MINUTES OF
THE WILSON COUNTY BOARD OF EDUCATION
SPECIAL MEETING
April 6, 2020

The Wilson County Board of Education held a Special Meeting on Monday, April 6, 2020, at 12:00 p.m. in the Administrative Offices, 113 N. Tarboro Street. Chairman Dr. Christine L. Fitch called the meeting to order at 12:00 p.m. with the following members present:

Dr. Christine L. Fitch, Chairman
Henry E. Mercer, Vice-Chairman
Velma Barnes
Beverly Boyette
Rhyan Breen
Gary Farmer
Debora Powell
Dr. Lane B. Mills, Secretary

Others present were Board Clerk Linda Horrison and Board Attorney Brandon McPherson. Also present was *The Wilson Times* Reporter Drew Wilson.

After calling the meeting to order, Dr. Fitch amended the agenda by moving items listed under IV. Discussion/Information/Action Items A-D, to be discussed after item II. Pledge of Allegiance and Moment of Silence. Dr. Fitch asked for approval of the agenda. Ms. Powell made the motion, seconded by Ms. Boyette, that the Board amend the agenda as stated moving items IV. A-D to follow the Pledge of Allegiance, then follow-up with the Superintendent's Report. Mr. McPherson recommended approving items IV. A-C since the policies reference the resolution. The maker of the motion agreed. The motion passed unanimously.

Dr. Fitch led the Pledge of Allegiance, followed by a moment of silence.

The purpose of the meeting was to discuss three policies, a resolution to grant emergency powers to the Superintendent and the purchase of Chromebooks for the traditional high schools; to conduct architectural interviews for the new Wilson Academy of Applied Technology (WAAT) building; and to discuss the 2020-2021 Local Current Expense and Capital Outlay Budgets.

Under Draft Policy 2302, *Remote Participation in Board Meetings*, the Board reviewed the revisions, which are necessary to align local Board policies with North Carolina General Statutes and North Carolina School Boards Association (NCSBA) policies. The Board requested a minor change in the verbiage of this policy. Ms. Barnes made the motion, seconded by Mr. Mercer, that the Board approve waiving the second reading of Policy 2302, *Remote Participation in Board Meetings*, and on line 87, replace the word "shall" with "may." The motion passed unanimously.

Under Draft Policy 2450, *Suspension of Board Policies*, the Board reviewed the revisions, which are necessary to align local Board policies with North Carolina General Statutes and NCSBA policies. The Board did not request any changes to this policy. Ms. Barnes made the motion, seconded by Mr. Farmer, that the Board approve Policy 2450, *Suspension of Board*

Policies, as a second read, with the removal of Policy 1517, *Suspension of Board Policies*. The motion passed unanimously.

Under Draft Policy 2460, *Administration in Policy Absence*, the Board reviewed the revisions, which are necessary to align local Board policies with North Carolina General Statutes and NCSBA policies. The Board did not request any changes to this policy. Ms. Barnes made the motion, seconded by Mr. Farmer, that the Board approve as a second read Policy 2460, *Administration in Policy Absence*, and the removal of Policy 1518, *Administration in Policy Absences*. The motion passed unanimously.

Under Resolution to Grant Emergency Powers to the Superintendent, the Law Offices of Schwartz & Shaw have drafted a resolution to grant the Superintendent temporary powers to address the COVID-19 emergency. This resolution allows for the Superintendent to be granted greater flexibility to respond quickly and appropriately to the evolving events. When action must be taken on a matter for which Board policy provides no direction for administrative action, the Superintendent shall have the power to act. Ms. Boyette made the motion, seconded by Mr. Mercer, that the Board approve the Resolution to Grant Emergency Powers to the Superintendent. The motion passed unanimously. Mr. Farmer congratulated Dr. Mills and his team on how they have handled the COVID-19 situation. They have made the Board proud. Ms. Barnes added that Wilson County Schools (WCS) has one of the finest Superintendents anyone could have.

At 12:29 p.m., it was the Board's consensus to take a recess so that Board members could relocate to different areas and complete the meeting by way of video conference. The virtual meeting reconvened at 12:40 p.m.

Under Superintendent's Report – COVID-19, Dr. Mills updated the Board on the following:

- Maintenance has treated all of our buildings.
- Principals are working from their homes or offices. They are checking their buildings and minimizing a lot of exposure.
- There has been some discussion of funding from the governor to address temporary and long-term issues, child nutrition, maintenance and child care. The greatest needs are offsetting child nutrition costs due to lack of normal meals being served. Funding will be discussed later during the Budget portion of this meeting. Dr. Mills has also been involved in regional conference calls with other Superintendents, and they are facing the same issues.
- Spring Break is scheduled next week. The Administration is recommending that WCS observe Spring Break in our traditional schools as originally scheduled on our calendar. The Maintenance Department and some year-round staff will be working during the break. Child Nutrition will not serve meals during the week of Spring Break. Other locations such as CHEW and The SPOT may be able to provide meals for students in the community during our break.
- Child Nutrition is serving approximately 8,300 meals per day. The Administration has been discussing making changes to food service because of the increased risk of exposure to COVID-19. There has been some discussion of providing bulk bags on Friday to last students the entire week.

- Students needing medical attention during our school closure can make an appointment with the Wilson Area School-Based Health (WASH) Center by making an appointment through the Health Department and utilizing Telehealth.
- Students that do not have internet at home to download assignments may access the guest network in the parking lot at our schools. There have been conversations about equipping buses with hotspots to ride through communities.

Under Purchase of Chromebooks for the Traditional High Schools, Board Policy 2500.1, *Contracts*, states that all contracts involving expenditures exceeding $90,000 must receive prior approval from the Board. The Administration is seeking to purchase new Chromebooks for grades 11 and 12 at our traditional high schools. The operating system on their current Chromebooks will no longer accept updates due to their age. These devices were purchased in 2014 with a Golden Leaf Grant and have outlived their expected lifespan. Given the current situation with production loss overseas and the uncertainty of product availability in the future, the Administration would like to obtain the needed inventory of Chromebooks as soon as possible for our high schools. The purchase price of these devices is from a state approved Premium HP vendor, which means we receive preferred pricing that is slightly cheaper than the negotiated price the state has made available to districts. The Administration is requesting the Board's approval to purchase new Chromebooks for grades 11 and 12 at the three traditional high schools from Netcom Business Solutions, Inc. Ms. Boyette made the motion, seconded by Ms. Barnes, to approve the purchase of Chromebooks for the traditional high schools. The motion passed unanimously.

Under Architectural Interviews – Request for Qualifications – Architect for Wilson Academy of Applied Technology (WAAT) Building, WCS sought qualification proposals from skilled, experienced architectural firms who specialize in school building construction for the new WAAT Building on the Lee Campus of Wilson Community College. A Request for Qualifications (RFQ) for an architect for the WAAT Building was publicly let and closed on February 27. The Administration received RFQS from the following firms: Clarknexsen, Davis Kane Architects, HH Architecture, JFK Architecture, Little Diversified Architectural Consulting, LS3P, Moseley Architects, Oakley Collier Architects, SfL+a Architects and Skinner Farlow Kirwan Architecture. The Administration recommended the Board interview the following firms: Davis Kane Architects, HH Architecture, JFK Architecture, Oakley Collier Architects and Skinner Farlow Kirwan Architecture. The Board requested the architects be interviewed during a Special Board meeting. Prior to the interview, each firm was sent a link to Zoom, which is an online video conferencing platform. Architecture firms were given 30 minutes to present their proposal to the Board, followed by 10 minutes of questions from the Board, the Administration and the Board's attorney. An RFQ Selection Process and Evaluation Grading Rubric was provided for each Board member and used to evaluate the proposal. The Board will need to select an architect for the new WAAT Building.

The architecture firms were scheduled to present to the Board virtually at the following times:

- 1:00 P.M. – Davis Kane Architects
- 1:45 P.M. – HH Architecture
- 2:30 P.M. – JKF Architecture
- 3:15 P.M. – Oakley Collier Architects
- 4:00 P.M. – Skinner Farlow Kirwan Architecture

In advance of the interviews, each firm submitted references to Director of Maintenance Mark Letchworth for at least three different school districts and/or governmental entities for whom their firm had performed similar work. Mr. Letchworth shared this information with the Board at the conclusion of the interviews.

Mr. Mercer made the motion, seconded by Mr. Farmer, that Skinner Farlow Kirwan be the architect for the WAAT project. The motion passed 5:2, with Mr. Breen and Ms. Boyette casting the dissenting votes.

Under 2020-2021 Local Current Expense and Capital Outlay Budgets, it was the Board's consensus to discuss this at the April 20, Regular Board Meeting.

There being no further business at 5:34 p.m., Mr. Farmer made the motion, seconded by Mr. Breen, to adjourn the meeting. The motion passed unanimously.

Christine L. Fitch
Dr. Christine L. Fitch, Chairman

Dr. Lane B. Mills, Secretary