

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

398 Hospital Road, Sylva

February 22, 2022

5:45 p.m.

The Jackson County Board of Education met in regular session at 5:45 p.m. on Tuesday, February 22, 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 Chair
Wes Jamison
Abigail Clayton

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

Margaret McRae

Also present were Dr. Dana L. Ayers, Superintendent; Jacob Buchanan, Deputy Superintendent; Teri Walawender, Director of Human Resources; Jeremiah Jackson, Chief Technology Officer; Ashley Leonard, School 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 Mr. Wes Jamison, 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 Mr. Wes Jamison the board unanimously approved the consent action agenda:*

1. Draft Closed Session Minutes for Regular Meeting on January 25, 2022.

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.

Students from Smokey Mountain High School led the National Anthem and 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. Dr. Ayers presented a DPI Certificate in recognition of 100% Graduation Rate to Melanie Jacobs, JCEC Principal, for the 2020-2021 school year.
2. Dr. Ayers presented a Certificate of Recognition to David Proffitt, Chief Communications Officer for receiving four Gold and one Silver NCSPPA Awards.

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 January 25, 2022.

INFORMATION AGENDA

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

Dr. Ayers reported on the following:

1. There has been a whirlwind of activity in the last month and I am excited about things to come. First, I am pleased with our staff's diligence in keeping students in school and appreciative of the support our families and communities have offered. JCPS moved to mask OPTIONAL, effective yesterday. This coincides with the NC StrongSchools Toolkit update that only requires quarantining for positive or symptomatic students. I encourage families to make individual decisions to best meet their needs in regards to wearing of masks.
2. As I shared last week, our COVID data looks really good! As of today, we have 5 staff and 1 student case and a positivity rate of less than 0.1%. There are currently 13 students and staff in quarantine.
3. February is a busy month as we recognize various staff groups. We celebrated our school counselors earlier this month. They do a wonderful job serving our students and supporting our staff. Our JCPS counselors are: Paula Kennedy BREC, Julie Lambert CVS, Heather Bullock CVS, Ashley Miller FV, Mary Derks FV, Amy Fahey SMHS, Stacy Macke SMHS, Paige Jeleniewski SMHS, Natalie Roth SCE, Kaye Anderson SCE, Nancy Harmon JCS, and Brittany Brower SME.
4. February is also bus driver appreciation and we celebrated "Love the Bus" week. JCPS continues to struggle to have sufficient drivers and we are so thankful for those who drive

for us. Although it is a long list, I want to call the names of our fabulous drivers: Carlene Galloway, Ronnie Setzer, Megan Dezarn, Michelle Chastain, Danny Rigdon, Mike Taylor, Dennis Proffitt, Tim Copeland, Blake Fox, Autumn Hall, Jeremy Cauley, Elizabeth Waldroup, Scott Hill, Rudy Edwards, Maria Gotay, Wayne Crawford, Megan Davis, Bailey Ensley, Dawn Hornbuckle, Jerry Justice, Mike Treadway, Sheila Kinsey, Bridgett Shook, Stacy McNabb, Kheri Cowan, Ashley Steinel, Zachary Eden, Rita Ferrin, Lori Huckabee, Jill Cook, Brady Powell, Sam McMahan, Megan Brown, Chuck Bean, Brandon Mathis, Natalie Sutton, April Bates, Jason DuPree, LeeAnn Inestroza, Paul Graham, Danny Mathis, Aimee Karup, Brandon Ashe, Amy Buchanan, Doug Bailey, Holly Whisnant, Kathryn Moses, Matt Ammons, Mark Biddix, Larry Bates, Will Rich, Jesus Sandoval, Wes Willoughby, Georgeanne Simmons, and Mary Bumgarner. Bus Monitors: Amy Bryson, Katie Mayes, Logan Mcghee, Deborah Copeland, and Kayla Evans.

5. February is National CTE month! CTE (Career and Technical Education) prepares students to be college and career ready by focusing on high tech, high demand, and high skill career pathways leading to a wide range of industries and occupations. Those pathways include Agriculture, Food & Natural Resources; Architecture & Construction; Arts, A/V Technology & Communications; Business Management/Administration; Education & Training; Finance; Health Science; Hospitality & Tourism; Human Services; Information Technology; Public Safety; Marketing; STEM; and Transportation.
6. Did you know that JCPS teaches 54 CTE courses across our nine schools? And that when JCPS students complete a CTE pathway over 95% of them graduate on-time with his/her class? And in Jackson County, 93.3% of students completing a CTE pathway are either in postsecondary education, advanced training, in the military or employed one year after they graduate? And in 2020-2021, CTE students in JCPS achieved over 527 credentials!!!! This is wonderful news. Over the last few days we have been highlighting our incredible CTE teachers and their programs on social media. I hope you've seen them!
7. Lastly, a big shout out to our BREC Varsity girls who are playing tonight in the first round of state playoffs at Albemarle High School and to our SMHS Varsity girls who are also playing tonight in the first round of basketball playoffs at Freedom High School. Our other winter sports teams have concluded their seasons and we have already opened our spring sports seasons.
8. Final reminder that the window opens on Thursday, February 24th for anyone interested in running for the open BOE seats.
9. Great things are happening in all of our JCPS schools and I couldn't be more proud.

- B. **Agenda Item:** Smoky Mountain High School Football Field Maintenance
Presenter: Dr. Dana L. Ayers, Superintendent

Dr. Ayers updated the board on maintenance work scheduled for the Smoky Mountain High School Football Field during spring break. She said that the infield material will be replaced at no charge under the terms of the warranty.

- C. **Agenda Item:** Mental Health Program Update
Presenter: Mrs. Kelly Doppke, Director of Student Support Services

Mrs. Doppke provided the board with an update on the Mental Health Program. She stated that the slight reduction in school counselor/student support specialist was due to an employee on part time leave. Mrs. Doppke informed the board that Meridian is working towards a plan to serve students face to face in schools soon, and HIGHTS is serving students at JCS, Blue Ridge and Scotts Creek schools.

D. Agenda Item: Data Update

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

Mr. Holt provided the board with an update of testing data for the first half of the 2021-2022 school year and stated that we are pleased with the student progress.

E. Agenda Item: 2nd Quarter Internal Audits

Presenter: Kristie Walker, Chief Financial Officer

Ms. Walker reported that internal audits for the 2nd Quarter were conducted with no issues reported.

F. Agenda Item: Unaudited Financial Summary

Presenter: Kristie Walker, Chief Financial Officer

Ms. Walker presented the Unaudited Financial Summary as of February 22, 2022.

OPEN SESSION FOR PUBLIC COMMENTS

1. Keith Blaine – Commented on the board making some changes since he spoke last – lifted mask mandate and updated CRT policy. He has concerns about the Mental Health program aligning with Senate Bill 476 - Mental Health and Suicide Prevention leading into the Social Emotional Learning. He wants to learn more about SEL, and the data. He feels like we need a curriculum board or committee. He commented on JCPS spending funds for the egress safety upgrades and new curriculum programs last fall and the need for a review committee. He stated that the board should hold a meeting up in Cashiers to be fair to them and told the board to drive up to Cashiers after the meeting and see how they feel about that. He wants the Board to open comments on You Tube.
2. John Edwards – Wanted to share some thoughts with the board. He feels it is critical to all learning and all subjects that are taught is the knowledge of the god who created us and how we relate to each other. Mr. Edwards shared a passage from the bible. He said that what he sees happening is children are being told they cannot be beaten by anybody – not even their parents or Social Services will be called. Teachers are told if they spank a child they will lose their license, and that children are never corrected adequately. They reach high school where a police officer walks the halls and that didn't happen when he was in school. He said he came to Jackson County forty years ago and sees that change and thinks to himself what went wrong, that we need to go back to biblical concepts. He said that children are being taught that they came from an animal, and that all the other issues that are plaguing our public school today will come to us. Survival of the fittest and the law of the jungle is not the law that schools can provide for us.

3. Rainy Brake – K-5 teacher in the Qualla Boundary. Not involved in curriculum but came to the December meeting and heard about the new curriculum program, Wit and Wisdom, and did some research on it. She said it was hard to find information about it. She said that she is concerned that over half of the students in JCPS are below grade average. She said that she is concerned that the lessons are not appropriate maturity wise for our students. She commented about the Sea Horse module for first grade students that teaches about gender fluidity. She said this is a hot topic issue and should be left to the parents to teach their children. She commented on a portion of the book being separate and not equal. She said that this portion of the book deals with a trial where a Superintendent makes remarks about Hispanic students and she feels this is not the message we want our children to take home.

ACTION AGENDA

A. Agenda Item: Budget Amendments

Presenter: Kristie Walker, Chief Financial Officer

Ms. Walker presented budget amendments and transfers to the State Public School Fund, Federal Grants Fund, and Other Specific Revenue Fund 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 budget amendments and transfers to the State Public School Fund, Federal Grant Fund, and Other Specific Revenue Fund.

B. Agenda Item: Anderson Smith and Wike PLLC Audit Contract

Presenter: Kristie Walker, Chief Financial Officer

Ms. Walker presented the Anderson Smith and Wike, PLLC Audit Contract and Audit Engagement Letter for 2022-2023 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 Anderson Smith and Wike, PLLC Audit Contract for 2022-2023.

C. Agenda Item: Needs Based Public School Capital Fund Application

Presenter: Jake Buchanan, Deputy Superintendent

Mr. Buchanan presented a request to submit Needs Based Public School Capital Fund Applications for additional classrooms at Fairview Elementary School, a gymnasium and performing arts center at Blue Ridge School and ADA compliant facilities for the stadium at Smoky Mountain High School. Mr. Buchanan said that the state has changed the parameters for this grant and JCPS now qualifies to submit applications for these funds.

Action: Upon a motion by Mrs. Elizabeth Cooper and seconded by Mr. Wes Jamison, the board voted unanimously to approve the submission of NBPSCF applications for the three projects.

D. Agenda Item: Board Policy Assignments

Presenter: Jake Buchanan, Deputy Superintendent

Mr. Buchanan requested that the Superintendent be given authority to change board policy assignments to existing board policies when personnel changes are made and asked for board approval.

Action: *Upon a motion by Mrs. Elizabeth Cooper and seconded by Mrs. Abigail Clayton, the board voted unanimously to give the Superintendent the authority to change board policy assignments to existing board policies when personnel changes are made.*

E. Agenda Item: 2023-2024 Calendar Weather Waiver Approval

Presenter: Mr. Jake Buchanan

Mr. Buchanan presented the 2023-2024 Calendar Weather Waiver 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 2023-2024 Calendar Weather Waiver.*

F. Agenda Item: Field Trips

Presenter: Dr. Dana L. Ayers, Superintendent

1. CVES, Grade 3 – Ripley’s Aquarium, Gatlinburg, TN, 03-18-2022, TT7362.

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 Mr. Wes Jamison, the board voted unanimously to approve the personnel agenda as recommended by Mr. Buchanan. The board unanimously approved the following recommendations:*

Employee Recommendations:

1. Albury, Tiffany – Pre-K Teacher Assistant, SMES
2. Berryhill, Suzanne – Student Transportation Driver, SMHS and CVES
3. Caldwell, Madison – Behavior Support Assistant, Central Office
4. Draper, Samantha Brooke – Instructional Support Teacher Assistant, FES
5. Irons, Clinton – Bus Driver and Custodian, SMHS
6. McFalls, Alicia – Receptionist, SMHS
7. Mills, Jordan – Student Transportation Driver, SMHS and CVES
8. Naef, Brittany – EC Assistant, CVES
9. Norman, Susan – Title 1 Tutor, CVES
10. Valentine, Rebekah – School Nutrition Assistant, BRS
11. Wiley, Kailin – SEL Assistant, CVES

Employee Resignations:

1. Galloway, Carlene – Bus Driver, SMHS
2. Mathis, Cassandra – Receptionist, FES
3. Rowe, Christy – Kindergarten Teacher Assistant, SCES

4. Williams, Joshua Shane – Interim EC Teacher, SMHS

Staff, Non-Staff and Returning Coach Recommendations:

1. Burns, Jenny – Head Coach Middle School Softball, District MS – Returning Non-Staff
2. Cabe, Hannah – Head Coach Softball, CVES – New Non-Staff
3. Cochran, Trevor – Assistant Coach Men’s Track, SMHS – New Staff
4. Davis, Katelyn – Assistant Coach Track, SMHS District – New Non-Staff
5. Dills, Mickey – Head Coach Baseball, CVES – New Non-Staff
6. Eyler, James – Assistant Coach Men’s Tennis, SMHS – Returning Non-Staff
7. Handy, Caleb – Assistant Coach District Women’s Soccer, SMHS District – New Non-Staff
8. Hansen, Debbie – Head Coach Middle School Soccer, District MS – Returning Staff
9. Hill, Melissa – Head Coach JV Softball, SMHS – Returning Staff
10. Larch, Catherine – Head Coach Middle School Track, District MS – Returning Staff
11. Peoples, Alexya – Assistant Coach Track, SMHS – New Non-Staff
12. Stephens, Anthony – Head Coach Baseball, SCES – New Non-Staff
13. Thompson, Mark – Assistant Coach Middle School Baseball, District MS – Returning Non-Staff
14. West, Keith – Head Coach Middle School Baseball, District MS – Returning Non-Staff
15. Wilburn, Chris – Assistant Coach Baseball, CVES – New Non-Staff
16. Winchester, Travis – Assistant Coach Middle School Softball, District MS – Returning Non-Staff

ANNOUNCEMENTS

The next regularly scheduled business meeting of the Board of Education is March 22, 2022, at 5:45 p.m., at the Administrative Offices of the Board of Education, Sylva, North Carolina.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no objection, Chairperson Ali Laird-Large adjourned the meeting at 8:10 p.m.

Alison Laird-Large, Chairperson

Dr. Dana L Ayers, Secretary