

**Jackson County Board of Education
Minutes of Regular Meeting
Sylva, North Carolina**

398 Hospital Road, Sylva

July 27, 2021

5:30 p.m.

The Jackson County Board of Education held their regular session on Tuesday, July 27, 2021, at 5:30 p.m., at the Board of Education Administrative Office Board Room, 3998 Hospital Road, Sylva, North Carolina. The following members were present:

Alison Laird-Large, Chairperson
Elizabeth Cooper, Vice-Chair
Wes Jamison
Abigail Clayton

The following members were present via telephone and/or online platform:

Margaret McRae

Also present were Dr. Dana L. Ayers, Superintendent; Jacob Buchanan, Deputy Superintendent; Christopher Z. Campbell, Board Attorney; Jeremiah Jackson, Chief Technology Officer; and Cora Fields, Board Assistant.

CALL TO ORDER

Chairperson Alison Laird Large called the meeting to order.

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.

Action: *Upon a motion by Mrs. Elizabeth Cooper and seconded by Mrs. Abigail Clayton, the board unanimously approved the consent action agenda:*

- A. Draft Closed Session Minutes for Regular Meeting on June 22, 2021.

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

CALL TO ORDER – REGULAR BUSINESS MEETING

Chairperson Alison Laird Large called the regular business 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.

OPEN SESSION FOR PUBLIC COMMENTS

Board Assistant, Cora Fields, read the following public comment:

On Monday, July 26, 2021, I received the following public comment: “We are looking forward to discussion on the following items: Are aspects of Critical Race Theory (CRT) taught in local schools? How is Black Lives Matter addressed within the school curriculum? Sincerely, Dr. Michael and Sheila Padgett.

Dr. John Edwards, spoke to board about the need for the Bible to be reintroduced into our public school curriculum. He provided copies of a letter he has written to former NC State Superintendent of Public Instruction, Mark Robinson, and a petition to reinstate the Judeo-Christian Bible as curriculum in public education.

CONSENT ACTION AGENDA

Action: *Upon a motion by Mrs. Elizabeth Cooper and seconded by Mrs. Abigail Clayton, the board unanimously approved the consent action agenda:*

- A. Open Session Minutes of Regular Meeting of June 22, 2021.

INFORMATION AGENDA

- A. **Agenda Item:** Superintendent’s Report
Presenter: Dr. Dana L. Ayers, Superintendent

Dr. Ayers reported on the following:

1. July has been extremely busy and we have successfully navigated six weeks of our summer program opportunities at Smoky Mountain High, Blue Ridge and Fairview. Our final day of summer activities is Friday. Our JCPS staff met the challenge of serving hundreds of students, staffing for school nutrition, custodial and bus drivers while managing a full weekly schedule. It was outstanding for kids to be in school recapturing missed opportunities from the past year.
2. Dr. Ayers’ focus is now on the 2021-2022 school year. We will welcome students back to school on Monday, August 16th for a normal, five-day a week schedule. To prepare for this, she looks forward to meeting many of our families and community members in the upcoming “Meet the Super!” events being held at three locations across the district. These events on July 29th, August 3rd and August 5th are open to the public and offered at several schools. Her intent is to interact with our JCPS community and meet/greet people in an informal setting. Refreshments will be available at all locations.

3. Several staffing changes have occurred in the past few weeks within JCPS. We are welcoming new principal, Heather Reidinger, to Jackson Community School. Additionally, a familiar name is stepping into the role of JCPS Human Resources Director. Teri Walawender, current Blue Ridge School principal (for the remainder of the week), will officially begin her new position on August 2nd. A new principal will be named this evening to take the reins of Blue Ridge School.
4. Most exciting is news regarding academics! For the first time in many years, JCPS will have uniform math and reading curricula across all kindergarten through eighth grade classrooms. Our teachers and administrators will be provided district professional development and implementation plans to support these new materials as well as ongoing learning opportunities to strengthen instruction throughout the year. This is an exciting time for our instructional leaders; students will greatly benefit from these new resources.
5. Dr. Ayers invited families to support our upcoming athletic events. In just the first week of school, our student-athletes will participate in soccer, volleyball and football games. She hopes to see many families and community members supporting our JCPS coaches and athletes. We will be live-streaming many of our athletic events again this year as a service to those who cannot attend in person. More to come, soon, on how to watch from home and games that will be streamed.
6. Finally, there has been much discussion regarding Critical Race Theory and what this means for JCPS. Jackson County Public Schools will teach the standards as required by the NC Department of Public Instruction. We will teach history in an unbiased and factual manner. Most importantly, we will follow the NC curriculum standards for social studies and history to ensure students receive appropriate, standard-aligned instruction.

B. Agenda Item: School Nutrition and SHAC Update

Presenter: Mrs. Laura Cabe, School Nutrition Director

Mrs. Cabe updated the board about the seamless summer option that will include free breakfast and lunch for anyone 18 years or younger. She stated that there will also be curbside meal pickup at Blue Ridge School, Smokey Mountain Elementary School and Smokey Mountain High School. Ms. Cabe informed the board that the School Health Advisory Committee has scheduled four meetings this year and will continue to support mental health and wellness for students and staff.

C. Agenda Item: Unaudited Financial Summary

Presenter: Mrs. Kristie Walker, Chief Financial Officer

Mrs. Walker presented the Unaudited Financial Summary as of June 30, 2021.

ACTION AGENDA

A. Agenda Item: COVID 19 Safety Protocols for 2021-2022

Presenter: Dr. Dana L. Ayers, Superintendent

Dr. Ayers informed the board that the Executive Order requiring face masks expires at 5:00 p.m. on July 30th. The NC Governor has passed the responsibility to require masks to the local school boards. She added that the CDC has recommended all K-12 students be masked regardless of vaccine status as of 3 p.m. today. Dr. Ayers presented the board with three options for the coming school year:

- Option A. Masks required for all students and staff in grades PreK through 12, regardless of vaccine status.
- Option B. Masks required for PreK through grade 8 students and staff. Masks required for unvaccinated student and staff in grades 9-12.
- Option C. Masks not required for any students or staff. Masks are optional for families and staff to choose.

The board discussed all three options and choose Option A. The board will review this decision at the September, November, January and March board meetings. The board delegated the Superintendent to modify the mask regulation for athletic activities within the district.

Action: *Upon a motion by Mrs. Elizabeth Cooper and seconded by Mrs. Abigail Clayton, the board voted unanimously to approve Option A.*

Action: *Upon a motion by Mrs. Elizabeth Cooper and seconded by Mr. Wes Jamison, the board voted unanimously to delegate the Superintendent and Administration to modify the mask regulations for athletic activities.*

- B. **Agenda Item:** Second Amendment and Restatement of the Memorandum Of Agreement (MOA) between Western Carolina University (WCU) – Catamount School and Jackson County Public Schools

Presenter: Dr. Dana L. Ayers, Superintendent

Dr. Ayers presented the Second Amendment and Restatement of the MOA between JCPS and WCU to operate the Catamount School at SMHS and asked for board approval.

Action: *Upon a motion by Mrs. Elizabeth Cooper and seconded by Mrs. Abigail Clayton, the board voted unanimously to approve the Second Amendment and Restatement of the MOA between JCPS and WCU to operate the Catamount School at SMHS.*

- C. **Agenda Item:** JCPS School Safety Egress Approval

Presenter: Jake Buchanan, Deputy Superintendent

Mr. Buchanan updated the board on the JCPS School Safety Egress projects. He informed the board that the projects will be completed in the most cost-effective order. He said that most of the work in exterior and crews will be working year-around with minimum disruption to the schools. Mr. Buchanan asked the board to authorize and approve the Superintendent to enter into a contract with Buchanan & Sons Construction, following legal review, and to authorize the Deputy Superintendent to serve as owner/project manager.

Action: *Upon a motion by Mrs. Elizabeth Cooper and seconded by Mr. Wes Jamison, the board voted unanimously to approve/authorize the Superintendent to enter into a contract with Buchanan & Sons Construction, following legal review, and to authorize the Deputy Superintendent to serve as owner/project manager.*

D. Agenda Item: Finalsite website Approval

Presenter: Jeremiah Jackson, Chief Technology Officer

Mr. Jackson presented the board with a proposal from Finalsite to update the JCPS website to include translation services and ADA compliance requirements and asked for board approval.

Action: *Upon a motion by Mrs. Elizabeth Cooper and seconded by Mrs. Abigail Clayton, the board voted unanimously to approve the Finalsite proposal to update the JCPS website.*

E. Agenda Item: Microsoft Licensing Agreement Renewal Approval

Presenter: Jeremiah Jackson, Chief Technology Officer

Mr. Jackson presented the Microsoft Licensing Agreement renewal and asked for board approval.

Action: *Upon a motion by Mrs. Elizabeth Cooper and seconded by Mr. Wes Jamison, the board voted unanimously to approve the Microsoft Licensing Agreement renewal.*

F. Agenda Item: College Advising Corps – Appalachian State Memorandum Of Understanding Approval

Presenter: Angie Dills, Chief Academic Officer

Mrs. Dills presented the updated grant-funded College Advising Corps MOU that provides funding for school counselors at SMHS to help rural communities increase college-going students and asked for board approval.

Action: *Upon a motion by Mrs. Elizabeth Cooper and seconded by Mrs. Abigail Clayton, the board voted unanimously to approve the updated College Advising Corps MOU.*

G. Agenda Item: Wit & Wisdom ELA Curriculum Purchase Approval

Presenter: Angie Dills, Chief Academic Officer

Mrs. Dills presented the Wit & Wisdom ELA K-8 Curriculum purchase that will align reading and ELA curriculum across the district and asked for board approval.

Action: *Upon a motion by Mrs. Elizabeth Cooper and seconded by Mrs. Abigail Clayton, the board voted unanimously to approve the purchase of the Wit & Wisdom ELA K-8 curriculum.*

H. Agenda Item: Geodes ELA Curriculum Purchase Approval

Presenter: Angie Dills, Chief Academic Officer

Mrs. Dills presented the Geodes ELA Curriculum purchase and asked for board approval.

Action: *Upon a motion by Mrs. Elizabeth Cooper and seconded by Mr. Wes Jamison, the board voted unanimously to approve the purchase of the Geodes ELA Curriculum.*

I. Agenda Item: 2021-2022 Student Handbook Approval

Presenter: Angie Dills, Chief Academic Officer

Mrs. Dills presented the 2021-2022 Student Handbook and asked for board approval.

Action: *Upon a motion by Mrs. Elizabeth Cooper and seconded by Mr. Wes Jamison, the board voted unanimously to approve the 2021-2022 Student Handbook.*

J. Agenda Item: School Nutrition Procurement Plan for 2021-2022

Presenter: Laura Cabe, School Nutrition Director

Mrs. Cabe presented the 2021-2022 School Nutrition Procurement Plan and asked for board approval.

Action: *Upon a motion by Mrs. Elizabeth Cooper and seconded by Mr. Wes Jamison, the board voted unanimously to approve the 2021-2022 School Nutrition Procurement Plan.*

K. Agenda Item: Bus Camera Purchase Approval

Presenter: Josh Francis, Transportation Director

Mr. Francis presented a proposal to purchase 29 new high-definition bus cameras from Safety Vision and asked for board approval.

Action: *Upon a motion by Mrs. Elizabeth Cooper and seconded by Mrs. Abigail Clayton, the board voted unanimously to approve the purchase of 29 bus cameras from Safety Vision.*

L. Agenda Item: Policy Updates

Presenter: Jake Buchanan, Deputy Superintendent

Policy Updates:

1. Graduation Requirements (3460)
2. Foreign Exchange Student Program (3630/4160)
3. Attendance, Absenteeism, and Truancy (4400)
4. Teleworking (7503)

Mr. Buchanan reviewed the above listed policy updates and reinstatements of policies that were suspended due to COVID-19 and asked for board approval.

Action: *Upon a motion by Mrs. Elizabeth Cooper and seconded by Mr. Wes Jamison, the board voted unanimously to approve the updates and reinstatements of board policies.*

OPEN SESSION

PERSONNEL ACTION AGENDA

Action: *Upon a motion made by Mrs. Elizabeth Cooper and seconded by Mrs. Abigail Clayton, the board voted unanimously to approve the personnel agenda as recommended by Dr. Ayers. The board unanimously approved the following recommendations:*

Employee Recommendations:

1. Bonen-Clark, Michael – Teacher, CVES
2. Bramlett, Brianne – Teacher, CVES
3. Brown, Tabitha – EC Teacher Assistant, CVES

4. Browning, Amy – Receptionist, SCES
5. Cauley, Cleis – Teacher, FES and SMES
6. Cogdill, Alicia – Instructional Support Teacher Assistant, FES
7. Cowan, Kheri – Principal, Blue Ridge School
8. Frady, Dillon - Temporary Custodian, CVES
9. Greene, Heather – Media Coordinator, BRS
10. Hansen, Debbie – Instructional Support Teacher Assistant, FES
11. Heim, Lindsay – Speech Language Pathologist, SMHS and CVES
12. Helton, Mary Ellen – Instructional Support Teacher Assistant, SMES
13. High, Elaine – EC Teacher, FES
14. Laws, Kaylah – EC Teacher, SCES
15. Martinko, Sarah – Teacher, SMHS and SCES
16. McFadden, Kathy – Temporary EC Teacher Assistant, SCES
17. McFalls, Alicia Nicole – Instructional Support Teacher Assistant, FES
18. Miller, Carly – Teacher, CVES
19. Mills, Jordan – Teacher, SMHS
20. Morgan-Nations, Ryan – EC Teacher Assistant, SCES
21. Phillips, Angela – Teacher, SMHS
22. Reidinger, Heather – Principal, JCS
23. Walawender, Teri – Human Resources Director, CO
24. Watkins, Rebekkah – Teacher, BRS
26. Wooldridge, Sarah – HR Coordinator, CO
27. Gentry, Logan – Teacher, SMHS

Employee Recommendation – Summer Programs

1. Borchelt, Carly – Academic Program Teacher, FES
2. Griekspoor, Nicholas – EC Teacher Assistant, SMHS
3. Maney, Angela – Summer Bus Cleaning, Bus Garage
4. Marr, Michelle – Academic Program Supervisor Substitute, BRS
5. Sutton, Theresa – Substitute Summer School Nurse, SMHS and FES
6. Williams, Joshua – EC Teacher, FES and SMHS

Employee Resignations:

1. Callaham, Lorie – School Nutrition Assistant, FES
2. Clayton, Heather – Teacher, CVES
3. Frady, Melissa – School Nutrition Assistant, SMES
4. Fritts, Kristin – Teacher, CVES
5. Jones, Kathee – Instructional Facilitator, FES
6. Karcher, Susan – Speech Language Pathologist, SMHS
7. Kirkman, Susan – School Nutrition Bookkeeper, CO
8. Lunsford, Angela – Principal, JCS
9. Melvin, Jason – Head Coach Women’s Golf, SMHS
10. Moody, Tony – Head Coach Wrestling, SMHS
11. Orr, Amanda – Teacher, SMHS
12. Sessoms, Todd – EC Teacher, SMHS
13. Taylor, Tracy – ESL Tutor, SCES and SMHS
14. Wike, Margaret – Receptionist and Bus Driver, SCES
15. Willett, Danielle – Teacher, CVES

16. Wood, Paige – Teacher, FES

Employee Retirements:

1. Parris, Melissa – CTE Teacher Assistant, SMHS

Staff, Non-Staff and Returning Coach Recommendations:

1. Chambers, Angela – Assistant Coach Varsity Volleyball, SMHS – Returning Staff
2. Davis, Megan – Athletic Director, SCES – New Staff
3. Dezarn, Megan – Head Coach Women’s Golf, SMHS – Returning Staff
4. Evans, Gabriela – Assistant Coach Soccer, SCES – Returning Staff
5. Henson, Chris – Assistant Coach Varsity Men’s Soccer, SMHS – Returning Non-Staff
6. Pressley, David – Assistant Coach Varsity Football, SMHS – Returning Non-Staff
7. Sink, Zeb – Assistant Coach JV Men’s Soccer, SMHS – New Non-Staff
8. Swartzwelder, Katie – Head Coach Soccer, SCES – Returning Staff

Action: *Mrs. Abigail Clayton recused herself from the vote. Upon a motion made by Mrs. Elizabeth Cooper and seconded by Mr. Wes Jamison, the board approved the following recommendation:*

Employee Recommendations:

25. Woods, Anna – Teacher, FES

RECESS

The board took a brief recess at approximately 7:45 p.m.

WORK SESSION

Board Attorney Chris Campbell provided an updated Ethics Training work session to all board members, staff and directors present.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

The next regularly scheduled business meeting of the Board of Education is August 24, 2021, at 5:30 p.m., at the Board of Education Administrative Office, 398 Hospital Road, Sylva, North Carolina.

ADJOURNMENT

Action: *Upon a motion by Mrs. Elizabeth Cooper and seconded by Mr. Wes Jamison, the board voted unanimously to adjourn the meeting at 8:15 p.m.*

Alison Laird Large, Chairperson

Dr. Dana L. Ayers, Secretary