

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

398 Hospital Road, Sylva

January 25, 2022

5:45 p.m.

The Jackson County Board of Education met in regular session at 5:45 p.m. on Tuesday, January 25, 2022, 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
Abigail Clayton

The following member was present via telephone and/or online platform:

Margaret McRae
Wes Jamison

Also present were Dr. Dana L. Ayers, Superintendent; Jake Buchanan, Deputy Superintendent; Teri Walawender, Human Resources Director; Ashley Leonard, Board Attorney; 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 December 14, 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 Smokey Mountain 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

1. National Board Certified Teachers and Renewals: Dr. Ayers presented Certificates of Recognition to Debbie Cloer, April Mays, Pam Shuler, Melanie Jacobs, Heather Bullock, Carla McAllister, Kathryn Moses, Patricia Fisher, Amanda Green and Tracie Holden for their Nation Board Certified Teacher renewals and to Jessica Stewart for obtaining her National Board Certification.
2. ESTEAM Pitch Competition Winners – SMES Students Madison Blankenship, Emelyn Bumgarner, Emma Miller and Andre Billie. Dr. Ayers presented each student with a Certificate of Recognition for their third-place award winning entry to the ESTEAM Pitch Competition.

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 December 14, 2021.

INFORMATION AGENDA

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

Dr. Ayers reported on the following items:

1. Happy New Year and second semester! We've had a good, though eventful start to the second half of the school year. As much as we all loved the snow last week, it creates an enormous amount of work and preparation for our transportation team. I want to offer Josh Francis and his team, who are on the roads at 4:00 am or earlier to ensure we make the safest and best decisions, a word of gratitude. I'm also very thankful for the dedication of our bus drivers who get our students to school safely each day. These JCPS staff members are truly deserving of our praise!
2. COVID has definitely impacted our return to school after the Christmas break. Our positivity rate is currently 0.6% and active cases are 27 that includes students and staff. Our highest positivity rate since our return was 1.8% about 10 days ago. We seem to have peaked and I am hopeful that the case and quarantine numbers will continue to fall over the coming weeks.
3. I want to share incredible news about our district preschool programs. Thanks to a generous grant from the Blue Ridge School Education Foundation, we will be opening a

second preschool classroom at Blue Ridge School for the 2022-23 school year. Our intent is to include 3-year-olds in this class. Most exciting is that this grant along with the grant awards from Dogwood Health Trust that we announced in December will double preschool opportunities for the upcoming year. That means we will be moving from three to six preschool classrooms across the district. All of our elementary schools will have preschool programs and registration will begin soon. Increasing early education and preschool programs is just one of my five goals for moving and growing Jackson County Public Schools. These new opportunities will be a tremendous benefit to our community.

4. In other good news, our Chief Financial Officer, Kristie Walker, has been awarded a \$1,000 scholarship for continuing education. Although she already holds a bachelor's degree, she, on her own initiative, decided to seek accreditation as a certified public accountant. We are very proud of Kristie and her expertise!
5. January is Board of Education appreciation month in NC and I share sincere thanks to each of our Board members! The NCSBA says, "School board members play a vital role in our communities and schools. They spend countless hours of their time and talents toward the advancement of public education. They are extraordinary people who tackle the enormous job of governing school districts, and their actions and decisions affect the present and future lives of our children. Board members contribute hundreds of hours each year leading their districts. Whether it be crafting policies, hiring top-notch administrators, listening to staff and student concerns, or recognizing outstanding programs, board members always keep their eyes on the goal of student achievement. Many school board members are facing unprecedented challenges in trying to navigate controversial topics in K-12 education, from COVID-19 to critical race theory; yet they continue to work with all stakeholders to ensure a bright future for every child. The time spent in board meetings represents just a small fraction of the hours school board members spend in leading their districts." Thank you to our Board members Abigail Clayton, Elizabeth Cooper, Ali Laird-Large, Wes Jamison, and Margaret McRae for their time and efforts to always put students first in JCPS! One important piece of information is that this is election year for open board seats. Please note the election window for filing reopens on February 24th and ends on March 4th, 2022.
6. Finally, our student athletes and coaches are wrapping up winter seasons and have enjoyed the opportunity to resume normal play even amid continuing Covid concerns. We are looking ahead to spring sports which begin in February. Thank you to families and our community that support our athletic and other extracurricular programs across the district.

B. Agenda Item: Egress Courtyard Update

Presenter: Jake Buchanan, Deputy Superintendent

Mr. Buchanan updated the board on the Egress Courtyard projects at Smokey Mountain Elementary School, Blue Ridge School, Fairview Elementary School and Smoky Mountain High School. Mr. Buchanan informed the board that the quality of work is excellent with anticipated completion dates for all four projects by this fall.

C. Agenda Item: Unaudited Financial Summary and Internal Audit Report

Presenter: Mrs. Kristie Walker, Chief Financial Officer

Mrs. Walker presented the Unaudited Financial Summary as of January 25, 2022. Mrs. Walker reported that internal audits for the period 10-01-2021 through 12-31-2021 were conducted with no issues reported.

OPEN SESSION FOR PUBLIC COMMENTS

Dr. John Edwards spoke to the board. He stated “Like I’ve said before, I’ll say again, I will keep on coming back with this one thing in mind. We are denying our children the right to know and if you don’t know then how can you make a choice if you don’t know God and who he is and what his character is like. How can we make a decision or even pledge allegiance one nation under God without knowing who this god is like or what he’s like. So what I’m seeing is when I talk with students that are little and high school and people who have come from other states to our college here, one thing I’m finding that they have a complete misconception in what God meant in American when the founding fathers wrote their constitution and we need to bush up on that. So how did they choose to use those words and what do those words really mean. What’s the significance of it because it affects our domestic tranquility, our every day lives, how we do business, how we relate to each other in the community. And if we lose that we lose a tremendous amount and that leads to the kind of anarchy were seeing in our country this date. Where people have weird concepts about God that are foreign to what the constitution founders had about God. Not that they didn’t know these other concepts, because they were very well-informed people. Our young people are not permitted to know that and when they’re told that, they’re sometimes given a biased idea that is really not in line with true history of man’s relationship to God. And as a nation our relationship to this God that we say one nation under God on our currency got written in God we trust. So all of this it makes more sense and its worth more time for the child to at least know that.”

ACTION AGENDA

A. Agenda Item: Budget Amendments

Presenter: Mrs. Kristie Walker, Chief Financial Officer

Mrs. Kristie Walker asked for board approved of budget amendments and transfers to the Capital Outlay Fund, Federal Grants Fund, Other Specific Revenue Fund, and the State Public School Fund.

Action: *Upon a motion by Mrs. Elizabeth Cooper and seconded by Mrs. Abigail Clayton the board voted unanimously to approve budget amendments and transfers to the Capital Outlay Fund, Federal Grants Fund, Other Specific Revenue Fund and the State Public School Fund.*

B. 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.*

- C. **Agenda Item:** Approval for Elevator Repair at Scotts Creek Elementary School
Presenter: Jake Buchanan, Deputy Superintendent

Mr. Buchanan presented a quote from Southern Elevator Company to repair the Scotts Creek Elementary School elevator 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 Scotts Creek Elementary School elevator repairs.*

- D. **Agenda Item:** Storage Upgrade for Servers
Presenter: Jeremiah Jackson, Chief Technology Officer

Mr. Jackson presented quotes for storage upgrades for JCPS servers and asked for board approval to purchase the Dell EMC PowerStore 500 T.

Action: *Upon a motion by Mrs. Elizabeth Cooper and seconded by Mrs. Abigail Clayton, the board voted unanimously to approve the purchase of the Dell EMC PowerStore unit.*

- E. **Agenda Item:** Securly (Internet Filter/Classroom Management/Monitoring)
Presenter: Jeremiah Jackson, Chief Technology Officer

Mr. Jackson presented quotes to purchase a new Internet Filter for JCPS from Securly 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 Securly Internet Filter.*

- F. **Agenda Item:** Indian Education Policies and Procedures Annual Approval
Presenter: Brent Speckhardt, Director of Professional Development and Teacher Growth

Mr. Speckhardt presented the Indian Education Policies and Procedures update 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 Indian Education Policies and Procedures.*

- G. **Agenda Item:** Field Trips
Presenter: Dr. Dana L. Ayers, Superintendent

1. FES, Grade 5 - Dollywood, Pigeon Forge, TN, 05-06-2022, TT7330.
2. FES, Grade 6 – Dollywood, Pigeon Forge, TN, 04-22-2022, TT7329.
3. CVES, Grade 8 – NC Zoon, Asheboro, NC 05-04-2022 to 05-06-2022, TT7276.

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

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. Bishop, Johnnie Nell – Part-time Custodian, CVES
2. Broom, Anita – Part-time Custodian, SMHS
3. Brown, Stephen – Custodian, SMHS
4. Dezarn, Megan – Custodian, SMHS
5. Dezarn, Megan – Bus Driver, SMHS
6. Duggins, Lesley – Project ACTIVATE Clinician/School Mental Health Clinician, CO
7. Eden, Zachary – Substitute Bus Driver, BRS
8. Edwards, Robert – Custodian-Bus Driver, SMHS
9. Evans, Kayla – Bus Monitor, CVES
10. Frizzell, Earl Nathan – Substitute Bus Driver, SMHS
11. Hill, Scott – Custodian-Bus Driver, SMHS
12. Inestroza, LeeAnn – Bus Driver, CVES
13. King, Mary – Teacher, CVES
14. Korman, Elizabeth – Teacher, BREC
15. Larch, Catherine – EC Teacher Assistant, SMES
16. Martin, Shirley – Grant Funded Tutor, SCES
17. McCraney, Reagan – Interim Teacher, SCES
18. McKee, Jennifer – Afterschool Tutor, BRS
19. Mills, Jordan – Custodian, SMHS
20. Pepper, Susan – Instructional Support Assistant, CVES
21. Pippio, Michelle – Certified Nursing Assistant, JCS
22. Porter, David – Part-time Custodian, CO
23. Reed, Tammy – School Nutrition Assistant, CVES
24. Shuler, Brittany – School Nutrition Assistant, SMES
25. Tappan, Cassidy – School Nutrition Assistant, SMHS
26. Tompkins, Suzanne – Custodian, SMHS
27. Watkins, Rebekkah – Teacher, BRS
28. Wilson, Stephanie – EC Teacher Assistant, BREC
29. Wingo, Summer – Afterschool Assistant, CVES
30. Wright, Heather – Custodian, SMHS

Employee Resignations

1. Adams, Bonnie – EC Teacher Assistant, CVES
2. Breuer, Ashlyn – Pre-K Teacher Assistant, SMES
3. Jones, Kennedy – SEL Assistant, FES
4. McGaha, Edward – Bus Driver, SMHS

5. Nation, Jennifer – Driver Education Instructor, Bus Garage
6. Thomas, Christopher – Technology Technician, CO

Staff, Non-Staff and Returning Coach Recommendations:

1. Davidson, Todd – Head Coach Men’s Track, SMHS – Returning Non-Staff
2. Mulligan, Tyler – Head Coach Men’s Tennis, SMHS – Returning Staff
3. West, Valerie Hope – Assistant Coach District Boy’s Basketball, SMHS District – New Non-Staff

ANNOUNCEMENTS

The next regularly scheduled business meeting of the Board of Education is February 22, 2022, at 5:45 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 7:25 p.m.

Alison Laird Large, Chairperson

Dr. Dana L. Ayers, Secretary