

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

398 Hospital Road, Sylva

October 28, 2021

5:45 p.m.

The Jackson County Board of Education met in regular session at 5:45 p.m. on Tuesday, October 26, 2021, at the Board of Education Administrative Office Board Room, 398 Hospital Road, Sylva, North Carolina. The meeting was conducted using video and telephone conferencing to limit the number of people present for the meeting. The following members were present:

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

Also present were Dr. Dana L. Ayers, Superintendent; Jake Buchanan, Deputy Superintendent; Teri Walawender, Human Resources Director; Ashley Leonard, Board Attorney; Jeremiah Jackson, Chief Technology Officer; and Cora Fields, Board Assistant.

CALL TO ORDER

Chairperson Alison Laird Large called the business 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:*

1. Draft Closed Session Minutes for Regular Meeting on September 28, 2021.

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

CALL TO ORDER – REGULAR BUSINESS MEETING

Chairperson Alison Laird Large called the regular business meeting to order.

The students from Cullowhee Valley Elementary School led the Pledge of Allegiance via video.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Upon a motion by Mrs. Elizabeth Cooper and seconded by Mrs. Abigail Clayton, the board voted unanimously to approve the Agenda.

SPECIAL RECOGNITION

Dr. Ayers presented a Certificate of Recognition to Mrs. Kristin Holt, JCEC Science Teacher, for being named the North Carolina Science Teachers Association (NCSTA) District 8 Outstanding High School Science Teacher for 2021.

OPEN SESSION FOR PUBLIC COMMENTS

Mrs. Fields read the instructions for Public Comments to the board.

Edward Thurston – Mr. Thurston shared his concern with the board about board policy 5020 - Visitors to the School. Mr. Thurston stated that if a parent is properly wearing a mask while on school property they will not pose a risk to anyone. He shared information found on thehealthboard.com that cites a nationwide study of abuse. He said that the study showed 6 to 10 percent of public school children were sexually abused or harassed by teachers and other school employees. He said that by removing the possibility of a parent being present on campus will only increase the potential of risk. Mr. Thurston stated that he is also concerned about the current masking policy for children. He said that there is a lack of discussion and dismissive nature of the issue by the board. He asked the board to set some sort of goal or standard, some sort of realistic expectation parents and student can have and what to expect moving forward. Mr. Thurston stated that the majority of people that want the vaccine have gotten it and those that haven't gotten the vaccine don't want it. He asked the board to remember that people are capable of making the choice that's best for them and those around them.

Keith Blaine – Mr. Blaine stated that he has been coming here month after month requesting the board to take action. He stated that it is his expectation of the board to address every person that comes here with bringing a motion forward. Mr. Blaine asked the board if they have taken action on any requests received in the last year. He stated that we need our elected officials to step up.

John Edwards – Mr. Edwards shared with the board that bibles need to be put back in the schools. He said the reason he thinks this is critical is because our history, our Constitution, the North Carolina Constitution, our currency all has reference to God. He said that our children must not be brought up in a vacuum. Mr. Edwards stated that our country's law and justice and administration, everything in our country is based on biblical knowledge of the bible. He stated that our children are being raised in a godless environment that is unacceptable. He asked are we going to walk with knowledge and understanding or are we going to try to invent something, because man's inventions don't always turn out right.

Kim Moore – Ms. Moore said that she was here to speak about Critical Race Theory. She said that she thinks that not enough people from the African American community are speaking up about how they feel about this. She said that she has looked at a lot of materials about CRT and it seems racist at its core. Ms. Moore shared information about her background with the board. She said that

we should teach African American history and that if CRT is introduced into the curriculum it will create racism.

Justin Castle – Mr. Castle said he was here about the mask mandate. He said that Macon County has made masks optional and if Jackson County wants to be on par with them, we should do the same. He said that it should be up to the parent to choose. He added that no board can dictate what he does with his child. He added that None of this is logical. He thinks this will add to a vaccine mandate. He said that citizen groups are being formed in Macon County and will be formed in Jackson County. He said that the board members positions are not forever and that someone will run against them and their spot will be taken if they don't listen to these people.

CONSENT ACTION AGENDA

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

- A. Open Session Minutes of Regular Meeting of September 28, 2021.

INFORMATION AGENDA

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

Dr. Ayers reported on the following items:

1. We concluded the first quarter of school on October 14th and are currently in week 11. This month we hosted Education NC reporter Caroline Parker, who visited classrooms at Smokey Mountain Elementary where the new Wit & Wisdom materials are in use. We also visited the arts programs at SMHS. The students were highly engaged and lessons were integrative and rigorous!
2. As we approach the upcoming Veterans Day holiday on November 11th, we will be honoring our JCPS staff who are veterans. We have 13 staff who are veterans and other contracted staff (SROs) who are also veterans. I genuinely thank them for their service to our country!
3. Our COVID positivity rate is 0.2% across the district. There are only nine active cases in JCPS as of this afternoon. This is exciting to know that we are doing well with our safety precautions. Of importance to note, we are working collaboratively with the Jackson County Health Dept to organize vaccine clinics for 5-11 year olds and their families at dates to be determined.
4. On the athletic front, the BREC varsity volleyball team finished the year 6-8 overall, second in the conference and made it to the first round of the state playoffs. The BREC varsity soccer team is completing its regular season this week. They are currently 5-5 overall and in third place in the conference. They have a chance to make the state playoffs in soccer.
5. At SMHS, football wrapped up second place and an automatic berth in the playoffs with their victory over Tuscola Friday night. They have a great chance to host a home playoff game on November 5th. The volleyball team finished fourth in the conference and had an excellent year. They defeated Atkins High School in the 1st round of the state tournament and will play at Fred T. Foard this evening in the second round of the state playoffs.

6. The SMHS women's golf had two golfers this year and both were all conference - Payton Broom who finished 2nd in conference and Chesney Coggins who finished 4th in conference. Payton Broom qualified for Regionals
7. Both the men's and women's team finished 3rd at the Mountain 7 Conference Cross Country Meet. Earning All Conference honors were Lily Buenting, Caleb Phillips and Parker Smith. Both teams will compete this weekend at regionals. The Men's Soccer team is currently third in the conference and has a chance to host a playoff game. Senior night for soccer is this Wednesday. Women's Tennis had a good year and competed recently at the conference tournament at West Henderson. I continue to encourage our families and community to attend athletic events at all of our schools and support our student-athletes.
8. I'd also like to revisit a topic that I have addressed over the last few months. There has been much media attention regarding Critical Race Theory. 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.
9. Finally, October is National Principals Month and we will honor both our assistant principals and principals with a special luncheon this week. It is certainly well-deserved. In honoring our principals, I want to share this video to highlight our amazing building leaders who serve students and staff in JCPS!
10. Dr. Ayers shared a special Principals Month video and thanked David Proffitt and concluded her superintendent report.

B. Agenda Item: Egress Courtyard Project Update

Presenter: Jake Buchanan, Deputy Superintendent

Mr. Buchanan presented and update to the Egress Courtyard Project. Mr. Buchanan said that the materials are being delivered and that the project will begin next week with the installation of underground utilities at SMES, BRS, FES and SMHS. The project will be done in phases and should be complete by next year.

C. Agenda Item: Unaudited Financial Summary

Presenter: Mrs. Kristie Walker, Chief Financial Officer

Mrs. Walker presented the Unaudited Financial Summary as of October 26, 2021.

D. Agenda Item: 1st Quarter Internal Audits

Presenter: Mrs. Kristie Walker, Chief Financial Officer

Mrs. Walker presented information from the 1st Quarter Internal Audits and informed the board that the audit observed no findings.

ACTION AGENDA

A. Agenda Item: District and School Improvement Plans

Presenter: Mr. Adam Holt, Director of Testing and Accountability

Mr. Holt presented the district and school improvement plans for 2021-2022 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 district and school improvements plans for 2021-2022.*

- B. **Agenda Item:** Approval for Two Replacement Doors and Automatic Controls at SMHS
Presenter: Jason Watson, Maintenance Director

Mr. Watson presented the quote for two replacement doors and automatic controls for C building 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 two replacement doors and automatic controls at SMHS.*

- C. **Agenda Item:** Big Brothers Big Sisters Partnership Agreement with Scotts Creek Elementary School
Presenter: Dr. Dana Ayers, Superintendent

Dr. Ayers presented the Partnership Agreement for Big Brothers Big Sisters with Scotts Creek Elementary School 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 Partnership Agreement for Big Brothers Big Sisters with Scotts Creek Elementary School.*

- D. **Agenda Item:** SMES Cherokee Culture Day
Presenter: Dr. Dana L. Ayers, Superintendent

Dr. Ayers presented planned activities for SMES Cherokee Culture Day on November 5, 2021 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 SMES Cherokee Culture Day.*

- E. **Agenda Item:** Review Mask Mandate
Presenter: Dr. Dana L. Ayers, Superintendent

Dr. Ayers reviewed the current JCPS mask policy that requires all students, staff, and educational visitors to wear masks when indoors. She said that the JCPS COVID numbers have remained low as a result of masking, social distancing, hand washing, and good custodial practices. As required by the Department of Public Instruction the board will review COVID procedures monthly.

Action: *Upon a motion by Mrs. Elizabeth Cooper and seconded by Mrs. Abigail Clayton, the board voted unanimously to approve the Mask requirement for all students, staff, and educational visitors in grades PreK through 12, regardless of vaccine status.*

- F. **Agenda Item:** BOE Meeting Location for November 2021

Presenter: Dr. Dana L. Ayers, Superintendent

Dr. Ayers requested the board change the location for the November 16, 2021 Board of Education meeting from Fairview Elementary School to the Central Office Board Room, to help limit the number of visitors to the school, 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 Central Office location for the November 16, 2021 board meeting.*

G. Agenda Item: Policy Updates

Presenter: Jake Buchanan, Deputy Superintendent

First Reading:

1. [Remote Participation in Board Meetings](#) (2302)
2. [Employee Dress and Appearance](#) (7340)

Updates:

1. [Parental Involvement](#) (1310/4002)
2. [Confidential Information](#) (2125/7315)
3. [Curriculum Development](#) (3100)
4. [Testing and Assessment](#) (3410)
5. [Student Promotion](#) (3420)
6. [Graduation Requirement](#) (3460)
7. [Licensure](#) (7130)
8. [Federal Grant Administration – Procurement Procedures](#) (8305-R)

Mr. Buchanan presented two new policies for first reading and updates to the eight policies listed above 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 updates to the eight policies listed above.*

H. Agenda Item: Field Trips

Presenter: Dr. Dana L. Ayers, Superintendent

1. [FES, Grade 6 - Ripley's Aquarium, Gatlinburg, TN, 2-24-22 to 2-25-22, TT7052.](#)
2. [SMHS, Grades 9-12 – Walt Disney World, Lake Buena Vista, FL, 03-31-22 to 04-03-22, TT7155.](#)
3. [SMES, Grade 1 – Ripley's Aquarium, Gatlinburg, TN, 11-12-21, TT7162.](#)

Dr. Ayers reviewed the above listed field trips 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 above listed field trips.*

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. Dana Ayers. The board unanimously approved the following recommendations:

Employee Recommendations:

1. Adams, Ziquila – Afterschool Assistant, CVES
2. Breuer, Ashlyn – Teacher Assistant, SMHS
3. Browne, Abigail – Substitute Bus Monitor, CVES
4. Carpenter, Donna – Afterschool Assistant, CVES
5. Cauley, Jeremy – Substitute Bus Driver, SMHS
6. Copeland, Debra – Custodian, CVES
7. Claire, Reanna – Teacher, FES
8. Draper, Samantha – Instructional Support Assistant, SMES
9. Eden, Zachary – Assistant Principal, BRS & BREC
10. Eldridge, Robert – Cherokee Culture Specialist, SMES
11. Haney, Teresa – Instructional Support Assistant, SMES
12. Hawken, Danielle – Teacher Assistant, SMES
13. Hayes, Kimberly – Teacher, FES
14. Hensley, Jeri -Tutor, FES
15. High, Rachel – SEL Support Assistant, CVES
16. Holt, Adam – Substitute Bus Driver, CVES
17. Huckabee, Delores – Custodian and Bus Driver, SCES
18. Hughes, Daphne – Homebound Teacher, SMHS
19. Jones, Angie – School Nutrition Assistant, CVES
20. Leopard, Sara – Tutor, FES
21. Marena, Levi – Electronic Consultant Band, SMHS
22. Martin, Kirstyn – Tutor, FES
23. Reece, Gretchen – Substitute Bus Monitor, CVES
24. Richmond, Denise – Instructional Support Assistant, SCES
25. Sealey, Sarah – Afterschool Assistant, CVES
26. Shepard, Tracy – School Nutrition Assistant, CVES
27. Thompson, Kevin – Woodwind-Visual Instructor Band, SMHS
28. Wilkinson, Matthew – Percussion Instructor Band, SMHS
29. Willson, Dorothea – Homebound Tutor, SCES
30. Wood, Heather – Bookkeeper, SCES
31. Young, Lyndsi – Substitute Bus Monitor, CVES

Employee Resignations:

1. Barrett, Samantha – Speech Language Pathologist, CVES
2. Brown, Virgle Cody – Custodian, CVES
3. Gass, Andrew – Custodian, SMES
4. Hunter, Kristal – Teacher, BRS
5. Kelley, Caleb – Bus Driver, SMHS
6. Kittle, Tyler – Tutor and In School Suspension, JCS

Staff, Non-Staff and Returning Coach Recommendations:

1. Alcantar, Elena – Head Coach MS Soccer, BREC – New Staff
2. Beck, Zack – Assistant Coach JV Football, SMHS – New Non-Staff

3. Bell, Tasha – Assistant Coach Soccer, SMES – Returning Staff
4. Bonen-Clark, Michael – Assistant Coach Soccer, CVES – Returning Staff
5. Brooks, Beth – Head Coach Volleyball, SMES – New Staff
6. Brown, Megan – Athletic Director Middle School, CVES – New Staff
7. Brown, Megan – Head Coach MS Volleyball, District wide – Returning Staff
8. Buenting, Abby – Head Coach JV Men’s Soccer, SMHS – New Non-Staff
9. Bumgarner, Mary – Athletic Activity Bus Driver, SMES – Returning Staff
10. Bumgarner, Mary – Athletic Director, SMES – Returning Staff
11. Burgess, Cierra – Head Coach Volleyball, FES – New Non-Staff
12. Davidson, Todd – Head Coach Indoor Track, SMHS – Returning Non-Staff
13. Davis, Thomas – Head Coach JV Wrestling, SMHS – New Non-Staff
14. Elkins, Brittany – Assistant Coach Varsity Boy’s Basketball, BREC – Returning Staff
15. Ellenburg, Jeremy – Athletic Activity Bus Driver, FES – Returning Staff
16. Ellenburg, Jeremy – Athletic Director, FES – Returning Staff
17. Gentry, Logan – Head Coach Swimming, SMHS – Returning Staff
18. Gribble, Corina – Assistant Coach District Cross Country, District wide – Returning Staff
19. Hansen, Debbie – Assistant Coach District Men’s Soccer, District wide – Returning Staff
20. Heath, Dan – Head Coach District Men’s Soccer, District wide – New Non-Staff
21. Kilpatrick, Alicia – Assistant Coach Volleyball, SMES – Returning Staff
22. Kostak, Abigail – Head Coach Soccer, CVES – Returning Staff
23. Larch, Catherine “Mindy” – Head Coach District Cross Country, District wide – Returning Non-Staff
24. Long, Michelle – Assistant Coach Cheer, SCES – Returning Staff
25. Long, Michelle – Assistant Coach Volleyball, SCES - Returning Staff
26. Love, Caitlin – Assistant Coach Volleyball, CVES – New Staff
27. McMahan, Luisa – Head Coach Volleyball, SCES – New Staff
28. Melton, Daniel – Assistant Coach JV Football, SMHS – New Non-Staff
29. Miller, Scott – Head Coach Soccer, SMES – Returning Staff
30. Mull, Jim – MS Athletics Bus Driver, BREC – Returning Non-Staff
31. Murphy, Ronda – Head Coach Cheer, SCES – Returning Staff
32. Nelson, Gabrielle – Head Coach JV Volleyball, SMHS – New Staff
33. Nicholson, Rachel – Assistant Coach District Volleyball, District wide – Returning Staff
34. Pitcher, Beth – Head Coach Volleyball, CVES – Returning Staff
35. Richards, Keith – Head Coach District MS Wrestling, District wide – Returning Staff
36. Shuler, Tiffany – Assistant Coach JV Volleyball, SMHS – New Staff
37. Steinel, Ashley – Assistant Coach Varsity Girl’s Basketball, BREC – Returning Staff
38. Steinel, Ashley – Head Coach MS Volleyball, BREC – Returning Staff
39. Stewart, Anna – Head Coach MS Girl’s Basketball, BREC – Returning Non-Staff
40. Stewart, Anna – Assistant Coach MS Volleyball, BREC – New Non-Staff
41. Wilson, Erik – Head Coach Varsity Wrestling, SMHS – Returning Staff
42. Wilson, Grace – Assistant Coach Volleyball, FES – New Non-Staff

ANNOUNCEMENTS

The next regularly scheduled business meeting of the Board of Education is November 16, 2021, at 6:00 p.m., at the Board of Education Administrative Office, 398 Hospital Road, Sylva, North Carolina.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no objection, Chairperson Alison Laird Large adjourned the meeting at 7:38 p.m.

Alison Laird Large, Chairperson

Dr. Dana L. Ayers, Secretary