

**Jackson County Board of Education
Minutes of Regular Meeting
Cullowhee Valley Elementary School
Sylva, North Carolina**

240 Wisdom Drive, Cullowhee

October 25, 2022

6:00 p.m.

The Jackson County Board of Education held their regular session on Tuesday, October 25, 2022, at 6:00 p.m., at Cullowhee Valley Elementary School, 240 Wisdom Drive, Cullowhee, North Carolina. The following members were present:

Elizabeth Cooper, Chairperson
Wes Jamison, Vice Chairperson
Abigail Clayton
Kim Moore
Dr. Lynn Dillard

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 Elizabeth Cooper called the business meeting to order.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Upon a motion by Mr. Wes Jamison and seconded by Dr. Lynn Dillard, the board voted unanimously to approve the Agenda.

SPECIAL PRESENTATION

Holly Whisnant welcomed everyone to Cullowhee Valley Elementary School. She introduced the 2nd and 4th grade students who led the Pledge of Allegiance. The students were all dressed as their favorite story book character and sang “It’s My Book”. Ms. Whisnant thanked the Carson Scholars Fund, founded by Dr. Ben Carson and his wife, Candy, for the grant to establish the Think Big Reading Room at Cullowhee Valley Elementary School.

SPECIAL RECOGNITION

Dr. Ayers recognized Mrs. Evelyn Graning, who was selected by her peers, as the JCPS Principal of the Year.

Dr. Ayers presented a Certificate of Recognition to Mabry Bumgarner, SMHS, for his selection as the Rotary Club of Sylva Student of the Month.

CONSENT ACTION AGENDA

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

- A. Draft Open Session Minutes of Regular Meeting of September 27, 2022.

INFORMATION AGENDA

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

Dr. Ayers reported on the following:

1. This week marks the start of the second quarter of school and halfway through the first semester. We had a mandatory professional development day last week which was full of learning and leading. Our Career and Technical Education teachers even had the opportunity to do industry tours on their own field trip organized by Angie Dills. It was a hugely successful day! I am positive our students also enjoyed a couple extra days of rest.
2. As we head into the second quarter, we continue to be focused on high-quality, rigorous instruction that meets the needs of all our learners. As we follow the NC Curriculum Standards, we use our instructional resources both online and print to provide engaging lessons and activities. I know our teachers are working diligently to improve our students' skills in all areas.
3. Our athletic teams are concluding their fall season and have proudly represented their school and Jackson County Public Schools. It's been exciting to see our student-athletes excel in their sport and alongside their teammates. Next week, the winter sports seasons begin. Our SMHS marching band, too, has been full-throttle performing at games and during the competition season. I am so proud of our students, coaches and leaders committing the time and efforts to participate in extracurricular activities.
4. I need to address a very important aspect of our school system. We are, once again, at a critical need level for bus drivers. Up until this point, we have managed to cobble together schedules that provide transportation to students. However, we currently need 8-10 bus drivers across the district. There are buses that we are unable to put on the road as a result of lack of drivers. Furthermore, bus routes are being extended requiring students to arrive home late or be picked up very early. We are consistently working to address this problem but do not have the capacity to do so with multiple bus driver positions available. I cannot adequately express how dire this need is. Anyone willing to drive a bus, we will work around schedule barriers as best we can. Please understand that we recognize that our students are on buses for extended periods of time and we can only improve this with more bus drivers.
5. As we look at the safety aspects of our schools, we continue our school safety walk-throughs in partnership with the Jackson County Sheriff's Office and the Emergency Management Department. I am pleased with what we are seeing. Furthermore, our egress projects are nearing completion. Mr. Buchanan will provide an update this evening. The most exciting news is the grant we have been awarded from the Department of Justice in the amount of \$420,000! This grant will provide sophisticated radio communications as well as keyless door locks on every classroom door in JCPS. A huge thanks to Jeremiah Jackson and many others who wrote and submitted this grant.

6. In November, we will be honoring our JCPS staff who are veterans in recognition of the Veterans Day holiday on November 11th. We have more than 17 staff members who are veterans and other contracted staff (SROs) who are also veterans. A special luncheon will be provided for them along with public recognition, if they choose to be a participant. I genuinely thank each of them for their service to our country!
7. As always, it feels wonderful to be part of an organization that is heavily supported by our Jackson County community.

B. Agenda Item: NC Star School Improvement Plans

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

Mr. Holt presented the NC Star School Improvement Plans for the district and all nine JCPS schools, for first reading.

C. Agenda Item: COPS SVPP Grant

Presenter: Mr. Jeremiah Jackson, Chief Technology Officer

Mr. Jackson presented information to the board about the Community Oriented Policing Services School Violence Prevention Program (COPS SVPP) grant that we have received. This grant will be used to purchase and install locks on every classroom in Jackson County Public Schools and improve digital communication capabilities.

D. Agenda Item: Egress Courtyard Update

Presenter: Mr. Jake Buchanan, Deputy Superintendent

Mr. Buchanan updated the board on the progress and completion dates for the Egress Courtyard projects at SMHS, SMES, FES and BRS. Mr. Buchanan informed the board that the SMES project will be complete in November 2022, BRS project will be completed in December 2022, FES has an expected completion date of February 2023 and SMHS has an expected completion date of April 2023. Project completion delays were due to the discovery of water lines impacting the projects.

E. Agenda Item: School and BOA Internal Audits

Presenter: Mr. Jake Buchanan, Deputy Superintendent

Mr. Buchanan reported that the 1st Quarter Internal Audits and Bank of America P-Card Audits were conducted with no issues or findings of negligence or fraud reported.

F. Agenda Item: Unaudited Financial Summary

Presenter: Mr. Jake Buchanan, Deputy Superintendent

Mr. Buchanan presented the Unaudited Financial Summary as of October 25, 2022.

OPEN SESSION FOR PUBLIC COMMENTS

Addison Wilson- Middle School Cheer – Hello, my name is Addison Wilson, and I am in sixth grade here at Cullowhee Valley School. I asked if I could come speak with you today because there are a couple of things I'm frustrated about, and I hope maybe you can help me. I am part of

the new Jackson County district middle school cheerleading team. I was so excited when I tried out and was chosen for the team. I have been a cheerleader since I was six years old for the county youth recreation team. This year I wanted to challenge myself and move to the next level. I am going from the recreation league to the school-based sports. I practiced and practiced and practiced and I made the team. I was super proud of myself. Now to the part that gets me really frustrated because I don't understand. I have gone to practice every single day except for the weekends for two hours a day since the beginning of August. That's a lot. There were times when I didn't feel like going, but I knew if I didn't go, I would be allowed to cheer when it was game time. I participated in the Back to School Bash, and I participated in the two mandatory fundraisers for district sports, but for what. I did all the practice and participated and only got to cheer at three home game football games. That doesn't seem right or fair. I want to cheer at all the middle school football games, both home and away games. Our whole cheer team does. But we have been told several times by the school district that we are not allowed to go to the away games because we don't have any bus drivers. My parents are willing to take me to and from the games and one of my teammates moms already has a special kind of license to drive a bus and my cheer coach said that she would be willing to learn how to drive a bus so we can all go, but still the answer has been no. I don't get it. I put in the time and effort and energy at practice, and I give it all my effort every day, but don't feel like anybody in the school district cares whether we are there at the games or not. But I care. I love my school, I love cheerleading, I love my team, and I love my coach. We all just want to be able to do our sport and give it everything we have. I don't feel I am being treated as an equal athlete as to all the other middle school athletes. I want to feel like what I do matters, and it is important, because to me it does. I want the school district to help us grow as a team, but I feel like we are being held back. The other thing I don't understand is why we aren't allowed to wear our uniforms to school on game days. I worked super hard to earn the privilege to wear that uniform. I was only allowed to wear it to school one time before we were told we weren't allowed to again all because one principal didn't like it. Do you know that the recreation team is allowed to wear their cheerleader and football uniforms to school, but our middle school team isn't.

Brenda Wilson – Middle School Cheer – How do I follow that? I'm sure that you guys are aware that equity and inclusion is a big topic in schools. Being the mother of a female athlete, I am not able to answer questions as to why she is the only team that's not allowed to go and do her sport. Every day this child does not get home until 9 o'clock, every night because she is practicing. We live in Tuckasegee, so by the time we get back home it's 9 o'clock at night. It feels like.... I'm not sure that some of the comments have been made known as to why is she wearing a t-shirt rather than her whole uniform. She knows that I am willing to transport anywhere. She has given up every other sport to be able to do this, to cheer at three games. Football players are asking her why she's not allowed to wear her uniform to school, but they can. They're being bounced around from facility to facility for practices. So we were at Fairview Gym, now we will be in the lunchroom at the High School. How is that equity given to each sport. Nobody else has to practice in the lunchroom when her sport requires a gymnasium. I've got people who are willing to drive the buses. We've got the licenses. We've got every parent willing to transport their child. It's not even being remotely considered, and we are not being given reasons as to why. So how can you tell her that she's not as important as every other athlete when even in our own handbook says that the school board is responsible and will provide transportation to and from athletic contests. But yet she's not and that is not okay.

Amanda Stafford – School Buses – I'm here to represent the students who ride the Little Canada buses. While we acknowledge and recognize there is a bus driver shortage, this is not a new

problem. Our students ride the bus for two plus hours each way. The High School students ride to school, those early college late, sometimes not able to get breakfast. There's around 11 miles of this route in the afternoons that is driven through Transylvania County, with no stops on that. This is not a safe road. It is not something that I would want to travel in my own vehicle in the wintertime. In the mornings the whole route is not even ran. Students are tired. They're unable to preform at their best. There's different dismissal times for each school, that delay students from getting home each day. And it's hard for a single person to manage all these students on the bus for this diverse age range. Students are deprived of quality time with their families an are up to midnight or later doing their assignments, sometimes not able to keep up with their workload. Water and snacks are not provided. Mu students get home at 6 p.m. It is very hard for them to do their classwork, including college classes and I beg that the school board considers that. These students are our future. The future of this county. And they deserve the equal opportunity as every other student in this county.

ACTION AGENDA

A. Agenda Item: Budget Amendments

Presenter: Mr. Jake Buchanan, Deputy Superintendent

Mr. Buchanan presented budget amendments and transfers to the State Public School Fund, Other Specific Revenue Fund, and Federal Grants Fund, and asked for board approval.

Action: Upon a motion by Mr. Wes Jamison and seconded by Mrs. Abigail Clayton, the board voted unanimously to approve the State Public School Fund, Other Specific Revenue Fund, and Federal Grants Fund budget amendments and transfers.

B. Agenda Item: Purchase Windows for the Central Office

Presenter: Jason Watson, Director of Operations

Mr. Watson presented a bid from Blue Ridge Glass for the purchase and installation of windows for the Central Office and asked for board approval.

Action: Upon a motion by Mr. Wes Jamison and seconded by Mrs. Kim Moore, the board voted unanimously to approve the purchase and installation of new windows for the Central Office.

C. Agenda Item: Roof Maintenance Proposal for SMHS and SCES

Presenter: Jason Watson, Director of Operations

Mr. Watson presented proposals from Construction and Maintenance Services for annual roof inspection and scheduled maintenance for SMHS and SCES and asked for board approval.

Action: Upon a motion by Mr. Wes Jamison and seconded by Mrs. Kim Moore, the board voted unanimously to approve the proposals from Construction and Maintenance Services for annual roof inspection and scheduled maintenance for SMHS and SCES.

D. Agenda Item: Policy Updates

Presenter: Mr. Jake Buchanan, Deputy Superintendent

Mr. Buchanan presented the following Board Policy for rescission:

1. English as a Second Language Program (3480/4170)

Mr. Buchanan presented the following Board Policies for updates:

1. Operation of School Nutrition Services (6220)
2. Cafeteria Accounts (6221)
3. Free and Reduced-Price Meal Services (6225)

Action: *Upon a motion by Mr. Wes Jamison and seconded by Mrs. Kim Moore, the board voted unanimously to approve the rescission of policy 3480/4170, and the updates to the above listed policies.*

E. Agenda Item: Field Trips

Presenter: Dr. Dana L. Ayers, Superintendent

1. SCES, Grade 8 – Outer Banks, NC, April 25-28, 2023, TT7877.
2. SMES, Grade 6-8 – Universal Orlando Resort, Orlando, FL, April 10-14, 2023, TT7926.

Dr. Ayers presented the above listed field trip requests and asked for board approval.

Action: *Upon a motion by Mr. Wes Jamison and seconded by Mrs. Abigail Clayton, the board voted unanimously to approve the above listed field trips.*

CLOSED SESSION

The board unanimously approved a motion by Mr. Wes Jamison and seconded by Mrs. Kim Moore, 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.

Upon a motion by Mr. Wes Jamison and seconded by Mrs. Kim Moore, the board voted unanimously to return to open session.

OPEN SESSION

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

- A. Closed Session Minutes of Regular Meeting of September 27, 2022.

PERSONNEL ACTION AGENDA

Action: *Upon a motion made by Mr. Wes Jamison and seconded by Mrs. Abigail Clayton, the board voted unanimously to approve the remaining personnel agenda as recommended by Dr. Ayers. The board unanimously approved the following recommendations:*

Employee Recommendations:

1. Bennett, Brandon – Temporary Fuel Truck Driver, Bus Garage

~~2.~~

3. Clark, Jacqueline – EC Teacher Assistant, SCES
4. Dowdle, Ashley – PreK Teacher Assistant, SCES
5. Flora, Kayla – Temporary Teacher, CVES
6. Fowler, Cindy – Substitute Bus Driver, BRS and BREC
7. Greene, Heather – Homebound Teaching Services, BRS
8. Haigler, Melissa – Homebound Teaching Services, SMHS
9. Hartman, Christian – Instructional Support Assistant, SMES
10. Henson, Jonathan – Custodian and Bus Driver, SMHS
11. Karcher, Susan – Temporary Speech Language Pathologist, BRS
12. Knight, Mandie – Custodian, SMHS
13. Manning, Samantha – Instructional Support Assistant, SMES
14. Mathis, Susan – EC Teacher Assistant, FES
15. Mayse, Tim – Athletics Bus Driver, BREC
16. Peoples, W. Jem – Instructional Support Assistant, SCES
17. Reavis, Chelsea – Activity Bus Driver, FES
18. Sydykbekova, Alymkan – EC Teacher Assistant, CVES
19. Towns, Ashley – Custodian, FES

Employee Resignations:

1. Owens, Catherine – Receptionist, CVES
2. Raxter, Lisa – School Nutrition Assistant, SCES
3. Shook, Bridgett – Custodian and Bus Driver, BREC

Staff, Non-Staff and Returning Coach Recommendations:

1. Ashe, Brandon – Head Coach Men’s Basketball, FES – Returning Staff
2. Brown, Megan – Assistant Coach Women’s Basketball, CVES – Returning Staff
3. Hoyle, Samantha – Head Coach District Women’s Basketball, SMHS – Returning Non-Staff
4. Pressley, Jennifer – Head Coach Women’s Basketball, CVES – Returning Non-Staff
5. Sullivan, Hannah - Head Coach Women’s Basketball, FES – Returning Staff
6. Sutton, Trevor – Assistant Coach Soccer, SMES – Retuning Non-Staff
7. Thompson, Robert Mark – Head Coach District MS Basketball, SMHS – Returning Staff

ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Board of Education has scheduled a Work Session on Tuesday, November 8, 2022, at 5:00 p.m. in the Board Room at the Administrative Offices of the Board of Education, 398 Hospital Road, Sylva, NC.

The next regularly scheduled business meeting of the Board of Education is November 15, 2022, at 6:00 p.m., at Blue Ridge School and Early College, 95 Bobcat Way, Cashiers NC.

ADJOURNMENT

Action: *Upon a motion by Mr. Wes Jamison and seconded by Mrs. Kim Moore, the board voted unanimously to adjourn the business meeting.*

There being no objection, Chairperson Elizabeth Cooper adjourned the meeting at 7:50 p.m.

Elizabeth Cooper, Chairperson

Dr. Dana Ayers, Secretary