

**Jackson County Board of Education  
Minutes of Special Called Meeting  
Sylva, North Carolina  
Central Office**

398 Hospital Drive

September 01, 2020

6:00 p.m.

The Jackson County Board of Education met in a Special-Called Meeting at 6:00 p.m. on Tuesday, September 01, 2020, in the board room of the Central Office, 398 Hospital Road, Sylva, NC. The following members were present via telephone and/or online platform:

Ali Laird-Large, Board Chairperson

The following members were present:

Elizabeth Cooper, Vice-Chair  
Margaret McRae  
Wes Jamison  
Abigail Clayton

Also present were Dr. Tony Tipton, Interim Superintendent; Jacob Buchanan, Assistant Superintendent; Chris Campbell, Board Attorney; Jeremiah Jackson, Chief Technology Officer; Steve Heatherly, CEO Harris Regional Hospital; and Cora Fields, Board Assistant.

**CALL TO ORDER**

Alison Laird-Large, Chairperson, called the meeting to order.

Mrs. Laird-Large led the Pledge of Allegiance.

**APPROVAL OF AGENDA**

*Upon a motion by Mrs. Elizabeth Cooper and seconded by Mr. Wes Jamison, the board voted unanimously to approve the Agenda.*

**ACTION AGENDA**

1. **Agenda Item:** Week Five and Beyond  
**Presenter:** Dr. Tony Tipton, Interim Superintendent

Dr. Tipton introduced Ms. Shelley Carraway, Health Director, Jackson County Department of Public Health. Ms. Carraway updated the board on the number of COVID-19 cases in Jackson County - Total number of 570 confirmed cases and 7 deaths, and that the number of new cases appears to be decreasing. She said that the Health Department is in regular communication with school leadership during twice weekly calls. Jackson County Public Schools has only two confirmed cases and that new cases will be investigated on a case by case basis to ensure contact

tracing. She said that the procedures put in place within the district are working well and recommended everyone keep practicing the three W's – Wash your hands, Wear a Mask, and Wait six feet apart.

Dr. Tipton introduced Mr. Steve Heatherly, CEO Harris Regional Hospital. Mr. Heatherly stated that he is very proud of Jackson County and the response to the pandemic. He said that his team is involved with the Health Department on the twice weekly calls that include SCC, WCU and JCPS. He updated the board on current COVID-19 hospitalizations in Jackson County, and that the screening methods are working very well. He stated that the severity of cases in the county have decreased as staff have become more familiar with treatments. He added that the good news is COVID-19 appears to have leveled off in the county. Mr. Heatherly informed the board about the Rapid Response Testing Team that is available to respond to locations where a suspected outbreak occurs.

Dr. Tipton thanked the JCPS staff, students, and parents for pulling together during these unprecedented times. Dr. Tipton said he was very happy with the two orientation weeks and all principals reported that the kids were responding tremendously well. He said that the district has spoken with the health center and the hospital and that fewer numbers of cases are being reported. He stated that according to the health experts, JCPS has the ability to keep schools open by following the guidelines of wearing a mask, staying apart, and hand washing. Dr. Tipton made the following recommendations, and asked for board approval, based on information and data from local health officials showing a flattening rate of COVID-19 infections in Jackson County:

1. Academics - Students will return to face-to-face instruction on the A/B schedule beginning on September 14<sup>th</sup>. If a cluster of COVID cases is experienced, the board will meet in an emergency session to decide if that school will be changed to remote only, or if this will affect the entire district. The A/B schedule will be followed until further notice. A change will only be made if needed based on the course of the pandemic.
2. Athletics – JCPS will follow the North Carolina High School Athletic Association (NCHSAA) guidelines. No decision has been made on Middle School sports at this time. JCPS will continue practice and possible games depending upon guidance from NCHSAA.
3. Staff children – Staff members will be allowed to bring their own school age children to their classroom/office space on remote Wednesdays and will be required to supervise them.

**Action:** *Upon a motion by Mrs. Elizabeth Cooper and seconded by Mrs. Abigail Clayton, the board voted unanimously to approve the Superintendent's recommended plan for Week Five and Beyond – Academics return to A/B schedule, Athletics to follow NCHSAA guidance, and staff children allowed to be supervised in their parents classroom/office space on remote instruction Wednesdays.*

### **CLOSED SESSION**

*The board unanimously approved a motion by Mrs. Elizabeth Cooper and seconded by Mrs. Abigail Clayton, to enter into closed session pursuant to G.S. 143.318.11 for the following purposes: under subsection; (a) (1) to prevent the disclosure of privileged or confidential*

*personnel information pursuant to G.S. 115C-319-32 and (a) (3) to discuss matters protected by attorney-client privilege.*

*Upon a motion by Mrs. Elizabeth Cooper and seconded by Mrs. Abigail Clayton, the board voted unanimously to return to open session.*

**OPEN SESSION**

**ADJOURNMENT**

There being no objection, Chairperson Alison Laird-Large adjourned the meeting at 6:51 p.m.

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Mrs. Alison Laird-Large, Chairperson

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Dr. Tony Tipton, Secretary