisting with a Teacher of the Month program and a Student Recognition program; committing to a school visitation policy; and the sponsorship of community forums.

The School Board identified positive attributes of the school system which include its dedicated and capable teachers; the students; the diversity of the curriculum; the extracurricular programs offered; and the positive momentum that is now present. The School Board identified some aspects which are not working well, including the lack of a positive public relations strategy; the need for addressing disciplinary issues; the need to keep excellent teachers; the need to create a better environment for better student performance; and the need for parental and community involvement in the public education system. Leading opportunities identified by the School Board are to establish a community engagement program; establish an incentive program for teachers and students; sponsor a community forum that focuses on public education in Prince Edward County; ensure that the public education system meets the needs of all students.

Discussion followed. Dr. Chandler suggested the boards set up a priority list and a schedule to meet each priority; he also suggested setting community forums in various locations around the county to engage the parents and community. Suggestions were made for ways to gather input from the parents, community and teachers. A plea was made for parents and the community to attend the regular School Board meetings; currently, participation is minimal and usually, it is the same few parents in attendance.

Dr. Walker stated that at a School Board meeting, the public is usually listening; during a forum, it is a dialogue. The officials become the ones that are listening, asking questions, and then assessing the answers at a later time.

Discussion followed regarding an anonymous survey to be returned to the School Board; a forum would then be held within a specified amount of time at a predetermined location for the parents and citizens to obtain answers to their questions. A series of strategies designed to facilitate as much civic involvement as possible is necessary; the survey will obtain their contribution to frame the dialogue and to give value to the goals of the School Board and the Board of Supervisors.

Dr. Walker then reviewed other topics brought up during the assessments, such as SOL scores; accountability, managing discipline issues; and public relations. Discussion followed on the improvement of the school property and the need for planning capital improvements. She then led the boards through priority setting.

Chairman Dove suggested that the boards appoint committees with members from both the School Board and the Board of Supervisors to discuss separate issues and then report back to the boards as a whole. A suggestion was made to compile the surveys. Discussion continued.

Dr. Walker suggested consideration of securing a trusted service to conduct the surveys to get a response from a percentage of the population. Discussion followed.

Chairman Fore stated that the Board of Supervisors is hearing what the School Board is not; he suggested a professional agency develop an in-depth community survey. Once the survey is complete, the School Board could develop policies to attack each area of concern. Chairman Fore added the Board of Supervisors needs to do all it can to assist the School Board to prioritize and fix the problems that are perceived by the public.

Dr. Chandler suggested the school implement the best ideas from a private school and implement them in the public school; he discussed the students taking a “Code of Conduct” or “Pledge” of things to bring to the classroom each day.

Chairman Fore thanked Dr. Chandler and Dr. Walker for their hard work; he said the Board of Supervisors and School Board have a huge job to do, and he thanked the School Board for their cooperation.

Chairman Dove adjourned the School Board meeting.

On motion of Supervisor Campbell and adopted by the following vote:

Aye:	Howard M. Campbell	Nay: None
	Pattie Cooper-Jones	
	William G. Fore, Jr.	
	Don C. Gantt, Jr.	
	Robert M. Jones	
	Charles W. McKay	
	Howard F. Simpson	

Absent: Jim R. Wilck

the meeting was adjourned at 8:37 p.m.