



County of Dare

P.O. Box 1000 | Manteo, NC 27954

MINUTES

DARE COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS MEETING

First Flight High School, Kill Devil Hills, NC

5:00 p.m., July 10th, 2024

Commissioners present: Chairman Robert Woodard, Sr., Vice Chairman Wally Overman
Rob Ross, Danny Couch, Steve House, Bea Basnight, Ervin
Bateman

Board of Education present: Chairman David Twiddy, Vice-Chairman Carl Woody, Ron
Payne, Susan Bothwell, Matt Brauer, Superintendent Basnight,
Attorney Rachel Hitch

Others present: County Manager/Attorney, Robert Outten
Deputy County Manager/Finance Director, David Clawson
Master Public Information Officer, Dorothy Hester
Clerk, Skyler Foley

A full and complete account of the entire Town Hall meeting is archived on a video that is available for viewing on the Dare County Schools website.

ITEM 1 – MEETING CALLED TO ORDER

At 5:02 p.m. BOE Chairman David Twiddy called to order the special scheduled meeting with appropriate prior public notice having been given. He welcomed the Dare County Board of Commissioners for attending.

ITEM 2 – APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA

Chairman Twiddy asked for a motion to approve the Agenda.

MOTION

BOE Member Ron Payne made a motion to amend the Agenda to add Board Members to Item 5.

BOE Member Matt Brauer seconded the motion.

VOTE: AYES unanimous

MOTION

BOE Ron Payne made a motion to approve the amended agenda.

BOE Susan Bothwell seconded the motion.

VOTE: AYES unanimous

ITEM 3 – EARLY COLLEGE PRESENTATION

The Superintendent provided a presentation on the Early College. He started off by saying that he has heard the word “passion” thrown around and he expressed that he is passionate. He is passionate about educating all kids and expressed that he has to be the voice for all of them. He stated that he believes in the power of Early College and the effect it has on

students and parents. He highlighted Dare County Schools Strategic Goals which include 1.) increasing student learning and doing 2.) recruiting and retaining quality professionals 3.) increasing school safety and security 4.) increasing quality professional learning opportunities 5.) maintaining, upgrading, and repairing facilities 6.) increasing district support throughout Dare County Schools. He then briefly touched base on the misinformation he had heard about regarding Early College.

He explained that Early College is a state funded Public High School (Cooperative Innovative High School) that expands opportunities and aims to meet a specific demographic. It is also a blend of high school and college that has an overall smaller environment and a college going culture focusing on completion of an Associate Degree or a Career Certification. He reviewed the Cooperative Innovative High School (CIHS) Student statistics from 2022-2023 and stated that 87% of NC CIHS students at community colleges averaged a passing grade of C or better. (2023-2024 Dare County = 88.3%) Then 77% of NC CIHS graduates received an Associate Degree or Career Credential (2023-2024 Dare County = 4% or 13/328 students)

He explained that there are 100 Counties in NC and 82 of them have at least one Early College and there are 117 School Districts in NC and 100 of them have an Early College. There is a total of 134 Early Colleges in the State of NC where some counties have more than one. He further explained that Dare County's Early College design and plan is not like any other counties noting that the goal is to create opportunities for students and they tried to remove all barriers that a student may encounter.

He then stated that research shows NC students enrolled in Early Colleges have higher ACT scores, higher attendance rates, lower suspension rates, lower dropout rates, higher enrollment rates in 4-year universities, more likely to vote, and less likely to be convicted of crime during late adolescence.

He touched base on the timeline of Early College and how it got to this point, noting that administrators, students, Board of Education, parent and teachers' groups have all been involved.

He then discussed the Early College Application to NCDPI which involved the following categories: student enrollment and admission processes, recruitment efforts, comprehensive description, program information, how does the Early College serve students beyond CCP, regions economic vision, curriculum and instruction, personalized learning, lesson design, common instructional framework, curriculum pathways, family engagement, school effectiveness measures, staffing and operational plans, and student transportation. He noted that after the NCDPI reviewed the application they asked if it could be used as an exemplar to send to other districts and counties that were opening an Early College. He noted that the application had been approved from the NCDPI, NCSBE, UNCS, and the NCCCB and is now awaiting an additional \$200,000 of State funding from the NC General Assembly. He explained that Dare County does not pay for the staff, administrators, principals etc. at the Early College, that it is a public school and the State of NC pays for that.

He elaborated that anyone can attend the Early College and that it is an application process and the student would have to of completed 8th grade and live in Dare County. The student's applications are evaluated by a team of people and there are five categories including

1. Target Student Population 2. Interview 3. Attendance/Discipline Data 4. Staff Recommendations, 5. Application Written Responses.

When Early Colleges were originally developed, they broke it down into six categories: 1. First Generation College Student 2. English Language Learners 3. Students from Low Socio-Economic Backgrounds 4. Students who want an Accelerated Academic Track 5. Minority Students 6. Students At-Risk of not Graduating. They have now combined them to three categories 1. First-Generation College Goers 2. Students At-Risk of Dropping out of High School 3. Students who would benefit from Accelerated Learning Opportunities. He explained that it is for everyone.

He addressed the question if a student goes to the Early College could they decide to go back to their ascending school, and the answer was yes at the end of the school year. He then explained that Early College will not eliminate AP Courses at the traditional high schools. He then discussed the 2023 DCS AP percentages of students achieving a 3, 4, or 5 and the 2023 DCS COA percentage of students achieving a "C" or better.

He addressed the question about students already being able to complete an associate's degree through dual enrollment, and the answer was yes, they can, but the problem is that they are not doing it. The ability to do it is there, but it is difficult to do because they are in a limited timeline in traditional school to complete the Associates Degree. Early College offers the following things that Dual Enrollment does not: Integrated Academic Support, Social and Emotional Support, Post-Secondary Planning Assistance, Transition Support, Improved Post-Secondary Readiness Skills, Dual Credit Coordination, College-Going Culture.

He announced that Early College students can participate in athletics. He also explained that bus transportation will be provided from Hatteras, First Flight, and from Manteo.

He went over all of the COA Curriculum Options and the potential benefits for students attending an Early College vs traditional school which included: 1. Comprehensive College Preparation 2. Stronger College-Going Culture 3. Improved College Readiness Skills 4. Equitable Outcomes 5. Personalized Attention 5. STEM Degree Impact

He reviewed the School District Funding and explained that receiving a lump some of money really means nothing and that it is more important to understand where it came from and what it can be used for. There are three funding pools, Federal, State, and Local which are all come with specifically designed usages and will get audited in a heartbeat. He reviewed the CIP funds which come from the Lottery Funds and Sales Tax Funds which is used for building. The school system submits a plan to the county expressing what they would like to do and reviewed their recent and upcoming projects including what the BOC approved for the 2024-2025 school year. The following years are a plan and it is a notification on what they are thinking and looking at. Then the additional Capital Outlay Funding was discussed.

He addressed Cape Hatteras Secondary School cafeteria and stated that it is not unsafe or in an unsanitary condition and it has not flooded in the last five years. The drains were cleaned out as regular maintenance at the beginning of the 2023-2024 school year and there is typically standing water in the parking lot from a hard rain or northwest wind, but it does not enter the building.

Building capacity was also discussed and stated that it is not the same as Fire Capacity Limits/Building Code. "Educational Building Capacity" is based on state-mandated class size limits and it can change. He then reviewed the building capacity numbers for the entire district.

ITEM 4 – PUBLIC HEARING – EARLY COLLEGE

At 6:17 p.m. the School Board Attorney outlined the procedure for making public comment.

MOTION

BOE Vice-Chairman Carl Woody motioned to accept the Early College Public Hearing Procedures.

BOE Member Susan Bothwell seconded the motion.

VOTE: AYES unanimous

Following is a summary of all citizen remarks, which may be viewed in their entirety in a video on the Dare County Schools website.

1. Kenny Brite stated that he supports the Early College and he hopes that it is successful.
2. Joe Tyson, Principal of FFHS, discussed the advantages of Early College and how it could set a new standard for academic excellence and opportunity.
3. Charles Parker inquired about the actual annual costs of the Early College once it gets constructed and how many employees will there need to be. He also asked why are they only offering this program to a percentage of students, that they should make the whole school an Early College.
4. John Bone, a previous school teacher in Dare County Schools, spoke in support of the Early College Program.
5. Clinton Johnson, a former High School Principal and a Leadership Coach with roughly 60 Early College High Schools in NC, discussed the strengths of the Early Colleges that he has seen over the years.
6. Jim Metzenger, teacher at MHS, asked if the Early College Model could be embedded into each school separately so it could be held within the schools and why is it a priority over the other needs that are listed.
7. Aida Havel stated she is not against the idea of Early College but feels that it is fiscally irresponsible to build a \$20 million dollar building while not promptly taking care of the ones that are already in place.
8. Myra Ladd-Bone, former Dare County teacher, does not understand how anyone that cares about Dare County or the children could be opposed to the Early College.
9. Jamie Wegener asked for clarification on the funding, specifically the NC Education Lottery funds and how they would be available again in 2028. But in the meantime, the House and Senate are trying to come to a 2024/2025 biannual budget approval where we are continuing to see school vouchers be approved down that portal.

10. Dr. Sandra Slate, a former Chemistry Professor, expressed she was interested in finding out how chemistry, physics, and advanced education will be provided to such a small student body. She also expressed concern that she has received reports that a large number of Early College students who transfer to a 4-year University and get placed in an advanced Chemistry Class and do not have a good enough background and do not do well, which lowers their grades.
11. Allen Creech, has a 12-year old daughter that would be a candidate, but feels that it should be available to all students, not a select few, and it should be able to be implemented in the existing schools.
12. Leah Dixon, teacher at MHS, expressed concerns about the day to day logistics. She expressed that she is not fully opposed to it, but there is a lot of information that parents do not understand. Would love to have a group of teachers/committee together so they can go through all the concerns together. She pointed that the students are taking COA classes because they are easier than the AP Literature and Language and AP Chemistry.
13. Rebecca Spencer, asked since we are one of the last to get an Early College, are we too late? Statistics are showing that more than five Early Colleges are closing and NC only had 4,000 out of 34,015 students graduate with a degree. She stated that colleges want AP classes and college classes on student applications, noting that AP averages are down in Dare County. She asked could Dual Enrollment be given support like Early College.
14. Jamie Whitley expressed her support on the Early College and referenced the UNC transfer rate being higher than its freshman acceptance rate.

The School Attorney closed Public Comments at 6:56 p.m.

ITEM 5: Superintendent and Board Member's Closing Remarks

The Superintendent stated that he would love to answer every question that has been asked and is open to having a conversation with anyone. He stated he is not trying to push anything on anyone, but he wants to make the best decisions for the kids together. He expressed he is proud that we are Dare County Schools and proud of everyone for supporting Dare County Schools.

BOE Member Ron Payne thanked the BOC for the additional funding for the teachers. He also emphasized that they are taking care of the buildings now. Anytime an issue is brought up it is addressed. He also mentioned that the rigor for Early College is honors level.

BOE Member Matt Brauer stated that they have been discussing Early College for over a year now. He also mentioned that Public Finance is its own puzzle and the more it is talked about and he learns the more he is firmly convinced that this is the right thing for the school district.

BOE Member Susan Bothwell stated that Early College is not for every student and it is not feasible to put in every school in her opinion.

BOE Vice-Chair Woody, asked the County Manager explain what the Lottery Funds can be used for. County Manager Outten explained that they are a directed fund from the legislature and they can only be used for school Capital Improvements that would include constructing buildings and things like major repair. The Lottery Funds are a portion of the Sales Tax Fund that are accumulated at the State in the name of Dare County and they sit at the state level and that fund grows over time until we choose to use it. Our school system has grown very slow so our money has grown since we are not building schools. He explained that there is not \$21 million sitting in an account, there is enough money there that we can borrow \$21 million and the funding that we get from the state will then pay the debt service on that funding over the life of that loan and that is how the process is supposed to work so the state can leverage that money throughout school system throughout the state. He then addressed the concern of the legislature taking the money that was brought up during public comment and he stated that there is a process that you go through and at any point in the process you can stop the process so until we go out and actually borrow the money we can stop so if the legislature has taken the lottery funding to do something else with it before we get to the point where were borrowing the funds then we do not have to proceed. Anything that is done where you are using state funding as a recurring funding source is subject to the whim of the legislature.

BOE Chairman David Twiddy thanked everyone for coming out. He referenced a similar predicament that happen 20 years ago and how they all worked together to make everything happen and it made Dare County have community schools. He stated that Early College is the right thing for the students in Dare County. He reiterated that they are following the federal and state guidelines to provide education for our students. He also expressed that transportation is provided by the NCDPI at no cost it does not matter where the student lives.

Chairman Woodard thanked the BOE for agreeing to hold the public hearing and is thankful for the tremendous relationship that the BOC has with the BOE.

Commissioner Ross stated it was an extraordinary presentation and appreciated the detail explaining the difference in an AP Course vs. Dual Enrollment vs. Early College. He stated he is very comfortable about what he saw and heard at this meeting.

Commissioner House stated it was an excellent presentation. He gave an insight to his personal endeavors where he took his high school classes during the day and his firefighter and paramedic classes at night so he understands what this program can do for students. He expressed that the students will benefit and the Board wants to see the youth in Dare County excel and succeed.

At the conclusion of the meeting, BOE Chairman David Twiddy asked for a motion to adjourn.

MOTION

BOE Member Susan Bothwell motioned to adjourn the meeting.

BOE Member Ron Payne seconded the motion.

VOTE: AYES unanimous

At 7:18 p.m., the Board of Commissioners and Board of Education adjourned the meeting.



Respectfully submitted,

By:

Skyler Foley
Skyler Foley, Clerk to the Board

APPROVED:

By:

Robert Woodard, Sr.
Robert Woodard, Sr., Chairman
Dare County Board of Commissioners

Note: Copies of attachments (Att.), ordinances, resolutions, contracts, presentations, and supporting material considered by the Board of Commissioners at this meeting are on file in the office of the Clerk. Attempts have been made to accurately spell each podium speaker.