

1-18-11 Work Session

The Board did not discuss accreditation at this work session, but instead heard information on a wide array of budgeting issues. ([Story from WRAL.](#)) With enrollment projected to grow by 4,000 and budgets being squeezed at the state and national level, Chair Ron Margiotta said he expects the Wake County Commissioners to be more generous next year, and he also wants to press the State DPI to give Wake more funding. Members Ann McLaurin, Kevin Hill and Keith Sutton asked Board members to **agree to support student achievement**, especially for high-risk groups, such as African American males, who graduate at lower levels than other students in Wake County. Board members John Tedesco and Deborah Prickett repeatedly mentioned cutting transportation, including cutting magnet transportation, which has been done in Charlotte/Mecklenburg and which Ms. Prickett has supported. The Board did not come to consensus to support any one budget item, and Mr. Margiotta said he would wait until the County Commissioners meet with the Board in mid-February.

WCPSS Finance chief David Neter provided handouts, including a [report from the nonprofit N.C. Public School Forum](#) that detailed national spending on public education. Compared to the other 50 states and Washington DC, North Carolina ranks 42nd, at \$8,743 per student, compared to \$17,638 in Washington DC, and \$17,289 in Rhode Island. Among Southern states, Virginia (16th in US) spends \$11,114 per student, West Virginia (20th) spends \$10,747 per student, and South Carolina (34th) spends \$9,286 per student. Utah ranks at the bottom, 51st, at \$5,912 per student.

Mr. Neter noted that Wake County spends below the state average, only about \$7,886 in local, state and federal dollars, according to [the story in the N&O](#). He noted how well Wake schools are doing with such low spending, and he asked the Board to consider options for strengthening the system. He and staff have worked to increase efficiencies over the past several years, he said. In response to a question from Board member Debra Goldman, Mr. Neter noted that the District only receives \$7 million to \$9 million on average, per year, from the N.C. Education Lottery, which is earmarked for construction. The current cost of a new elementary school is about \$23 million.

The public has submitted more than 800 suggestions for dealing with the budget cuts. Some of their suggestions include an array of fees being added to the system and cuts in services: imposing fees for all athletics and extracurricular activities, eliminating all transportation, imposing fees for magnet programs, eliminating lunch programs, selling all computers and "getting back to basics," selling corporate sponsorships, pay cuts to teachers and staff, and a four-day school week. Some citizens suggested raising taxes to get more resources into the schools.

The Board also heard up an update on the move to consolidate all administration of the school system to Crossroads in Cary. Board member Debra Goldman seemed surprised that the moves won't be completed until late July, saying she had expected it done by April. She also expressed dissatisfaction with the layout of the Boardroom and not having received an update until this week. Since the Board suspended standing

committee work, the Facilities Committee, which would have overseen such a project, has not met since August 2010. The Facilities Committee also canceled its meeting this week, which had been scheduled for tomorrow. Board member Chris Malone is the Board Liaison to the Facilities staff.

Upcoming meetings:

There are three more public hearings on [Student Assignment](#), all beginning at 6 pm: Wednesday, January 19, at Southeast Raleigh High School; Thursday, January 20, at Garner High School; and Monday, January 24, at Cary High School.

Two work sessions have been added to the Board's discussion on **Student Assignment**: Tuesday, January 25, 9 am to 5 pm; and Thursday, January 27, 9 am to 5 pm, both at 3600 Wake Forest Road in Raleigh.