

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

398 Hospital Road, Sylva

March 19, 2024

6:00 p.m.

The Jackson County Board of Education held their regular session on Tuesday, March 19, 2024, at 6:00 p.m., at the Board of Education Administrative Office Boardroom, Sylva, North Carolina. The following members were present:

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

The following board member was present via telephone and/or online platform:

Abigail Clayton

Also present were Dr. Dana L. Ayers, Superintendent; Jake Buchanan, Deputy Superintendent; Chris Campbell, School Board Attorney; and Cora Fields, Board Assistant.

**CALL TO ORDER**

Chairperson Elizabeth Cooper called the business meeting to order.

Mrs. Cooper led the Pledge of Allegiance.

**APPROVAL OF AGENDA**

*Upon a motion by Mr. Wes Jamison and seconded by Mrs. Kim Moore, the board voted unanimously to approve the Agenda.*

**SPECIAL RECOGNITION**

Dr. Ayers recognized the following Cullowhee Valley Elementary students:

Regional STEM Fair – Elementary School:

Riley Hill - 1st place Math; Ester Melton - 2nd place Engineering; Jack Pollack and Cail Lord-Siler - 2nd place technology.

Middle School: Julia Friddle and Alexis Lind - Honorable Mention biological sciences; Ida Reisinger & Tilly Pressley - Honorable Mention earth and environmental sciences; Ella Tracy - Technology third; Lexi Hughes and Alizabeth Holt - earth and environmental science 3rd and 2nd place as a special water award; Senith DeSilva - Earth env-1st place; Mary Vineyard - 3rd physics; Theo Rutt & Wally Wilson - 1st physics; Lane Brooks, Maddie Hendershot and Griffin Brown - Honorable Mention Engineering; Abram Graning - Tied 3rd math stats data; Linus Huffman - 3rd place Math, Data & Statistics; and Garret Chapman - 1st math statistics and data.

## 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. Draft Open Session Minutes of Regular Meeting of February 27, 2024.

## INFORMATION AGENDA

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

Dr. Ayers reported on the following:

1. We gathered just three weeks ago for our last board meeting and much has occurred in those few weeks. I am extremely proud of the academic strides we have made and am eager to see our results at the conclusion of the year. There are only eight weeks remaining in the school year!
2. JCPS students and staff are ready to take some much-deserved time away from classrooms to enjoy spring break. As a reminder, JCPS will be closed March 25th through April 1st. School resumes on Tuesday, April 2nd.
3. In athletics, we are in desperate need of support. When we discussed middle grades athletics in January of 2023, I presented the barriers of running district teams and school teams at the same time. Many, many people promised to support schools by coaching, driving buses, volunteering to run clocks and monitor students. Unfortunately, very few have come through on those promises. Our greatest need is transportation! I would like to commend Mark Hooper, Michael Forbis and Ronnie Riddle for driving athletic teams on a regular basis. We are so appreciative of their time but need more people to step up for our students and fulfill those promises from last year. If you are willing to help with any of these roles, please contact Pam Shuler at SMHS by phone or email.
4. The next few weeks will bring several planning discussions around budgets, capital projects and other upcoming plans for JCPS. I often contact both the Air Force and Army regarding our applications for ROTC programming at Smoky Mountain High School. We have students who are interested; we simply need to be granted the program from either branch. As of now, we are still on the waiting list for both branches. Likewise, our curriculum team is collaborating with Southwestern Community College to increase the Career and College Promise (CCP) courses offered on the campuses of Blue Ridge Early College and SMHS. The goal is to have in-person instructors on both campuses in the fall. These dual enrollment classes provide free college to our students. What a tremendous and no cost benefit for students and their families. As you can tell, I am continually looking for ways to expand opportunities for our high school students.
5. Of much importance is our long-range plan for capital priorities. These priorities include: 1) a new cafeteria and classroom space at Fairview, 2) a newly built traditional middle school with athletic fields, 3) upgrades to SMHS athletic facilities to include construction of a track and ADA upgrades, and 4) a newly constructed bus garage on the current site. Each of these projects has been presented to our county commissioners for review and potential funding. I urge our community to promote these projects when interacting with commissioners.
6. Finally, I am excited about my recent invitation to present to the State Board of Education in Raleigh on April 3rd. This will be a chance for me to highlight the work our principals are doing with the Regional DPI team to improve student outcomes. This is perhaps one of the first times that JCPS will have the attention of folks in Raleigh!

**B. Agenda Item:** NC SIS Transition to Infinite Campus

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

Mr. Holt presented information about the new Student Information System, Infinite Campus, that will be implemented over the next two years. Mr. Holt informed the board that data conversion will occur during the summer and the new system will be in place at the start of the 2024-2025 school year. The new user-friendly system offers lots of benefits and will require a new log in for parents and students. Additional information will be disseminated prior to implementation of this new program.

**C. Agenda Item:** The Catamount School

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

Dr. Ayers reported on the Catamount School Memorandum of Agreement between WCU and JCPS. Dr. Ayers shared enrollment statistics, facility usage, staffing numbers, and discussed the advantages and disadvantages of housing the Catamount School on the Smoky Mountain High School campus. She informed the board that there is a need for additional classroom space for several CTE classes, Specially Designed Instruction for the Exceptional Children's Program, a JROTC Program, and additional office space for College & Career Promise. Dr. Ayers said that relocating the Catamount School is one option that is being considered.

**D. Agenda Item:** Unaudited Financial Summary

**Presenter:** Mr. Jake Buchanan, Deputy Superintendent

Mr. Buchanan presented the Unaudited Financial Summary as of March 2024.

**OPEN SESSION FOR PUBLIC COMMENTS**

Jill Wolfe spoke to the board in support of the Catamount School remaining on the campus of Smoky Mountain High School. She said that there seems to be some challenges that are being looked at. She said that while looking at the classroom space for these programs that we must tread carefully. She said that the Catamount School has invested in renovating these spaces. She said that she feels there are the same challenges of supervision of middle school students on the high school campus as there are at K-8 schools. She said that it should be a privilege for SMHS to have these students on their campus. She said that there is a challenge between progress and preservation.

Grayson Wolfe spoke to the board in support of the Catamount School. He said that from what he understands the problem is the interactions between the high school and middle school students. He said he thinks there would still be problems no matter what school they were located at. He said there are problems no matter where we go. He said the teachers are respected and loved and happy at the Catamount School. He said that we should keep the funding in place for the Catamount School.

Rae Daniels spoke to the board in support of the Catamount School. She said she likes her school and the clubs and electives, and they get to have freedom in their classrooms, and they really love their school.

## **ACTION AGENDA**

**A. Agenda Item:** Budget Amendments

**Presenter:** Jake Buchanan, Deputy Superintendent

Mr. Buchanan presented budget amendments to the Capital Outlay Fund, 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. Kim Moore, the board voted unanimously to approve the budget amendments to the Capital Outlay Fund, Federal Grants Fund, Other Specific Revenue Fund, and the State Public School Fund.*

**B. Agenda Item:** High School Math I, II, III Textbook Purchase

**Presenter:** Mrs. Angie Dills, Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum and Instruction

Mrs. Dills presented information for the adoption of the Carnegie Learning Textbook Bundles for high school courses Math I, II and III 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 of the Carnegie Learning Textbook bundles for High School Math I, II, and III.*

**C. Agenda Item:** JCPS Suicide Screener Resolution

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

Dr. Ayers presented a Resolution supporting an exception to the Parents' Bill of Rights for Suicide Risk Screeners and asked for board approval.

***Action:** Upon a motion by Mr. Wes Jamison and seconded by Mrs. Kim Moore the board voted unanimously to adopt the Resolution Supporting an Exception to the Parents' Bill of Rights for Suicide Risk Screeners.*

**D. Agenda Item:** Field Trips

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

1. Blue Ridge School, Grade 5 – Bad Creek, Salem, SC, 04-18-2024, TT9210.
2. Scotts Creek Elementary School, Grade 6 – Ripley's Aquarium, Gatlinburg, TN, 04-19-24, TT9255.
3. Smoky Mountain High School, Grade 11 – UNC Chapel Hill, Chapel Hill, NC 04-22-24 to 04-23-24, TT9199.
4. Jackson Community School, Grades 9 through 12 – Smokemont Riding Stables, Cherokee, NC, 04-22-2024, TT9284.
5. Smokey Mountain Elementary School, Grade 1 – Knoxville Zoo, Knoxville, TN, 04-22-2024, TT9295.

Dr. Ayers presented the above-listed field trips 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 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. Kim Moore, the board unanimously approved the consent action agenda:

- A. Closed Session Minutes of Regular Meeting of February 27, 2024.

### **PERSONNEL ACTION AGENDA**

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

#### **Employee Recommendations:**

1. Fox, Paula – Custodian, CVES
2. Gaspard-Powers, Alana – EC Teacher, SMES
3. Long, Aaron – Tutor, SMES
4. Murphy, Lisa – EC Teacher, JCS
5. Porterfield, Curtis – Bus Monitor, SMHS
6. Ryan, Maria – EC Teacher Assistant, CVES

#### **Employee Resignations:**

1. Ballew, Amber Elaine – Teacher, SCES
2. Davidson, Hannah – Bus Monitor, CVES
3. Draper, Smanatha – Instructional Support Assistant, FES
4. Herring, Ameer Nicole – EC Teacher Assistant, CVES
5. Hill, Molly – College Success Coach, JCEC
6. Junaluska, Samantha – EC Teacher Assistant, CVES
7. Mahoney, Michael – Teacher, SCES
8. McAllister, Carla – EdTech Coach, BOE
9. Miller, Robert – Custodian and Bus Driver, CVES
10. Porter III, William – Teacher, SCES

#### **Employee Retirements:**

1. Carpenter, Kim – Teacher Assistant, CVES

2. Haggard, Linda – Teacher, SMHS
3. Hamilton, JoEllen – Teacher, SCES
4. Proffitt, Christy – K-4 Intervention Specialist, SCES

**Employee Separations:**

1. Poindexter, Holden – Assistant Coach Women’s Track, SMHS

**Special Requests: Leave of Absence:**

1. Cochran, Trevor – EC Teacher Assistant, SMHS
2. Jamison, Charity – Teacher, SMES

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

1. Brennan, Hannah – Assistant Coach Varsity Track, SMHS – Returning Non-Staff
2. Cabaniss, Christian – Assistant Coach Baseball, CVES – New Non-Staff
3. Frizzell, Jacob – Assistant Coach JV Baseball, SMHS – New Non-Staff
4. Luckman, Nicholas – Head Coach Baseball, CVES – New Non-Staff
5. Mayse, Tim – Head Coach Varsity Men’s Golf, BREC – Returning Staff
6. McCall, Kristina – Assistant Coach Varsity Women’s Soccer, BREC – New Staff
7. Mull, Ryan – Head Coach MS Baseball, BREC – New Non-Staff
8. Pendergast, Brandon – Assistant Coach Women’s Track, SMHS – New Staff
9. Pressler, Nickalus – Head Coach Varsity Women’s Soccer, BREC – Returning Staff
10. Reece, Bailey – Assistant Coach Softball, SCES – New Non-Staff
11. Sharpless, Reuben – Assistant Coach Baseball, SMES – Returning Non-Staff
12. Willoughby, Wes – Head Coach Baseball, SMES – Returning Staff
13. Zerrusen, Samantha – Head Coach Softball, SMES – New Non-Staff

**ANNOUNCEMENTS**

**The next regularly scheduled business meeting of the Board of Education is April 23, 2024, at 6:00 p.m., at the Board of Education Administrative Office, 398 Hospital Road, Sylva, NC.**

**ADJOURNMENT**

There being no objection, Chairperson Elizabeth Cooper adjourned the meeting at 8:07 p.m.

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Elizabeth K. Cooper, Chairperson

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Dr. Dana L. Ayers, Secretary