

11/15/10 – Board of Education Work Session

One week after Board of Education Chair Ron Margiotta criticized a County Commissioner for predicting teacher layoffs, the Board members heard their financial officer tell them staff layoffs and classroom cuts were likely next year as a result of a possible \$50 million cut in state education funding to WCPSS next year and the loss of \$48 million in federal stimulus funding that went to Title 1 and special education programs.

At Tuesday's work session, Board of Education members [heard a dire financial picture](#) from Finance Chief David Neter. The district foresees flat state and local funding, an additional two new schools opening, and about 4,100 additional students next year. So with flat funding, the additional operational and student expenses will result in cuts in other areas of the budget. Mr. Neter attempted to give the Board a sense of the magnitude of possible ramifications of a \$50 million state cut--hypothetically, using an average salary for teachers, it would require a reduction of 1,000 employees--cutting that many jobs--to equal \$50 million in cuts. Last year's cuts eliminated all vacant positions as well as non-classroom positions. Next year, the Board faces cutting classroom resources. Many other school districts have already had to cut classroom teachers, and many are considering cutting field trips, cutting transportation, cutting extracurricular activities, eliminating summer school, having four-day school week, or cutting athletics. North Carolina laws do not allow school districts to cut funding to charter schools or reduce Kindergarten to a half-day. Mr. Neter said "it is inevitable jobs will be lost."

The Board also gave a split vote on working toward consensus--five of the Board members--Debra Goldman, Keith Sutton, Anne McLaurin, Carolyn Morrison and Kevin Hill--backed Hill's proposal to use a deliberative process to develop the next multi-year assignment plan. Members Deborah Prickett, John Tedesco and Chris Malone opposed the plan. While the zone-based model proposed by Mr. Tedesco [has been abandoned](#), so the next step is for the Board to develop a plan for a multi-year assignment plan for 2012 and beyond.

In making final remarks, Ms. Goldman said Student Assignment issues have "divided the county," and she stressed the need for all board members to work on the plan. By voting up Mr. Hill's proposal, the Board will now hold a work session on developing the next Student Assignment plan.

Earlier in the work session, Growth and Planning administrator Laura Evans gave the Board an update on the Community Meetings on Student Assignment, the first of which was held Monday at Millbrook High School. [Additional work sessions](#) will be held at Cary High School Thursday evening at 6:30 pm and at Garner High School on Monday, November 22, at 6:30 pm.

The discussions began on Title 1 spending on after school supplemental instruction provided to Level 1 and Level 2 students, much of which is dictated by No Child Left Behind federal legislation. Administrator Willie Webb said ideally, she would like

individualized data for each child. Not all of the 3,494 students participate in the program, which is governed by parent choice. The Board directed the staff to develop a proposal for WCPSS staff to administer the supplemental education services as well as a broader evaluation of current offerings.

The following are the talking points from Mr. Neter's financial presentation:

1. Our county appropriation was reduced mid-year in 2008-09, and we received flat funding for 2009-10 and the current year.
2. Assuming flat funding for 2010-11, our county appropriation for next year will be \$313.5 Million, and our (county) funding per student will be just over \$2,000 per year.
3. This represents the an effective \$28 Million reduction to our local county appropriation for next year and a cumulative loss of County Appropriation during this period of over \$54 Million.
4. To give you an idea of the impact of a 5% and 10% state funding reduction on WCPSS, a 5% state reduction equates to an additional \$34 Million reduction, and a 10% state reduction equates to an additional \$68 Million reduction.
5. Whether or not the effects of the Non-Instructional Support issue would be included in these amounts, or would be in addition to remains to be seen.