



## NEWS RELEASE

### FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Date: Thursday, March 28, 2019

### **County & school district to work together to chart course for school facilities projects**

**Goldsboro, N.C.** – This week, a working group led by the Wayne County manager and superintendent of schools, convened to discuss the school district's facilities plan, funding concerns, school bonds and construction projects, possible changes to a 2017 interlocal agreement between the Board of Commissioners and the Board of Education, and possible next steps for both Boards moving forward.

County Manager Craig Honeycutt stated, "We appreciate the opportunity for the County and Board of Education to work together on issues. We believe the focus should remain providing a quality education for our students, and the only way to accomplish that is to successfully move forward as two groups, working as one."

The meeting kicked off with welcoming remarks by Wayne County Board of Commissioner Chairman A. Joe Gurley, III, who noted he and Wayne County Board of Education Chair Don Christopher West felt it was time to try to get everyone on the same page, following some apparent miscommunication and misunderstandings. Mr. West stated his goal for the joint meeting was the participants to leave with no unanswered questions, and to try to work out any differences.

Wayne County Schools Superintendent Dr. Michael Dunsmore gave a detailed presentation that generated considerable discussion, much of which focused on changes that had occurred since the January 2017 interlocal agreement. Participants agreed there are many complex, interrelated issues, such as how to comply with the state's new K-3 class-size mandates, and how to address substantial federal cuts in Developmental Day funding, along with school redistricting, all of which will require further study and creative solutions.

At the end of the meeting, the group recognized the need for continued collaboration amongst the county and district leadership, who will work together to communicate information back to their respective boards in order to develop a new agreement for public school needs.

"I believe we had a very positive meeting, which has set a good foundation for progress and cooperation moving forward," states Dr. Dunsmore. "As I shared with the working group, there have been many changes in circumstances as a result of state and federal mandates and funding changes since the interlocal agreement was put in place. I believe everyone recognized that in order to chart a fiscally responsible course that can both address these changes and meet our school facilities construction needs, it will require creative solutions, difficult choices, cooperation and compromise between the Boards and with professional staff."

The working group was made up of various Wayne County staff, Wayne County Public Schools administrators, and three individual members from each Board.

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