

April 5 Board of Education Meeting Notes

The Wake Board of Education heard details on the [2011-12 budget](#) as well as Superintendent Tata's plans to augment underutilized schools and help create "high demand" schools in preparation for the District's still-developing student assignment plan.

The budget will reduce the months of employment for the district's 204 Assistant Principals, reducing all contracts to 10-month periods, instead of 11- or 12-month contracts. Principals will have discretion to increase contracts using their own allotments, and APs will have a short time to appeal the reductions, following a Reduction in Force procedure.

Supt. Tata detailed, during the Committee of the Whole, his plans for a Small Elementary School initiative, targeting underenrolled elementary schools. Tata proposes giving five schools that have lost enrollment in the last year (due to Board reassignments as well as other attrition) extra months of employment so that they can hire additional teachers and maintain a full program to attract and keep students from their base populations. The five elementary schools that will receive the extra funding are: Hilburn Drive, Aversboro, Jeffreys Grove, Baileywick and Root.

Supt. Tata also will ask the [principals at 14 year-round schools](#) whether they wish to collapse their four tracks into one--essentially making them modified year-round schools, all one one track but with the more frequent breaks of a year-round calendar. The 14 schools are: Alston Ridge, Ballentine, Banks Road, East Garner, Harris Creek, Lake Myra, Rand Road, River Bend, Timber Drive, Wakefield, West Lake elementary schools; as well as East Cary and Holly Grove middle schools. All of these schools are currently under 100 percent capacity for a single track, and some are in high growth areas that may soon greatly increase their enrollments. Tata will meet with each principal to make final decisions as to whether the schools will convert from four-track year round calendars.

The Board approved as part of the consent agenda a 50 percent increase in a contract to Fanning/Howey Associates to conduct a capacity study of all WCPSS schools, in preparation for the new student assignment plan, being drawn up by staff and Supt. Tata. The contract for \$147,910 will "accomplish a capacity study for each of the 163 schools in the WCPSS."

The Board approved giving Supt. Tata the ability to pursue outside grants without obtaining prior Board approval.

The Board again voted to suspend their standing Committees, retaining only the ad-hoc Economically Disadvantaged Student Performance Task Force, headed by Board member John Tedesco. Chris Malone was the only Board member to vote against the suspension of committee work, which was suggested by Supt. Tata.

New principals were named for three of the four schools under the Renaissance program. Ken Branch will become principal of Brentwood; he is former principal at Zebulon and

Centennial middle schools and senior director for middle school programs. Mark Tracy, a principal in Wilmington, will become principal at Wilburn Elementary. Sandra Barefoot, who has been principal at York Elementary, will become the new principal at Barwell Road. Catherine Berry was chosen to remain at Creech Road, after having to reapply for her job as part of the Renaissance program. Each of these principals will receive a \$7,000 signing bonus.

Of the 23 speakers during public comment, 21 were critical of the Board, particularly of the Board's recent response to an investigation by the Office of Civil Rights of the U.S. Department of Education,. Many said the response drafted by the Board and its attorneys were based on false analysis. Matthew Brown noted the statistical correlation between poverty and low student proficiency; he said the Board's analysis blaming long bus rides for the poor performance of low income students is like saying "we have found that ...people in the hospital are sicker than people outside the hospital, thus we should stop sending people to the hospital; it makes them sick." Brown said low performing students were more likely to be bused, but that the long bus rides were not to blame. Rita Anita Linger said the Board failed to show that busing is linked to proficiency and she said that high poverty schools are problems, not solutions. Adrienne Lumpkin said the Board was lying with statistics by blaming busing for problems caused by poverty and lack of funding. The League of Women Voters and Great Schools in Wake asked the Board for greater transparency in redistricting schools board districts for the fall elections.