

ROCKCASTLE COUNTY SCHOOLS

245 RICHMOND STREET

MT. VERNON, KY 40456

Minutes of the Board Meeting

Tuesday, October 13th, 2020

Rockcastle Board of Education Members

Angela Stallsworth-Mink - Chair, Susan Jordison - Vice Chair,

Anna Stevens-Goff, Misty Lakes, Jeff Vanhook

- 1. CALL TO ORDER:** At approximately 6:00 pm, Chairman Angela Mink called the meeting to order.
 - A. Silent Prayer:** At the direction of Chairman Angela Mink, the Board observed a moment of silent prayer.
 - B. Roll Call:** All members present with the exception of Misty Lakes.
 - C. Reading of Board Team Commitments:** Angela Stallsworth-Mink read the board commitments.
 - D. School Showcase – Rockcastle County Middle School:** Principal Robbie Phillips and 8th grade Language Arts teacher, Hannah Laswell, shared information with the board regarding the start of school, including changes in scheduling, team orientations, their Hat Day fundraiser to benefit the Rockcastle Health and Rehabilitation Center. The presentation included pictures of the school and Mrs. Laswell shared her Google classroom and other RCMS teacher sites and resources developed for families. She discussed the collaboration and teamwork among staff and student collaboration during the pandemic. Angie Stallsworth-Mink asked a question about masks and sporting events. Mr. Phillips remarked that there had only been a few minor hiccups, but that overall things were going well. Mrs. Ballinger expressed her pride in and appreciation of the RCMS teachers and staff for all of their work, considering how far we've come since March.
 - E. Compass Municipal Advisors Financial Advisory Presentation:** Anthony Strong and his team provided information to the board on what their firm can offer the district in terms of financial advising, capital planning and bonding potential.
- 2. ADOPT AGENDA/ACTION:** Susan Jordison made a motion to accept the agenda. Jeff Vanhook made a second. All members present agreed.
- 3. OPERATIONS/ACTIONS:**
 - A. Approve Minutes of the September 8, 2020 Board Meeting**
 - B. Approve Bills for Payment**
 - C. Approve Non-Resident Contracts with Pulaski, Garrard and Lincoln County Schools for the 2021-2022 School Year**
 - D. Approve MOA with Eastern Kentucky University for Student Teacher Placements**
 - E. Approve KETS Technology Activity Report**
 - F. Approve Requests for Family and Medical Leave of Absence**
 - G. Approve Board Attorney Contract**

Susan Jordison made a motion to approve Operations/Actions. Anna Stevens-Goff made a second. All members present agreed.
- 4. DISCUSSION/ACTION:**
 - A. Review/Approve Purchase of 2 New School Buses (Mr. Ken Hopkins)**

Anna Stevens-Goff made a motion to approve the purchase of 2 new school buses. Jeff Vanhook made a second. All members present agreed.
 - B. Review/Approve Monthly Financial Reports (Mrs. Sweet)**
 - 1. Month Ending Balance Sheet**
 - 2. Revenue & Expenditures for the Month by Fund**

Anna Stevens-Goff made a motion to approve the monthly financial reports. Jeff Vanhook made a second. All members present agreed.

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- C. **Review/Approve School-Based Mental Health Coordinator Position:** Mr. Marcus Reppert shared with the board the recent funding by the state to help pay for a position to assist school counselors in providing additional mental health services for students. This individual would provide trainings to staff members, assist with coordination of the district and school trauma-informed teams, coordinate mental health services across all of our schools, including those provided by Somerset Mental Health and help families with students experiencing mental health issues. This position would be housed at RCMS, but would work throughout the district to coordinate and facilitate mental health services. Susan Jordison made a motion to approve the School-Based Mental Health Coordinator position. Jeff Vanhook made a second. All members present agreed.

5. DISCUSSION/REVIEW:

A. **Review Superintendent's Personnel Action Report (*Mrs. Ballinger*)**

Mrs. Ballinger shared current personnel actions in the district with the board.

B. **Review Rocket Relaunch for Schools (*Mrs. Ballinger*)**

C. **Review Rocket Relaunch for Families (*Mrs. Ballinger*)**

Mrs. Ballinger discussed the Rocket Relaunch plans that have been revised to reflect current KDE and State health guidance on re-opening schools. Our previous plans had included a three light system. The new guidance added a 4th light (Orange) that provided additional information about community spread and incidence rates to help districts make decisions. Mrs. Ballinger informed the board that it is possible that our incident rate will increase this week to the point where we may need to return to a state of NTI, or virtual learning for our students. That decision would be made each Thursday evening, based on information from and collaboration with our local and regional health departments.

6. DEPARTMENT REPORTS

Trent Clark-Facilities

- Mr. Clark ensured the board that we were working to take care of kids and doing everything possible to ensure kids are safe and our schools are sanitized. He discussed the backpack spray sanitizers that we ordered early on and have proven to be very effective.

Ken Hopkins-Transportation

- Mr. Hopkins discussed all of the transportation activities that have taken place since the September board meeting. Food/Meal delivery service into and throughout the county have been very positive. Each bus had a different system, but drivers enjoyed getting out and seeing students and families again. When school began on September 28th, procedures had to be adjusted. After a practice run and getting through that first day, buses are running smoothly and students are being transported to and from school in a timely fashion. The amount of increased paperwork for drivers has been a concern, but one that they are working through.

Jason Coguer – Instruction

- Mr. Coguer shared his excitement around the work that our teachers and staff have done in the use of Google classroom. His idea is to create a “greatest hits” in Flipgrid to share highlights of the good things happening in our classrooms. He also shared his participation in recent Professional Learning Community (PLC) Microsoft Teams meetings, in partnership with KDE and their Continuous Improvement coaching staff. KDE is providing support for our teachers and schools in the implementation of the PLC model to foster improved teacher efficacy and student achievement. He noted that each school can tailor PLC work to meet their own needs. Mrs. Ballinger added that this goes along with her work with principals and their own PGP's.

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Brandon Reynolds – Technology

- Mr. Reynolds discussed the Chromebook repairs that have occurred since school began. He reminded the board that the purchase of a three year warranty has been worthwhile. He also shared that the Technology Help Line, available 8 am-8pm on Mondays-Thursdays and 8:00 am – 3:00 pm on Fridays, has been very helpful to families and staff. He also told the board that he had recently hired Kayla Lawson Adams to assist him in these efforts. She is a former co-op student who is familiar with our district operations and will be a tremendous asset.

Marcus Reppert – Student Services

- Mr. Reppert discussed the school safety assessment that was conducted earlier this summer with all of our schools. The assessment was conducted by Stuart Adams with the Department for Criminal Justice. This week, he has been meeting with all principals to go over the assessments and ensuring that activities were being completed. On October 14, all first responders in the county will be meeting to go over the school and district safety plans. One part of the assessment is the requirement to have a School Resource Officer in place within the district. RCS has opted to collaborate with local law enforcement agencies to hire an SRO to be in compliance with the requirement. The role of Safety Coordinator would be completed by Mr. Reppert and Mrs. Ballinger. The board and law enforcement agencies would share in the cost of the new SRO.
- Mr. Reppert reiterated to the board that RCS is not in charge of contact tracing. That is the responsibility of the Health Department. It has been a process, but is working smoothly right now. Jessica Dollins, our district nurse, has been in communication with the health department and staff.
- Mr. Reppert shared a recent meeting with Somerset Mental Health regarding their plans for serving the mental health needs of our students and how those services will be delivered. He talked about the numerous referrals for mental health services that have been made on behalf of our students since we have returned to school.

Jenny Sweet - Finance

- Mrs. Sweet first provided the board with information from Mrs. Jamie Saylor about the tremendous work of our Food Services staff since our start on September 9th. During the three week NTI period, we delivered 47,000 meals to students and families in Rockcastle County. During this time, ALL students under the age of 18 have been able to receive free meals. All of the planning that has taken place during the summer, in dealing with all of the state and federal regulations, has been truly monumental. P-EBT for students was continued through August and September. We also received an Equipment Assistance Grant of \$25,000, which allowed us to install a new double-stack oven at RCHS.
- Mrs. Sweet also shared that our recent financial audit took place this past week and auditors were here in the district, reviewing all of our school and district accounts. She noted that there could be a request for an extension to the audit. Each year one major program is reviewed during the audit. This year, our Food Services program is up for review. In order to meet all of the requirements, related to COVID-19, the auditors may need to ask for an extension to complete their review.

Wendy King – Special Education and Preschool

- Mrs. King shared with the board that she had recently conducted a survey with all of our Special Ed teachers, pre-school teachers and related services staff. This was a “temperature check” to see where we are as a district and what our strengths and areas of concern are. We have partnerships with KEDC, SESC and other agencies to assist us in identifying needs, based on the needs assessments completed by teachers and determining next steps for improvement.

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- Mrs. King also discussed her plan to send out a regular parent communication with information for families about our services for students with Special Needs, including clear explanations of parent rights and responsibilities.
- Mrs. King also shared that in her new role, this past week, she has made several visits to schools and attended virtual trainings related to Special Education laws and procedures.

Jennifer Mattingly – Instruction/Assessment

- Mrs. Mattingly provided the board with an update on the current i-Ready diagnostic assessments in reading and math that are occurring now in schools, K-12. She shared that to date, 65% of students have taken the reading diagnostic and 66% have taken the math diagnostic. She informed the board that the purpose of these diagnostics was to determine where our students were in their reading and math skills, in order for teachers to make targeted instructional decisions to meet students' needs. She shared that following the conclusion of this first diagnostic, teachers, students and families will be able to see strengths and areas of need for every student in reading and math. Students will be able to gauge their own progress and participate in "chat" sessions with their teachers and set personal goals. The i-Ready program will assign lessons based on each child's individual reading and math level and students can complete these lessons at school and at home. There will be 2 additional diagnostic windows, in February and May, in order to measure student growth and progress throughout the year.

7. SUPERINTENDENT COMMUNICATION:

- Mrs. Ballinger shared the status of her Superintendent Onboarding program and the upcoming, in person meeting on October 14th to discuss progress of her 30-6-90 day plan and her professional growth goals.
- Mrs. Ballinger also shared our district COVID-19 status, which is currently red, taking into account the increase in cases at the Rockcastle Health and Rehabilitation Center in Brodhead. RCS is monitoring our incidence rate, along with the Health department and, as we get closer to the 25% incidence rate, we may have to make a decision on a move to NTI or virtual learning for the next week. Mrs. Ballinger noted that a decision would be made on Thursday for the following week and that she would stay in communication with the board to keep them informed.

8. BOARD COMMENTS:

Mrs. Angie Stallsworth-Mink asked our visitors if they had any comments. Erin Grace, Spanish teacher at RCHS shared how positive Google classroom had been for her students and what a wonderful opportunity she felt our students have had with the increased technology, despite the journey the past several months. Mrs. Stallsworth-Mink added that she is glad to know that we are putting our students first. Mrs. Jordison, Mrs. Stevens-Goff, and Mr. Vanhook all expressed their appreciation to staff for their hard work in having a successful start to in person instruction.

- 9. ADJOURNMENT:** Motion to adjourn by Jeff Vanhook at 8:15 p.m. Anna Stevens-Goff made a second. All members present agreed.