

**STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA
COUNTY OF McDOWELL
BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
ADJOURNED SESSION-June 8, 2012**

ASSEMBLY

The McDowell County Board of Commissioners met in an adjourned budget meeting at 11:30 am on Friday, June 8, 2012, in the Commissioners Board Room, the usual place of meeting.

MEMBERS PRESENT

David N. Walker, Chairman; Barry E. McPeters, Vice-Chairman; Michael Lavender and Josh Dobson.

OTHERS PRESENT

Charles R. Abernathy, County Manager; Russell Neighbors, Chairman McDowell County School Board, Mark Cauthen, Vice-Chairman, School Board members Patrick Ellis, Terry Frank, Bob Brackett, Ira Trollinger, School Superintendent, Suzanne Rampey, and Aaron Slutzky. Also in attendance was Mike Conley with the McDowell News.

CALL TO ORDER

Chairman Walker called the meeting to order and welcomed everyone to the budget session. The primary item to be covered at this session was the "One to One" project. Dr. Trollinger, School Superintendent, thanked the Board and made a few introductory comments about the need for this program as project that would engage students, provide the technology needs for the future and assist with drop-out rates. Dr. Tollinger turned the meeting over to Aaron Slutzky, the School System technology manager. He overviewed the program as being a program that would place a lap top in each student's possession. The lap top computer would be taken home and used 7 days a week. The lap top would also become an integral teaching tool used in the classroom. Dr. Trollinger emphasized the importance of training for the teachers. This approach was described as the trend and the importance of technology in the classroom will only continue to increase. Dr. Trollinger also reviewed the importance of the wiring at the various schools and how the school buildings were ready for the wireless network and the implementation of One to One.

The School Superintendent next reviewed steps taken at the staff level to prepare for this step. Facilitators have been hired to work with both students and teachers to begin the process at the two Jr. Highs and a person is in place at the Early College. The State is

moving to "Cloud" technology and McDowell County has participated in Cloud technology training. Dr. Trollinger reviewed 9 items of importance including training, software selection, technology facilitators, establishing external computer connections, installation of adequate wireless connection points, obtaining the needed computers, hiring technicians, establishing the necessary protocols, and training the students.

Dr. Trollinger next described the partnership that was being proposed. Google has provided a less expensive alternative than previous prices provided by Apple. Google is attempting to make in-roads on the Apple system and this will work to the advantage of the lower price. Golden Leaf is also a partner and had encouraged the School System to apply for the One to One funds during the recent Community Collaboration process that awarded \$2,140,000 to McDowell County. The Golden Leaf grant process emphasizes partnerships. The request made by the School System from the County is for \$200,000. ADM funding would provide \$400,000 and the Golden Leaf grant would be in the amount of \$200,000. It is the intent of the program for the computers to be replaced every four years. Suzanne Rampey reviewed the current status of the school system reserve fund including the availability of ADM funds and capital reserve funds.

In sum, the importance of preparing the students and building their self-esteem and capabilities are the primary goal of the program.

Commissioners asked a number of questions including various platforms and software applications and the maintenance and management of the system, how many school systems have the "One to One" and when would the program be implemented. Commissioners also asked if the graduation rates were positively impacted and if this could be verified. A discussion ensued regarding how damaged computers would be assessed. Several Commissioners expressed positive views regarding students have to pay to repair broken lap tops.

School System Chairman Russell Neighbors commented that what was good enough for previous generations was no longer good enough for our young people and is no longer acceptable. Working with computers in the classroom is how to engage children and this step was a critical step.

The Commissioners expressed appreciation to the School Board members and staff for the presentation and information. Chairman Walker explained that the Board would make a decision in less than a month.

Abernathy reviewed changes needed to the recommended budget including an increase to DSS revenue, an increase the EMS salaries, an increase to the Enterprise Fund transfer and the removal of the payment to MCAO. The Board agreed to accept these changes to the recommended budget and a general discussion ensued regarding the "One to One" presentation. The Board members present were supportive of the concept and expressed an interest in partnering with the School System.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business the Board adjourned until the Regular session to continue the budget process.

David N. Walker, Chairman

Charles R. Abernathy, County Manager