

The Rockbridge County School Board held their regular meeting on Tuesday, August 9, 2022 at the County of Rockbridge Administration Building.

Present: Vice-Chair Neil Whitmore; Trustees Corey Berkstresser, Catie Brown, and Kathy Burant; Superintendent Phillip Thompson. Absent: Chairman Wendy Lovell.

CALL TO ORDER

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

CHANGES TO THE AGENDA: None

STUDENT / STAFF RECOGNITION:

WIDA Fellow Recipient: Ms. Rachel Braun, Coordinator for ESL Programs. Dr. Angie Wilder explained that WIDA recognizes fellows from around the US that go above the call of duty for their students. Ms. Braun delivered food to students during COVID. She also organizes a bookmobile during the summertime door to door. Ms. Braun has been teaching K-12 for almost 16 years in four different states. She has mentored numerous teachers during the year. In addition, Ms. Braun is National Board certified. The Rockbridge County Public School system is very grateful to have her in our school system and we are proud she is part of our Rockbridge family; our children are served better because she is here with us.

21st CCLC DREAMS Grant – First Year Review:

Mr. Rick Bain, Principal, Natural Bridge Elementary School, introduced Lenya Hansley, who is the coordinator of the NBES DREAMS Grant. Ms. Hansley presented and explained DREAMS stands for *Developing Resilient, Empathetic, and Motivated Students*. The program serves students in grades 2-5 at NBES. Our goals are to achieve passing SOL scores in Reading and Math. We want to improve attendance and engage with families. Our staff consists of school-day teachers, instructional aides, and community partners such as Natural Bridge State Park, YMCA, Project Horizon, Community Services Board, and Halestone Dance Studio. The program takes place Monday through Friday from 3-5 PM. We provide a snack, share about our day, have a dance party, then we have an hour of remediation and then we have enrichment. There is also a before school club which is our "Rocket Commanders". Next year we plan to have "Rocket Readers" to compliment the literacy piece. The seven C's for Resiliency are our focus: Competence, Confidence, Connection, Character, Contribution, Coping, and Control. We also have an attitude of gratitude tree. We began with expectations for our program and had them create the rules but we call them "Expectations." We have many clubs such as kindness club, boys club, the rocket pantry, and hall of trees. We worked with Natural Bridge State park and collected 168 items for the Natural Bridge hall of tree program. Our rocket pantry is our food pantry. We partner with "Feed the Need" who provides food to the NBES community. Our kids created the logo, filled the pantry, and served the families when they came for pickups. The idea is to have kids step outside of their community so they know that little hands make big changes. Based on reported data, 60% of those attending passed their Reading SOL and 68% of the participants passed their Math SOL. Throughout interactive activities, we have watched our students gain the confidence to achieve student-focused, evidence-based programming works. Boxerwood assisted us to do a PBL and we helped save some trout. We partnered with our amazing CTE program at the high school for career exploration. We had a citizen scientist camp that allowed for two weeks of students partnering with Boxerwood and the Flying Classroom to learn about the Maury River, ecology, sustainability, biology, and conservation. From science experiments, data collection to poetry, and art, our students learned what it meant to be a citizen scientist! They created a book and each member will receive a book that they published about the Maury River.

CONSENT AGENDA

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

- Minutes: 1) June 14, 2022 [Regular Meeting]; 2) June 21, 2022 [Joint Meeting with the Rockbridge County Board of Supervisors]
- Field Trip and Bus Use Requests
- Fundraiser Requests
- Applications for Use of Facilities
- Appointments and Resignations

Appointments

Professional Staff

Michael Walters, Teacher, Rockbridge County High School, 2022 – 2023 school year

Professional Staff - continued

Natasha Gengler, Teacher, Rockbridge County High School, 2022 – 2023 school year
 Ben Kabzinski, Teacher, Rockbridge County High School, 2022-2023 school year

Support Staff

Clayton Burch, Teacher Assistant, Rockbridge County High School, 2022 – 2023 school year
 Lisa Lawrence, Teacher Assistant, Rockbridge County High School, 2022 -2023 school year
 Charlie Smith, Food Service Worker, Fairfield Elementary School, 2022 – 2023 school year, time sheet
 Sharon Smith, Food Service Worker, Fairfield Elementary School, 2022 – 2023 school year, time sheet
 Joseph (Mike) Jenkins, Food Service Worker, Maury River Middle School, 2022 – 2023 school year, time sheet
 Diana Crawford, Food Service Worker, Natural Bridge Elementary School, 2022 – 2023 school year, time sheet
 Delores Goad, Food Service Worker, Rockbridge County High School, 2022 – 2023 school year, time sheet
 Cheryl Hong, School Nurse, Mountain View Elementary School, 2022 – 2023 school year

Resignations**Professional Staff**

Joy McDonald, Online Learning Coordinator, resigned effective July 28, 2022
 Mat Rapoza, School Counselor, Rockbridge County High School, resigned July 25, 2022

Support Staff

Skylar Forren, Teacher Assistant, Mountain View Elementary School, resigned August 4, 2022
 Ashley Hamilton, Teacher Assistant, Rockbridge County High School, resigned end of the 2021 – 2022 school year

Fall Coaches 2022-2023**RCHS****Football**

Martin Cox, Head Coach
 Peter Lampman, Assistant Coach
 Matt Deloach, Assistant Coach
 Ben Kabzinski, Assistant Coach
 Dan Taylor, Assistant Coach
 Irvine Jones, Assistant Coach

Golf

David Miller, Head Golf Coach

Boys' Cross Country

Julie Tisone, Head Coach
 Dave Salge, Volunteer Coach
 Peter Jetton, Volunteer Coach

Girls' Cross Country

Julie Tisone, Head Coach

Cheerleading

Shannon Bryan, Head Coach
 Tasha Polly, Assistant Coach

Volleyball

Kassidy Beagan, Head Coach
 Graceon Armstrong, Assistant Coach
 Jaden Harrison, JV Coach

Maury River Middle School**Volleyball**

Candace Camden, Head Coach

Cross Country

Paul Spangler, Head Coach

Club Sponsors**RCHS**

Newspaper, Mary Holton
 Yearbook, Brian Hamelman
 Forensics, Amanda Burks
 Academic Team, Chris McGrath
 Academic Team Assistant, Patrick Bradley

RCHS - continued

SCA, Jessika Crance
 NJHS, Stephanie Brooks
 Destination Imagination, Ashlee Payne

MRMS

Destination Imagination, Sarah Schultz
 Yearbook, Erin Jones
 NJHS, Courtney Diette
 Gifted Coordinator, Sarah Edwards
 SPED Coordinator, Cyndi Tucker
 Activities Coordinator, Tasha Polly

CES

Gifted, Elizabeth Schmidt
 Destination Imagination, Michelle Hughes

FES

Gifted, Christy Imler
 Destination Imagination

NBES

Gifted, Beth McElroy

- **Business Items**

- Approved carryover grant appropriations to Fund 50 in the amount of \$176,119.00.
- Approved new grant appropriations to Fund 50 in the amount of \$99,259.00
- Approve Monthly Financials in the amount of \$1,488,635.65

PUBLIC COMMENT: None

BUDGET PLANNING:

Superintendent Thompson gave an update to explain that this is the quiet part of the budget season with nothing new to report at this time.

COMMITTEE REPORTS: None

INSTRUCTIONAL REPORT:

Mr. Timothy Martino, Assistant Superintendent, provided a brief update in terms of student achievement and preliminary data. All of our schools, for the fifth time in the last five years, are fully accredited. Mr. Martino stated that we need to look at absenteeism in all of our schools. We really have to pay attention to that in all schools.

- Trustee Burant asked in regards to absenteeism, are we looking at it due to the pandemic and getting used to the routine.
 - Mr. Martino explained that is part of it but what that some older students are working jobs more because during the pandemic they could get their schoolwork done earlier in the day and then go to work. That has affected us as the school division has gone back to full time in-person instruction. Our parents are doing the best they can do so this is not on them. Moreover, some of it is that when students are home they could be Remote Present but they had to do some work. Sometimes they did not do work and therefore were then marked Remote Absent.
 - Dr. Thompson explained that the social aspects of school that students were not able to participate in for the past two years made an impact on whether or not students even wanted to be in school. If we could have the activities, they had to be done in a socially distant atmosphere. While the pandemic is not behind us, it is in the rear view mirror. Dr. Thompson explained that Dr. Craft and Mrs. Stevens wants school to be welcoming and fun so that students want to be there.

Mr. Martino stated that for data interpretation, while we want to celebrate the data, we do have to be somewhat cautious in grades 3-8 reading and mathematics. Because Virginia utilized growth assessments during SOL testing, these can skew pass rates to some degree. The overall pass rate is the combined rate of students who did pass the SOL, plus those who made a certain amount of

growth during the year. We want to make sure that everyone knows the difference between a true pass rate and a combined rate, which includes growth. We have to be careful because some of our students did not pass the test even if they showed growth. We have no problem with accountability because it is a good thing, and we appreciate the challenge to strive for the goal of 100%.

Mr. Martino stated that the division has created a five-year literacy plan that offers a roadmap as to where we are going to be in five years and how we are going to do it. Mr. Martino explained that we worked with our administrators this summer and really feel like we have a plan that allows every child to be reading on grade level by the end of the 2nd grade, not 3rd grade. We are going to get into some heavy phonics, phonemic practices so that the middle school does not have to worry about kids who cannot read. Mr. Martino reflected that Rockbridge County Public Schools has some great resources among our colleagues. Our principals are very well versed in literacy and it is the backdrop of what we do; it does not matter if we teach history, kids still have to be able to read.

- Trustee Burant expressed her appreciation to Mr. Martino for devoting so much time to this, reflecting that even if we let one student fall through, that is one more negative thing that we have thrown at a child and we need to recover.

INFORMATIONAL ITEMS:

Mr. Jason Kirby, Chief Business Officer, shared information from the New Teacher Orientation:

- 52 new staff members
- 20 elementary teachers
- 6 middle school
- 20 high school
- 2 school counselors
- 1 director
- 1 assistant principal
- 1 librarian/media specialist
- 1 EL teacher

Mr. Kirby also provided information on support that will be provided to our professional staff moving forward:

- PBL and Mental Health Professional Development
- Weekly Meetings
- Monthly Central Office Mentor Meetings with Mr. Timothy Martino, Mr. Jason Kirby, Mr. Randy Walters, Mrs. Ashley Rhodenizer, and Mr. Paige Owens.
- Whole group meetings at the end of the first semester and near the end of the year.

Mr. Kirby stated that we are not fully staffed with some "like to have positions" but we are in a great spot with the staff that we have which allows us to have small class-sizes, an extra bus driver, and a few teachers teaching six classes instead of five. There have been teachers willing to teach a 6th period, but it would be nice to have a few more teachers and if it makes sense to hire in the coming weeks, we will do that.

ACTION ITEMS:

Upon recommendation by Superintendent Thompson, motion by Trustee Berkstresser, seconded by Trustee Brown, and passed by a 4-0 vote, the Board approved the Crisis Plans as presented.

NEW BUSINESS:

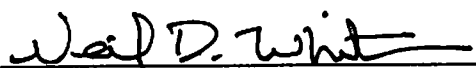
Trustee Burant honored Ms. Sandy Thompson for her dedication to her students and to RCPS, by taking a moment to recognize and offer our condolences to the family, friends, and students of Sandy Thompson who passed away July 1, 2022. Ms. Thompson taught World History and U.S. Government at RCHS for many years and had just officially retired June 30.

SCHOOL BOARD

The next regular meeting of the Rockbridge County School Board will be on Tuesday, September 13, 2022 / 5:30 PM / Location: County of Rockbridge Administration Building, 150 South Main Street, Lexington, Virginia.

ADJOURNMENT

Upon motion by Trustee Berkstresser, seconded by Trustee Brown, and passed by 4-0 vote, the meeting was adjourned at 6:20 p.m.


Neil D. Whitmore, Vice-Chairman


Tim Martino, Clerk of the Board