

WIL LOU GRAY OPPORTUNITY SCHOOL

BOARD OF TRUSTEES

MINUTES OF OCTOBER 27, 1984

The Board of Trustees of the Will Lou Gray Opportunity School met in a scheduled meeting in Myrtle Beach, South Carolina during the annual School Boards Association Conference. Members present were: Dr. Marvin Efron; Mr. DeVon Belcher; Mrs. Hannah Meadors; Ms. Wilhemina McBride; Mr. Vince Rhodes; Dr. Louise Scott; Ms. Linda Spivey; Mrs. Elizabeth Thrailkill; Ms. Patricia Watt; Mrs. Olive Wilson; and Dr. Milton Kimpson, representing Governor Riley. Members of the staff present were: Mr. Sam Drew, Superintendent; Dr. Jonnie Spaulding, Director of Educational Support Services; Mr. Pat Smith, Director of Support Services; Mr. George Smith, Student Development Coordinator; Mrs. Virginia Taylor, Psychologist; and Ms. Deborah V. Haney, Dean of Students.

Dr. Marvin Efron, Chairman called the meeting to order at 1:40 p.m. and extended a special welcome and recognition to Dr. Milton Kimpson of the Governor's Office.

The agenda was adopted with no corrections. The minutes of the called meeting of August 14 were approved.

Dr. Efron called on Mr. Drew to give his report to the Board. Mr. Drew referred the Board to the information items previously sent to them and asked for any questions about the information. There being none, Mr. Drew referred the Board to the suggested policy on attendance in their packets. He explained that a new attendance policy was needed to meet the requirements of the Education Improvement Act. There was some general discussion and clarification on the proposed policy. Dr. Lou Scott expressed concern that the policy, as proposed, was not specific enough with respect to designating the total number of unlawful absences allowed. She said that, as stated, the policy would allow a person to simply miss ten days and then get additional excused absences. Dr. Efron asked if Dr. Scott wanted to amend the proposed policy. Dr. Scott moved that we accept the policy with the amendment that a student can only have a total of five unexcused absences. The motion was seconded by Mr. Belcher. There was no further discussion and Dr. Efron called the question. The motion passed.

Mr. Drew then expressed his wish to reserve the personnel report for executive session. The Board agreed.

Mr. Drew then drew the Board's attention to the information in their packets on payscale for instructional staff. He explained that this payscale was developed to parallel those used by surrounding school districts. He explained that he would like to implement the payscale and had the support of state personnel for implementing it. However, he pointed out that funding for such a payscale was not automatic. Funding would have to be secured from year to year. Mr. Drew suggested that the Board use it as a suggested payscale we would try and meet, but that we not bind ourselves to it at this point. Mr. Rhodes asked about how our teachers' salaries compared to those in surrounding districts. Mr. Drew said they are comparable to the average salaries in the five Lexington districts--a little less when you consider that our people work ten more days. Mr. Rhodes said he had heard some complaints from teachers in Youth Services and in other agencies with

schools who felt they should be paid the same as other teachers. Mr. Drew said that the only reason our teachers are paid comparable was because he and others wrote a promise allowing teachers in agencies to receive raises under the Education Improvement Act. He expressed concern however, that as local districts raised salaries, our teachers would fall behind. Mr. Drew said that it would cost approximately \$10,000 per year to implement the payscale. Dr. Efron said that the Board would accept all of this as information at this time with the possibility of later action.

Mr. Drew then called the Board's attention to the information concerning occupancy of F Dormitory by the Department of Vocational Rehabilitation. He recalled for the Board the results of an extensive staff needs assessment completed last year that led to the new programs being implemented. A part of that plan called for the relocating of some staff and programs. He stated that 1) educational support services staff had experienced growth and that they needed to be housed in one location, 2) the present infirmary was not adequate and a better facility was needed to house it, and 3) counseling, OPP team, in school suspension and other support services programs needed to be housed in closer proximity to maximize staff time. Mr. Drew said he had explained this to the program committee at a previous meeting and expressed his intent to move the infirmary and Educational Support Services staff to E-Dorm since it had not been occupied for the past two years. Dr. Efron expressed concern over this saying that the Department of Vocational Rehabilitation had been granted use of the building by the Opportunity School Board. Mr. Drew explained that he researched this through reviewing minutes of past Board meetings and through a conversation with Mr. Vince Rhodes. Mr. Drew said he found reference in the Board minutes of May, 1982 that the Board had granted Vocational Rehabilitation use of the building. However, no time frame or conditions of any kind were stated and no formal agreement or lease was drawn up. He said that Mr. Rhodes confirmed that no formal agreement existed but stated that the Department of Vocational Rehabilitation had been planning for some time a program to offer computer training to handicapped individuals. He said they were waiting for the asbestos removal project to be completed before putting the program in place. Mr. Drew further explained that since the time of his conversation with Mr. Rhodes, a Vocational Rehabilitation program was in place in F Dorm and that presently five people were enrolled in that program.

Mr. Drew said that since a program was in place he would propose the following:

- 1) a formal lease should be drawn between the Opportunity School and the Department of Vocational Rehabilitation to extend through the end of this fiscal year and that the Opportunity School would re-occupy the building at the beginning of the next fiscal year. This would give Vocational Rehabilitation time to relocate their program if it is to extend beyond the fiscal year.
- 2) agreement with respect to compensation should be upheld through the term of the lease (i.e. utilities charge only for the building).

- 3) all future arrangements with agencies and organizations for extended use of our facilities should be formalized by written leases.

Dr. Efron then called on Mr. Vince Rhodes to explain Vocational Rehabilitation's position with respect to this issue. Mr. Rhodes explained that Voc. Rehab. has been involved with the Opportunity School since 1959 and had not needed a written agreement concerning many joint ventures. He said that originally Voc. Rehab. and the Opportunity School were to construct an evaluation unit. The demand for evaluation at that time was great with perhaps 100 people on a waiting list. So the possibility of a dormitory attached to the evaluation unit was proposed and eventually built. He stated that Voc. Rehab. contributed \$171,000 for construction of the facility. He said there never was a written agreement, rather it worked as a gentleman's agreement. Over the years until 1982, the Department of Vocational Rehabilitation did not compensate the Opportunity School for use of the facility. In 1982 when the Board of the Opportunity School granted Voc. Rehab. use of F Dorm, it was agreed that Voc. Rehab. would pay electrical costs. He explained that the computer training project had been planned for some time but did not get started as planned. He stated that the program is operating now with five clients and that they anticipate others. He stated that he would be happy to respond to any questions about the facility or program. There was additional discussion about the cost and origin of the F Dorm portion of the building. Mr. Belcher asked to whom the building belongs. Mr. Drew stated that it belongs to the Opportunity School. Mr. Rhodes agreed and added that it was a cooperative kind of thing where Vocational Rehabilitation put some federal money into the building on the Opportunity School campus. Upon further query, Mr. Drew stated that the Opportunity School holds deed to the property. Dr. Efron stated that in 1982 the school had its back to the wall financially. He said we had an electric bill we couldn't pay. He said the school looked as though it would operate in the red. He said that the Department of Vocational Rehabilitation came to our rescue by saying they would furnish payment for electricity for use of the building. He said his interpretation was that we were not using the facility and therefore would allow Vocational Rehabilitation to use it. He said we were trying to shrink down to cutting corners as much as possible to keep our heads above water. Mrs. Thrailkill stated that she did not recall that perspective. Dr. Efron further stated that our enrollment was low and that this showed we needed Vocational Rehabilitation. He said he knew the people behind this program and was afraid they would take this action as a slap in the face. He stated that it might have repercussions on our future relationship. There was some discussion about the use of other dormitory space for housing staff. Mr. Drew reiterated the specific reasons for using F Dorm which included its proximity to the instructional building.

Mr. Drew went on to focus the Board's attention on the fact that the Voc. Rehab. program operating in F Dorm is not an Opportunity School Program. He said the real issue is when, how and under what circumstances we allow others to use our facilities for extended periods. He said this issue did not simply apply to Voc. Rehab. Mrs. Thrailkill stated that we should have had an agreement in writing all along.

After considerable additional discussion along these lines, Mr. Belcher proposed that the sentence in Mrs. Drew's proposal, stating that the Opportunity School assume occupancy of F Dorm at the beginning of the 86 fiscal year, be struck and the rest be adopted. He said that leaves us with a framework for good management and leaves open the option to negotiate the lease for a longer period. Mr. Drew expressed the desire for the Board to make the additional decision about whether to renew the lease for the 86 fiscal year. He said he needed this decision to be able to plan for next year. Mr. Belcher stated that he would like to maintain his motion and get Board commitment to decide on extending the lease at the next meeting in January. The motion was seconded. Dr. Efron called for a show of hands vote. Motion carried.

Mr. Drew next gave his report on enrollment. This report and the points made is attached and becomes a part of the minutes. With respect to the fewer number of referrals from Voc. Rehab., Mr. Rhodes stated that they were trying to be more selective about the type client being sent to the school. They were trying to screen clients better. Mr. Rhodes stated that he felt the programs at the Opportunity School were better now but that we were not getting that word out to the field counselors. There was some discussion about the need for George Smith to go on the road recruiting again.

Dr. Efron called for a brief five minute recess after which he called upon Mr. Drew to make some final points about this topic. Mr. Drew said that there are two main issues wrapped up in the enrollment statistics: 1) Enrollment must be viewed in light of the severity of the cases we are getting and the capability of handling those cases with the present staff. He said that while the total capacity for resident students is around 240, the present staff cannot do an adequate job with that number. He said that he presently is attempting, as the Board is aware, to add youth counselors in order to provide adequate supervisory coverage in the evenings. Mr. Drew also reminded the Board that the school is now doing a modified version of case management with the students using the OPP Teams and that this process, while providing better services, is time consuming and requires adequate staff. He said that his objective was to build programs to meet the needs of the population of students we are serving, and that as programs are refined and adequate staff secured to be able to serve a much larger population of students. He said he felt that the state would need services such as those offered by the Opportunity School as more and more kids fell through the cracks resulting from the Education Improvement Act. 2) While enrollment presently is down from last year by approximately 30 students, Vocational Rehabilitation referrals have dropped by approximately 22%. In other words we are picking up the cost of many more students than we have in some time. This will mean that careful budgeting will have to occur this year based on current projected institutional revenue which will be considerably less than in previous years. He said he is seeking additional information from Vocational Rehabilitation about the level of referrals.

There being no further discussion on enrollment, Mr. Drew proceeded to give the expenditure report. He said that he and staff were currently projecting revenues and would report to the Board on these projections at the next meeting. He said that expenditures were being made as outlined to the Board last year--heavier expenditures in the first quarter, projections in the second, etc.

Dr. Efron then informed the Board that he had asked Mr. Drew to bring to the Board the Vocational Rehabilitation Agreement for 1984-85 for formal approval. He said he felt it the Board's duty to approve any formal agreement with another agency. Mr. Drew has said that he feels that it is an administrators' responsibility to contract with other agencies provided that contracting is within the dictates of board policy. He said that a board certainly should be made aware of any agreements or contracting with other agencies. He said he certainly would abide by the Board's wishes on this. Dr. Efron called for discussion on this matter. Dr. Kimpson expressed to the Board that the Governor felt that in some cases Boards were not carrying out the responsibilities given them. He felt that Boards should be more involved in matters such as these. There was some clarifying discussion about whether the Board wanted review or approval of contracts and agreements with other agencies. It was agreed that approval was being discussed. Dr. Kimpson moved that the Board adopt formally the policies necessary to bring the agency in compliance with the Governor's guidelines requiring the Board to review and approve contracts entered into between the Opportunity School and other agencies. Motion was seconded and passed. Mr. Drew then presented the annual cooperative agreement with Vocational Rehabilitation and the 1984 Affirmative Action Proposal. Mr. Drew said that a new ruling required the Board's signature on the Affirmative Action Plans of all state agencies. The Board approved both the Vocational Rehabilitation Cooperative Agreement and the Affirmative Action Plan.

Finally Mr. Drew outlined for the Board a proposed project to be implemented by the Opportunity School during the Summer in conjunction with the State Committee on Youth Unemployment. The Committee was dealing with the problems of youth at risk of not becoming productive citizens. Mr. Drew said that he had been approached about the possibility of a two week summer session for approximately 50 of these youth. The youth would reside on campus during the two weeks and receive basic skills instruction. All youth served by the pilot project would have had some brush with the law. There was considerable discussion about the pro's and con's of such a project. Mr. Rhodes expressed concern about the similarity of this project to others proposed in the past dealing with adjudicated youth. Mr. Drew assured the Board that this was a different proposition, but wanted prior Board approval because he had heard of past problems. He also reiterated that this was only a proposal and that the summer session was not certain. Mr. Rhodes said we should proceed cautiously and be certain to have a clause allowing us to end the program immediately in the event the students were destructive or otherwise could not be adequately supervised. Mr. Drew agreed that this was important and would be done in the event the program materialized. Mr. Drew also said that he would not seek any publicity over the project so as to avoid negative community reaction. The Board gave its approval to Mr. Drew to explore the initiation of this project with the provisions stipulated.

Dr. Efron thanked Mr. Drew for his report. He then called for any standing committee reports. The Personnel Committee deferred its reports to the Executive Session. No other reports were given.

Dr. Efron called for a report from the Ad Hoc Committee on Mission. Mrs. Thrailkill reported that the Committee was trying to schedule its third meeting and had not been able to coordinate schedules as yet. She said that Dr. Don Thomas

of the Department of Education, Mr. Hayes Mizell of the Committee on Youth Unemployment, Mrs. B.J. Hopper of the Continuum of Care Project, and Dr. Jerome Hanley of the Governor's Office Division of Health and Human Services have been invited to make presentations to the committee concerning state needs that we might address. Mrs. Thrailkill said that she will try and schedule the meeting so that the Committee can make a tentative final report at the January meeting.

There was no unfinished business.

Dr. Efron then called for new business and explained that Board elections were scheduled to take place at this meeting per Board policy. He said that Mr. Walter Dahlgren had called him to ask for a delay in the elections in that he was unable to attend this meeting. The Board agreed that the election should not be delayed. Dr. Efron also informed the Board that Mr. Clarence Rowland had sent a sealed ballot with the request that the ballot be counted at the time of the election. Dr. Efron said that he had an Attorney General's ruling that absentee ballots were not allowed. The Board agreed that if the Attorney General's ruling prevented absentee ballots that the ballot should not be counted. Dr. Efron asked Mr. Drew to return the ballot to Mr. Rowland unopened. Dr. Efron then called for nominations for the Chairperson. Mr. Vince Rhodes nominated Mrs. Olive Wilson. Mr. DeVon Belcher nominated Mrs. Hannah Meadors. Nominations were closed. Dr. Efron called for nominations for Vice Chairperson. Mr. DeVon Belcher was nominated. Nominations were closed. Ms. Linda Spivey was unopposed for Secretary and Ms. Patricia Watt was unopposed for Treasurer. Dr. Efron asked for a vote by written ballot. The ballots were counted by Mr. Drew and Dr. Kimpson with Dr. Efron as witness. Mrs. Hannah Meadors was elected Chairperson. Mrs. Olive Wilson moved that the election be unanimous. The Board approved. Mr. DeVon Belcher was elected Vice-Chairperson. Ms. Linda Spivey was elected Secretary and Ms. Patricia Watt was elected Treasurer. Dr. Efron congratulated all new officers. Mr. Kimpson expressed appreciation to Dr. Efron and the other outgoing officers on behalf of Governor Riley for their dedication and hard work during their administration. He praised Dr. Efron for the steady leadership he had provided the Board during a very difficult period for the Opportunity School.

Dr. Efron then turned the gavel over to Mrs. Meadors who made remarks thanking the Board for their confidence in her. She then called for a motion to adjourn. Motion was made and the meeting was adjourned at 5:15 p.m.