

The Rockbridge County School Board held their regular meeting on Tuesday, August 8, 2023, at the County of Rockbridge Administration Building.

Present: Chairman Neil Whitmore; Trustees Corey Berkstresser, Kathy Burant, Wendy Lovell; Superintendent Phillip Thompson, Deputy Clerk Timothy Martino.
Absent: Trustee Catie Brown.

CALL TO ORDER

Chairman Whitmore called the meeting to order at 5:30 p.m.

CHANGES TO THE AGENDA: None

STUDENT / STAFF RECOGNITION:

Mr. Joe Hawes was named the winner of the AFCEA “40 under 40” award. AFCEA is the Armed Forces Communications and Electronics Association. The RCPS STEM program partnered with AFCEA to host a Hack-A-Thon with all fifth graders across the division this past school year. Mr. Hawes was instrumental in making this event a success. The AFCEA 40 Under 40 Award is given to 40 individuals ages 40 and under for their significant contributions in a technical science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) field by providing innovation, thought leadership, and support to their client or organizations using information technology. Mr. Hawes’ dedication to the field of STEM and love for our students is what made him a perfect recipient of the 40 Under 40 Award.

CONSENT AGENDA

Upon recommendation by Chairman Whitmore, motion by Trustee Berkstresser, seconded by Trustee Burant, the board approved the following items on the Consent Agenda:

- Minutes: 1) July 11, 2023 [Regular Meeting]
- Field Trip Requests
- Fundraiser Requests
- Applications for Use of Facilities
- Appointments and Resignations

Appointments

Professional Staff

Amy Henson, Secondary Administration Intern, Rockbridge County High School,
effective July 31, 2023

Emilee Booze, Teacher, Central Elementary School, effective 2023-2024 school year

Brandi Long, Teacher, Central Elementary School, effective 2023-2024 school year

Support Staff

Autumn Andrews, Teacher Assistant, Natural Bridge Elementary School, effective 2023-2024 school year

Zachery Byrd, Teacher Assistant, Mountain View Elementary School, effective 2023-2024 school year

Elane Moses, Teacher Assistant, Maury River Middle School, effective 2023-2024 school year

Courtney Overton, Teacher Assistant, Mountain View Elementary School, effective 2023-2024 school year

Krailyn Guymon, Teacher Assistant, Central Elementary School, effective 2023-2024 school year

Food Service

Shilla Clements

Jessica Drake

Bus and Car Drivers

Jessica Wills, Car Driver

Kimberly McKee, Bus Driver

Professional Staff Resignation

Johnathan Williams, Teacher, Maury River Middle School, resigning effective August 22, 2023

Support Staff**Resignation**

Libby Braddy, Teacher Assistant, Maury River Middle School, resigning effective June 30, 2023

Rebecca Staton, Custodian, Fairfield Elementary School, resigning effective May 31, 2023

Hailey Petty, Teacher Assistant, Mountain View Elementary School, resigning effective June 30, 2023

Hailey Showalter, Teacher Assistant, Mountain View Elementary School, resigning effective June 30, 2023

Reneda Chittum, Teacher Assistant, Central Elementary School, resigning effective June 30, 2023

Support Staff**Retirement**

Larry Garrett, Bus Driver, Transportation, retiring effective August 1, 2023

Fall Coaches 2023-2024**RCHS****Football**

Martin Cox, Head Coach

Peter Lampman, Assistant Coach

Conner Christofferson, Assistant Coach

Irvin Jones, Assistant Coach

Ben Kabzinski, Assistant Coach

Dan Taylor, Assistant Coach

Taylor Austin, Assistant Coach

Golf

David Miller, Head Coach

Boys' Cross Country

Julie Tisone, Head Coach

Louise Uffelman, Assistant Coach

Dave Salge, Volunteer Coach

Girls' Cross Country

Julie Tisone, Head Coach

Jen Ludtke, Assistant Coach

Jennifer Showalter, Volunteer Coach

Cheerleading

Shannon Bryan, Head Coach

Ellie Kabzinski, Assistant Coach

Sarah Parnell, Volunteer Coach

Lindsey Ramsey, Volunteer Coach

Maury River Middle School**Volleyball**

Candace Camden, Head Coach

Cross Country

Paul Spangler, Head Coach

Winter Coaches 2023-2024**RCHS Girls Basketball**

Darrell Plogger, Head Coach

Club Sponsors**RCHS**

Anime, Mike Lenior

Chess, Miranda Fitzgerald

Cyber Club, Mike Lenior

Dark Room Club, Brian Hamelman

Educators Rising, Amanda Grimm

FBLA, Mike Lenior and Jennifer Balkey

FCA, Erin Allen, Sherry Brown, Heath Glass, and Perry Hardin

FCCLA, Corey Wallace, Amanda Grimm, and McKenzey Robinson

FFA, Lisa Martin and Gwendolyn Gosney

The Green Team, Kiersten Donahue

Club Sponsors (continued)

RCHS

HOSA, Deborah Wright
Interact, Sarah Leadbetter
Latin Club, Patrick Bradley
Model UN, Chris Gallagher
MCSU, Chris Gallagher
Outing, Mary Holton
SAGA, Patrick Bradley
SCA, Jessika Crance
Sirpha, Ashley Bailey
Skills USA, Alton Jarvis and Colter Bennett
Spanish/French, Jamie Youngblood and Andy Martin
Spike Ball, Mary Holton
STAND, Patrick Bradley
VRC Book Club, Amanda Burks
Y Street, Amanda Grimm

MRMS

FFA, Molly Marshall
NJHS, Courtney Diette
Destination Imagination, Sarah Shultz
Activities Coordinator, Tasha Polly

CES

Gifted, Elizabeth Schmidt
Destination Imagination, Michelle Hughes

FES

Gifted, Christy Imler
Destination Imagination, Cathy Whitesell

NBES

Gifted, Beth McElroy

MVES

Gifted, Brandon Smith

- **Business Items**
 - Approved appropriations to Fund 50 for CIP projects in the amount of \$135,000.00.
 - Approved appropriation for Fund 50 for carryover grants in the amount of \$288,153.00.
 - Approved appropriation for Fund 50 for new grants in the amount of \$116,625.00.
 - Approved Monthly Financials for August 8, 2023 in the amount of \$2,290,705.60

PUBLIC COMMENT:

One patron addressed the board who is the leader of Cub Scouts for four of the scout units that are in Rockbridge County; there are five scout units in Rockbridge County. The patron expressed appreciation to the school superintendent for allowing Cub Scouts to participate in the Back To School nights to let the families know that Scouting is in Rockbridge County. The patron requested the opportunity to send home recruitment flyers once a year to the elementary school students in welcome packets rather than being at the front office for children to pick up. The patron expressed the sentiment that it would make a lot more impact so that parents will get the information in the backpack rather than relying on children to have to go get the flyer and take it home.

BUDGET PLANNING: None

COMMITTEE REPORTS: None

INSTRUCTIONAL REPORT:

Mr. Timothy Martino, Assistant Superintendent, provided an update on Instructional Professional Development that took place today. He stated that it was the first day that staff was all back together working toward a common purpose. There were two morning professional development sessions. The first session met at Central Elementary School and was for all elementary teachers, regardless of what area is taught, for a session called the “Science of Reading.” Ms. Julie Morris, Ms. Barbara Hess, Ms. Lauren Fauber, Ms. Jennifer Floyd, and Ms. Melissa Tomlin led this PD

this morning but spent 50-60 hours on it over the summer. We are integrating UFLI (University of Florida Institute) to address spelling and phonics. We are also ahead of the curve with the Virginia Literacy Act that goes into effect soon. This gets us out in front of it and we need to get this right. The second session was for the secondary teachers (grades 6-12) who attended Secondary Questioning PD led by Dr. Melanie Falls and Ms. Kimberly Pollock. The point of the session was for teachers to focus on the formative assessment process and to intentionally design questions so that students have an opportunity to have dialogue and receive feedback about their learning prior to taking the summative assessment at the end of the unit.

INFORMATIONAL ITEMS:

Mr. Ricky Bain, Supervisor of Human Resources, provided an information on the New Teacher Orientation. New teachers to our division came together on August 2 and August 3, 2023 for their orientation. We had this over the course of two days this year because we found out last year that one day is not enough. We have 23 new professional staff members to Rockbridge County Public Schools. Eleven teachers are first year educators and twelve are experienced.

- 9 elementary teachers
- 7 middle school teachers
- 3 high school teachers
- 1 school counselor
- 1 Occupational Therapist
- 1 Board Certified Behavior Analysis
- 1 English Learner teacher

During the two days of orientation, there was discussion regarding the “why” and how relationships impact the education of our students. There was professional development on Infinite Campus, Canvas, and a PBL Works introduction. An overview was provided on safety, as well as the mentor program introductions. A new initiative for this year is HOPE (Having Opportunities with Professional Educators). The intent is to form a cohort so that they grow and learn together throughout this year but also, their career. The tentative dates are: October 12, 2023 at Boxerwood Gardens; December 14, 2023 at Mulberry’s DIY; and March 7, 2024 at Natural Bridge State Park. HOPE will take place at these locations to introduce them to these community partners and be able to form those relationships with experts in our backyard.

Also new this year, the Human Resources Department plans to spend more time in schools. Every Monday, the HR staff will be in a school to talk about benefits, etc., to answer questions that staff may have of them.

Superintendent Thompson provided a report on Discipline and Safety Guidelines Protocol. The division has tried for the past six years to gain consistency across our division in terms of discipline and safety. Our administrators have worked together to create protocols to ensure that they are all on the same page when we have to administer discipline. There are two charts; one for elementary and one for middle and secondary. The charts provide guidelines that administrators will use to assign consequences to students for behavior problems so that there is consistency across our division. Superintendent Thompson stated that he is very proud of our administrative team and how hard they worked to create the expectations and consequences for student behavior. Superintendent Thompson requested that all principals put this on their school webpages. This information will be placed in the student handbooks beginning with the 2024-2025 school year so that families are aware of how we are handling discipline.

- Trustee Lovell expressed her appreciation that this information will be on the website for families because social media is a big component of communication.
- Chairman Whitmore expressed his appreciation to have these documents to ensure consistency.
- Trustee Burant concurred with Chairman Whitmore’s comment and expressed her appreciation to the principals for their hard work.

Superintendent Thompson also explained that some of the more egregious student behaviors have to have guidelines, as well. Although every situation is unique, this document will provide guidance to administrators to remain as consistent as possible; it is a checklist for principals.

- Chairman Whitmore explained that a Standing Operating Procedure will give administrators peace of mind that they are going through this properly and not missing anything.
- Trustee Burant complimented Superintendent Thompson in that the chart provides administrators a checklist so that all the boxes are checked, especially in a traumatic event.

Superintendent Thompson explained that students and situations are different than they were when he came to Central Office ten years ago. He explained that he had to involve the School Board Discipline Committee very few times. However, students and their circumstances are different today. Therefore, we have more students coming before the School Board Discipline Committee.

This year, administration is looking at ways that we can work with students to educate them or support them through a Central Office Discipline Committee. We only want to call upon the School Board Discipline Committee this year if we have to suspend more than 10 days. There is no need to call the School Board Discipline Committee if we do not plan to suspend a child more than 10 days.

- Trustee Lovell expressed her appreciation to the principals for the job that they do each day. She stated that they are hoping that this process will be efficient and minimize the time that they will have to sit in the evening hours to handle disciplinary issues. She expressed her concern about the number of vaping cases that came before the Discipline Committee last year and expressed how this is an issue in our greater community.
- Trustee Berkstresser expressed his appreciation to the administrators as well and that he is hopeful that this new process will help both students and administrators.

ACTION ITEMS:

Upon recommendation by Chairman Whitmore, motion by Trustee Lovell, seconded by Trustee Burant, the board voted 4-0, to approve the School Crisis Plans, as presented.

Upon recommendation by Superintendent Thompson, motion by Chairman Whitmore and passed by a 4-0 roll call vote: Resolution Requesting the Board of Supervisors to Issue General Obligation School Bonds for School Purposes and Consenting to the Issuance Thereof.

NEW BUSINESS:

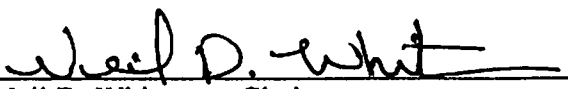
Superintendent Thompson provided information regarding the issue of interrupted telephone service at Rockbridge County High School. There was a meeting today at Rockbridge County High School involving Dr. Craft, many members of the Central Office, and the technology team. A week ago, the telephone system, intercom system, bell system, and clocks all quit working. There is a plan to be ready for students next on August 15 with working telephones and a working intercom system.

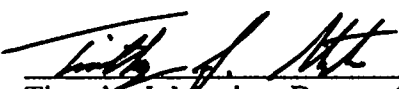
SCHOOL BOARD

The next regular meeting of the Rockbridge County School Board will be held on Tuesday, September 12, 2023 / 5:30 PM / Location: County of Rockbridge Administration Building, 150 South Main Street, Lexington, Virginia.

ADJOURNMENT

Upon motion by Trustee Lovell, seconded by Trustee Burant, and passed by 4-0 vote, the meeting was adjourned at 6:29 p.m.


Neil D. Whitmore, Chairman


Timothy J. Martino, Deputy Clerk of the Board