

MINUTES
FALL MEETING OF BOARD TRUSTEES
OPPORTUNITY SCHOOL
OCTOBER 15, 1958

The fall meeting of the Board of Trustees of the Opportunity School convened in the Conference Room of the Administration Building at 11:15 a.m., Wednesday, October 15 instead of September 17, the date originally set at the May 7 meeting.

Present for this meeting were: Dr. James F. Miles, Vice Chairman; Mrs. David R. Coker; William Dillard; R. H. Smith; Dr. Oliver Thomas; Mrs. Harriet F. Johnson; Mr. J. S. Agnew, Director; Miss Marguerite Tolbert, Assistant Director; and Dr. Wil Lou Gray, Director Emeritus. Governor George Bell Timmerman, Dr. Jesse T. Anderson, Dr. M. B. Webb, and Dr. J. C. Holler had sent their regrets that they would be unable to attend because of previous commitments.

Mr. Agnew opened the meeting with prayer.

In the absence of Dr. Holler, Miss Tolbert was asked to serve as Secretary.

The Chairman presented for approval the agenda which had been sent to the members in advance. This was adopted by unanimous consent.

The Secretary read the minutes of the May 7 meeting, which were accepted as read.

The Chairman stated that the plans for the campaign for \$1,125,000 had slowed down because of lack of deeds to our property. In regard to the expenses of putting on a campaign for an endowment for the Opportunity School, it was his understanding that the school would bear the brunt of the money-raising campaign at first, but later the expenses would be taken care of from the first cash contributions. He further stated that there was no item in the regular budget for this expense.

MR. AGNEW'S REPORT

The enrollment for the Opportunity School to this date is:

Day School	141
Night School	82
Summer School	<u>182</u>
Total	405

The expenses of the general plant are heavy; for instance, there is impending a possible outlay of \$800 for new water flues in the boiler room. The farm has caused the least worry, but the most concern of any of the subdivisions. The expenditures are approximately as much as a \$1000 each month over the receipts.

The morale of the Faculty and student body is, I believe, good. The teaching abilities of the members of the faculty are excellent.

During the first month of operation the dining room and kitchen were operated within the allotment for the dietary services. There have been many commendations on our meals this year. The Federal Government has provided us with surplus flour, cheese, and creamery butter. We are participating in the Federal Milk program.

We have had many groups to use the facilities of the Opportunity School for their conferences: The former N.Y.A. Organization; a family camp for the South Carolina Crippled Childrens Society, the first family camp of this kind ever held; the Adult Teachers planning group; and the members of the Allied Youth annual convention representatives. Besides these we have entertained two service and one flower club in our own community. All of these organizations have paid in sufficient money for us to break even or even to net a small sum.

Since June, Miss Tolbert has taken care of the publicity for the Opportunity School, which was formerly the responsibility of Mr. Abeel of The Record. Mr. Abeel was paid \$1200 a year for his services.

STUDENT PUBLICATION AND PUBLICITY

There were many favorable comments on the student publication, Carolina Pioneer, and the publicity the school had received in the press. Mrs. Johnson moved that the Board express its appreciation for the excellent student publication and the fine publicity the Opportunity School had received. The motion was seconded and carried.

ATHLETIC PROGRAM

Dr. Miles complimented the school on the advancement made in the athletic program and the variety of sports offered.

MISS GRAY'S DISCUSSION

Miss Gray was invited to take ten minutes to share her thinking with the Board. In substance she said, "I do wish the farm could break even. But we must remember that the farm provides work for about 25 students a year."

Dr. Miles asked if it cost too much to have students working on the farm to help pay their tuition and board.

Miss Gray stated that the Legislature would not give us money for scholarships, but would finance a project like the farm which would help a student work his way through school. She stated that if we are interested in working with people and helping them to solve their problems we must provide some kind of work they can engage in to pay for their tuition and board.

In regard to getting titles to the Opportunity School property, which is now owned by the State of South Carolina, Miss Gray thought it imperative to get the titles cleared before we solicit funds for an endowment. The Attorney General gave a ruling that the Budget and Control Board could deed the land to the school. (The School wishes title to all the land of the original 998.3 acres except the portions already assigned to the Area Trade School and the 53.87 acres sold by the Budget and Control Board to Brooklyn-Cayce School, District #2 of Lexington County and the 2.05 acres sold to the City of Columbia for the Wilbur Wright Homes.)

She mentioned the fact that the land had been deeded originally to the State for the Opportunity School, but the last titles do not even mention the name of the Opportunity School or the Area Trade School, for that matter.

Miss Gray was asked why she had ever consented to have the land deeded to the State rather than to the State Department of Education under whom she worked. She explained she felt that since the personnel of the State Department could change every four years, it was too political.

She explained further that the Federal Government required that the land and buildings be used for ten years for the purposes set forth in the original application. Then at the expiration of this time, the Government could deed it out right. She said they lost one year because of delay in getting all the papers processed, etc.

But she was amazed to read in the papers in the fall of 1956 that the Government had turned the property over to the State a year earlier than anticipated. This was announced by Mr. King of the Sinking Fund Commission who had helped negotiate the deal. The State of South Carolina had to pay the Government the sum of \$9374.34 to expedite the deal so they could in turn deed to Brooklyn-Cayce School, District #2 of Lexington County, 53.87 acres for the new Junior High School. The local school authorities paid back to the State \$4,500 for these 53.87 acres.

She said if the Budget and Control Board can sell 53.87 acres to them, they can sell more next time. Hence a clear title to the property was imperative.

She thought the Board of Trustees should be made aware of the situation. At the hearing with the Budget and Control held on June 11, 1958, she said; "We played our cards badly." Attending this hearing were Dr. James F. Miles, Dr. Wil Lou Gray, Mr. T. D. Watkins, Mr. R. H. Smith, and Mr. Charlie Elliot.

J. M. Smith, the State Auditor, said he did not believe the State should deed lands to State Institutions.

Mrs. Johnson asked if we could obtain title to this land through the Legislature. She was told this would probably be the only method possible, but this would require a team to work in advance with every county delegation--a colossal task.

Dr. Miles stated that the Budget and Control Board has the copy of the original petition, that Mr. Charlie Elliot, lawyer for the Board of Trustees, has a carbon copy. All legal papers of the State are filed in the office of the Sinking Fund Commission.

Dr. Miles was of the opinion that the deeds to the property should be turned over to the school as a matter of ethics and moral obligation rather than as a matter of law, because the property was given by the Federal government for this purpose.

Miss Gray reported that some of the members of the Budget and Control Board stated their position thus: "We will give you some of the land but never all of it." Dr. Miles stated they have not given us a formal answer to our petition for title to the Opportunity School; they have not formally said "No".

Miss Gray took the position that the Board must wait and work to get all of the land to which the school was entitled.

At this time much discussion centered around Mr. Elliot's letter (copy attached) and how the Area Trade School got their land in the first place. It was suggested that Miss Gray write a statement for our minutes explaining in detail the beginning of the Area Trade School.

ADULT EDUCATION

Dr. Miles gave to each member of the Board a copy of his talk on Adult Education in South Carolina, "It is Challenging". He cited facts to show that illiteracy was still rampant in South Carolina; that less than 20% of our population have a high school certificate; that the Opportunity School ought to enroll 500 to 1000 each year.

At 12:30 A.M. there was time out for a picture for The State and Lunch.

The Board reconvened at 1:45 P.M.

MR. R. H. SMITH'S REPORT

Mr. R. H. Smith who had just had a conference with Governor Timmerman was pleased with his attitude toward the Opportunity School.

The members who had appeared before the Budget and Control Board complimented Mr. Smith for the fine part he played. When it was suggested that we do something very quickly with the Budget and Control Board, Mr. Smith suggested that we work slowly; and contact the members individually. Mr. Dillard stated that we have a "selling job" on our hands. Dr. Miles challenged each member of the Board to work privately with the members of the Budget and Control Board.

Dr. Miles was of the opinion that someone should contact the new Governor and get him to include a statement about the Opportunity School in his inaugural address.

Dr. Miles also suggested that we get a plat of the land and buildings and of underground improvements to be used in defense of our keeping all this land.

THE BUDGET

Mr. Agnew presented the budget (copy attached). Mr. Smith moved and Mrs. Coker seconded this motion that the budget be revised to include a 10% salary increase for the faculty and staff of the Opportunity School. Motion unanimously passed.

Mrs. Johnson moved and Mr. Smith seconded the motion to accept the budget with this proposed change. The motion carried.

The question came up as to who should appear before the Budget and Control Board to present the Budget. Many thought Mr. Agnew should have as many members of the Board as possible with him. "Numbers count," it was stated. Someone suggested that Dr. Miles, Miss Gray, and Mr. Agnew decide this matter, but all board members were urged to be present.

NEW BUSINESS

Mr. Agnew stated that Mr. Turner, Director of the Trade School, wanted to know if we would be willing to sell them our part in the chapel purchased with money Miss Gray had saved from a special account, (probably \$1000). Dr. Thomas moved we sell them our half portion provided the Attorney General of South Carolina rules that we have the right and further provided the school can keep the money. Motion carried.

Mrs. Johnson moved that we bring the organ in the chapel back to the Opportunity School since this belonged entirely to our school. Dr. Thomas seconded this motion, which carried.

Mr. Dillard moved that we permit the Trade School to dismantle the old gymnasium owned jointly by the Opportunity School and the Trade School, as requested. Dr. Thomas seconded this motion, which carried.

Dr. Thomas moved that the Opportunity School sell to the Highway Department the top soil from the 15 acres, as requested by the Highway Department, provided first, the transaction be approved by the Attorney General, and provided second, that it be possible to turn the revenue over to the Opportunity School. The motion died with-

out a second. There was a general feeling that the selling of top soil was inadvisable.

It was the consensus of the Board that the land should be used constructively for the planting of slash pines which will yield a dividend every seventeen years.

DIAGNOSTIC CENTER

Miss Gray discussed the possibility of the Opportunity School becoming a Diagnostic Center under the Rehabilitation Program; she felt there were great possibilities for Federal Aid.

Mrs. Coker moved the chair appoint a committee to study this possibility and to make recommendations to the Board.

The chair appointed Dr. Thomas, Chairman, Dr. Holler and Mr. Webb, with Mr. Agnew serving as a consultant. Mr. Agnew was requested to call the meeting.

PORTRAIT

Mr. Dillard moved that Mr. Agnew and his portrait committee be empowered to use their best judgment in placing Miss Gray's portrait in the most appropriate place and manner. Mrs. Coker seconded this motion, which carried.

ELECTION OF OFFICERS

Mrs. Coker moved to reelect Dr. Miles as Chairman of the Board and Dr. Holler as Secretary for another year. Mr. Smith seconded this motion. Motion unanimously carried.

TEXTILE CENTERS

Miss Tolbert asked if it were possible for Dr. Gray and others to solicit scholarships from the various textile centers of the State. These funds are deductible from income tax and can well be invested in up-grading local leadership in the mills. This is a ready resource that could be tapped now. This would yield money and many worthy students. "Think what two living scholarships from every county would mean to the Opportunity School!" she stated.

The meeting adjourned sine die at 3:30 P.M.

Marguerite Tolbert
Secretary Pro Tem