

**MINUTES
BOARD OF EDUCATION
ELIZABETH CITY-PASQUOTANK PUBLIC SCHOOLS
December 21, 2020 - Meeting**

The Elizabeth City-Pasquotank Board of Education met virtually and via livestream, on Monday, December 21, 2020, at 12:00 p.m. The following Board members were present and constituted a quorum:

Sharon Warden, Chair
Mr. George Archuleta
Mrs. Virginia Houston
Mr. Rodney Walton

Ms. Pam Pureza
Mr. Daniel Spence
Dr. Shelia Williams

The following staff members were present:

Dr. Catherine Edmonds, Superintendent
Rachael Haines, Chief Finance Officer
Rhonda James-Davis, Chief Human Resources Officer
Dr. Amy Spencer, Chief Academic Officer
Delishia Moore, Principal of ECMS
Adrian Fonville, Principal of RRMS
Amy Fyffe, Principal of ECP Early College
Dr. Katina Jones-Waples, Principal of Sheep-Harney Elementary
Cassandra Young, ECPPS Lead Nurse
Dr. Holly Glenn, Interim Director of Exceptional Children
Tammy W. Sawyer, Director of Community Schools/PIO
Executive Asst to Superintendent and Board

1.Meeting Called to Order by Chair

Chair Warden called the meeting to order at 12:01 p.m.

2.Pledge of Allegiance and Moment of Silence

Chair Warden dispensed with this agenda item

3.Roll Call

Chair Warden dispensed with this agenda item

4.Ethics Awareness and Identification of Conflicts or Potential Conflicts of Interest

Chair Warden dispensed with this agenda item

5.Approval of Agenda (Action)

A motion was made by Virginia Houston, seconded by Dr. Shelia Williams, and unanimously carried, as confirmed by roll call, to approve the agenda as shared by Chair Warden.

11.Agenda Items

Discussion of COVID Related Matters: Chair Warden called the meeting for December 21st as an open session for everyone to be able to hear important information from the ECPPS Reentry Task Force team members with regard to COVID. Superintendent Edmonds shared the background of the Reentry Task Force and how this team has met along the way to design reentry and address safety protocols and needs of the schools and district related to

COVID-19. Nurse Young shared information with the board about COVID cases within ECPPS. She shared the trends of reported cases or exposures (quarantines) from prior to Thanksgiving to current. The data demonstrated that numbers doubled following the Thanksgiving break and could be attributed to gatherings during the holiday. Staff nurses and the local health department are anticipating the same trend following the Christmas holiday break. Nurse Young confirmed that ECPPS is still requiring a 14-day quarantine period. Based on questions, she further shared the guidelines surrounding positives and exposures and the quarantine surrounding those situations.

Dr. Waples, Sheep-Harney Principal, shared concern regarding staff and the availability of substitutes. She also shared that the COVID notifications, although necessary, create anxiety among staff and families.

Delishia Moore, ECMS Principal, shared staffing concerns also. She shared her own personal concerns regarding COVID. She shared that the number of students coming to the building is decreasing. She shared support for a 14-day period following the holiday for quarantine.

Adrian Fonville, RRMS Principal, shared the same thoughts on having a 14-day quarantine period for families following the holiday. This quarantine period would show staff that we are supporting them and understand their concerns regarding safety at this time.

Amy Fyffe, ECP Early College Principal, shared the same concerns that other principals expressed. We are seeing increasing numbers. When one family gets sick, the entire family is quarantined. It was a real concern that numbers spiked after Thanksgiving. She shared that many of her students have shared they will be traveling not only to other states, but to other countries.

Rhonda James-Davis shared that we have a limited number of substitutes at this time, but have two more coming on board. We have 18 available to come into buildings. There are additional substitutes on our list, but they are not willing to come into the building for face-to-face. She shared that we have approximately 90 staff members who have submitted documentation to allow them to work remotely. There are three additional staff members who have requested the documentation to have their healthcare provider complete to qualify them for remote status.

Dr. Holly Glenn, Exceptional Children Director, indicated the Exceptional Children's program is experiencing the same staffing issues or concerns. She shared that with the increases and the newest strains of the virus, a break would be helpful. She said the Exceptional Children's Department will support the decision of the Board.

Chair Warden opened the floor for questions from board members. It was asked if any of the principals had received feedback from parents or teachers with regard to this matter. Principal Moore emphasized a decrease in students attending face-to-face. She also said they are experiencing quite a bit of the stomach flu. Many parents are opting to keep their children at home. Currently, they are having to shift students due to not having staff available in the building. Principal Waples echoed the same shared by Principal Moore. Principal Fonville said staff are there serving, but they are concerned and are asking if there will be a quarantine period following the break. The question was asked if there is a 14-day extension of remote learning, will staff feel comfortable coming back. Principal Fonville said staff has

expressed appreciation for a quarantine period. Principal Fyffe said her staff have expressed the same and are comfortable with coming back after a quarantine period.

A board member shared thoughts and concerns regarding the number of days being requested and the potential for travel during the extended remote learning period. There is also the Martin Luther King holiday. Additionally, for those days we are in remote learning, many students will have to go to other locations in the community while parents work. If numbers are high at spring break, are we going to have to consider this plan once again.

Nurse Young shared that the concerns from staff could also stem from the season we are in for other illnesses such as cold and flu which all have similar symptoms to COVID.

Principal Moore indicated that the number of days being requested also took into consideration the calendar and with the remote days already scheduled and the holidays, it would only result in seven days being remote.

A board member shared that with the time after the holidays is typically a period that does not have a great deal of activity. Leaning on the leadership and their recommendations, the board needs to consider the information shared.

A question was raised from a board member about when the 14-day period begins. Superintendent Edmonds shared that it would begin on January 4, 2021. This period would only result in seven face-to-face days that would be remote. Students would return on Thursday, January 21, 2021.

Nurse Young also shared that Governor Cooper has requested that those traveling out of the state quarantine upon their return.

A board member asked if this period would include high school. Superintendent Edmonds shared that it would be across the board due to the concerns shared by the principal. It was also asked by a member if the decrease in the number of students attending face-to-face, has helped with addressing the staffing needs. Principal Waples shared that it has not because the same number of teachers are still needed as they are trying to keep students in the same classrooms. The member asked what the plan is for staff during the quarantine period. Superintendent Edmonds shared that when students are in remote status, instruction is still delivered and teachers will continue to teach. She further shared that instructional staff and instructional support staff will work remotely during the quarantine period. Principal Fonville added that this decision was made because staff will also be traveling during the holidays.

Board members shared appreciation for the work of the Reentry Task Force and thanked those present for the meeting for sharing. Appreciation was also expressed for all staff within the district.

A motion was made by Dr. Shelia Williams, seconded by Virginia Houston, and carried, as confirmed by roll call, to approve the delay of school entry between January 6th and January 21st for a seven-day no face-to-face. Pam Pureza voted against the motion.

13.Other

Chair Warden reminded members that there is a special meeting of the Board on January 4, 2021 at noon. The meeting will be held virtually. She requested that middle school principals and athletic directors be present for the discussion of middle school athletics.

14.Adjournment

Chair Warden adjourned the meeting at 1:11 p.m.

Chair

Secretary