

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

884 US Highway 441 North, Whittier

January 24, 2023

6:00 p.m.

The Jackson County Board of Education met in regular session at 6:00 p.m. on Tuesday, January 24, 2023, at Smokey Mountain Elementary School, 884 US Highway 441 North, Whittier, 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; Jake Buchanan, Deputy Superintendent; Teri Walawender, Human Resources Director; Ashley Leonard, Board Attorney; Jeremiah Jackson, Chief Technology Director; 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 Mrs. Abigail Clayton, the board voted unanimously to approve the Agenda.*

**SPECIAL PRESENTATION**

Mike Treadway, SMES Principal, welcomed everyone to Smokey Mountain Elementary School. Mr. Bob Eldridge's Cherokee Culture Grade Pre-K through 2<sup>nd</sup> students led the Pledge of Allegiance. The Superintendent and board members joined in the Friendship Dance. Mr. McGrew led the students in Ms. Doll's and Ms. Burchette's 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> grade classes in the song *Put a Little Love in Your Heart*.

**SPECIAL RECOGNITION**

Dr Ayers presented the NCDPI Graduation Rate and Academic Progress Recognition awards to Blue Ridge School, Blue Ridge Early College, Cullowhee Valley Elementary School, Fairview Elementary School, Jackson County Early College, Scotts Creek Elementary School, Smokey Mountain Elementary School and Smoky Mountain High School.

**CONSENT ACTION AGENDA**

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

- A. Open Session Minutes of Regular Meeting of December 13, 2022.

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

- B. Open Session Minutes of the Special-Called Work Session of January 05, 2023.

### **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 semester in December and End of Course testing is finalized. We have made tremendous progress in many areas. I am confident this will be reflected in our EOG and EOC scores at the end of the year. I am also grateful that our school semesters allow for a clear break for our students and staff.
2. It's been a great but sporadic start to the second semester. Our students returned on January 9th with a short week because of snow followed by another short week in recognition of the Martin Luther King, Jr. Holiday. Hopefully we will have all full week of school soon!
3. January is Board of Education appreciation month and I share genuine thanks to our Board members! This is the second year we have recognized our Board for the hard work, dedication and many hours focusing on the students and staff of JCPS. Our schools have offered some treats and notes of gratitude for each BOE member. We all recognize the difficult decisions and the work our Board accomplishes. 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. 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 Elizabeth Cooper, Wes Jamison, Abigail Clayton, Kim Moore and Dr. Lynn Dillard for serving Jackson County Public Schools. Your work does not go unnoticed.
4. Looking ahead, we are wrapping up the winter season of athletics, planning for spring sports and the exciting opportunities that lie ahead in the arts and CTE departments. Students are taking advantage of the intentional instruction that is delivered each day as we learn and grow. Before you know it, we will be finalizing details for graduations.
5. Finally, I want to share my gratitude to the Jackson County Board of Commissioners. I have scheduled school tours for them to participate and our principals and staff are happy to showcase our schools. Chairman Mark Letson has been quite complimentary of the things taking place in JCPS. These scheduled tours will conclude next week, prior to our joint meeting with the Board of Education and Board of Commissioners on January 31st at Southwestern Community College at 6:00 pm.
6. As always, thank you for the unrivaled support we receive from our parents, families and the Jackson County community.

- B. **Agenda Item:** Internal School Audits and Bank of America Audit  
**Presenter:** Mrs. Kristie Walker, Chief Financial Officer

Mrs. Walker presented a clean audit report for the 2<sup>nd</sup> quarter internal school audits and the Bank of America P-card transactions.

- C. **Agenda Item:** Unaudited Financial Summary  
**Presenter:** Mrs. Kristie Walker, Chief Financial Officer

Mrs. Walker presented the Unaudited Financial Summary as of January 24, 2023.

### **OPEN SESSION FOR PUBLIC COMMENTS**

**Action:** *Upon a motion by Mr. Wes Jamison and seconded by Mrs. Abigail Clayton, the board voted unanimously to approve a 30-minute extension to the public comment period due to the large number of speakers that signed up.*

The board heard from 17 speakers who all spoke about the importance of School-Based Athletics and Middle School Athletic Programs and spoke in support of the continuation of both as follows:

Gracie Buck  
Shaylee Temple  
Clinton Irons  
Trevor Sutton  
Marlowe Verrault  
Henry McMahan  
Ronda Murphy  
Megan Brown  
April Mayes  
Debbie Jefferies  
Dave Waldrop  
Cindy Johnson  
John Smith  
Corey Frady  
Crystal Jones  
Jennifer Blatner  
Shane Danner

### **ACTION AGENDA**

- A. **Agenda Item:** Middle School Athletics  
**Presenter:** Dr. Dana L. Ayers, Superintendent

Dr. Ayers spoke to the board about the difficulties in sustaining both District Middle School Sports and School Based Sports due to the shortage of qualified coaches, bus drivers and support staff.

**Action:** *Upon a motion by Mr. Wes Jamison and seconded by Mrs. Abigail Clayton, the board voted 4 to 1 to approve the continuation of District Middle School Athletics as they currently operate.*

**Action:** *Upon a motion by Mr. Wes Jamison and seconded by Mrs. Abigail Clayton, the board voted 3 to 2 to approve the retention of school-based athletic teams with the condition that a minimum of two schools must field a team in any given sport with appropriate personnel. And, if there is only one team in any given sport, there will not be a season and no additional try-outs for district teams will occur. Furthermore, district teams will be prioritized over school teams in regard to use of facilities.*

**Action:** *Upon a motion by Dr. Lynn Dillard and seconded by Mrs. Kim Moore, the board voted 2 to 3 to dis-approve the continuation of school-based athletics with no conditions.*

**B. Agenda Item:** Budget Amendments

**Presenter:** Mrs. Kristie Walker, Chief Financial Officer

Mrs. Walker presented budget amendments to the Federal Grants Fund, Other Specific Revenue Fund, and the State Public School 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 budget amendments to the Federal Grants Fund, Other Specific Revenue Fund, and the State Public School Fund.*

**C. Agenda Item:** HIGHTS Memorandum of Agreement

**Presenter:** Kelly Doppke, Student Support Services Director

Mrs. Doppke presented the updated HIGHTS Memorandum of Agreement for 2022-2023 and asked for board approval.

**Action:** *Upon a motion by Mr. Wes Jamison and seconded by Dr. Lynn Dillard, the board voted unanimously to approve the updated HIGHTS MOA for 2022-2023.*

**D. Agenda Item:** Southwestern Community College Board of Trustees Appointment of Mr. Gerry McKinney

**Presenter:** Mrs. Elizabeth Cooper, Chairperson

Mrs. Cooper presented a letter of request from Swain County Public Schools Superintendent for approval of Mr. Gerry McKinney to fill the unexpired term of Lambert Wilson as the Swain County Public Schools representative to the Southwestern Community College Board of Trustees from December 19, 2022 to June 30, 2025 and asked for board approval.

**Action:** *Upon a motion by Mr. Wes Jamison and seconded by Mrs. Abigail, the board voted unanimously to approve Mr. Gerry McKinney as the Swain County Public Schools representative to the Southwestern Community College Board of Trustees for the unexpired term of Lambert Wilson from December 19, 2022 to June 30, 2025.*

**E. Agenda Item:** Indian Education Policies and Procedures

**Presenter:** Mr. 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 Mr. Wes Jamison and seconded by Mrs. Abigail, the board voted unanimously to approve the updates to the Indian Education Policies and Procedures.*

**F. Agenda Item:** Policy Updates

**Presenter:** Jake Buchanan, Deputy Superintendent

Updates:

1. Attendance, Absenteeism, and Truancy (4400)

Mr. Buchanan presented updates to the policy listed above and asked for board approval.

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

**G. Agenda Item:** Field Trips

**Presenter:** Dr. Dana L. Ayers, Superintendent

1. SCES, Grade 3 – Young Harris College, Young Harris, GA 03-28-2023 – TT8155

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

**Action:** *Upon a motion by Mrs. Wes Jamison 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 Mr. Wes Jamison 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. Allen, Shaneka – Public Information Officer, Central Office
2. Caroon, Mikayla – Afterschool Assistant, CVES
3. Crisp, Rayna – Substitute Bus Driver and Field Trip Bus Driver, FES
4. Donatelli, Donna – Substitute School Nutrition Assistant, SMHS
5. Hensley, Jeri – Afterschool Tutor, FES
6. Leopard, Sara – Afterschool Tutor, FES
7. Miller, Tiffany – Educational Diagnostician, SMHS
8. Myers, Sarah – EC Teachers Assistant, CVES
9. Norman, Kaitlyn – School Counselor, SCES
10. Queen, Jessica – School Nutrition Assistant, SMHS
11. Robidoux, Ashley – School Nutrition Assistant, FES
12. Robidoux, Ashley – Afterschool Assistant, FES
13. Stiffler, Mark – Teacher, SMHS
14. Tucker, Kelli – Afterschool Assistant, CVES
15. Warlick, Kodie – EC Teachers Assistant, SMHS
16. Winship, Kimberly – EC Bus Monitor, CVES

**Employee Resignations:**

1. Lee, Jennifer – Teacher, BREC
2. Maney, Graham – Technology Technician, Central Office
3. Monteith, Nathaniel – Teacher Assistant, SMES
4. Porter, David – Custodian, Central Office
5. Rich, William – Custodian and Bus Driver, SMES

**Employee Retirements:**

1. Tucker, Dana – SEL Coordinator and Behavior Specialist, District-wide

**Staff, Non-Staff and Returning Coach Recommendations:**

1. Dellinger, Austin – Assistant Coach MS Men’s Basketball, BREC – New Non-Staff
2. Larch, Mindy – Assistant Coach JV Wrestling, SMHS – Returning Staff
3. Mezzina, Melody – Assistant Coach JV Women’s Soccer, SMHS – New Non-Staff

**ANNOUNCEMENTS**

**The next regularly scheduled business meeting of the Board of Education is February 28, 2023, at 6:00 p.m., at Fairview Elementary School, 251 Big Orange Way, Sylva, North Carolina.**

**ADJOURNMENT**

There being no objection, Chairperson Elizabeth Cooper adjourned the meeting at 8:50 p.m.

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Elizabeth Cooper, Chairperson

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Dr. Dana L. Ayers, Secretary