

**WIL LOU GRAY OPPORTUNITY SCHOOL
MINUTES OF SEPTEMBER 11, 1985
BOARD OF TRUSTEES**

The Board of Trustees convened for a scheduled meeting on September 11, 1985, in the cafeteria at 7:00 p.m. Trustees in attendance were: Mrs. Hannah Meadors, presiding; Mr. Walter Dahlgren; Mr. Vince Rhodes; Ms. Linda Spivey; Mrs. Elizabeth Thrailkill; Mrs. Olive Wilson, Dr. Louise Scott, Ms. Wilhelmina McBride and Mrs. Mickey Lindler. Staff members present were: Mr. Sam F. Drew, Jr., Superintendent; Mr. John Robinson, Principal; Dr. Jonnie Spaulding, Director of Educational Support Services; Mr. George Smith, Development Officer; Mr. John W. King, Jr., Fiscal Affairs Officer; Ms. Gloria Lloyd, Personnel Specialist; and Mrs. Brenda Stork, Secretary.

Mrs. Meadors called the meeting to order and stated for the record that notice of the meeting was provided to the public in conformance with the requirements of the S. C. Freedom of Information Act, Section 30-4-80(d) of the South Carolina Code of Laws, 1976 as amended.

Mr. Drew formally introduced our new Principal, John Robinson. Mr. Drew said that Mr. Robinson's education included a strong alternative education background in both administration and teaching and that we were very pleased to have Mr. Robinson on board. On behalf of the Board of Trustees, Mrs. Meadors welcomed Mr. Robinson.

A motion was made by Mr. Rhodes that the agenda be adopted with no corrections. The motion was seconded. The motion was passed.

The next order of business was approval of the Minutes of the July 17, 1985, Board meeting. Mr. Rhodes made a motion that the Minutes be accepted as written. Mr. Dahlgren seconded the motion. The motion was passed.

Mrs. Meadors called for the Superintendent's Report. Mr. Drew explained that he hoped in future meetings as we develop the process of staff meeting with committees before the regular Board meetings that the committees could begin to initiate more of the Board's action using staff as resources.

Mr. Drew explained that he and Mr. King reviewed with the Budget Committee the details of our budget request for this year. The budget request for this year is \$88,000.00. This amount represents a request for the restoration of the new personal service funds that we gained last year which, along with all agencies, were cut back by the legislative toward the end of the legislative session and again by the Budget and Control Board a couple of months after that. Mr. Drew explained that these cuts were

presented to the public as delays in the hiring of new positions. However, our understanding is that the money for these delayed hirings will not be restored automatically and, therefore, amounted to a fifty percent cut in new funds. We are asking, therefore, for these funds to be restored. Mr. Drew stated that there are several items that we will probably try to obtain later in the session as we follow the economic picture and if we determine that there is some money available. One such item would be the elimination of PCBs from our electrical system. We presently have four transformers that do contain PCBs which will have to be removed within a two year period of time and for which we may need additional money. Mr. Drew explained that our present operating budget should be adequate for the agency to operate very effectively for FY 1987 with no major increases.

Mr. Drew then informed the Board about concerns over the FY 1986 budget, our present operating budget. There is rumor that there may be some midyear budget cuts, such as we experienced three years ago. He said that at this time there has been no official action taken, but sales tax and income tax revenues were not coming in as projected. If the tax revenue does not increase there may be the need for budget cuts and Mr. Drew said his information was that cuts would be in the amount of two to four percent. Mr. Rhodes heard there may be a budget cut in the amount of 3.5 percent. If cuts were four percent, Mr. Drew gave as an example, then this means an effective cut of eight percent because it is a mid year cut but covers the entire year. This would be consequential for us. It would amount to approximately \$160,000.00 for us. Mr. Drew explained that our first strategy would be to go for an exemption or a partial exemption. Meanwhile he said we are formulating a plan for cuts in our budget if we need to turn back money. He further explained that we have spent fairly heavily in the first quarter. The report sent to the Board does not reflect this because of the cut off date reflected by the report. This report does not take into account all of the things that have been encumbered through the present. If we do not have a situation of budget cuts then our present spending plan is intact. He explained that we will have the money to turn back if necessary. Mr. Drew stated that he would keep the Board informed.

At this time Mr. Drew called on Mr. King to present updated information to the Board in reference to the Expenditure Report. Mr. King explained the expenditure summary which was previously mailed to the Board covered initial start-up activity and salaries for the most part. During the interim a thorough analysis was done which took into account all purchase orders, requisitions and invoices which when added to actual paid and booked expenditures totalled \$178,000. We show \$71,900. in operating expenditures on the summary statement which means there is around \$106,000. more dollars primarily for start-up items and physical plant items.

Mr. Drew next reported on the FY 1984 Closeout Report. He reminded the Board that this report had been discussed at the last Board meeting in which the Board was provided with preliminary figures and were told they would be provided with the final report by this time. He asked the Board to recall that the Board meeting in July fell prior to the closeout date. The figures in the closeout report are balanced, with the exception of the column called earmarked or institutional funds. Mr. Drew made note that the expenditures are about \$8,000.00 more than the indicated revenues. He drew the Boards attention to the bottom of the page of the Closeout Report. All of the revenues collected from students fees are not accounted for in this statement so there is not a negative balance in the column as indicated. Last year we turned back a total of approximately \$1,900., to the State. This year we returned approximately \$1,200.

In reference to the Personnel Report which was previously mailed to the Board, Mr. Drew felt this report was self-explanatory. He informed the Board that even with the cut in new personal service money we were able to hire almost the number of Youth Counselors that we projected. We were not able to hire the additional nurse and security guard and several other positions but would be able to do so next year if funds are restored. Mr. Drew said that he was pleased with the quality of the Youth Counselors we were able to hire this year. Mr. Rhodes asked if the new Youth Counselors were living in the dormitories. Mr. Drew said no, and he further explained that some of them were working a late night shift so that they were awake in the dorms through the morning and he felt this was making a big difference. Mr. Rhodes commented that he felt there would be less discipline problems. Mr. Drew explained that we hired one Youth Counselor III who serves in a floating capacity in the evenings as a liasion between the Youth Counselors and the OPP Teams. The Youth Counselor III reports to the Psychologist who reports to Dr. Spaulding. Mr. Drew said the Personnel Report requires the action of the Board. A motion was made by Mrs. Thrailkill to approve the personnel positions. The motion was seconded. The motion was passed.

Mr. Drew explained that Mr. Robinson and Dr. Spaulding briefed the Program Committee on new programs and the progress of existing programs. Mr. Robinson explained that this year we have three new GED labs. Each lab is monitored by two teachers. Both teachers jointly decide on the students' assignment. Each program in the lab will eventually be organized in module form so that each student will be given individualized instruction. Also this year it is required that each teacher develop course requirements and procedures. The academic and vocational objectives this year range from an increasing number of students receiving the GED to job placement. Overall, the number of objectives for the academic and vocational programs total sixteen.

In terms of reward and punishment, Mr. Robinson explained that there is a time-out room for students with disruptive behavior. Students are sent there in an isolated setting during the academic day. Students are

also referred to in-house suspension for more serious offenses. Also, the academic program has developed a continuation of the point system for students as a reward system for good behavior and this system is also used to counsel students who display disruptive behavior. All students will start with 150 points. The points will decrease because of tardiness to class, cutting school, disruption of class. Once the students point level is 50 we then counsel the student through the OPP Team approach. Mr. Robinson said he was very excited about this school year. He felt the increased counselors at night have a positive effect on the school day. Students are more alert and the behavior overall is very positive. Within three weeks of school there have only been two students in in-house suspension.

Mr. Rhodes asked several questions. 1) How many students reside in the dormitory? 2) From the total number of students, how many day students are enrolled from Richland and Lexington Counties? and, 3) How many people do we have enrolled in the vocational courses? Dr. Spaulding explained that we have 133 students enrolled thus far. She said that applications are continuing to come in steadily. Fifteen are day students which leaves 118 residing in the dorms. Mr. Rhodes asked if the vocational courses have started and how many students were enrolled in these courses. Mr. Robinson stated in the Auto Mechanic course there are fifteen students, Food Service - four students, Nursing Technician - six students, Distributive Education - five students, and Office Occupations - three students. He said that these courses are continuing to build.

Mr. Drew explained that at the last Board meeting several Board members had asked for various types of reports. He informed the Board that we were in the process of entering data into the computer and we will then be able to provide the Board with these reports. He further explained that Ms. Muriel Anderson had completed some sample reports and now has most of the student information into the computer. He briefly reviewed several of the reports with the Board and said he would send the Board copies of these reports.

Mr. Drew explained that Mr. George Smith has scheduled exhibits for a number of conferences. In some instances he will be manning the display and in other instances, e.g. the Association of School Counselors, members of our counseling staff will be attending also.

In reference to the next item on the agenda, the Lease Agreement with Federation of Older Americans, Mr. Drew explained that the Board had before them a copy of a letter that represents a renewal of a Lease Agreement with the Federation of Older Americans. The new Board members may not be aware of this Lease. Mr. Drew explained that for a year we have had an agreement with the Federation of Older Americans. They lease office space on campus. This organization was founded by Wil Lou Gray. This has been a good agreement for us. Mr. Rhodes asked how much money did the Opportunity School receive

from this. Mr. Drew said the rent charged was minimal, about \$150.00 per month but that we received other remuneration such as the work George Fulton volunteered on the Foundation Bylaws. Mr. Drew recommended to the Board that they approve this Lease Agreement. A motion was made by Mrs. Lindler that we approve the Lease Agreement with the Federation of Older Americans. The motion was seconded by Mr. Rhodes. The motion was approved.

In summation, Mr. Drew stated that he had included in the Board's packet copies of his evaluation and of the planning document prepared by the Board. He reminded the Board that the planning document is the document that can be revised. Mr. Drew said that we set quite a few goals and objectives for ourselves but he thought we could accomplish them. He did express some reservation about completing the policy revision process in a year but said we should continue to strive for that. Again, he asked the Board to review this planning document carefully because the Board can revise this during the year.

Mr. Rhodes said he knew the planning document was what we were going to try to achieve, but how can we make the following statement: "The Wil Lou Gray Opportunity School exists to serve those citizens of South Carolina at least fourteen (14) years of age." Mr. Drew explained that we probably should restate this although, by law, we are now charged to serve students fourteen years of age who are referred as truants. He said that the agency is using a strict interpretation of this and unless the school can classify the child as truant or unless he is referred specifically on that basis then we are holding to the fifteen years of age limit unless the Board deems that we drop the age for all students to fourteen (14). Mr. Drew said he is not in favor of dropping the age to fourteen (14) for all students at this time until we have had a chance to assess the impact on our programs. We presently do not have any students enrolled under fifteen, however, we do have one applicant who is fourteen. After some discussion among the Board, Mr. Drew referred the Board's attention to a letter from Dr. Efron to Mrs. Meadors. Mr. Drew explained that it was decided to hold the policy referring to age limits and not act on it until further discussion.

Mr. Rhodes asked if we could provide him with a copy of the Policy Manual so that he would have ample time to review it before the revisions are made. Mr. Drew said he thought all Board members had copies of the manual. Mrs. McBride, Mrs. Lindler, Mr. Dahlgren and Mr. Rhodes said they did not. Mrs. Wilson said that in the past retiring members have passed on their manuals. Mr. Rhodes said in reference to the policy revisions taking place through the Ad Hoc Committee, that he did not have a policy manual with which to make comparisons. He felt that the policies should be sent out well in advance of the meetings for the Board to assess and react to. Mrs. Meadors said that Dr. Efron certainly wanted the Board to have input and to give feedback. Mr. Drew reminded the Board that a process for getting the policy revisions done was approved by the Board at the last meeting. That process was outlined in a management plan which was given to each Board member. The management plan called for the Ad Hoc Committee to do the bulk

of the work. Sections that were completed would be presented to the Board for consideration at the regularly scheduled meetings. He said that the Committee was being very careful to bring anything controversial to the Board's attention. He referred to Dr. Efron's letter to Mrs. Meadors recommending deferring the "age limit" policy for further consideration before recommending approval, as an example of the Committee's concern for Board input. Mr. Drew said he felt that Dr. Efron wanted the Board to approve the policies recommended for this meeting since they were routine revisions, but that if the Board did not feel comfortable with this process, they may want to rethink the process. He said that perhaps special meetings could be called of the entire Board once a major body of work had been completed. He said that if the Board wanted to continue to let the Ad Hoc Committee perform the bulk of the initial work, then the Board would have to entrust that Committee with the responsibility and give the Committee its backing to do that. He said that if the Board wanted more meetings, however, the revision process was going to take considerably longer than planned. Mr. Drew said he felt the comments he put at the bottom of each policy indicating any changes would help the Board assess the changes. He said that he recognized this would not be very useful if some Board members did not have policy manuals with which to compare the revised policies.

Mrs. Scott said she understood that each policy would require the Boards' action for passage. Mrs. Meadors said that was correct. Mrs. Scott (in reference to one of Mr. Drew's statements on one of the revised policies) asked what the problem was with Alumni members of the Board. Mr. Drew explained that there may be a legal problem with the fact that the Alumni members are not going through the same legislative screening process as is required of other members. He said we need to seek some further information about this.

In reference to a comment made about the role of the School Boards Association, Mr. Drew then discussed the School Board Associations' involvement in the policy revision process. He also explained that we pay the School Boards Association an amount each year for affiliate membership and that the membership includes policy review services. He said that the agency has not taken full advantage of this service in the past. The School Boards Association offers the service to all members. Boards send their Minutes in and the Association reviews the Minutes. If there are new policies or policy changes those will be typed and sent to us. Mr. Drew further explained that the agency has not sent its Minutes in the past. He said we are sending them now. Mrs. Scott commented that someone would have to go back through the Minutes and prepare the policies. Mr. Drew said this was his thought too. Mrs. Scott said she felt the School Boards process was too slow. She asked if we had gotten any revisions back. Mr. Drew replied that we have gotten one. He also said that if the Board passes no new policies or the School Boards' Association finds no concerns in the Minutes, then no action is required on the part of the School Boards' Association. Mrs. Scott expressed the opinion that we would get further behind as we revised the manual.

Mr. Drew said that we are sending our Minutes now and therefore, we would not get any further behind. We could add the policies as we pass them.

Mr. Rhodes asked what other advantages did we receive from the School Boards' Association by being a member? Mr. Drew explained that we received the Journal which helps keep us abreast of educational issues, various conferences and training sessions that are held each year, and regular updates on policy issues together with sample policies we are sent which keep us abreast new policies that the Board needs to address. Mr. Rhodes asked if it was really worth the \$500.00 or should we employ an attorney or somebody who would be willing to go through all of these Minutes and bring them up to date. He felt that we would get a much quicker reponse. Mrs. Thrailkill expressed the opinion that the School Boards Association was a professional affiliation that she thought we should be associated with. Mr. Drew said that he thought membership in the Association was beneficial to the Board also. Mrs. Meadors said that one service she has appreciated is the possibility of contacting Mr. George Leventis and asking him for advice on a certain issue. She further said he had given us a good many hours over the summer on legal advice.

Mrs. Meadors said the Board needed to come to some resolution of this matter of policy revision and asked if the Board had any new suggestions or wanted to proceed as previously planned. Mrs. Meadors said the next committee meeting to review the next section of the Policy Manual has been rescheduled for the conference at Myrtle Beach. She said they would spend several hours on the policy revisions and would welcome additional input from any of the Board members at that time. She said the Board would not have a formal meeting during the conference this year. Mr. Rhodes said he felt that the Board needed more time for deliberations because major changes were being made and he was not in a position at this time to approve these documents. Mrs. Meadors said this seemed to be the general consensus of the Board, therefore, they will take this as information, review it, and the Board would refer to it at the next Board meeting.

Mrs. Meadors asked again how many Board members did not have copies of the outdated Policy Manual. Mrs. Meadors said she had only a partial set of the policies. Mrs. Meadors suggested that we pursue Rev. Mitchell, Dr. Miles, and Mr. Clarence Rowland and see if we could recoup some of these old Policy Manuals to distribute. Mr. Drew said he felt that it would be easier for us to copy the manual that we have. For the members who do not have a copy of the manual, a copy would be provided. Mrs. Meadors advised the Board that if they had any suggestions concerning the policy revision process to please contact her, Mr. Drew or Dr. Efron and they would respond. After some discussion among the Board, it was decided that a complete copy of the Policy Manual would be sent to Mrs. McBride and that the other Board members, who did not have a manual, would receive copies of the sections being worked on for comparison with the revisions.

As it related to the next item on the agenda, Committee Reports, Mrs. Meadors said we had already acted on the Personnel Report and asked if there was any other additional reports. Mrs. Thrailkill thanked Ms. Lloyd for obtaining the personnel information for her. Mr. Drew explained the Personnel Committee had asked for a booklet that would outline the positions that we had presently so that everybody would have general knowledge of the positions and what those positions entailed. A draft of that booklet was presented to the Personnel Committee. Mrs. Thrailkill stated that the draft was what the Committee had in mind. Mr. Drew said he would then have Mrs. Lloyd prepare the final booklet.

The next item on the agenda was the report from the Program Committee. Mrs. Meadors stated that we had already heard from Mr. Robinson and asked Mrs. Wilson if any additional information was to be presented from the Program Committee. Mrs. Wilson said no, that Mr. Robinson had done a fine job. There were no further comments in relation to the Program Committee.

In reference to the Budget Report, Mrs. Meadors said this had been discussed by Mr. Drew earlier in the meeting. In the absence of Mr. Belcher she asked Mr. Rhodes if additional discussion was needed. Mr. Rhodes said no additional discussion was needed.

Mrs. Meadors asked if there was any additional comments relating to the policy revisions. There was no further discussion regarding policy revisions.

Mr. Dahlgren reported on the Wil Lou Gray Foundation. Mr. Dahlgren said the Board had been provided with a copy of the By-Laws and Articles of Incorporation for the Opportunity School Foundation. He reminded the Board that at the last Board meeting he asked the Board to review these and he then reviewed some key points that he thought might be of interest. One point discussed was the scheduling of the Foundation Board's annual meeting and also the definition of mini-grants as contained in the Articles. He asked for any comments the Board may have to expand or revise this document. He further explained that he had discussed with Mr. Drew and Mrs. Meadors the possibility of creating a development plan which is basically a plan for the operation of the foundation. He said he would have this information typed and distributed to the Board for their information. A motion was made by Mr. Rhodes to approve the By-Laws and Articles of Incorporation of the Wil Lou Gray Opportunity School Foundation. The motion was seconded by Mrs. Thrailkill. The motion was passed.

Mr. Dahlgren made an additional comment that there is one key element that the Board should be aware of which is at some point in time we would be approaching the nomination of Board members and he ask the Board to think of people that they would like to be on this Board.

Regarding old business, Mrs. Lindler said she had several handouts including parliamentary procedures and Board operations.

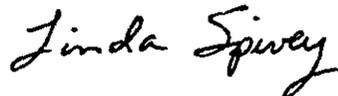
One item of new business was the Wil Lou Gray Portrait Committee. Mrs. Meadors explained that Mr. Drew had contacted Ms. Scott Sanders of the Arts Commission and the Commission is ready to move forward regarding this project. Mr. Drew explained that Mr. Rick Fisher with the Arts Commission has been assigned the task of getting this completed and he would like for the Board to appoint one or two members who will serve with members of the Arts Commission and probably someone from the Museum Commission on a statewide committee to select the artist. Mr. Drew further explained that he did not feel there would be any problem with timing so that the portrait could be completed and presented during this legislative session. Mrs. Meadors said that she would be working with Ms. Sanders on this as well. Mr. Drew also explained that Mr. Fisher said it would be helpful if the artist chosen is known by members of the Board or members of the joint commission because the personal touch really helps. They also have a list of approved artists and Mr. Fisher is already in the process of sending information so that those that are interested can get slides of their work in. Mrs. Meadors asked the Board if anyone would like to serve on this committee. Mrs. Thrailkill and Mrs. Wilson said they would like to serve on this committee. Mrs. Meadors said she felt that a family member should also serve and she asked the Board to think in terms of this as well.

Mrs. Meadors said she would not be able to attend the November Board meeting since she would be out-of-state. She requested that the Board set an alternate date. After some discussion among the Board, it was concluded that the next Board meeting would be scheduled for November 20, 1985. Mrs. Meadors apologized for not being able to attend the regularly scheduled Board meeting.

A motion was made by Mrs. Thrailkill that the Board enter into Executive Session for reasons of confidential personnel matters. The motion was seconded and approved. The Board reconvened after Executive Session and no further action was taken.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:10 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,



Linda Spivey

Secretary