

**MINUTES
BOARD OF EDUCATION
ELIZABETH CITY-PASQUOTANK PUBLIC SCHOOLS
September 2, 2021 - Special Session**

The Elizabeth City-Pasquotank Board of Education met in special session on Thursday, September 2, 2021, at 5:00 p.m. The following Board members were present and constituted a quorum:

Sharon Warden, Chair
George Archuleta
Virginia Houston
Pam Pureza

Daniel Spence
Rodney Walton
Dr. Shelia Williams

The following staff members were present:

Dr. Eddie Ingram, Interim Superintendent
Rhonda James-Davis, Chief Human Resources Officer
Dr. Amy Spencer, Chief Academic Officer
Rachael Haines, Chief Finance Officer
Amber Godfrey, Director of Technology
Tammy W. Sawyer, Director of Community Schools/PIO/Exec. Asst to the Supt. & Board

Others in attendance:

Ben Gallop, School Board Attorney Representative

1.Meeting Called to Order by Chair

Chair Warden called the meeting to order at 5:01 p.m.

2.Roll Call

Tammy Sawyer called the roll and recorded members in attendance for the meeting. All members were in attendance for the meeting.

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

Virginia Houston read the ethics statement and allowed members the opportunity to identify any conflicts or potential conflicts. The record reflects that no conflicts exist.

4.Approval of Agenda

A motion was made by George Archuleta, seconded by Daniel Spence, and unanimously carried, as confirmed by roll call, to approve the agenda.

5.Agenda

School Operations Related to Developing COVID Trends within our Community

Dr. Ingram provided an update to the board on the number of quarantines due to COVID and the number of COVID positives within the district, reminding them of the fluid situation at this time. He shared SB 654, ratified on August 26, 2021, which authorizes school districts to implement virtual learning with consent of a parent/guardian in accordance with a state approved virtual learning plan. The state has given permission for virtual instruction by choice. Ingram shared that we recognize that staffing could be challenging; however, he felt like there may be those that would be interested in virtual teaching. He addressed parents, letting them know that we have heard their voices, recognizing their concern and their desire for virtual due to COVID concerns. He recommended to the board that we expand our current virtual option. We want parents who are choosing and asking for virtual to be allowed that opportunity.

The district developed a survey to garner interest from parents for an expanded virtual option. The survey will be available to go out quickly so we can determine interest and get the program lined up as quickly as possible. Additionally, he shared that the district has scheduled separate meetings with staff and families immediately following the board meeting to provide information from the meeting regarding virtual learning.

Dr. Ingram asked Dr. Amy Spencer, Chief Academic Officer, to come forward to share additional information with the board on virtual learning options as well as the plan for those who are quarantined.

Dr. Spencer provided an overview of the virtual opportunity offered at the beginning of the school year for those with medical documentation. When we reported to the board on August 23, 2021, there were 59 students approved for virtual. Spencer shared that the numbers have increased and there is now the need to implement an application closing date. We now have 95 students that are virtual (37 elementary level, 20 middle school, 37 high school). Dr. Spencer provided information regarding the current instructional plan for those in the virtual learning option for medical related purposes. The district will utilize teachers hired from those approved for virtual positions along with Edgenuity for secondary. There will be educator support in place for secondary students also.

She further shared that a variety of scenarios for instruction were being discussed should we expand the virtual learning opportunity.

Dr. Ingram shared with the board that he thinks it's a moral imperative to offer an extended virtual option for students. Parents have expressed concerns that they may not necessarily be able to secure medical documentation for, but nonetheless, it doesn't make the issues any less valid.

He further shared that he believes we can attend school safely in person by ensuring we are washing hands and sanitizing, wearing face coverings and distancing as much as possible. We are trying to meet the needs of everyone which is hard to do. I encourage the board to allow us this flexibility for our parents who have requested it.

There was additional discussion among members and staff regarding professional development for virtual learning, the instructional plan for those in quarantine, and staffing related to the virtual options.

A motion was made by Pam Pureza, seconded by George Archuleta, and carried, as confirmed by roll call vote, to accept the superintendent's recommendations to expand our current virtual option as allowed by Senate Bill 654, to allow families to choose virtual instruction. The plan for the extended virtual option will be shared with the board at a subsequent meeting.

6.Other

No further business was shared by the board.

7.Adjournment

A motion was made by Virginia Houston, seconded by Pam Pureza, and carried, as confirmed by roll call, to adjourn the meeting. The meeting adjourned at 6:42 p.m.