

The Rockbridge County School Board held their regular meeting on Tuesday, February 13, 2018 at the County of Rockbridge Administration Building.

Present: Chairman David McDaniel; Trustees Corey Berkstresser, Heather Hostetter, Wendy Lovell, Neil Whitmore; Superintendent Phillip Thompson; Clerk Rhonda Humphries.

CALL TO ORDER

Chairman McDaniel called the meeting to order at 4:32 p.m. and requested that everyone rise for the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag.

CHANGES TO THE AGENDA: None

STUDENT / STAFF RECOGNITION:

- Washington and Lee University Mentor Program at Rockbridge County High School. Eric Moffa, Visiting Assistant Professor, Teacher Education, Washington and Lee University
Erin An, Laura Calhoun, Douglas Ciampi, Ralston Hartness, Bri Karpowich, Mark Marks, Gareth Minson, and Jared Shely.

PUBLIC COMMENT:

One patron addressed the board reading the document "Rockbridge County High School Educators Response to Gun Violence – 3/5/18". The request was made that the board draft a statement to legislators in Richmond and Washington.

CONSENT AGENDA

Upon recommendation by Chairman McDaniel, motion by Trustee Lovell seconded by Trustee Whitmore, and passed by a 5-0 vote, the board approved the following items on the Consent Agenda:

- Minutes: 1) February 7, 2018 [Special Meeting]; 2) February 13, 2018 [Public Hearing]; 3) February 13, 2018 [Regular Meeting]; 4) February 19, 2018 [Discipline Committee Hearing]
- Field Trips / Bus Use Requests
- Fund Raiser Requests
- Facilities Use Applications
- Enrollment Update
- **Appointments and Resignations**

Appointments

Professional Staff

Alexis Morse, School Psychologist, Division, 2018 – 2019 school year

Amanda Guerdat, School Social Worker, Division, 2018 – 2019 school year

Support Staff

Rebecca Lilly, Teacher Assistant, Central Elementary School, effective March 14, 2018

Substitute Teachers

Taylor Jacobs

Jenna Manuel

Car Drivers

Martha Mason

Coaches

Jessica Bowyer, Head Cheerleading Coach, Rockbridge County High School

Haleigh Berry, Assistant Cheerleading Coach, Rockbridge County High School

Resignations

Professional Staff

Christina Burkhardt, School Counselor, Rockbridge County High School, resigning end of 2017 – 2018 school year

Jeremy Cosgriff, Teacher, Central Elementary School, resigning end of 2017 – 2018 school year

Support Staff

Molly Rolon, Teacher Assistant, Central Elementary School, resigned effective February 23, 2018

Sarah Richey, Teacher Assistant, Natural Bridge Elementary School, resigned effective March 2, 2018

Retirement

Bonnie Fix, Teacher, Maury River Middle School, retiring end of 2017 – 2018 school year

Leave of Absence

Mary Carson Worley, requesting second year leave of absence, 2018 – 2019 school year

• **Business Items**

Appropriations to Fund 50 in the amount of \$84,433.00.

Monthly Financials in the amount of \$4,133,099.51.

BUDGET PLANNING:

Chairman McDaniel stated that there will be a need for a special meeting for the purpose of approving the Categorical Estimate of Needs. He offered the dates of March 21, 2018 and March 22, 2018. The date will be announced once confirmed.

COMMITTEE REPORT:

Superintendent Thompson provided information on the Ad Hoc Meeting that he attended on February 26, 2018. He stated that there were three areas of discussion: Rockbridge County Public Schools’ Comprehensive Plan, Digital Conversion, and Profile of the Virginia Graduate and how that will affect rising ninth graders, including Lexington City students when they enter Rockbridge County High School as freshman.

INSTRUCTIONAL REPORTS:

Mike Craft, Principal, Rockbridge County High School, stated that a new addition to the RCHS curriculum is the Writing Center which is moderated by the English Department and partners at Washington and Lee University. Introduced in the 2017-18 school year, the Writing Center serves students in all grade levels by providing a warm, welcoming environment for daily cross-curricular writing help as well as special sessions on topics such as college essays, PSAT/SAT prep, and resume writing.

- Annie Knepper, Sarah Leadbetter, and David Simms, RCHS English teachers were joined by Casey Shifflett and Elizabeth Grist (Rockbridge County High School seniors) and Gareth Minson and Parker Robertson (Washington and Lee tutors) who provided a brief presentation on the importance of the high school's new Writing Center.
 - Superintendent Thompson stated that this program is a progress testament to teachers because participation in this program is not required and there is no funding for this program. Teachers and tutors are willing to work with students to help with all needs and expressed his appreciation to the Washington and Lee students who assist the students.

Tim Martino, Director Elementary Education, provided information on school accreditation. He stated that the new accreditation system will focus on SOL proficiency and growth, reducing achievement gaps, absenteeism, graduation and completion and the dropout rate. He provided information on the performance levels of Level One, Level Two, and Level Three and the indicators that go into those levels. He also provided information on the new accreditation ratings of Accredited, Accredited with Conditions, Accreditation Denied. He offered the following comparison:

<u>Old System</u>	<u>New System</u>
Pass or Fail	Growth Model
Strictly Test Scores	Test Scores Plus Three Additional Categories
Can Focus on Limited Student Groups	Achievement Gaps are Targets
Accreditation – Yes or No	Accreditation – Improvement Matters

- Trustee Whitmore inquired if the tests are administered in the same procedure as in the past, using same application.
 - Mr. Martino stated that the test and procedure are the same as in the past but that over the past couple of years there has been a reduction in the number of items in the test.
- Chairman McDaniel inquired if the changes are to take place now for 2017-2018.
 - Mr. Martino stated that currently schools are to use what system work better and that next year the new process will be utilized across the state.

INFORMATIONAL ITEMS:

Matthew Crossman, Supervisor of Division Testing and Media Communications, provided an update to the school nutrition policy JHCF Food Services Student Wellness Policy and JHCH Food Services School Meals and Snacks Policy. He stated that per policy JHCH, students carrying a negative balance of \$25.00 or more are not permitted to charge any additional amounts, but may buy a meal using cash. He also stated that reasonable efforts are used to avoid calling attention to a student’s inability to pay and that at no time will a student be denied a breakfast or lunch due to lack of funds. This will be presented as an Action Item at the April board meeting.

- Chairman McDaniel inquired if a student with a negative balance still receives food.
 - Mr. Crossman stated that the student will receive the same foods; no alternate foods are given.
- Trustee Hostetter asked for clarification of the change in policy.
 - Mr. Crossman stated that there previously was no limit on the student account.
- Trustee Hostetter stated that students have the option to buy-up and add to their lunch.
 - Superintendent Thompson stated that a parent can request that a child not be allowed to charge utilizing the buy-up option. He stated that administration does not want to punish students and that they want to help families. He stated that this is an issue across the division and the first step is to apply the limit.
 - Mr. Crossman stated his concern that this places the school service worker in a hard position of telling a child they cannot purchase a buy-up item.
- Chairman McDaniel stated that a priority is that children are not punished and that food service staff are not responsible for following up to collect unpaid meal charges. He asked if a collection agency should be utilized.
 - Superintendent Thompson stated that currently a form letter is sent to parents who have unpaid meal charges from Daphne Stickley, Supervisor for School Nutrition. School administration then becomes involved via telephone calls and letters if the charge continues to be unpaid. He further stated that it potentially adds up to \$3,000 to \$5,000 annually.

Jason Kirby, Director of Personnel and Technology provided information on the Early Retirement Incentive Program for 2018-2019. This program has been in place for a number of years and helps to control costs for Rockbridge County Public Schools and allows employees an opportunity to have access to their health insurance when they retire and to give retirees an opportunity to come back to the school system and share their knowledge within our school system. He noted that there are two categories: 1) For employees with a retirement date prior to July 1, 2017 and; 2) For employees with a retirement date after June 30, 2017. This will be presented as an Action Item at the April board meeting.

- Chairman McDaniel stated that this change in policy was begun two years ago and is in effect this year. He requested that Mr. Kirby provide, at a future meeting, a break-even analysis on how this is beneficial for Rockbridge County Public Schools.
 - Superintendent Thompson stated that the process was begun two years ago in order to allow employees advance knowledge of the change in policy.
- Trustee Whitmore inquired if this is the first change in a while.
 - Superintendent Thompson stated that this is the first change in the last decade.

Randy Walters, Director of Operation and Transportation, introduced Mike Thomas of TRANE, Project Manager, for the current project. He provided information on the four sections of performance contracting currently taking place. Phase one is the water upgrades for each school; Phase two is the building envelope such as checking seals around the doors, insulation, checking for cracks around foundations, any area that could identified with air going in or out of the building; Phase three is the lighting upgrades at schools; Phase four is mechanical which includes the larger project of replacing boilers.

- Chairman McDaniel inquired if the project is on schedule.
 - Mr. Walters replied that phase one is being checked off line by line and is on schedule.

Randy Walters, Director of Operation and Transportation, provided a School Safety Update, which included the following:

- Safety audits: He stated that safety audits are conducted annually at each school by the principal and school resource officer identifying areas of improvement, which needs to be addressed immediately or needs that need that take time to plan.
- Review of Crisis Plans: He stated that the annual review of school crisis plans take place in late summer. He also confirmed that there is a Crisis Team for the division. Billy Thomas leads the Crisis Team
- Review of safety equipment: He stated that the division is in the process of checking safety equipment such as door locks and checking on pricing of security systems. Mr. Walters showed a sample of a doorstop that has been developed and donated by Zack Bright, Lexington Police Officer, for Central Elementary school. He also offered a doorstop that had been ordered online as an example of the research that is being conducted.
- Metal detectors: Research is being conducted on installed and hand-held devices.

Mr. Walters stated that the next step is for the Crisis Team to meet and look at options using the audit information for what items can be addressed now and possibly apply for safety grants to help offset the costs, when feasible.

- Trustee Lovell requested that the audits also include talking with teachers regarding safety.
- Chairman McDaniel expressed his appreciation for all that is being done for the security of our students. He stated that he does not want money to be an issue in that he would be willing to talk with the Board of Supervisors about pulling funds from reserve fund if needed.

Haywood Hand, Assistant Superintendent presented the VSBA policy updates, which are now in effect.

ACTION ITEMS: NONE

NEW BUSINESS:

Chairman McDaniel stated that in response to the Public Comment regarding gun violence, he requested that Superintendent Thompson draft a resolution to the state and federal legislators asking for support of the safety of our students. He also inquired if there has been consideration to going to a clear bag policy for after school events in large gathering places.

- Superintendent Thompson stated that administration is researching all options to ensure the safety of teachers and students.

Chairman McDaniel inquired on the status of repair for the gym floor at Maury River Middle School that sustained water damage from a roof leak during a snow event.

- Randy Walters stated that an insurance claim has been filed.

Chairman McDaniel inquired about using technology in the classrooms with digital conversion, possibly utilizing Rosetta Stone for foreign language.

- Jason Kirby, Director of Personnel and Technology, stated that it will be researched as possible supplements to middle and high school programs. The benefit of this may be to have larger class sizes.

Chairman McDaniel inquired about the impact of the recent snow days.

- Superintendent Thompson stated that we have now missed seven days. He explained that five banked days were built in. He further explained that additional instructional time was built into the school day at the elementary level several years ago and it has helped the school system not to have to make up days until there are nine or ten days total missed days.

SCHOOL BOARD

There will be a joint meeting of the Rockbridge County School Board and the Rockbridge County Board of Supervisors on Thursday, March 15, 2018 / 5:00 p.m. / Location: Rockbridge County School Board Office, 2893 Collierstown Road, Lexington, Virginia.

The next regular meeting of the Rockbridge County School Board will be on Tuesday, April 10, 2018 / 5:00 PM / Location: County of Rockbridge Administration Building, 150 South Main Street, Lexington, Virginia.

ADJOURNMENT

Upon motion by Trustee Lovell, seconded by Trustee Hostetter, and passed by 5-0 vote, the meeting was adjourned at 5:41 p.m.



David B. McDaniel, Chairman



Rhonda B. Humphries, Clerk of the Board