

WIL LOU GRAY OPPORTUNITY SCHOOL

BOARD OF TRUSTEES

MINUTES OF MEETING ON JULY 8, 1981

The Board of Trustees convened for its regular bi-monthly meeting on Wednesday, July 8, 1981 at 10:08 a.m. in the Archives Room of the William T. Lander Administration Building. Board members in attendance were: Dr. Marvin Efron, Chairman; Mrs. Anne T. Boyce; Ms. Patricia Jacques; Ms. Mary Alice Mack; Mr. James McClary; Mrs. Hannah C. Meadors; Dr. James F. Miles; Mr. Clarence S. Rowland; Mr. Karl Segelken; Mrs. Jack Wilson. Faculty members present were: Mrs. Denise Hoce; Ms. Mary Janet Janicki; Mrs. Lida Moore; Mrs. Lynda Owen. Also, staff members in attendance were: Ms. Gloria Lloyd; Dr. Jonnie Spaulding; Mr. John King; Mr. Pat Smith; Mr. Salvatore A. Fede; and Mrs. Patricia T. Robbins. Also, in attendance were Mr. Al Ray, State Personnel; Mr. Steve Osborne, State Personnel; Mr. Emory Smith, Attorney General's office; and Mrs. Lisa Peoples, Governor's office.

After introduction and welcome of the new members (Mrs. Hannah C. Meadors and Ms. Patricia Jacques) by Dr. Efron, Mr. Fede presented informational material and brochures to all board members.

The board then conducted its committee meetings. The Public Relations and the Fiscal, Facilities and Supportive Services, and Personnel committees met together in the Archives Room. The Education and Student Services committees met together in the Student Development Coordinator's office.

The Board met for lunch at 12:00 noon in the Home Economics Lab. It was prepared by Mrs. Mary Grant, school dietician.

Following the luncheon the Executive Committee met in the Archives room.

The meeting re-convened at 1:00 p.m. for the business meeting. Dr. Efron called the meeting to order.

Mrs. Meadors led the invocation.

Mrs. Wilson moved that the minutes of the last meeting be adopted. Mrs. Boyce seconded the motion. Approved.

Ms. Jacques made the motion that the Board go into Executive Session at this time. Mrs. Wilson seconded the motion. Approved. The Board went into Executive Session.

The Board again re-convened at 2:45. Dr. Efron announced that no action was taken by the Board in the Executive Session.

Mrs. Peeples expressed her appreciation to the administration and to the Board for their almost 100 percent approval of the School Advisory Council's recommendations for School Year 1981-1982. She indicated the council would be working with the administration to finalize the summary of the Annual School Report. She suggested that perhaps we should have a more restrictive policy for the students between the age of 15 and adulthood when leaving campus. Mrs. Peeples then submitted her written observations of two earlier visits to the school. These observations are attached.

Mr. Fede, in response to Mrs. Peeples' suggestion about the students having a more restrictive policy of signing in and out, said that he had written a letter to the Attorney General's office and received a letter back with suggestions regarding school procedures in the matter. Mr. Fede indicated he would send her a copy.

Mr. Fede reported that the Legislative Audit Council had told us informally that our students are being served on a more economical basis than the students of the other two equivalent schools. These two schools are John de la Howe and the School for the Deaf and Blind. Mr. Fede cautioned that general comparisons between schools are not true indicators of cost effectiveness.

Mr. Fede also reported the 1978 CETA Audit continues to give us difficulty.

Mr. Fede stated that the State Auditors office has completed both the 1979-80 Audit and the 1980-81 Audit of July through March. The informal exit interview indicated that the school has been managing its 1980-1981 fiscal affairs in a laudatory manner.

Mr. Fede indicated that he would be presenting the FY 1982-83 School Budget to the State Board of Education on July 10. In answer to questions raised as to the propriety of this, Mr. King explained that we do this every year. It has been a state policy to present a projected budget for the forthcoming year to the State Board of Education for approval. Mr. King further explained that our allocation is not received from the State Budget and Control Board until September; therefore, this projected budget may differ from the amount we receive to operate the school for FY 82-83. Mr. McClary said that he hoped we would receive some relief from the Governor's 7% reduction mandate and the additional 2.5% vacancy factor.

Mr. Efron expressed his appreciation to Mrs. Grant for the excellent meal she prepared for the Board of Trustees and the visitors.

Mr. McClary, Chairperson for the Student Services Committee, gave the report for that committee. The committee recommends that we should provide as many activities as possible for our students. Mr. McClary said that Mr. Hoce told him that perhaps 60% of our students are using some type of alcohol and/or drugs. Approximately 25% do not function in school because of some type of use of either alcohol and/or drugs. Mr.

McClary discussed the number of youthful offenders we have been taking into the Opportunity School and it was suggested that the number enrolled be limited in the future.

Mrs. Peebles asked if we were taking any more students from Juvenile Placement and Aftercare? Mrs. Meadors asked what percent did we have from JP&A ? (Total enrollment 567-JPA sponsored 15.)

Mrs. Wilson, Chairman for the Education Committee, said that we have seven teachers who are on permits for education and one waiting to go on the permit/tuition reimbursement plan. They are working on completing certification in various areas of Special Education.

Mrs. Wilson indicated the school was considering a satellite program with Airport High School (Lexington School District II).

Mrs. Peebles inquired as to the possibility of our regular day students going to night school.

Mr. Fede explained that students enrolled in our day program should not be enrolled in our night school. State and Federal guidelines preclude dual enrollment. Mrs. Hoce said that last year we had four students who attended night school at the beginning of the year, but they lost interest very quickly before the end of the year.

Dr. Efron inquired how much would it cost to operate the school at night? Mr. Fede told Dr. Efron that the school building is open at night anyway, Monday through Friday. Basically, there would be no additional costs incurred. Mr. Fede further stated at the beginning of School Year 1980-81 we had four teachers in our evening school: Mrs. Brackett, Mrs. Turner, Mrs. Trapp, and Mrs. Moss. At the end of the program only Mrs. Turner and Mrs. Moss were teaching because of low enrollment.

Ms. Jacques thought that we should incorporate our night school program with Lexington School District II.

Mrs. Wilson moved that we implement this suggestion for one school year (SY81-82) only. Ms. Mack seconded the motion. Approved.

Mr. Fede advised the Board that the Philosophy and the Guidelines to Disciplinary Actions had been drawn up as requested and that they should be reviewed and adopted by the Board. Ms. Jacques suggested that the Board review the Guidelines to Disciplinary Actions before any action is taken. There was no further discussion of these items.

Ms. Jacques told the Board of Trustees that Mr. Eddie Holloway replaced Mr. Herbert Breeland. Ms. Sharon Chatlos resigned and moved to Florida. Mr. Dane Cook will resign on July 15. Ms. Jacques moved these actions be accepted. Seconded by Mr. McClary. Approved.

Ms. Jacques suggested that the new chaplain, when hired, work with the night staff to reinforce the night staff.

Ms. Jacques questioned if the 1979 Audit recommendations concerning the Fiscal Department had been implemented. Mr. King provided an explanation of the actions that had been taken in the Fiscal Department during the last two years. Ms. Jacques announced that the committee would be studying utilization of personnel.

Mr. Rowland urged that Mr. George Smith work closely with the school's guidance counselor in implementing PR Goal Number Two of the School's Five Year Plan.

Dr. Efron recommended that the Board of Trustees meet on Friday evening and Saturday morning, November 13 and 14, rather than meet on November 11. This change would allow for the orientation of new board members.

Ms. Peebles asked if Mr. Bill Smith's job had been deleted. She suggested that another job be offered to him if we should have a position opening.

Dr. Efron suggested that the Board of Trustees host a dinner for the three retired Board of Trustee Members. They would also be awarded a plaque in appreciation for their years of service to the Board. Dr. Efron suggested that the Board of Trustees host a dinner for the three retired Board of Trustee Members. Dr. Efron suggested that Dr. Tolbert and Dr. Gray be invited to the dinner. Dr. Efron suggested that the recognition dinner be held at a private restaurant the evening of September 8 and that the board meeting be held on September 9. Ms. Jacques and Mrs. Boyce agreed to serve on the Planning Committee.

Mrs. Wilson motioned that this suggestion be adopted. Mr. McClary seconded the motion. Approved.

Dr. Miles stated that an article appeared in the Greenville News in Greenville stating that Dr. J. C. Holler had been ousted from the Board of Trustees. Various board members expressed concern about the tone of articles of this type.

Dr. Efron then discussed the action requesting that another ex-officio member be added to the Board of Trustees. This ex-officio member was to be from the Department of Vocational Rehabilitation. Dr. Efron stated he had received a letter from the Attorney General's office citing the rule(s) which would preclude such action. Dr. Efron indicated that now would not be a good time to approach the Legislature for additional membership on our school board.

Dr. Efron advised the Board that officials of the John de la Howe School in McCormick, the School for the Deaf and Blind in Spartanburg, and the Wil Lou Gray Opportunity School, have agreed to meet together to discuss possible ways to cooperate, as they are all three similar in nature. Dr. Efron stated that he, Mr. Fede, Dr. Spaulding, and P. Smith would be going to Spartanburg on July 14 at 10:00 a.m. for a group orientation and work session.

Dr. Miles reported that the names of Dr. J. Truett Willis, Dr. David Holler, and Mr. James McClary were being considered as appropriate names for campus buildings. Dr. Efron suggested that Mrs. Wilson and Mr. Segelken work with Dr. Miles on this committee.

Dr. Efron advised the board that he, Dr. Spaulding, and Mr. Fede are continuing to work with the Governor's Children's Coordinating Cabinet.

Dr. Efron said that the campus housing study being conducted by the University of South Carolina for the Wil Lou Gray Opportunity School will be received shortly. The study is being conducted by Dr. Thomas Surratt.

Dr. Efron stated that Dr. Wil Lou Gray will be celebrating her 98th birthday on August 29. Dr. Efron asked the Board of Trustees if they thought it would be a good idea to have a birthday party with a "This is Your Life" theme. Dr. Efron added that the Governor's office, Vocational Rehabilitation, the International Reading Association, the State's Department of Education, and the State Legislature, along with other agencies, would be invited to participate in this activity. Ms. Jacques and Mrs. Meadors were appointed to serve on the Steering Committee. Mr. Fede, also, asked Mr. Pat Smith to serve on this committee.

Mr. McClary made the motion to approve this suggestion. Mrs. Wilson seconded the motion. Approved.

Mrs. Wilson moved to adjourn. Seconded by Ms. Mack. The Board of Trustees adjourned at 4:04 p.m.

  
James McClary, Secretary  
Board of Trustees

SUMMARY REPORT OF VISIT TO W.L.G.O. SCHOOL

March 3, 1981

5:30 - 9:00 p.m.

On behalf of the School Advisory Council I visited the Opportunity School for the purpose of observing evening activities and student involvement.

The Dean of Students, Mr. Larry Hoce, met with me at 5:30 p.m. in his office to give me an overview of activities planned for the month and staffing. Nine staff persons were on duty and student enrollment was 257. Three dorm counselors, one female and two males, assisted in the oversight of students in the gym, canteen and grounds. The coach was present for the volleyball game in the gym. One counselor conducted a meeting for the students and oversaw the grounds, one male counselor oversaw a male dorm and one female counselor oversaw a female dorm. Mr. Hoce oversaw the grounds while meeting with me. One female counselor oversaw the canteen and adjoining game room.

Approximately 100 students were actively involved in activities in the gym, canteen, tennis court and keeping busy in their respective dorms. Approximately 30 students were observed on the grounds just standing and talking either in the parking lot, behind the dorms or in front of the Administration building. Approximately 15 students were observed to be standing/walking near the woods. Approximately 35 students were observed walking off campus either to a nearby place/store or returning to campus. Approximately 10 students' whereabouts was recorded in the sign in/out log located in the canteen. No account could be given about the remainder of the student body. However, I was informed that all students had to report back to their dorm by 9:30 p.m.

During my visit I observed that the staff appears to be committed to assist the students and provide activities for participation. However, it appears that only a third of the student population takes advantage of this. I also observed students who wanted to just talk with someone regarding some problems they were experiencing. A group of volunteers from the Columbia Bible College came by to talk with the students who wanted to talk. I was made aware, however, that it was impossible for a person without proper counseling background to be able to effectively assist the students. Additionally, I was made aware of and could easily observe the diversity of the student body and needs.

I toured the entire campus including all dorms, gym and canteen. I was encouraged by the staff's attitude and participation but also concerned about the students not involved in the above outlined activities. It appeared to me that not adequate staffing was provided to meet the needs of the students during evening hours.

June 1, 1981

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN:

On May 30, 1981, I went to the Wil Lou Gray Opportunity School to visit my son. Since it was a Saturday and my son did not come home for the weekend, I wanted to see what he was doing on the weekend. I came to the school around 2:30 p.m. and went to the GYM to see if my son was there. In talking with the counselor in charge, Mr. John McLeod, I was informed that my son was probably at the store, or at the Game House, or at the Recreation Center, or enroute to either the store or the school since the counselor had just returned from the E-Dorm and my son was neither there nor in the GYM nor on the grounds.

Therefore, I left the school to drive to the store and also to see whether my son was either at the Game House or at the Recreation Center. Since he was at neither one of these places, I returned to the school and checked the dorm. I looked at the bulletin board located next to the counselor's room but there was no sign-out sheet. I then returned to the GYM to check the sign-out sheet there and found that his name was not on the roster. I then checked with Frank Kistler, hoping that my son would be there. Upon checking with some students, I was told that my son had left with some other students to go to Mr. Flagg's house to swim.

I departed the school around 5:00 p.m. to drive to Mr. Flagg's house located behind the Veterans Hospital on Sumter Highway in Colonial Villa Apartments. Indeed, my son and three other students, 2 girls and another boy, were there. I explained to my son and Mr. Flagg that I was concerned since I didn't know that my son was leaving the school and that my son had not signed out at the school. During the conversation I received the impression that this was not the first time that my son had left the school. However, Mr. Flagg was unaware that my son had not told any official person that he would leave the school.

I realize that the school relies upon the sense of responsibility of each student; however, I question whether the students can really be relied upon in this manner. Had an accident occurred, who would have had the responsibility - school or parents? As a boarding school for students of 15 years and older, I wonder to what extent the responsibility of the school goes and to what the extend the parents are involved. Can a student under 18 years be left to make his own decisions without parental or counselor consent? It appears to me that some clarification needs to be made as to responsibility for and supervision of students under 18 years or falling under special circumstances, i.e., EMH, TMH, etc.

I would appreciate receiving clarification regarding the points raised above so that we can analyze whether we should permit our son to continue to attend the Wil Lou Gray Opportunity School as a boarding student.

Respectfully,

(Mrs.) Lisa Hein-Peebles