

# CASWELL COUNTY BOARD OF EDUCATION MINUTES

February 12, 2024

The Caswell County Board of Education met in regular session on Monday, February 12, 2024, at 9:00 a.m. in the Administration Building of Caswell County Schools. Members present: Chairman Mel Battle, Vice Chair Joel Lillard, Vennie Beggarly, Gladys Garland, Nicole Smith, Tracy Stanley and Trudy Blackwell. Others present include Interim Superintendent Dr. Douglas Barker, JoAnna Gwynn, 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*).

## **I. A. 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.

## **I. B. APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

Nicole Smith moved, seconded by Gladys Garland, to approve the minutes of the January 22, 2024, regular meeting, January 22, 2024 work session, and January 29, 2024 special called meeting as presented. The motion carried unanimously.

## **I. C. APPROVAL OF AGENDA**

Dr. Barker recommended approval of agenda as presented. Trudy Blackwell moved, seconded by Nicole Smith, to approve the agenda as presented. The motion carried unanimously.

## **I. D. ANNOUNCEMENTS**

Dr. Barker notified the board that Mr. Stokes has been meeting with University of North Carolina and agreed to a partnership which will work with us to provide student teachers at no cost to the district. This will be an asset to our school system.

Dr. Barker shared recent awards from the NCSBA (North Carolina School Boards Association) in which the whole board received the Gold Bell Award. Others shared were: Gladys Garland (Silver), Vennie Beggarly, Nicole Smith and Trudy Blackwell (Certificate of Merit).

## **I. E. PUBLIC COMMENTS**

None at this time.

## **II. REPORTS**

None at this time.

## **III. UNFINISHED BUSINESS**

Dr. Barker shared that a new mat for wrestling at the high school has been ordered and since the board agreed to add this sport for the middle school, he inquired if they wanted to go ahead

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and order both. He suggested the middle school mat be paid with funds from fund balance and the high school mat can be used from funds in their school account. This will assist these sports programs to have the mats when they start in the fall. Vennie Beggarly questioned if the old mat from the high school could be used at the middle school until we find out how much interest there is in the sport at the middle school level. Dr. Barker shared that they are very old and the more you handle and move the mats more wear and tear occurs.

Joel Lillard moved, seconded by Tracy Stanley to use fund balance funding for the mat for NL Dillard Middle School and the mat for the high school would be used from school accounts.

Discussion took place regarding which school account would be used referencing the pot of money set aside for athletics or from the actual school account. It was shared the report showed approximately \$90,000 in the general school account. Dr. Barker shared that the mat has already been ordered and the school will determine what account to pay for it from; however, he brought to the board to inquire if they wanted to order the mat for the middle school since the other is already on order.

It was agreed that a list of the athletic allocations can be shared as there were some concerns that all the money was not spent last year.

Upon no further discussion, the motion made by Joel Lillard, seconded by Tracy Stanley to purchase the mat for NL Dillard using fund balance was approved unanimously.

Dr. Barker reviewed information regarding the rental of the Civic Center and felt that the charge for the custodian and technician are not enough noting that they are having to work on weekends and holidays and the system is not breaking even with the current fee schedule. Dr. Barker shared that the current rate is not enough to cover their salary and benefits and felt these individuals need to be compensated for their time as the facility is being rented on a frequent basis. Dr. Barker also noted that another area that needs to be looked into is the facility as a whole noting the electricity is costly and the rates are not enough to cover our costs.

Dr. Barker shared that in years past a separate line item was used for the rental of the Civic Center but in the previous years this has been going into the fund balance. He has advised the finance director to implement a line item going forward. He also noted that repairs are needed as nothing has been done basically since the facility was built and referenced the recent update to the curtains, lights and stage area. If the board continues to rent out the facility, general updates are going to be needed on a recurring basis and the importance of keeping the facility clean and maintained. Dr. Barker shared that there is \$15,000 in the budget for the Civic Center and lights have been ordered which will eat into this amount quickly. The board needs to look at what this facility is costing the system and possibly change the rates.

Questions were asked about the rental form as to why the round tables require a fee but the rectangular do not. There was not a clear answer as this is how things have been in place for years prior.

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Discussion took place on the rental of the facility and thoughts on rates for the custodian and technician.

Dr. Barker suggested using the large auditorium only for performances or for end of year school events and using the small auditorium for banquets, etc. He shared this would save on the wear and tear of the performance seating as well as the manpower needed for the custodians to pull them out. He also suggested that the large professional development room could be used at the Central Office for events if needed and a fee needs to be established. This could be used in lieu of the Civic Center after hours and would just require planning as well as notifying of where to park and could increase revenue as well as give the public access.

It was agreed that Dr. Barker will bring back information to the next meeting with updated rates on items that have been discussed.

## IV. NEW BUSINESS

### 1. Consent Agenda

- Request for Transfer
- Child Nutrition Vendors (United Restaurant)

Questions were asked as to why the board is not given copies of the other bids and it was shared that they would like to see this included going forward. Dr. Barker shared that this situation was due to the timeline and trying to meet the deadline for the grant. He will make sure other bids going forward are shared with the board.

Joel Lillard moved, seconded by Vennie Beggarly, to approve the consent agenda as presented. The motion carried unanimously.

### 2. Activity Bus – Carolina Thomas

Dr. Barker shared that when he was here in the past a schedule was put in place to order activity buses; however, this has not taken place and our mechanics have notified us that some of our buses are not safe to transport students for lengthy trips. We've had to rent charter buses on some occasions which is very costly to the school district. We have purchased our buses from Carolina Thomas and they have a few left this year and have shared that the amount will most likely increase next year in the amount of \$10,000. Dr. Barker shared there is money in fund balance to purchase the book and if the board decides not to do this now, it will definitely be needed next year.

Dr. Barker recommended approval of purchase of a new activity bus with Carolina Thomas in the amount of \$132,462 from fund balance. Trudy Blackwell moved, seconded by Gladys Garland, to approve purchase of activity bus as presented using fund balance. The motion carried unanimously.

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It will be confirmed if the bus has air conditioning.

Carolina Thomas	Activity Bus
Cost:	\$132,462.00
Funding Source:	Fund Balance

3. Resolution

Trudy Blackwell read aloud the resolution for Gladys Graves. Vennie Beggarly moved, seconded by Nicole Smith, to approve the resolution as presented. The motion carried unanimously.

*Resolution in Memorial and Appreciation  
Of the Life of  
Gladys Alma Fowler Graves*

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**WHEREAS**, Gladys Alma Fowler Graves, was born on July 5, 1947, and resided in Blanch, NC, at the time of her death on February 3, 2024, and

**WHEREAS**, Gladys Graves, was a faithful wife and loving mother, aunt, sister, and friend and her family’s welfare was her major and constant concern; and

**WHEREAS**, Gladys Graves was a 1965 graduate of Caswell County High School in Yanceyville and a 1969 graduate of Shaw University in Raleigh, NC. In 1983, she graduated from NC Central University in Durham. She received her degrees in Early Education and Educational Administration; and

**WHEREAS**, Gladys Graves began her teaching career in the Caswell County School System at High Rock Elementary School. She later moved to Greensboro and began teaching in the Guilford County School System. In 2008 she retired and moved back “home” and returned to Caswell County Schools as a full-time substitute teacher until 2021; and

**WHEREAS**, Gladys Graves served two terms as president of the North Carolina Association of Educators. In 1986, she served as the Deputy Director of the Terry Sanford for Senate Campaign, and in 1989 she became the Director of Alumni Relations and Institutional Research at her alma mater, Shaw University; and

**WHEREAS**, Gladys Graves was an instrumental person in the Teaching Fellows Program. In May of 1991, Gladys joined the staff of the North Carolina Public School Forum as Director of the Teaching Fellows Program as an original member. While serving as Director, she planned and coordinated summer programs for over 25,000 Teaching Fellow rising freshmen, sophomores, and juniors. In her famous words about her humble hometown she is known for saying “I’m going to put Blanch, North Carolina, on the map” and that she did; and

**NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED** that the Caswell County Board of Education wishes to honor the memory of Gladys Graves and expresses its sympathy to her family by causing a copy of this Resolution to be spread upon the official minutes of the Board of Education and a copy forwarded to the family.

This the 12<sup>th</sup> day of February 2024.

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Mel Battle, Chairman

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Joel Lillard, Vice Chair

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Vennie Beggarly

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Trudy Blackwell

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Gladys Garland

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Nicole Smith

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Tracy P. Stanley

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Dr. Douglas Barker, Interim Superintendent

**V. SUPERINTENDENT UPDATES**

Dr. Barker shared that resolutions are a nice way to remember past employees and something the board may want to consider is having a blanket letter to use noting that some information in obituaries is incorrect or difficult to acquire. This would help the board assistant as well in the future and just something for the board to think about.

Dr. Barker shared that the board was notified of the safety grant that was awarded to the school system. This will allow the district to purchase 8 vaping detectors for the elementary schools, 21 for the middle and 23 for the high school along with 9 hand held metal detectors (4 at elementary, 2 at middle and 3 at high school). Dr. Barker thanked Dr. Medina Jones on writing and submitting the grant. The grant does not cover the expense of the metal detectors that allow you to walk through; however, if another grant is available he suggested writing another grant for this use. It was questioned if this would allow more bathrooms to be open at the high school and Dr. Barker shared that it should but does not take care of the problem in which more personnel needs to be assigned to provide better supervision.

Dr. Barker updated the board on a newly created scholarship by Dan Pleasant who is a Caswell County graduate and felt he is leaving a great legacy for himself and his wife as they are assisting a graduate who is going into engineering. Dr. Medina Jones has been informed and is working with the high school to make sure our students are informed of this opportunity.

Dr. Barker shared that February is Bus Driver Appreciation month and when it comes down to it, bus drivers have one of the most important jobs in the system noting they get the students to school. Our drivers are doing a fantastic job and will be receiving breakfast at their site this week by the Transportation Director and his staff. We thank them for what they do for Caswell County Schools.

A copy was shared with employees who are serving dual roles in the system. Dr. Barker questioned if anyone was aware of anyone that is not on the list and if so to please let him know.

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Question was asked if a certified employee drives a bus if they are receiving time and a half. Dr. Barker shared they are salaried employees and they are paid a set amount and then they receive the amount on the salary scale for bus drivers based on their years of experience of driving.

Discussion took place on this topic and it was shared that some teachers are receiving time and a half and others or not and Dr. Barker was asked to check into this. Lengthy discussion continued on rate of pay. Concerns were shared that teachers do not feel this is fair, etc. It was questioned if a flat rate of pay could be given to all drivers. Dr. Barker shared that if a teacher is driving they are not required to make up their time that they are leaving early to drive the bus and shared that when a teacher serves as a tutor they are receiving an amount and something like this could be looked into.

It was suggested to bring this back at the next work session and to look at how many teachers are driving a bus and not just acting as a substitute. Other areas to look at that were requested included the coaches driving and how they are paid while at the event versus a "driver" and if they get paid the entire time as well if it is the principal's decision to determine who the driver is. These topics will be brought back to the next work session. Dr. Barker reemphasized the importance of making decisions to make sure the budget can afford changes. Joel Lillard shared that perhaps looking at how many years a driver has had their CDL license and give credit for this and this may possibly fix the problem. Dr. Barker shared even with that suggestion, do you give credit for the CDL while in Caswell or other counties.

Dr. Barker shared he met with principals and discussed the discipline and will share more in closed session. He did share that all principals were in favor to have a food truck visit their school to offer a benefit to teachers but they wanted the board to set the requirements or guidelines. They agreed to work out the stipulations with ordering, collecting money, etc. but needed input from the board. Discussion took place on this and Dr. Barker shared that the board needs to keep in mind that if this is agreed upon, a vendor will need to be willing to go to all schools and he shared his concerns with the parameters of the school district.

This topic will be brought back to the next work session and decide how to handle this.

### VI. BOARD MEMBER OBSERVATIONS

- Dr. Barker shared that he met with the committee to begin working on the school calendar for 2024/25. He shared that guidelines were shared on what the law requires and they will meet again after they go back to their school and share with staff members. Dr. Barker also shared that he and Mr. Battle met with Representative Greg Maiers recently and they asked specifically the ramifications

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on going back to school earlier than what the law says. Dr. Barker shared he did not feel comfortable in making this decision and suggested abiding by the calendar laws. Dr. Barker shared that the calendar committee will be bringing back a traditional calendar for approval. Discussion took place regarding the 90-minute blocks, increasing the school day, going back to a seven-block schedule and it was shared that a 90-minute block is difficult for students and the teacher. The benefit of this was that students receive eight credits in their first semester and allow them to graduate early if they have met all requirements. Dr. Barker shared this is something that the board may want to look at next school year and he felt that having school begin closer to 8:00 should be looked into noting that this is not just the principal's decision and earlier start times are difficult for students and parents as well as students who are enrolled at PCC. Vennie Beggarly questioned who was on the committee. Dr. Barker shared there were representatives from each school and he shared that anyone is welcome to attend the meetings; however, you need someone with a working relationship that is familiar with the legalities and requirements. It was requested that the guidelines for how the calendar is created be posted on the website.

- Vennie Beggarly shared she was a judge for the spelling bee and it went well. Congratulations to our students were extended.
- Gladys Garland also shared she attended the spelling bee and most recently a basketball game and also recognized the contributions of Gladys Graves who recently passed away and offered thanks to Dan Pleasant for the newly created scholarship. She also shared that Mr. Helms received a Project Literacy award as she had attended the Ashby Award Program.
- Joel Lillard shared he has visited several schools and one concern included the science at the middle school (8<sup>th</sup> grade) and noted that the class is online with different instructors and the students are receiving different assignments which is making it very difficult and felt the need for a classroom teacher (even if it is a substitute) is needed and do away with the online portion.
- Tracy Stanley participated as a judge for the spelling bee and shared she had attended a few basketball games.
- Trudy Blackwell shared she has attended basketball games and the students were well behaved. She also shared thanks to Dr. Medina Jones on the grant writing for the safety grant and to Mr. Stokes on his work for the collaboration with UNC and student teachers.
- Mel Battle shared he also was a judge in the spelling bee and shared he was very impressed with Ms. Marcy Piotrowski as the event was very nice. He has also attended basketball games at home and away. He shared that in discussion with 90-minute blocks that other school districts do not take in school until 8:30 and there are a variety of options to look at and each district handles things differently.

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Joel Lillard moved, seconded by Vennie Beggarly, to take a recess for lunch at 10:55 a.m. The motion carried unanimously. (Lunch at Bartlett Yancey Sr. High School)

The board reconvened at 12:05 p.m.

**VI. 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. Vennie Beggarly seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

**VII. OPEN SESSION**

Nicole Smith made a motion to return to open session. Vennie Beggarly seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

**VIII. PERSONNEL LISTING**

Dr. Barker recommended approval of the personnel listing as presented. Joel Lillard moved, seconded by Nicole Smith, to approve the personnel listing as presented. Item # 1 will be brought back to the board if there is interest in a substitute position.

<b>Resignations</b>	
North Elementary	Linda Cottier, K-5 Teacher = Eff. 2/16/24
BYSHS	Karen Worlds, 9-12 Teacher = Eff. 2/9/24
Central Office	Lacy Flynn, Curr. Office Support = Eff. 2/28/24
<b>Retirement</b>	
<b>Employment</b>	
Stoney Creek Elementary	Hannah May, K-5 (4 <sup>th</sup> grade teacher) = Eff. 3/11/24
	Tosha Graves, Guidance Counselor = Eff. 3/18/24
Oakwood Elementary	Rebeckah Goras, EC Teacher = Eff. 2/13/24
	Kaytrah Asmond Connally, Teacher Asst. = Eff. 2/21/24
NL Dillard Middle	Valerie Swann, EC Teacher Asst. = Eff. 2/21/24



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North Elementary	Kaiya Johnson, Teacher Asst. = Eff. 2/21/24
<b>Substitutes</b>	
Substitute Teacher	
	Gregory Oliver (BYSHS) = Eff. 2/21/24
	Yvonne Rogers = Eff. 2/21/24
	Tiffany Stanley = Eff. 2/21/24
<b>Notes:</b>	
Bartlett Yancey Sr. High School to NLD	James Totten will be assisting at NLD

**IX. COMMUNICATIONS**

- Dr. Barker shared an updated listing of all board policies was included in your packet. Hard copies of all policies are located in the office of the Superintendent. Dr. Barker thanked Connie Kimrey as noted in the letter from the NCSBA on her work in keeping this project organized and on track.
- Gladys Garland offered thanks to Dr. Medina Jones and congratulations on her recent doctoral degree and her assistance with the grant writing.

**X. ADJOURN**

Gladys Garland made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 3:45 p.m., Trudy Blackwell seconded the motion and it carried unanimously. The next regular meeting of the Board of Education will be held on February 27, 2024 at 5:30 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