

The Rockbridge County School Board held their regular meeting on Tuesday, July 14, 2020. The meeting was held using a virtual format.

Present: Remote participation from individual locations: Chairman Wendy Lovell; Trustees Corey Berkstresser, Kathy Burant, Heather Hostetter, and Neil Whitmore; Superintendent Phillip Thompson and Clerk Rhonda Humphries.

CALL TO ORDER

Chairman Lovell called the meeting to order at 5:00 p.m.

CHANGES TO THE AGENDA: None

RECOGNITION / SPECIAL PRESENTATION:

Superintendent Thompson stated that the Virginia Department of Education announced the Exemplar Performance School Awards. He offered congratulations to Vicki Stevens, former Principal of Natural Bridge Elementary School, Lori Teague, Principal, Mountain View Elementary School, their school staff, students, and the community on their achievement.

- 2020 Board of Education Continuous Improvement Exemplar Award: Natural Bridge Elementary School
- 2020 Board of Education Highest Achievement Exemplar Award: Mountain View Elementary School

PUBLIC COMMENT:

Public comments were submitted via email. Statements were read by Mr. Tim Martino, Director of K12 Curriculum and Instruction; Mr. Jason Kirby, Director of Personnel and Technology; Dr. Phillip Thompson, Superintendent; and Mr. Haywood Hand, Assistant Superintendent.

- Fifty-two patrons expressed concerns regarding the lack of diversity in the Rockbridge County Public Schools system and their desire for the hiring of persons of color, banning of confederate flag, and ensuring a safe environment.
- Nine patrons expressed their concern about the re-opening of school.
- Chairman Lovell expressed appreciation on behalf of the Rockbridge County School Board to all patrons who expressed their view and stated that their investment in education and community input is important.
- Chairman Lovell acknowledged that COVID has presented some unimaginable situations for our county, our school division, and the nation. She expressed that there may not be an option that will fully address everyone's concerns but that the school board and division will do the best they can. She stated that the first priority of the school board is the safety of our teachers, our staff, our students, and our families. This is a community effort for all patrons to do this together.
- Chairman Lovell reflected that at the June meeting of the Rockbridge County School Board, the school board expressed their commitment to equity and the inclusion of all individuals and recognize that racism in all forms is deeply rooted in our nation's history in that, as referenced in the adopted statement, prejudice and injustice exist today. She also stated that education is the best tool for fighting all forms of racism.
- Chairman Lovell stated that last August Governor Northam established the commission on African American History Education and that among its members are public school teachers, administrators, superintendents, school board members, and other elected officials, college faculty, and parents, which lists only a broad spectrum of the members. The initial deadline for their report was July 1, 2020 but due to COVID, the deadline has been extended to September 1, 2020. Curriculum changes from the state level that are a result of this commission will positively impact Rockbridge County Public Schools and all school divisions in the Commonwealth. She encouraged all patrons who shared comments with the school board, particularly addressing the curriculum, to visit the Commission's website which has a survey link at the bottom of the page where thoughts can be shared:
www.education.virginia.gov/initiatives/aahec.
- Superintendent Thompson expressed his appreciation to patrons for feedback and stated that the school division will continue to work with NAACP Committee to move to the next stage, once the school division gets through the COVID-19 pandemic.
 - Trustee Berkstresser acknowledged that there is a shortage of teachers of color and that visits to colleges was put on hold because of COVID-19. He expressed his appreciation to Superintendent Thompson for his foresight that the school division is not only without teachers of color, but lack of teacher candidates of color as well.

- Superintendent Thompson stated that there is a teacher shortage each year and noted that it has proven difficult to find teachers of color who want to come to this area. He emphasized that Rockbridge County Public Schools has tried and is committed to do more and that the school division welcomes diversity to get all perspectives.
- Trustee Burant expressed her appreciation of hearing from the community and that she has had private conversations with students that reflect the goal to meet the needs of all on the community and wants patrons to know that the school board will continue to advocate for staff and students. She also noted that the number one goal is safety for opening of schools.

CONSENT AGENDA

Upon recommendation by Chairman Lovell, motion by Trustee Berkstresser, seconded by Trustee Burant, the board voted 4-0, with Trustee Hostetter abstaining, the following items on the Consent Agenda:

- Minutes: 1) June 9, 2020 [Regular Meeting]; 1) June 17, 2020 [Special Meeting]
- Application for Use of Facilities
- **Appointments and Resignations**

Appointments

Professional Staff

Jason Breeding, Teacher, Rockbridge County High School, 2020-2021 school year

Cynthia Lunsford, Teacher, Maury River Middle School, 2020-2021 school year

Robert Winfield, Teacher, Maury River Middle School, 2020-2021 school year

Fall Coaches

Rockbridge County High School

Football

Mark Poston, Head Football Coach

Heath Glass, Assistant Football Coach

Travis Roadcap, Assistant Football Coach

Mat Rapoza, Assistant Football Coach

Zach Rhodenizer, Assistant Football Coach

Stuart Rogers, Assistant Football Coach

Brian Dietz, Assistant Football Coach

Corey Hall, Assistant Football Coach

Robert Rhodenizer, Volunteer Football Coach

Golf

David Miller, Head Golf Coach

Boys' & Girls' Cross Country

Julie Tisone, Head Cross Country Coach

Peter Jetton, Assistant Cross Country Coach

Cheerleading Fall

Jessica Bowyer, Head Cheerleading Coach

Shannon Bryan, Assistant Cheerleading Coach

Volleyball

Amanda McCoy, Head Volleyball Coach

Michelle Kirby, Assistant Volleyball Coach

Hannah Burch, JV Volleyball Coach

Julianna Lozaw, Volunteer Coach

Mike Burch, Volunteer Coach

Maury River Middle School

Volleyball

Candace Camden, Head Volleyball Coach

Cross Country

Jessica Chittum, Head Cross Country Coach

Jennifer Ludtke, Volunteer Cross Country Coach

Resignations**Professional Staff**

Kellie Pryor, Teacher, Rockbridge County High School, resigned end of 2019-2020 school year

Emily Berquist, Teacher, Maury River Middle School, resigned end of the 2019-2020 school year

Darby McClung, Teacher, Maury River Middle School, resigned end of the 2019-2020 school year

- **Business Items**

- Approve carryover grant appropriations to Fund 50 in the amount of \$830,405.00.
- Approve new grant appropriations to Fund 50 in the amount of \$283,087.00.
- Approve carryover CIP projects that are in process, appropriate to Fund 50 in the amount of \$454,538.00.
- Approve Monthly Financials in the amount of \$715,158.91

BUDGET PLANNING: None

COMMITTEE REPORTS: None

INSTRUCTIONAL REPORT: None

INFORMATIONAL ITEMS:

Mr. Jason Kirby, Director of Technology, provided information on the VPSA Technology Resolution. This will be presented as an Action Item at the August board meeting.

- Trustee Burant inquired if of the \$206,000 that \$26,000 is based on 6 schools, with \$50,000 for the division. She requested further clarification that \$41,200 is a match, meaning once items are bought, the school division is reimbursed with no payback.
 - Mr. Kirby confirmed that there is no payback.

Mr. Billy Thomas, Principal, Maury River Middle School, provided a review of Schools' Crisis Plans for 2020-2021. He stated that ALICE training is used as the basis for critical response and training will take place as in the past. This will be presented as an Action Item at the August board meeting.

Trustee Whitmore inquired on the status of school resource officers.

- Mr. Thomas confirmed that Officer Ferguson will be at Maury River Middle School.
- Superintendent Thompson confirmed that the three school resource officers will remain the same as the 2019-2020 school year.

Dr. Melanie Falls, Supervisor of Attendance, Truancy, and Support Services, provided information on the Revised Secondary Student Code of Conduct. This will be presented as an Action Item at the August board meeting.

- Trustee Burant expressed her appreciation for the research and work conducted for the revised document and protocol.
- Chairman Lovell stated that the Rockbridge County School Board Disciplinary Committee members view the restorative justice as a way for students to reconnect with those they have harmed and will prepare for adulthood.

ACTION ITEMS:

Superintendent Thompson presented the "Rockbridge County Public Schools Continuity of Learning Plan Fall 2020". He noted that this plan is framework at this point, as principals are looking at more definite plans for their individual buildings. This is a flexible framework as information changes constantly and has many variables. "Learning First" is the motto for Rockbridge County Public Schools and policies and practices are based on which will involve how to make teachers and students safe. Schools across the Commonwealth are being asked to do what has never been done or needed before. An excerpt of the plan is as follows:

- The Rockbridge County School Board approved an amended 2020-2021 school calendar on June 17, 2020, which provides 15 professional development days prior to students returning to school on August 31, 2020.
- Rockbridge County Public Schools (RCPS) will collaborate with our local health department as we develop health plans for each school. Student and staff temperatures will be taken upon entering school buildings. Entry and transition plans will be created to ensure proper social distancing as learners enter school buildings, eat lunch, and transition throughout the day. RCPS is collaborating with the Virginia Department of Health to develop specific steps to

follow should a student or staff member become ill or infected with COVID-19. The transportation department is coordinating student schedules to ensure that social distancing practices can be implemented on school buses.

- New practices for delivering instruction will be established. Lesson plans will look different than in the past. Whether we educate our students in a face-to-face school environment, or educate them in an online environment, we have an obligation to provide students exceptional learning opportunities.
- Teaching and learning is always a top priority, but the mental health of students and staff members is of the utmost importance. During this challenging time, we recognize that many may struggle. We will continue to focus on providing learners high quality instruction, but also take into strong consideration the emotional needs of our learners. School counselors will be readily available to assist any learner in need. An entry plan is being developed in an effort to ensure our learners' social and emotional needs are met during this trying time.

Framework for Rockbridge County Public Schools:

Rockbridge County High School

Rockbridge County High School (RCHS) poses the most significant challenge in regards to planning a staggered start due to nearly 1,000 learners attending RCHS. The student body will be divided into two groups (Team A and Team B). This will allow approximately 500 learners to attend school on a given day. Each learner will report to RCHS two days per week. The other three days of learning will take place virtually. Teachers will be expected to hold office hours when they are not directly teaching students. Specific office hour schedules will be established and distributed at the school level.

Weekly Instructional Schedule

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
In School, Team A	In School, Team B	Deep Cleaning	In School, Team A	In School, Team B
Virtual, Team B	Virtual, Team A	Virtual, Teams A & B	Virtual, Team B	Virtual, Team A

All core and elective classes noted in the Program of Studies will be offered as planned. Career & Technical Education (CTE) classes will take extra safety measures when sharing equipment by using gloves as needed, safety goggles, and masks. In addition, all equipment used during class will be wiped down at the conclusion of each period. It is recommended that all learners identified with a disability who participate in a functional classroom attend school four days per week to ensure equity and a continuous focus on Individualized Educational Program (IEP) goals.

Parents who choose to keep their child at home but continue to keep them enrolled at RCHS will be provided with virtual instruction. In order to meet the needs of all learners at RCHS each student will be provided with a Chromebook. This will allow learners who have internet availability to access their work via the internet. In the event a learner does not have internet access they will have the ability to pre-load and download all necessary work via Google when they report to RCHS or from any wireless Wi-Fi internet connection. In the rare event that we have a learner who has absolutely no access to an internet connection, RCPS will provide a thumb/flash drive in order to deliver assignments and assessments.

Maury River Middle School

Maury River Middle School (MRMS) has approximately 630 learners registered for the 2020-2021 school year. The student body will be divided into two groups (Team A and Team B). This will allow approximately 315 learners to attend school on a given day. Each learner will report to MRMS two days per week. The other three days of learning will take place virtually. Teachers will be expected to hold office hours when they are not directly teaching students. Specific office hour schedules will be established and distributed at the school level.

Weekly Instructional Schedule

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
In School, Team A	In School, Team B	Deep Cleaning	In School, Team A	In School, Team B
Virtual, Team B	Virtual, Team A	Virtual, Teams A & B	Virtual, Team B	Virtual, Team A

All core and elective classes noted in the Program of Studies will be offered as planned. CTE classes will take extra safety measures when sharing equipment by using gloves as needed, safety goggles, and masks. In addition, all equipment used during class will be wiped down at the conclusion of each period. It is recommended that all learners participating in a functional classroom attend school four days per week to ensure equity and a continuous focus on IEP goals. Any learner currently receiving 50% or more service time through the Special Education program will be given consideration through the IEP process to attend In School more than two days per week.

Parents who choose to keep their child at home but continue to keep them enrolled at MRMS will be provided with virtual instruction. In order to meet the needs of all learners at MRMS each student will be provided a Chromebook. This will allow learners who have internet availability to access their work via the internet. In the event a learner does not have internet access they will have the ability to pre-load and download all necessary work via Google when they report to MRMS or from any wireless “Wi-Fi” internet connection. In the rare event that we have a learner who has absolutely no access to an internet connection, RCPS will provide a thumb/flash drive in order to deliver assignments and assessments.

Rockbridge County Elementary Schools

Rockbridge County Public Schools is home to four elementary schools in grades K-5. Learners at each elementary school will be divided into two groups (Team A and Team B). This will allow for approximately half of all learners at each elementary school to attend school two days per week. The other three days of learning will take place virtually. Teachers will be expected to hold office hours when they are not directly teaching students. Specific office hour schedules will be established and distributed at the school level.

Weekly Instructional Schedule

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
In School, Team A	In School, Team B	Deep Cleaning	In School, Team A	In School, Team B
Virtual, Team B	Virtual, Team A	Virtual, Teams A and B	Virtual, Team B	Virtual, Team A

The general education curriculum will be offered in full while carefully following the Standards of Learning. Music, PE, and Library will be offered once per week to each student group. Art will be provided at least once each month. All students identified as a student with a disability will be provided the opportunity to attend school four days a week. This will allow case managers the opportunity to continue to focus on individual student needs and goals.

Parents who choose to keep their child at home, but continue to keep them enrolled in an RCPS elementary school will be provided with virtual instruction. Learners in grades K-5 will be provided a device to access online learning. This will allow learners who have internet availability to access their work via the internet. In the event a learner does not have internet access they will have the ability to pre-load and download all necessary work via Google when they report to their elementary school or from any wireless “Wi-Fi” internet connection. In the rare event that we have a learner who has absolutely no access to an internet connection, RCPS will provide a thumb/flash drive in order to deliver assignments and assessments.

Rockbridge County Preschools

Preschools served through Rockbridge County Public Schools, depending on the final number of learners registered, will attend school four days a week. This will allow for an optimal learning experience for our youngest learners.

Weekly Instructional Schedule

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
Full Class	Full Class	Deep Cleaning	Full Class	Full Class

Delivering high quality instruction to our youngest learners will be a challenge. A large majority of preschool curriculum is based on play and social interaction. Significant modifications will need to be made to the written and taught curriculum in order to maintain social distancing and student safety. Specific bathroom and snack procedures will also need to be established.

100% Digital Learning

During the 2020-2021 school year, the Virginia Department of Education has given parents the opportunity to allow their children to be educated at home while continuing to be registered as a learner with Rockbridge County Public Schools. Each learner who will be participating in a RCPS school through a digital format will be provided an electronic device to ensure that they are able to fully access the content and curriculum.

Teachers of learners enrolled in full digital format (learning from home) will make contact with each learner at least two times per week (phone call, virtual chat). Those learners without internet access will have the opportunity to download content from a Wi-Fi connection at any of RCPS's six schools or the RCPS Central Office (former Effinger Elementary School). In the rare event that we have a learner who has absolutely no access to an internet connection, RCPS will provide a thumb/flash drive in order to deliver assignments and assessments.

There will also be a help desk available for parents to contact if there are any challenges accessing content in a digital format. Teachers will provide weekly feedback to each digital learner to ensure that they are receiving the necessary support for an authentic learning experience.

- Trustee Berkstresser inquired if the schedule was developed to allow for cleaning or instruction and if siblings will be grouped together in same group, but at different schools, to allow for same-day instruction.
 - Superintendent Thompson stated that the schedule was developed to allow for more instruction through the week with no long gap for students. He also noted that the student teams are being assigned so that siblings go to school on the same day.
- Trustee Burant inquired if data is being collected on who is coming / who will be teaching; as well as the same data for students.
 - Superintendent Thompson stated that schools have been calling each family and asking eight questions in regards to their intentions for their child. He noted that it is a realization that some parents may now change their mind when finding out the framework plan. A survey will go out with more detail to planning. Transportation will have to be determined as well. He stated that principals are talking with teachers as well to determine their comfort level for return.
- Trustee Whitmore inquired on the PPE mask policy and if classroom teachers will have a decision about policy in their individual classroom.
 - Superintendent Thompson stated that the policy will be consistent with the Virginia Department of Health (VDH) and Center for Disease and Control (CDC). He stated that a teacher can make a request for students to wear a face covering in class, but it will be difficult to mandate when 6 feet of social distancing is maintained.
- Trustee Whitmore inquired if the school division will issue masks.
 - Superintendent Thompson stated that masks will be available for all.
- Chairman Lovell inquired if there will be consideration for staff with compromised health or age issues.
- Superintendent Thompson stated that the staff member will need to have their physician write a note and the school division will have to work as diligently as possible, and noted that staff will not be placed in a bad health situation.
- Chairman Lovell inquired that if families want to home school, why stay with 100% virtual.
 - Superintendent Thompson stated that parents, who provide home instruction and purchase programs, do so as a family decision. However, he stated that he feels 100% virtual learning is a much better option in that staff such as school counselors, teachers, and nurses will be available as a resource for families.
- Chairman Lovell stated that whatever families choose, this will be an "all hands on deck" school year. She also stated that in this unprecedented time, all will get through in a positive way via looking at education in a different and creative way.
 - Superintendent Thompson stated that virtual learning will not be for every student.
- Trustee Hostetter inquired if there is an age limit on the wearing of masks.
 - Superintendent Thompson stated that based on CDC guidelines, it does not apply to age 2 and below and per VDH, no student who has medical issues.

- Trustee Berkstresser inquired what transportation protocol will be in regards to taking student temperatures and how many students per seat on the bus.
 - Superintendent Thompson stated that parents will be asked to take their child's temperature at home, and if there is a fever, to keep their child at home. Temperatures will also be taken when students arrive at school. Per VDH, a student with a high temperature will be set up in an isolation area until parent is called and child picked up from school. He stated that at this point, it is anticipated that there will be a student seated on every other seat on a bus but the needs are not yet known. If there are more students, the school division may have to apply for a variance for a student on every seat.
 - Mr. Randy Walters, Director of Maintenance and Transportation, confirmed that Ms. Kirstie Campbell, Supervisor of Transportation, has worked student by student to aid in making student teams and will run routes to see what the student numbers look like and determine a plan. All student lists are due to the Transportation Department by July 15, 2020.
- Superintendent Thompson stated that principals will be contacted very quickly and then staff will be contacted. The Technology Department is working hard for professional development opportunities. Ms. Joy McDonald is working with Digital Learning to make it available. There are currently fifteen days set aside for professional development, with five full days of professional development, including restorative justice. Others days will be used for collaboration to plan the most efficient and effective ways to teach the students of Rockridge County. Each staff member has different backgrounds and skillsets to offer.

Trustee Whitmore inquired on the employee policy on sick leave.

- Superintendent Thompson stated that the Department of Labor has new guidelines that require certain amount of time to be given. He stated that administration will be meeting next week to set the policy for Rockridge County Public Schools in order to do all that can be done to keep staff and students healthy.

Trustee Whitmore inquired on the status of the volunteers policy.

- Superintendent Thompson stated that the same policy and process remains in place. He also shared that civic organizations have already reached out to offer help.
- Chairman Lovell stated that during this hybrid year, some opportunities might be virtual.

Trustee Whitmore inquired if a teacher can choose to teach 100% virtual.

- Superintendent Thompson stated that the division will be empathetic to teachers who want to teach from home, but it would be a difficult endeavor in that there would still need to be a teacher in the classroom and there just is not enough teaching staff to accommodate that scenario.
- Chairman Lovell reflected that these are challenging times and there are budgetary shortfalls as the division is preparing to bring staff and students back to school. She expressed her appreciation to the administration and staff for their hard work.
 - Superintendent Thompson stated that there was no personnel added for the 2020-21 school year and that the CARES Act funding accounted for some diminishing operating budget on a daily basis. He commended the Central Office Staff, Principals, and school teams working throughout the summer to fill in the gaps and create schedules.
- Trustee Hostetter asked if there will be a set time during the day for the virtual learning online modules or if it will be a recording that can be accessed according to the family schedule.
 - Superintendent Thompson stated that it could be either but he anticipates that teachers will create mini lessons and videos to send out via Google Classroom, which could be viewed by students to suit the schedule for student and parent.

Upon recommendation by Superintendent Thompson, motion by Trustee Berkstresser, seconded by Trustee Hostetter, and passed by a 4-1 vote, the Board approved Continuity of Learning Plan / Framework for the 2020-2021 school year as presented.

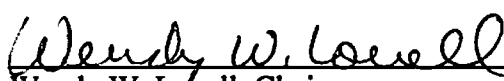
NEW BUSINESS: None

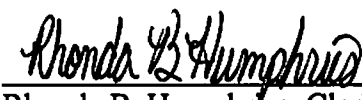
SCHOOL BOARD:

There was a consensus of the board members in appreciation to the public for their comments submitted online.

The next regular monthly meeting of the Rockridge County School Board will be held on Tuesday, August 11, 2020 at 5:00 p.m. The meeting location and format will be determined and advertised.

ADJOURNMENT:
Upon motion by Trustee Burant, seconded by Trustee Whitmore, and passed by 5-0 vote, the meeting was adjourned at 8:03 p.m.


Wendy W. Lovell, Chairman


Rhonda B. Humphries, Clerk of the Board