

**WIL LOU GRAY OPPORTUNITY SCHOOL
MINUTES OF JANUARY 8, 1986
BOARD OF TRUSTEES**

The Board of Trustees convened for a scheduled meeting on January 8, 1986, in the Archives Room of the William T. Lander Administration Building at 7:00 p.m. Trustees in attendance were: Mrs. Hannah Meadors, presiding, Dr. Marvin Efron, Mr. Walter Dahlgren, Mrs. Olive Wilson, Ms. Wilhelmina McBride, Ms. Mickey Lindler, Ms. Linda Spivey, Ms. Elizabeth Thrailkill, and Mr. Vince Rhodes. Dr. Robert C. Fulmer from the South Carolina Department of Education represented Dr. Charlie Williams. Staff members present were: Mr. Sam F. Drew, Jr., Superintendent; Mr. John Robinson, Principal; Dr. Jonnie Spaulding, Director of Educational Support Services; Mr. Pat G. Smith, Director of Administration; 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. Notice of this meeting was published in The State Newspaper and the Columbia Record in Columbia, The Journal in Lexington, and The Lexington Dispatch in Lexington.

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

The next order of business was approval of the Minutes of the November 6, 1985, Board meeting. Dr. Efron made a motion that the Minutes be accepted as written. The motion was seconded by Mrs. Thrailkill. The motion was passed.

Mrs. Meadors called for the Superintendent's Report. Mr. Drew began with a financial report and explained that he wanted to outline for the Board the formal request that we made to the House Ways and Means Committee. Three items were requested. Two were non-recurring items and had to do with the work we have initiated on the utility lines. Last year we were provided with the money to do this. However, some of our transformers contain PCBs and he explained that as best he and his staff can determine, materials containing more than five hundred parts per million of PCB's require mandatory removal of the PCB's. He said that we have four transformers that fall into that category. Mr. Drew said that while it is not mandatory that we remove the PCB's from the other transformers, some of those transformers have to be re-worked in the process of renovation. Where the PCB's are encountered in these transformers the PCB's must be removed and permanently stored. Therefore, we have requested an additional \$106,000 which is the estimate given to us by the contractor to complete this project. We requested this money in general funds, non-recurring. Another possibility for the money will be through the Bond Bill rather than non-recurring funds. This avenue was suggested to us by the Ways and Means Committee. Mr. Drew explained that there was not much revenue available this year. In the event we do not receive the money, he said we can proceed, with a modified version of the project utilizing the \$130,000 we have. He added that this amount would not give us a complete renovation.

The other item requested of the Ways and Means Committee Mr. Drew explained, was an increase in personal services revenue in the amount of \$31,941 which is revenue needed to pay for an anticipated re-classification of Youth Counselors by State Personnel. This amount is based on our best estimate of what that re-classification will cost. Mr. Drew further explained that he talked with the Board's Finance Chairman, Mr. Rhodes, and he concurred with these recommendations.

Mr. Drew explained that the Budget and Control Board did put into place a two percent across the Board cut for most agencies. A couple of agencies were exempt. The Department of Mental Health and the Tax Commission were exempted. The Department of Corrections had a one and one-half percent cut versus a two percent cut. He further explained that the two percent cut which was taken was for only the remaining

half year so the cut was actually less money than we had planned for. Thus far, this cut does not represent a permanent cut in the base.

At this time Mr. Drew called on Mr. King to present updated information to the Board on the Expenditure Report. A summary of activity through December 31, 1985 and a copy of the Revenue and Income Detail through December 31, 1985 was provided to the Board. Mr. King explained that the two percent reduction amounted to a cut of \$45,692. We had projected a surplus in personal service funds due to a planned delayed hiring of some positions. Approximately \$35,000 of the cut came from the personal service funds and we took an additional \$9,000 from the contractual services area. Mr. King directed the Board's attention to Personal Service. We still have a very large balance for the remainder of the year. The reason for this is that the full staff does not actually come on Board until September and for the months of July and August we are actually operating with one-third of the overall staff. In the area of Educational Supplies and Equipment, Mr. King explained that it appeared that we have spent disproportionately in the first part of the year but this was planned to initiate the new G.E.D. labs. Mr. King explained that the other areas of the budget are running close to approximately half for the first part of the year and leaving about half for the remainder of the year.

Mr. Drew reminded the Board also that by this time next year the budget reports that the Board will be receiving will be much more detailed. We have set in motion an internal budget process that will be completed by the end of this year so that these larger categories will be broken down by department and individual items will be further broken down.

Dr. Efron commented that when the budget cut was announced they said that this money was going into escrow. He asked what do they mean by escrow? Mr. King explained that this is done by the CG's office. The money is held until the end of the year. Should the actual shortfall be less than projected, the agencies would get the money back.

At this time Mr. Drew called on Ms. Lloyd to present the Personnel Actions. She explained since the last Board meeting we have received one resignation from Mrs. Dale E. Bosworth who had been on maternity leave and her resignation was effective January 6, 1986. Mr. James C. Young, Youth Counselor, was employed November 8, 1985. Mrs. Charlene Trapp is on maternity leave and is scheduled to return on February 3, 1986. In reference to a request made by the Personnel Committee of the Board, Mrs. Thraikill distributed to the Board a Personnel Directory. The Directory was drawn up by staff at the request of the Personnel Committee to keep the Board informed about our employees job descriptions.

Mr. Drew explained that even with the budget cuts we are expecting to fill the additional positions that he discussed at the last Board meeting. One would be a Youth Counselor III which would give us two people counseling in the evenings and the other would be a social worker who would basically do case management for us. Mr. Drew said that additional clerical help would also be needed for the case manager.

Dr. Efron made a motion that the personnel actions recommended be approved. The motion was seconded by Mr. Rhodes. The motion was passed.

Mrs. Thraikill distributed to the Board "An Abstract Of Recommended Employee Programs, Fiscal Year 1986-87". Ms. Lloyd explained that the Budget and Control Board has recommended an annual incentive increase program in lieu of the general increase where all State employees receive the same percentage. Under the new plan, salary increase would vary between 0 and 8% based on the recommendation of the immediate supervisor, the agency head and on employee performance evaluation. She further explained that the longevity program would be deleted on June 30, 1986, under the proposed plan.

Individual bonuses, amounting to a total of 1/4 of 1% of the agency's budget, would be allowed under the plan. Mrs. Thraikill commented that the Personnel Committee was continuing to follow up on the matter of Mr. Drew's recommended salary increase which would be contingent on the General Assembly's approval.

Mrs. Meadors commented that she had been in contact with State Personnel relative to this issue. Mr. Osborne of State Personnel has said that he will keep us informed and when the appropriate time came to contact the appropriate people he would let us know. Mrs. Meadors further commented that Mr. Osborne stated that our recommendation for Mr. Drew's salary was well in line and probably somewhat low in comparison to other agencies.

In reference to Mr. Drew's meeting with Elmer Whitten concerning the Jaycee Project, Mr. Drew explained that the Columbia Jaycees were interested in a project with the Opportunity School. Mr. Whitten is to contact Mr. Drew during the month of January about scheduling a meeting with some of the Jaycee members to determine what direction we could take. Mr. Drew mentioned to him that we had an April gala planned which we hoped to make into an annual event. He also mentioned to him about the foundation and the possibility that the Jaycees might participate in some way in the gala as a fund raising effort. Mr. Drew said he would keep the Board informed with respect to this.

Mr. Drew explained that he met with Grace Lowery concerning the Indian Pow Wow which was scheduled to take place in June. Mr. Drew said he felt that the Planning Committee he met with was not very organized at this point. He stated that Mr. Lowery was to contact him again later. To date, he stated, he has no additional information from them.

At this time Mr. Drew called on Mr. Robinson and Dr. Spaulding to present their reports on Student

Programs. Mr. Robinson distributed to the Board an Application, a Vocational Enrollment Report for First Semester 1985-86, an Honor Roll Report for the period August 26 - October 25, 1985, and a description of the program for the Student Of The Month. He explained that the feedback he has received regarding the A-I Conference that he spoke of at the last Board meeting is positive. The Principals have shared the material with their athletic directors and are now discussing the possibility of our participating in track, basketball, tennis, soccer and baseball for the 1986-87 school year. As it relates to the Honor Roll, Mr. Robinson explained that the students listed had a "B" or above average the first nine weeks of school and represented about 25% of the student body at that time. Regarding Student of the Month, the teachers submit to him an application. The Principal's Advisory Committee then meets and decides which of the nominees will be student of the month. Mrs. Thrailkill asked how the students are recognized. Mr. Robinson explained that they are recognized orally and also the name of the student is placed in the center display case. His committee will be meeting and discussing other avenues of recognizing their achievements. Mrs. Wilson suggested possibly a certificate or a plaque for the year with a name plate for each month with the student's name. Mr. Drew also suggested the students be recognized in the newsletter. Mrs. Meadors thanked Mr. Robinson for initiating these ideas.

In reference to a Facility/Maintenance Program, Mr. Robinson explained that he and Mr. Tyler will be going to Birchwood next week and will be looking at the program there under Ms. Sally Barefoot, Principal. They have the program divided into a custodial/maintenance program and a facility/maintenance program and we are hoping to implement these programs for the 1986-87 school year.

Dr. Spaulding explained that we are providing an in-service program which is for all staff members of the Education Department and Education Support Services. A series of presentations are being conducted by Dr. Frank Walton. Dr. Walton is covering the psychological principles and methods to be considered in working with young people such as those we serve. The emphasis will be on getting them to accept responsibility for their own behavior so that they can live more independently. Dr. Spaulding further

explained that the artist in residence program that is co-sponsored by the S. C. Arts Commission is progressing. We will have three artists in residence this year who will help us for five weeks and will probably have three presentations during the Spring semester. Our Chapter II Program has been reviewed and we are in compliance with the requirements of this federal program which was completed at the end of 1985.

Concerning enrollment figures, Dr. Spaulding explained at this time we have enrolled 242 students and there have been 65 withdrawals leaving the number of students presently enrolled at 177. During the January 19th registration, we will have between 30 and 40 new entries. There will be registration scheduled for every fourth Sunday for the remainder of the year. The withdrawals we have had have been for a variety of reasons. We have referred some of the withdrawals to treatment centers or to hospitals such as Morris Village. Ten of them have been referred to other agencies. Seventeen students have been referred back to their parents with the suggestion that they re-enter their home school and look into treatment centers, hospitals, or other local placements. We have also offered our services in making any arrangements that are necessary in placement. Three students have been employed, two have received their GED, four have left to specifically attend another school and six have left for reasons we cannot ascertain.

Dr. Spaulding, in reference to the Truancy Program, distributed to the Board a schedule on Truancy Referrals and asked the Board to recall that there was some funding provided to the school to develop a program for Truants. In addition to providing a means of fulfilling the requirements for Truants we feel that these programs would be beneficial to all the students. Dr. Spaulding went on to explain the components of our program that she felt would help us to be successful with truants. First, she said, we are a boarding facility. Dormitory checks are performed by the Dorm Counselor to make sure the students are awake and are prepared for breakfast and prepared for school on time. Individualized planning, along with case

management, is provided for each student. She further explained that with our counseling staff they get more counseling that they can expect to get in the public school because student to counselor ratio is about 50 to 1. If a truant has missed too many days to complete the academic units then we can counsel them into a GED program, into basic skills or into a vocational program. We are in the process of developing special procedures for checking attendance and keeping closer track of the truant students. Our psychological services offer individual and group counseling and everything is directed towards changing student behavior regarding absenteeism and tardiness. She further explained that we have also set up specific guidelines and procedures for qualifying for this truancy program. Mr. Rhodes asked how many of the truant students are within the attendance age and thus under the school's responsibility for working with the family courts if they do not attend? Mr. Drew explained that all are within the attendance age and we are committed to working with the individual school districts and the Department of Youth Services through the family courts in any way that we can to provide services for truants for whom the districts, the Youth Services Counselors and the Family Court Judges feel that this is a correct placement. Mr. Drew also explained that a letter has been sent to all family court judges and we will also have a letter going out to secondary Principals and Superintendents trying to clarify our program.

Mr. Drew brought to the Board's attention that the Governor's Conference on Education, sponsored by the School Board's Association is scheduled for January 22. If the Board members could attend, he encouraged them to do so.

By State Law, Mr. Drew explained, we are allowed to pay Board members \$35.00 a day per diem for any official function of the Board. He explained that he needed the Board to determine when the Board wants to pay the per diem within the definitive of the law, so that we can pay it consistently. Some people in the past have requested the per diem and others have not. The only people that cannot receive per

diem are State employees. He asked the Board to let us know under what circumstances they would want to receive per diem and then we could budget accordingly.

The last item on the Superintendent's Report concerned the topic of cooperation in the State's three special schools. Mr. Drew explained that during his tenure here the School for the Deaf and Blind, John De La Howe School, and the Opportunity School have cooperated probably to a greater degree than they ever have in the past. The three directors were able to get together on a personal basis and through the Health & Human Services Coordinating Council and other functions to discuss matters of common concern. Also he said he was aware that the School for the Deaf and Blind is in their long range planning and beginning to target a population of students very similar to ours, as well as to continue their efforts with handicapped, specifically the deaf and blind. John De La Howe, although founded originally as a State supported orphanage, serves kids with problems similar to ours but with different age ranges. Mr. Drew further explained that all three schools have set precedent for cooperation. For example, he cited the cooperation in assuring that teachers of the three schools were built into the EIA. In light of this, Mr. Drew said he felt this would be an appropriate time for some more formal discussions among the three schools and that our Board may want to make overtures to the other two Boards about meeting with representatives or as complete Boards to discuss matters of common concern and ways that we could increase our cooperative efforts. The School for the Deaf and Blind is losing its Director and someone new will be coming on Board and it is important that we continue the cooperation we have begun. Dr. Efron commented that he felt this cooperation should continue.

Dr. Efron made a motion that we invite the other Boards or representatives from the Boards to a special meeting with a jointly prepared agenda to discuss our present and future needs. The motion was seconded by Mr. Rhodes. The motion was passed. Mr. Rhodes suggested that we go ahead and have the chairpersons of the Board, as well as the top officials of the three agencies meet and then possibly

once a year try to get all three Boards together and get to know them better. Mrs. Lindler asked if we would have a formal Cooperative Agreement. Mr. Drew said he wouldn't advocate that at this time. He felt that people might become defensive about that. It would be best to meet and let matters take their course. Dr. Fulmer commented that over the last few years he has worked as the educational supervisor with the State Department of Education with all three of these institutions. During that time the educational programs in all three institutions have made tremendous strides and he felt the cooperation between these three schools was important not only for the student clientel served, as well as for the general educational programs for the State as a whole. Mrs. Meadors said she agreed and commented that she talked with Doug Dent, Chairman of Board of the School for Deaf and Blind, and attended their last Board meeting and learned many things. She discovered that in their long range planning they were duplicating some of the things that we were in the process of doing. They agreed at that point we needed to have some kind of communication because it was not their intent to undo or redo what we were doing, but to compliment. Mr. Drew felt that it would be appropriate for Mrs. Meadors as Chairman to initiate this and he would follow-up.

Mrs. Meadors then called for Committee Reports. Mrs. Thraikill brought the Board's attention to the draft of the Mission Committee Report of The Wil Lou Gray Opportunity School of which the Board had received copies. She explained that this was not a policy making committee but a fact finding committee established to study and make recommendations to the Board regarding the school's mission. Mrs. Thraikill commented briefly on the long hours of work by the committee. She then briefly presented the Mission Report to the Board and asked for the Board's endorsement of the recommendations and adoption of the Mission Statement. Mr. Drew added that the Board should review the recommendations in this report and act on these. Mrs. Thraikill explained to the Board that the recommendations contained in the report come to the Board with complete unanimous approval and support from the entire committee. Dr. Efron brought the Board's attention to page 11 of the Mission's Recommendations and said he felt this area should be our mission. Mrs. Thraikill said this was the mission statement.

Dr. Efron made a motion that we adopt this as our mission statement. Mr. Rhodes seconded the motion. Dr. Efron also moved that the entire document be adopted. The motion was seconded by Mr. Rhodes. Discussion followed. Dr. Fulmer asked in reference to page 12, #4 of the Mission Report, which states "The school is to maintain and strengthen its alternative status. A study should be made of negative effects of the DMP on the alternative status of the school and any changes needed should be negotiated with the Department of Education", what the committee saw as negative effects of the DMP. Mr. Drew explained that it should read "A study should be made of the effects of the DMP...". He further explained that no specific negative effects were really brought up by the committee nor did the committee hear any of the resource people point to a negative effect of the DMP. Two or three resource people stressed the school should work very hard to maintain its alternative status and that as a rule, regulations set up by the State often interfered with alternative status. Mrs. Thrailkill said that Dr. Thomas warned us not to let the accrediting standards defeat the purpose of the programs that serve these kinds of children - we are here to serve different children. Dr. Fulmer commented that the Board needed to refresh its memory on how the standards for this school came about. The DMP was negotiated between this school and the State Department of Education and the DMP can be amended simply by action of this Board appealing through the State Department of Education. Therefore, our DMP is exactly what we make it to be. Mrs. Thrailkill explained that Mr. Thomas was saying don't lose sight of the fact that we always need to keep it tailored. Several Board members commented that they felt Dr. Thomas did not know that this Board had a separate DMP. Mr. Drew said that the Committee made the point that the DMP was negotiated by us. He said that the recommendation was not intended to reflect negatively on the DMP or the Department of Education. Rather the recommendation was meant simply to affirm the school's alternative status. He asked the Board for suggestions on the revision of #4 of the recommendations from the Mission Committee. After some discussion among the Board it was the consensus of the Board that we vote on the recommendation as is but allow Mr. Drew to revise it vis-a-vis the Board's discussion. At this time Dr. Efron complimented the Mission Committee. He felt they did an excellent job and he felt the product was well worth the effort. Mrs.

Meadors commended the Committee and Mr. Drew for their dedication and excellent work. The Board expressed appreciation to Mr. Drew, his staff and to the Mission Committee for preparing this Mission Committee Report.

Mr. Drew added that, per the committees recommendation (recommendation #2 page12), he has given the committee copies of a letter he wrote to the Proviso Committee of the Ways and Means Committee seeking to reverse the proviso that we're working under now which lowers the age limit for truants to 14. He further explained that he was doing this with the understanding of the committee that should we run into a problem with any of the legislators that he may come back to the Board and there may need to be an exception from time to time with respect to the minimum age limit. Mr. Drew said he did not anticipate any major problems.

Mrs. Meadors called for the report from the Ad Hoc Committee on policy revisions and update. At this time the new Policy Manual notebook was distributed to the Board. Dr. Efron explained that included in the new Policy Manual were the first policies that were given final approval during the Board meeting in November, 1985. Section A is not completed in that the committee left out Policy A/C which dealt with the agency mission. We were waiting until the Mission Committee completed their work and the Board approve the mission. He informed the Board that they would receive this policy for the first reading at the March meeting of the Board. Also, included is a summary study of Board Minutes from 1957-1977. He further explained the Board would receive in the March Board meeting sample policies of Sections B,C,K,L, and M. We are projecting to complete our first of the complete Policy Manual by July, however, there will still be more policy work to be done.

Dr. Efron further explained that at the last Board meeting in November, the Board was provided with an Overtime Policy which had been sent to State Personnel at that time. Since then State Personnel has approved it and he recommended that the Board give the final reading of the Overtime Policy.

Dr. Efron made a motion that the Board adopt the Overtime Policy. The motion was seconded by Mrs. Wilson. The motion was approved.

Dr. Efron then explained in reviewing Section A that there is a void in policy concerning a members service on the Board. For example, if a Board member dies or if he resigns, that vacancy could not be filled until his term expires. We need to make some recommendation to the legislature to allow for the filling of an unexpired term. Dr. Efron recommended that Mr. Drew investigate this issue further and explore with the legislature the possibility of changes in this law. There are several alternatives. We could ask that the Governor appoint a person to fill the unexpired term or we could go to the legislature and have them elect the person but many times these vacancies could occur when the legislature was not in session. Mrs. Meadors asked the Board if anyone knew what other agencies do concerning the filling of these appointments. Mrs. Thrailkill commented that a lot of the other agencies aren't elected the same way we are. Some of them are appointed by the Governor. Mr. Drew said he had discussed this with Dr. Efron and they felt the best course of action would be to have the Governor appoint for the remainder of the term and then when the term expires then it is open again for the legislature to re-elect. This would assure that if someone left the position while the legislature was not in session a timely appointment could be made. Mrs. Lindler said that often the Governor appoints until the legislature reconvenes.

Dr. Efron again recommended that Mr. Drew investigate the most logical manner for succession and ask the legislature to implement this. The motion was seconded by Mrs. McBride. The motion was approved.

Dr. Efron explained the Board does need a policy on Per Diem for meetings the Board attends on official business. He would like to have input from any member between now and the March meeting. The Board members could contact him or Mr. Drew and a recommended policy would be prepared at that time.

After the Policy Manual is completed, and in order to keep the manual updated, Mr. Rhodes suggested

that the Board set up a rotating system by which every policy is reviewed yearly. On behalf of the Board, Mrs. Meadors thanked the Policy Revisions Committee and the staff for the manual.

In reference to the Wil Lou Gray Portrait, Mrs. Meadors explained that before the Christmas holidays she and Mr. Drew met with representatives of the Division of General Services. They located a place for the portrait of Wil Lou Gray in the State House. A problem arose with another portrait in this location that needs to be moved. In order to move it must be given from the person or organization who hung the portrait. Mrs. Meadors explained that she is still trying to get information about the sponsor of the portrait in question. There will be a meeting at the end of January with Mrs. Thrailkill, Mrs. Wilson, and Mr. Rick Fisher to review the portfolios of various artists and select the artist who will do Miss Wil Lou's portrait. The ceremony will be at the end of May and as soon as we receive the exact date we will provide the Board with the information so that they can reserve this date. She further explained that they are planning to make the presentation during a joint session of the House and Senate for presentation.


Mrs. Meadors commented that she understood that it was customary that the Chairperson of the Board attend the National School Boards Association Convention which will be held in Las Vegas this year. However, she will be unable to attend. She has had one request from the Board who would like to attend. Ms. Lindler expressed her interest in attending this convention and also commented that Ms. Watt had said she would like to attend also. Mrs. Thrailkill commented that she and Ms. Watt paid their own expenses twice to attend previous conventions. Dr. Efron recommended that the money be divided among the Board members who would like to attend and if there was only one member who wanted to attend then they would receive the entire amount. Mrs. Thrailkill also commented that when Dr. Efron was Chairman this was not Board policy that just the Board chairperson attend. Dr. Efron commented that a provision was approved by the Board since then for the Board chairperson or his designee to attend. Mrs. Thrailkill said that she has found in most cases that the Superintendent usually attends the national convention. She felt this convention was not limited to the School Board. Dr. Efron said he did not think

we needed Board approval for the Superintendent to attend these conventions. Mr. Drew agreed and commented, however, we should stay within the budget and plan in advance so that we could receive the best rates. He also informed the Board that he was attending the AASA Convention this year. Ms. Meadors informed the Board that she would make a decision concerning who would attend the National School Board's Conference and inform the appropriate Board members.

Mrs. Meadors said that as she has looked at the mission there may be other conferences that the Board may want to attend. For example, there is a good school in Sarasota that is an alternative school and we may want to send a representative there. She further commented that while it is good to make those contacts is also good to do other things that would make us grow.

There being no further business the meeting was adjourned at 9:25 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,


Linda Spivey
Secretary

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