

Minutes for the Alpharetta-Milton Joint Cluster Meeting on Tuesday, May 16, 2006

Carolyn Carson Call to Order and Introductions.

Buck Greene Welcome to Alpharetta High School  
Introduction of Cathy Skott from professional foods  
Professional foods prepared the food and the gift of truffles

**Mr. Wilson** Budget update

- Focus on the budget has been a distraction to an outstanding year.
- Projected growth was over 3,300 we are now at 5,500 in Fulton County School System
- We received 1,300 New Orleans evacuees – We are proud of the job that we did
- 6 High Schools are in the Top 100 in Newsweek
- The last 3 years Fulton County has spent more money than we took in thus reducing the large operating reserve budget we had
- The Class Size Reduction Law will cost the district \$10 million dollars and add 300 more teachers
- We need to hire teachers quickly to meet the demand for quality teachers in the classroom
- Meeting class size reduction by individual classroom is difficult to manage
- Next month will introduce a proposal for a Bridge Loan (short term note with an interest rate of 3 ½ %) for \$40 million to keep construction moving until the next SPLOST
- The district was \$80 million short when the budget was first prepared – growth in tax base offsets some expenditures resulting in a shortfall of \$60 million
- After some programs were cut the budget was balanced and was presented on Thursday, May 11<sup>th</sup>
- Cost per student compared to other districts is still the highest in the Metro area with the exception of Atlanta City Schools
  - We spend a lot on transportation, pupil services and school administration
  - State provides 1/3 of funding
  - State funding is being reduced which will hurt all school districts
  - When the state passes a raise, the dollars required represent an unfunded mandate, affecting local district dollars.

- We now have a balanced budget that has corrected the flow of money for the future
- The budget shortfall should not happen again next year (we believe we have corrected the problem)
- Property re-assessments are also on the docket for next year.
- Alpharetta High School is at capacity, but will be fine for 2 more years
- Milton is at capacity and will be above next year – portables will most likely be needed in another year
- SPLOST is up for renewal in March 2007 and the campaign is in the planning stages
- If the SPLOST is renewed, we are ready to build and that will help us meet growth
- Birmingham Road Elementary will stay on track
- TAN (Tax Anticipation Note) with low rates can keep projects moving
- Raising millage is not always the answer to effectively spending your dollars.
- There were programs put back in the budget that were initially cut:
  - Band & Orchestra for elementary schools (70)
  - IST (33)
  - Summer School Program
  - Social Workers – (8 ½ )
  - Child care (McClarín & Independence)
  - School Psychologists
  - ESOL (Shelter Program)

- 6<sup>th</sup> Grade Foreign Language (19)
- Special Ed Counselors (2)
- Pay for System-wide testing (except 9<sup>th</sup> grade PSAT)
- Pre-K funding
- Cluster Nurses back for 1 year
- New High School in North Fulton – east of 400 – off of State Bridge Road
  - Earnest money is down on property
  - Discussions underway with Fulton County government regarding who pays for road improvements in conjunction with new schools

**Dr. Denmark**

Thanked LSAC Cluster Chairs and presented gifts

- Norris Gaynor – 33<sup>rd</sup> year of service and retiring as Summit Hill Elementary principal
- Nancy Murphy from New Prospect Elementary will replace Mr. Gaynor as principal of Summit Hill
- Tracy Trussell, principal of Creek View Elementary is on extended medical leave, and will return in July
- For 2006-07 the Milton/Alpharetta area will add eight new Assistant Principals
- The following schools earned additional Assistant Principals: Alpharetta High School; Creek View Elementary; Manning Oaks Elementary; Summit Hill Elementary; and, Hopewell Middle School

There are 3 **Assistant Principals** being replaced at each of the following: New Prospect Elementary; Cogburn Woods Elementary; and, Milton High School.

The North Fulton Council of **PTAs Luncheon** at the Aquarium was wonderful, and many of our schools were highly successful in garnering awards from the Georgia PTA this year.

#### National Merit Scholars

- Milton – 1
- Chattahoochee – 5
- Northview – 1

#### **Early Release Days –**

- The Georgia High School Writing Test is scheduled for Wednesday, September 27, 2006. The first early release day will be moved to Thursday, September 28, 2006.
- The Georgia High School Writing Test is scheduled for Wednesday, February 28, 2007. The last early release day will be moved to Thursday, March 1, 2007.

#### **Policies** on the table for June Vote:

- Booster Clubs – if Boosters secure loans the project must be approved by the board prior to construction
- Cash will go through easier
- Break down of math in the middle schools next year: Advanced, On-level, Below-level

#### **Learning Matters Update:**

- Draft of professional learning opportunities show the focus in September, November and March 1 to be local school-based issues and learning; in October and January the professional learning opportunities will focus on area-wide collaboration.
- Schools will list reminder dates and explanations on report cards, in agendas, websites, posters in school, magnetic calendar and email reminder

- Transportation department will confirm bus route times no later than July for early release days beginning in September.

**New Business:** LSAC Elections went well, with most taking place prior to the end of the school year.

**SPLOST** – Sally and Sue will be co-chairing the SPLOST III Steering Committee for the March 2007 election. They are planning the following:

- Get information out during the summer – a list of things to do and activities for each of the following: Principals, PTA Presidents, LSAC members, Legislative Chair, SPLOST Coordinator at local schools
- Provide the same consistent message
- Get information to citizens without children in our schools and discuss with business leaders their perspective on SPLOST
- Include in back-to-school information explaining SPLOST
- 2-Part Campaign – 1. Develop the education piece in conjunction with the County priorities for construction and capital improvement projects. 2. Develop Campaign piece to get the vote for the renewal/continuation of the SPLOST.
- Working with Mitzi Edge for communication and information from school on education process to: 1. Explain SPLOST III 2. Why chosen – 3. Video – 4. Consistent message from all schools

**2006-2007 Calendar of Cluster Meetings:** Would we benefit from holding joint cluster or “area” meetings, possibly on the third Tuesday of alternating months. We will work on a tentative calendar for consideration. Some benefits of joint meetings:

1. Joint meetings would produce larger setting to use resources wisely
  2. Would send a unified message as a large group
  3. Could still break-out for small meetings
- Topic ideas for Meetings:
    1. Focused Legislative Forum
    2. Business Partners – Greater North Fulton Chamber of Commerce’s Education Committee to provide mentoring, speak at faculty meetings, provide leadership training for students, job shadowing, apprentices
    3. Monitor and evaluate early release days in-depth

4. Service learning throughout area
  5. Once councils are elected, get together for informational meeting
- Announcement about Softball Tournament to fund a “Blanket” group at Alpharetta Methodist Church the first weekend in June. This function in memory of Eric Crenshaw who passed away at the young age of 24. Tournament will be held the first weekend in June at North Park. Call Beverly Johnson to form a team at 770-289-2089

Meeting adjourned at 11:10 am