

# CASWELL COUNTY BOARD OF EDUCATION MINUTES

## WORK SESSION

June 5, 2023

The Caswell County Board of Education met in a work session session on Monday, June 5, 2023, at 9:00 a.m. in the Administration Building of Caswell County Schools. Members present: Chairman Mel Battle, Vice Chair Vennie Beggarly, Gladys Garland, Tracy Stanley, Joel Lillard, Nicole Smith, Trudy Blackwell. Others present include Assistant Superintendent Dr. Carla Murray and Board Attorney Ron Bradsher. Connie Kimrey recorded the minutes. (*Note: Others may have been present but did not sign the roster or names were not legible*).

### CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order by Chairman Mel Battle. A moment of silence was observed followed by the Pledge of Allegiance.

### ANNOUNCEMENTS

Mel Battle shared that Dr. Douglas Barker would meet with the board at noon and the meeting would stop to meet and discuss items with him. Mel Battle shared that the work session would follow the agenda topics and can be discussed but no decisions can be made without an interim superintendent in place.

### AGENDA TOPICS

#### Discipline in Schools

Nicole Smith shared she has concerns with the lack of discipline at the high school. A list was provided for each school and she is hearing that teachers are being spoken to by students using foul language and nothing is being done. If you look at the write up information that was provided and the offenses it confirms that the protocol in our handbooks is not being followed.

**ACTION:** Nicole Smith asked if a report showing this information could be provided quarterly to the board. It appears that the alternative placement is not being used especially with the discipline not being addressed. Nicole Smith shared that several teachers are resigning due to the lack of discipline.

Tracy Stanley questioned if the wording in the handbooks is clear. Mel Battle shared that he felt that there are consequences when not following the guidelines and if administrators start out handling this the students will know the protocol. Going forward it was agreed that administrators need to follow the consequences as listed in the handbooks.

Questions were asked regarding PowerSchool and how this data is entered. Dr. Murray shared that it is entered in PowerSchool and the high school and middle school use the Educators Handbook and written discipline referrals are used at the elementary level. It appears that teachers are writing up students but nothing is being done at the administration level.

**ACTION:** Trudy Blackwell asked if someone could explain this process at the next meeting.

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Discussion took place regarding the handbooks and the Student Code of Conduct and how is this confirmed that all parents have read this and signature page is returned. Mel Battle shared the process is not working and the superintendent needs to hold principals accountable.

**ACTION:** Nicole Smith asked if a list of teacher referrals and follow-up could be provided at the next meeting.

Discussion took place regarding the alternative school and the placement and if an administrator needs to be over it as well as looking if this can be moved to the east wing of the high school as there is extra room at the high school.

**ACTION:** It was agreed to look into the big picture of this program and how to handle the process for the alternative program.

### **Legality of Kids Posting Videos**

Nicole Smith shared concerns with videos and shared an example of an employee trying to break up a fight and employee is hit and possibly taken down by a student and then this is posted on social media. Is there anything we can do to legally prevent this from going viral? Board Attorney Ron Bradsher shared there isn't much that can be done as a board. If the individual wanted to pursue this they could under the first amendment; however, these types of situations occur now due to social media.

Board Attorney Ron Bradsher shared examples of issues that have taken place with inappropriate pictures. He shared that School Resource Officers (SRO) can charge students criminally for explicit pictures and if these situations are suspected they need to be reported to the SRO. With general videos there is not much that can be done.

Discussion took place regarding the rules that are in the handbooks and the timing when students can have cell phones out and if a fight should occur during the time a student should not have a phone out what discipline action could be done. It was agreed that teachers and administrators should be following the rules regarding the cell phone.

**ACTION:** The wording in handbooks needs to be consistent for the middle and the high school.

### **Transfer Policy for Employees**

Nicole Smith requested confirmation on how this policy is handled. Policy # 706 and Policy # 707 were shared with the board. Dr. Murray shared that employees complete the intent form in March and if transfers and vacancies are available they are considered. Principals are given a listing by the end of the year and after July 1<sup>st</sup> both principals must come to a mutual agreement. There are factors to consider based on the intent request and placement needs to be looked at as

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well. If an opening occurs during the school year an employee may put in a letter of intent to be considered for the position and is interviewed.

**Student Transportation - Feasibility of Adding Contracted Transportation**

Gladys Garland had requested this be looked into. Information was shared for the board to review. Gladys Garland shared that although this sounds like a possible option it is apparent this could not be sustainable in Caswell County due to the small system. It looks good and sounds good but unfortunately it would be very costly to maintain. Other concerns included the transportation for special needs students.

ACTION: Joel Lillard asked if Mr. Nelson Showalter could be present at the next meeting to explain the IEP process.

ACTION: It was suggested that the possibility of a mini-van be looked into within the transportation department (if feasible) if funding is available to assist with usage within the school system.

**Clubs**

Nicole Smith shared she received emails regarding the clubs at the high school noting that all have been stopped. She shared that parents need to be notified and make sure we are following the handbook guidelines. A handout was shared with the board. It was noted that the guidelines say clubs should be student led (not teacher led). Discussion was had regarding the recent club at the middle school and the concerns that were brought to the board. It was agreed that the teacher should not be leading this club.

Concerns were expressed that the club could meet as long as it was not during instructional time and that lunch time should not be a problem if the student had a note to participate. It appears that policies are misinterpreted and not being followed correctly.

The board agreed that the email that was sent to the board complies with the guidelines and should be allowed to take place.

ACTION: Mel Battle will reach out to make sure the student is informed for this year and next year it will be clear that all club rules are followed.

**Lunch Schedules**

Joel Lillard had requested this item for the agenda. A listing was provided to board members with school lunch schedules. After reviewing the listing it was clear that the timing doesn't add up to the 30 minutes for lunch. Each school varied and it appears that the students are being rushed to eat lunch. Mel Battle shared that one problem is trying to get out of school too early and everything during the day is rushed. He felt that the four elementary schools should be

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following the same schedule. Joel Lillard shared that he felt lunch at 10:30 a.m. is too early as well and noted the breakfast times and timeframes of last student served.

**ACTION:** Interim Superintendent will review the lunch schedule and look at consistency across the board.

### Recess Time

Joel Lillard requested this item for the agenda and shared similar sentiments regarding the inconsistency and felt that teachers are being pushed with academics. It was shared that each class is not doing the same thing and Vennie Beggarly shared that schedules on the walls do not allow time for recess. She felt that teachers are being pushed to the max and have to stay focused on staying on the schedule. The teachers are not making the schedules but are being required to follow them and stay on track and it was shared that this is coming from the central office. Joel Lillard shared he felt that we are taking the responsibility away from the teachers and shared the example of the videos that were shown at the signature school breakfast noting that all the videos shown included students having fun at school. He felt we need to get back to some happy medium within our schools to allow teachers to have the freedom to determine what works best in their classrooms and have flexibility as long as they are adhering to the mandates.

Trudy Blackwell shared she agreed; however, she knew there are mandates given from the state and asked if a listing of the mandates can be shared with the board so they know what actually is required to be taking place.

**ACTION:** A listing of mandates from state to be shared with the board.

### Feasibility of Civic Center Full Time Employee

Mel Battle requested this item for the agenda. He shared background of the Civic Center and how things were handled in the past. He would like to see the Civic Center used and explore opportunities for our students and the community.

Board Attorney Ron Bradsher shared examples of concerns that took place in past years and suggested that if this is feasible to pursue to make sure the school is in control of it and not another organization.

**ACTION:** Look into funding source and feasibility of a Community Schools Coordinator for the Civic Center.

One concern that was discussed included if a student has been suspended and prohibited from being on school grounds but an event is occurring at the Civic Center if they are allowed to attend. Discussion took place and Board Attorney Ron Bradsher shared there may be exceptions

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but needs to be looked into. It was recommended to add wording to the rental agreement to include protocol on how this should be handled.

ACTION: Rental agreement at Civic Center to include wording regarding student suspensions.

ACTION: Follow-up on carpet for the small auditorium at the Civic Center.

ACTION: Suggestion to take a tour of the Civic Center and the East Wing of the high school at the next scheduled work session.

Trudy Blackwell shared concerns regarding the East Wing noting that she thought painting and sprucing up was to have taken place and was discussed previously after the board toured the high school and the East Wing. It was shared that it was discussed but not sure it has happened.

(The board took a ten-minute break)

### **Board Policies**

- Policy # 7340, Employee Dress Code & Appearance
- Policy # 4316, Student Dress and Appearance Standards

Discussion took place regarding these two policies and it was agreed that whatever the decision the guidelines needs to be followed. It was noted that times have changed since the policies were created and felt that some things need to be relaxed. It was agreed that the Interim Superintendent review and bring back suggestions to the board at the June 26<sup>th</sup> meeting. It was shared that you should be able to distinguish the teacher from a student as far as the dress code.

ACTION: Review and bring a draft of both policies to the June 26<sup>th</sup> meeting.

- Policy # 6230, School Meal and Competitive
- Policy # 6410, Organization of the Purchasing Function

Board Attorney was to review these policies and offered input. According to the guidelines nothing prohibits allowing food to be brought into the school as long as it is not given to students until after they have had lunch. The wording that is in the original policy can be removed. It was questioned that if someone wanted to bring in cupcakes, cookies, etc. and share with students in the cafeteria after they have had lunch that this will be allowed and Board Attorney confirmed.

Other discussion took place regarding food trucks coming to the school for employees (example included O'Kellys) or if someone wanted to bring an employee food from a restaurant if this is allowed.

ACTION: Interim Superintendent to look into this to see if this will be an issue and if allowed to have this take place at lunch on occasion.

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Joel Lillard questioned if secretaries/ data managers are allowed to leave school for lunch noting they have an hour timeframe for lunch. It was shared that all schools are not consistent. Other concerns included the timeframe for opening schools and what time the phones are covered as there are also inconsistencies with this. According to the general statutes the board can set the times but it was suggested that the Interim Superintendent review these items and bring a recommendation back to the board. Concerns were shared that calls made after students leave school are not being answered at the school. Messages indicate school hours; however, no one is answering the phone. This is concerning for parents who cannot reach anyone at the school while buses are still on the road.

**ACTION:** Times for each school and phone coverage for office personnel to be reviewed and recommendation brought back to the board. All schools need to be consistent.

**Lawn Care Contract**

Contract for lawn care was reviewed and information was shared from recent request for quote for the bid for lawn care. It was shared that only one bid was received. Discussion took place. Tracy Stanley questioned the certificate of liability insurance. Board Attorney Ron Bradsher shared that this was sufficient and coverage is provided based on the copy included in the quote.

Nicole Smith questioned the amount listed for mulch at \$48,000 and questioned why the budget numbers that were shared previously were at \$100,000 and asked that information be given on the discrepancy with the numbers.

**ACTION:** Follow-up on the budget for landscaping and discrepancy in totals.

**ACTION:** It was agreed at the next bidding process that the RFQ include mulch as well.

The mowing contract should normally run from July 1<sup>st</sup> to June 30<sup>th</sup>.

**Interim Superintendent**

At this time Chairman Mel Battle shared that he was asked to call Dr. Douglas Barker and inquire if he would be willing to serve as the Interim Superintendent. He followed up that Dr. Barker agreed and a vote needs to be taken.

Joel Lillard moved, seconded by Nicole Smith, to approve Dr. Douglas Barker as Interim Superintendent effective June 5, 2023. The motion carried 6-1 with Stanley voting "No."

A recess for lunch was taken.

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Dr. Douglas Barker arrived and was introduced to the board. Chairman Mel Battle shared some history and welcomed Dr. Barker back to the system. A time was allowed for Dr. Barker to give input as well as the board.

Judge Brandon arrived at the meeting to swear Dr. Douglas Barker in as Interim Superintendent and gave the Oath of Office.

### CLOSED SESSION

Joel Lillard made a motion to go into closed session for the purpose of considering a personnel action that involves an officer or employee of this Board (NC General Statute 143-318.11(a)(6); and for the purpose of discussing information that is privileged, confidential or not a public record (NC General Statute 143-318.11(a)(1) and to confer with legal counsel. Gladys Garland seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

### OPEN SESSION

Joel Lillard made a motion to return to open session. Nicole Smith seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

### SUMMER SCHOOL

Carol Boaz gave an update on summer school numbers and shared that due to the central location that some teachers are no longer interested. Once final numbers are confirmed this information will be shared with the board for final approval on staffing. It was shared that Carol Boaz is looking at seniority and if the teacher is willing to work both sessions for staffing. Dr. Barker shared that in some instances seniority may be good but there are some people who are not as effective and test scores need to be reviewed to see who may be the best fit with the needs of the students.

It was shared that an AIG student failed the math EOG test noting that the Eureka NY State math was taught but testing was based on something different and these students were very upset. It was shared this occurred at North Elementary.

**ACTION:** Carol Boaz will look into the AIG testing and EOG's.

Mel Battle shared information with Interim Superintendent regarding the recent summer hours for twelve-month employees and an email from a teacher regarding concerns. Joel Lillard shared he made the motion but would be willing to be flexible based on Interim Superintendent's recommendation after reviewing the information. The concern was accountability and it appears we have lost it as there were too many inconsistencies previously. Joel Lillard shared he is willing to relax the requirements if employees are working the correct times. Dr. Barker questioned if eleven-month employees were

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included in this and it will have to be confirmed. A copy of the information will be shared with Dr. Barker.

**ACTION:** Interim Superintendent Dr. Barker will look into the schedules and review and recommend suggestion to the board by Friday if possible.

**PERSONNEL LISTING**

Tracy Stanley shared the vacancy listing that was shared previously did not include a Social Studies teacher and the personnel listing includes a recommendation. Dr. Murray confirmed that there may be a teacher who will be moved to another subject which allows for this position.

Dr. Barker recommended approval of the personnel listing for employment as listed below.

| <b>Employment</b>               |  |
|---------------------------------|--|
| Bartlett Yancey Sr. High School | Lori Heatherly, 9-12 Math Teacher = Eff. 8/17/23         |
|                                 |  |
|                                 | Antwain Cook, 9-12 Social Studies Teacher = Eff. 8/17/23 |
|                                 |  |
| Stoney Creek Elementary         | Casey Evans, K-5 Media Specialist = Eff. 8/17/23         |

Gladys Garland moved, seconded by Nicole Smith to approve the personnel listing as recommended. The motion carried 6-1 with Beggarly voting "No."

| <b>Employment</b>               |  |
|---------------------------------|--|
| Bartlett Yancey Sr. High School | Lori Heatherly, 9-12 Math Teacher = Eff. 8/17/23         |
|                                 |  |
|                                 | Antwain Cook, 9-12 Social Studies Teacher = Eff. 8/17/23 |
|                                 |  |
| Stoney Creek Elementary         | Casey Evans, K-5 Media Specialist = Eff. 8/17/23         |
|                                 |  |
| <b>Retirement</b>               |  |
| Bartlett Yancey Sr. High School | Cynthia Smith, 9-12 EC Teacher = Eff. 7/31/23            |
|                                 |  |
| <b>Resignation</b>              |  |
| District                        | Kimberly Scott, Bus Driver = Eff. 5/17/23                |
|                                 |  |
| South Elementary                | Daniela Flores, K-5 Teacher Asst. = Eff. 5/26/23         |
|                                 | Jessica Chester, K-5 Teacher = Eff. 6/14/23              |
|                                 | Barbara Jane Williams, K-5 Teacher = Eff. 6/14/23        |



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|                                       |  |
| North Elementary                      | Latisha Brown, Data Manager = Eff. 6/30/23                                   |
|                                       |  |
| Oakwood Elementary                    | Lisa Johnson-Knight, K-5 Teacher Asst. = Eff. 6/14/23                        |
|                                       |  |
| Central Office / Transportation Dept. | Debra Moore, Cost Clerk = Eff. 6/9/23  |
|                                       |  |
| <b>Transfer</b>                       |  |
| Stoney Creek Elementary               | Teresa Crumpton, Data Manager = Transfer from South Elementary = Eff. 7/1/23 |
|                                       | Lynn Moretz, K-5 Teacher = Transfer from South Elementary = Eff. 8/17/23     |

**ADJOURN**

Joel Lillard made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 2:45 p.m., Gladys Garland seconded the motion and it carried unanimously. The next regular meeting of the Board of Education will be held on June 26, 2023 at 6:30 p.m. in the Caswell County Schools Administration Building.

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Mel O. Battle  
Chairman

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Dr. Douglas Barker  
Interim Superintendent