

3-15-11 Board Work Session Minutes

Superintendent Tony Tata, on the job for six weeks, has taken charge of policy for Wake County public schools, releasing a comprehensive budget and recommending that the Board of Education continue to work as a Committee of the Whole twice a month and suspend standing committee work, giving the Superintendent more time to work with staff on details that sometimes have been handled by Board committees.

The proposed [2011-12 budget is online](#). Highlights include: preserving jobs for all teachers and teacher assistants; reducing class size in grades 4 and 5; ensuring foreign language at all middle schools; maintaining Pre-Kindergarten programs when temporary federal funding runs out; cutting 46 jobs in central office; reducing months of employment for Assistant Principals by 181 months (not positions); eliminating one clerical position at each school; and giving a one-time \$500 bonus to all full time teachers (pro-rated for part-time teachers).

Supt. Tata also announced initiatives to help targeted schools become more attractive and viable for parents and students. The proposal also will work to strengthen five targeted schools that are currently under-utilized and have flat or declining enrollment. Root, Hilburn Road, and Jeffrey's Grove elementary schools will receive additional teacher allotments, based on a formula, to help strengthen and enrich their program offerings. Two additional elementary schools will be added to the list, once utilization analysis is complete. Under the formula, as an example, Tata said Hilburn Road, which has suffered a 28 percent decline in enrollment, will have six additional teaching positions in addition to the 3.5 positions it now has for specials. Root and Jeffrey's Grove, which also have had enrollment declines, though less severe than Hilburn, will also receive additional positions. The four high poverty/low proficiency schools, recently designated as [Renaissance Schools](#)--Barwell Road, Brentwood, Creech Road and Wilburn elementary schools--will not be included in this enhancement program, Tata said, adding that staff will evaluate whether such program enhancements are needed after the Renaissance program progresses further.

Up to ten schools (six elementary, two middle and two high schools) will be eligible for a similar enhancements to introduce intensive programs in international studies or technology. About \$900,000 will be set aside for this initiative.

Both school-based initiatives are "tactical" decisions, geared to make sure that every school in Wake County is "a high demand school," Tata said. The overall strategy is to use these programs to maximize utilization at all schools in the county by making sure no school is under-enrolled.

Tata also said he and the staff are reviewing utilization at year-round schools, some of which are under-enrolled, and he said he may announce converting some of those year-round schools to a traditional calendar. Year-round schools he noted as under-utilized included Timber Drive, River Bend, Alston Ridge, Lake Myra and Rand Road elementary schools.

The budget proposes expanding the number of alternative program seats for suspended students by 760 (to 2,106, up from 1,346 seats) by adding teachers at regional elementary sites, "repurposing" middle school teachers, adding new high school level teachers, and expanding Mary Phillips and Longview schools.

The Board also heard an update on the State budget from budget director David Neter. The Board will take up Tata's suggestion that they suspend committees at a future Board meeting.

For [more on the budget](#), see the WCPSS website.