

Board of Education Agenda Item

Item: G.

Date: January 15, 2009

Topic: First Review of a Request for Approval to appoint a Part-Time Superintendent for Highland County Public Schools

Presenters: Ms. Anne Wescott, Assistant Superintendent for Policy and Communication
Mr. Leslie Billingsley, Chairman, Highland County School Board
Mr. Percy Nowlin, Interim Superintendent, Highland County Public Schools

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Origin:

Topic presented for information only (no board action required)

Board review required by

State or federal law or regulation

Board of Education regulation

Other: _____

Action requested at this meeting

Action requested at future meeting: _____

Previous Review/Action:

No previous board review/action

Previous review/action

date _____

action _____

Background Information: The Highland County School Board requests approval to employ a part-time superintendent, pursuant to § 22.1-62 of the *Code of Virginia*, in order to meet budget reductions while reducing disruption to instructional programs.

Highland County is sparsely populated and has limited economic resources. The number of students enrolled in Highland County Public Schools has decreased in recent years. There are currently only 257 students enrolled in kindergarten through the twelfth grade, and that number is expected to decrease by 14 students in school year 2009-2010. Because of enrollment loss and the resulting loss in state funding, the Highland County School Board has already made a number of budget reductions, including the elimination of a bus driver and two teaching positions. Additional reductions will be required in 2009-2010 because of state budget reductions, in addition to the expected continued decrease in enrollment.

Summary of Major Elements: The Highland County School Board's request, for a part-time superintendent, is permitted by § 22.1-62 of the *Code of Virginia*, subject to the approval of the Board of Education.

§ 22.1-62. Appointment of same person by two or more school divisions; approval of part-time superintendent by State Board.

A. Any two or more school divisions may appoint the same person to be division superintendent.

B. No person may be employed as a part-time division superintendent without the approval of the Board of Education.

Highland County Public Schools has already taken a number of actions to reduce costs. It has consolidated the schools and administrative offices into one building. Although the county's population is sparse, it has consolidated bus routes, resulting in bus routes of more than an hour in length. It has reduced costs by partnering with Augusta County Public Schools in purchasing and in-service training and professional development, pursuant to the provisions of § 22.1-98.2 of the *Code of Virginia*. That section of the *Code* permits small school divisions that participate in cost-savings and service-sharing agreements with neighboring school divisions to use the most favorable composite index. Thus, Highland County is able to use Augusta County's composite index of .3303, rather than its own composite index of .6774 for those services.

Consolidation with neighboring school divisions has not been feasible. Neither Augusta County nor Bath County has been willing to consolidate with Highland County or to share administrative and supervisory services. The other contiguous school divisions are in West Virginia.

Both Highland Elementary School and Highland High School made Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) this year, as they have for the past three years. The division did not make AYP, but it did in the prior two years. Highland Elementary School was Accredited with Warning in History this year, but has been Fully Accredited for the prior two years. Highland High School has been Fully Accredited for the past three years.

The Highland County School Board proposes a part-time superintendent because it would have the least negative impact on instruction, in view of current and expected budget reductions.

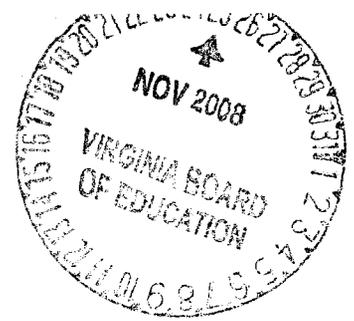
Superintendent's Recommendation: The Superintendent of Public Instruction recommends that the Board of Education waive first review and approve the request from the Highland County School Board to appoint a part-time superintendent, pursuant to §.22.1-62 of the *Code of Virginia*.

Impact on Resources: Approval of this request will enable Highland County Public Schools to use the savings to reduce further cuts that would directly affect classroom instruction. The impact on resources at the state level is negligible.

Timetable for Further Review/Action: Upon approval by the Board of Education, Department of Education staff will notify the School Board Chairman and the Interim Superintendent of Highland County Public Schools so that the appropriate administrative action can be taken by the school board.



Highland County Public Schools



"Instilling Learners for Life"

240 Myers Moon Road PO Box 250 Monterey, VA 24465 Phone: 540-468-6300 Fax: 540-468-6306

November 18, 2008

Dr. Mark E. Emblidge, President
Virginia Board of Education
P.O. Box 2120
Richmond, VA 223218-2120

Dear Dr. Emblidge:

The Highland County School Board respectfully requests an exemption from Section 22.1-62 of the Code of Virginia prohibiting the employment of a part-time division superintendent and asks that you approve Highland County School Board's request to employ a part-time superintendent. The Board will attempt to explain our rationale for this: Highland is a sparsely populated county with only 257 students, kindergarten through twelfth grade. We are predominately an agricultural/small business county with limited economic resources. We have consolidated our schools into one, with the superintendent's office, and have been granted special legislation in the General Assembly to partner with Augusta County Public Schools to utilize cost savings, especially to obtain a lower school composite index, in order to exist. Consolidation with Augusta County Schools would impose a real hardship on our children because of the three mountain ranges between the two counties, and Bath County Public Schools have a composite index of eight. We face a loss of 14 pupils in 2010, which will reduce state funding by \$71,000. We have already cut a bus driver, a handicapped teacher, and a family and consumer science teacher to meet current funding reductions because of enrollment loss. We expect to have to cut additional positions because of the state reductions in funds as well as enrollment reductions.

Highland is a proud school system, we earned a Distinguished Title I Citation in 2007, and our schools have met Adequate Yearly Progress in the past, with our first and only warning this year in history in the elementary school. Our two excellent instructional principals are working on data driven instruction of the Standards of Learning, and we expect to remedy this warning very shortly. We offer music, art, agriculture, business, and woodworking, and advanced placement courses through an interactive distance learning classroom.

The Highland County School Board has done as much as possible to operate efficiently, while trying to offer as many programs as for the students as funding will allow; we now ask that you allow us to employ a part-time superintendent because this will be the least disruptive to our instructional programs. Our interim superintendent, a veteran of eighteen years in Bath County, believes this will work.

Sincerely,



Leslie K. Billingsley, Chairman
Highland County School Board



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December 8, 2008

To: Virginia Board of Education
From: Highland County School Board
Subject: Plea for Part-time Superintendent

The Highland County School Board is requesting an exemption to 8 VAC 20-400-30, Code of Virginia (part-time superintendents) for the following reasons:

- 1) Highland is experiencing a trend (10 years) of declining student enrollments, which will continue in the future, and next year will experience a loss of 14 students, resulting in a loss of \$71,000 in state funds. We have only 257 students, kindergarten through 12th grade, and will have only 244 in 2010. A table detailing this trend is attached.
- 2) Highland will also experience an additional cut in state funding for the second biennial year, possibly even one this year.
- 3) We have consolidated everything into one building, including the superintendent and school board, and this year have had to start cutting instruction – a special education teacher and a consumer science teacher. Highland also cut a bus driver and consolidated the bus routes again. The county is sparsely populated and bus routes are already over an hour long (one way).
- 4) Highland has partnered with Augusta County to achieve economies of scale in purchasing and inservice, and through special legislation in the General Assembly is enabled to utilize Augusta County's school composite index (.3303) versus its own of .6774. Augusta declined to consolidate administrative and supervisory services because of the travel time between the two divisions caused by three mountain ranges (more than an hour).
- 5) Bath has a school composite index of 8, and Highland would have to use its own composite index of 6.774 (Highland would have to fund 67 percent of the costs to get 33 percent of state funding). Bath has no interest in sharing its real estate taxes garnered from the hydroelectric generator at Back Creek (2 to 3 million dollars annually) or in sharing administrative or supervisory services because of this. Their tax revenue does not increase because of an increase in students. The other contiguous school divisions are in West Virginia.

Interim Superintendent Percy C. Nowlin

- 6) Highland's instructional program will suffer more if the superintendency has to be combined with a principal's position at this time. We are initiating data driven instructional programs and the principals need unencumbered time to make this work.
- 7) This is our plea to reduce our costs with the least negative impact on instruction by utilizing a retired superintendent who will be paid part-time while drawing retirement. This would not set a precedent for others because of our small enrollment and remoteness.

Sincerely,



Percy C. Nowlin, Interim Superintendent

Leslie K. Billingsley, Chairman

Grade	Local Proj 2005-06	Local Proj 2006-07	Local Proj 2007-08	Local Proj 2008-09	Local Proj 2009-10	Local Proj. 2010- 2011	Local Proj. 2011- 2012	Local Proj. 2012- 2013
K	8	17	15	15	15	8	8	8
1	26	17	15	15	15	15	8	8
2	20	21	17	15	14	15	9	8
3	17	21	18	17	18	14	15	9
4	21	17	21	18	17	15	15	15
5	14	19	17	21	18	17	15	15
ST ES	106	112	103	101	97	84	70	63
6	21	16	17	17	21	18	17	15
7	26	24	19	17	17	21	18	17
8	23	27	25	19	17	17	21	18
ST MSP	70	67	61	53	55	56	56	50
9	30	25	26	25	19	17	17	21
10	26	29	23	26	25	19	17	17
11	25	29	31	23	26	25	19	17
12	32	25	27	31	23	26	25	19
ST HSP	113	108	107	105	93	87	78	74
ST HHS-C	183	175	168	158	148	143	134	124
Enroll	289	287	271	259	245	227	204	187

ADM	
1998-99	344
1999-00	354
2000-01	343
2001-02	307
2002-03	293
2003-04	294
2004-05	301