

The Rockbridge County School Board held their regular meeting on Tuesday, March 10, 2020 at the County of Rockbridge Administration Building.

Present: 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:

- **REACH Award: Dr. Bonny Wilson, Fairfield Elementary School**
Dr. Bonny Wilson has been a volunteer at Fairfield Elementary School for years. She dedicates hours to organizing and maintaining the FES bookroom that houses instructional material. She also researches each book knowing the potential literacy skill that each book could support at all grade levels and matches sight words according to grade levels to the books that are available. Dr. Wilson continues to explore how each of the books can link to other curriculum like science and social studies topics. In addition to hours of running the bookroom, even in the summers, she also gives her time on Wednesdays to work with small group or individual students. Students are always excited to see her and showcase what they have learned under her guidance. Dr. Wilson is also a liaison in the partnership between Fairfield Elementary and Fairfield Presbyterian Church. She ensures that the church is able to provide luncheons or breakfasts for teachers and staff and school supplies for students. Additionally, she has been a leader in coordinating the church as the Fairfield Elementary School rally point in case of an imminent emergency.
- **REACH Award: Mrs. Barbara McGuffin, Mountain View Elementary School**
Mrs. McGuffin is a retired teacher who spent several of her years teaching at Mountain View. She loves reading and is passionate about students having books to read of their very own. For the past five years, Ms. McGuffin has gifted Mt. View with \$1000 twice a year for our fall and for our spring Book Fairs. As a result, every student goes home with books of their own from the book fair twice a year. That is a total of \$10,000.00 over the past 5 years!

PUBLIC COMMENT: One patron addressed the board with concern on the lack of diversity within the faculty of the school division.

CONSENT AGENDA

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

- Minutes: 1) February 5, 2020 [Discipline Committee Hearing]; 2) February 11, 2020 [Public Hearing]; 3) February 11, 2020 [Regular Meeting]; 4) February 17, 2020 [Special Meeting]; 5) February 24, 2020 [Special Meeting]; 6) February 26, 2020 [Discipline Committee Hearing]
- Field Trip and Bus Use Requests
- Fundraiser Requests
- Application for Use of Facilities
- Enrollment Update
- **Appointments and Resignations**
Appointments
Professional Staff
Jessica Sandifer, Elementary Teacher, 2020-2021 school year

Spring Coaches

Rockbridge County High School

Katlyn Bradley, Volunteer Softball Coach

Madison McKemy, Volunteer Softball Coach

Scott Winterton, Volunteer Boys' Lacrosse Coach

Maury River Middle School

Brandy Connell-Marando, Volunteer Track Coach

Substitute Teachers

Alesa Chaffin
Erika Gantert
Camille Lee
William LeMert

Car Driver

Graham Moore

Substitute Bus Drivers

David Austin
Lewis Austin

Resignations**Professional Staff****Retirement**

Rick Lollis, Athletic Director, Rockbridge County High School, retiring end of 2019 – 2020 school year

Support Staff

James C. Rice, Bus Driver, Transportation Dept., retiring end of 2019 – 2020 school year

- **Business Items**

- Approval for new grant appropriations to Fund 50 in the amount of \$115,000.00.
- Approve Monthly Financials in the amount of \$2,953,562.97

BUDGET PLANNING:

Superintendent Thompson provided a FY21 Budget Update stating that the focus has been on the Governor's budget and that the senate and house version have now been released. He also noted that the three budgets have not yet been compiled into one budget. He stated that three budgets offer the same funding. The requirements for each budget are different and the money for each locality may be different from each budget. He stated that he anticipates the Calc Tool will be made available soon.

COMMITTEE REPORTS:

Superintendent Thompson stated that he has been in communication with Ms. Rebecca Walters, Superintendent, Lexington City Public Schools regarding the Ad Hoc Committee and have decided to conduct the next meeting at the conclusion of the Feasibility Study.

INSTRUCTIONAL REPORT:

Ms. Rhonda Hill, Director of District & School Leadership, Buck Institute for Education, provided a presentation on the Rockbridge County Public Schools Project Based Learning Initiative. Ms. Hill began her presentation with the following statement: *"At Rockbridge County Public Schools, we strive to create an environment that engages all our students in rigorous, inclusive learning experiences that foster exploration and collaboration, inspire lifelong learning, and promote productive citizenship."*

She provided the following overview of PBLWorks:

- Virginia Profile of a Graduate, which includes Virginia Department of Education "Virginia's 5 C,'s": Critical Thinking Skills, Collaboration Skills, Communication Skills, Creative Thinking Skills, and Citizenship Skills.
- Mission Statement: PBLWorks builds the capacity of teachers to design and facilitate quality Project Based Learning and the capacity of school and system leaders to set the conditions for teachers to implement great projects with all students.
- Vision Statement: PBLWorks believes that all students – no matter where they live or what their background – should have access to quality Project Based Learning to deepen their learning and achieve success in college, career, and life.
- PBLWorks Leadership Theory of Action: Leadership, School Conditions, Teacher Practice, Student Experience, Student Outcomes.
- Gold Standard for PBLWorks:
 - For Students: 1) Students master core academic content and builds success skills; 2) Students inspired to think differently about themselves as learners, collaborators, and leaders.
 - For Teachers: 1) Enables teachers to make a difference in their students' lives; 2) Re-ignites passion for designing learning experiences.

- For Leaders: Allows leaders to set a vision and create conditions that allow teachers and students to be the best versions of themselves.
- Community Voices - Project Slice: This project enabled students and teachers to gather questions and explore resources to support quality interviews with local businesses. The following local businesses engaged in the process: Rockbridge Area Relief Association (RARA), Boxerwood Nature Center, Project Horizon, Rockbridge Area Transportation Services, VA Extension Office, Lexington Fire Department, Red Newt Bikes, Just Games, FLEX Fitness, Books & Co...&Toys, Too.
- Ms. Hill stated that the culmination of the PBL Initiative would be reflected at a Project Based Learning Fair on March 11, 2020 at Maury River Middle School from 2-4 PM.
- Superintendent Thompson stated that there are 32 school divisions utilizing PBLWorks for school/leadership services. He expressed his sentiment that Dr. James Lane, VDOE Superintendent of Public Instruction, will lead the PBL initiative into more school divisions. Dr. Thompson reflected that he, the administrators, and teachers of Rockbridge County Public Schools are excited to be working with PBLWorks.
- Chairman Lovell expressed appreciation to the teachers and administration of Rockbridge County Public Schools and stated that she is excited to see the PBL initiative shine through the students, upcoming projects, and presentations.

INFORMATIONAL ITEMS:

Mr. Haywood Hand, Assistant Superintendent, provided information on the VSBA Policy Manual Updates, which are now in effect. He stated that policy JFC [Student Conduct] has been revised based on the review of Model Guidance for Positive and Preventive Code of Student Conduct Policy and Alternatives to Suspension, Virginia Board of Education. He stated that three administrators attended an in-service and are ready to launch the program "PAST", which stands for "Positive Alternative to Suspension Team".

Ms. Christine Wood, Director of Special Education, provided a first reading of the Rockbridge Area Special Education Advisory Council members who the Board is required to formally approve. This will be presented for approval at the April board meeting.

Ms. Christine Wood also provided information on the Special Education Annual Plan and Applications for Federal Funds. The Rockbridge Area Special Education Advisory Council will review all documents at their next meeting, as required. This will be presented for approval at the April board meeting.

Mr. Jason Kirby, Director of Personnel and Technology, provided information on the Early Retirement Incentive Program for 2020-2021. This program has been in place for a number of years, 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; 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 Lovell inquired if the change in 2017 had been successful.
 - Mr. Kirby provided an example of retirees working 2 hours a day to work with a reading group instead of being at a school for an entire day which may not fully utilize their time at the school.
- Trustee Whitmore inquired how many retirees participate in the Early Retirement Program.
 - Mr. Kirby stated that there are 45 participants.
- Superintendent Thompson inquired how many participate in the Rockbridge County Public Schools health insurance program.
 - Mr. Kirby stated that there are 21 participants utilizing the health insurance program.

ACTION ITEMS:

Upon recommendation by Chairman Lovell, motion by Trustee Burant, seconded by Trustee Whitmore, and passed by a 5-0 vote, the Board approved Policy IKFA-R, "Special Permission (SP) Credit Accommodations for Locally Awarded Verified Credits".

Upon recommendation by Chairman Lovell, motion by Trustee Burant, seconded by Trustee Berkstresser, and passed by a 5-0 vote, the Board approved the Renaming of the Athletic Stadium Complex at Rockbridge County High School to "Prasnicki-Ross Field at Veterans Stadium".

- Superintendent Thompson stated that a ceremony will be held at a future date.

Upon recommendation by Superintendent Thompson, motion by Trustee Hostetter, seconded by Trustee Berkstresser, and passed by a 5-0 vote, the Board approved a Categorical Estimate of Needs – FY20 in the amount of \$33,480,958.

- Superintendent Thompson stated that this document is not a budget but rather to provide the county an estimate of needs for the school system when developing the FY21 county budget. He offered caution that once more information is received from the state, that the numbers may change.

Upon recommendation by Chairman Lovell, motion by Trustee Whitmore, seconded by Trustee Berkstresser, and passed by a 5-0 vote, the Board approved reducing the health insurance plans from three plans to two plans by doing away with the traditional five hundred deductible plan.

- Trustee Burant inquired if the HSA match will be offered again this year.
 - Superintendent Thompson responded that it is the goal of the School Board but it will depend on the status of funding and the budget.
- Chairman Lovell expressed her sentiment that the match was important in helping employees to make a switch and to explore options.
- Trustee Berkstresser expressed his sentiment that the School Board will continue to look at a hard match that will help in the overall savings for the school division.
- Superintendent Thompson stated that the employee educational campaign last year and conversations this year will continue to be beneficial.

NEW BUSINESS: None

SCHOOL BOARD

There will be a Joint Meeting with the Rockbridge County Board of Supervisors on Thursday, March 19, 2020 / 5:00 PM / Location: Rockbridge County School Board Office, 2893 Collierstown Road, Lexington, Virginia.

The next regular monthly meeting of the Rockbridge County School Board will be held on Tuesday, April 14, 2020 at 5:00 p.m. The meeting will be held at the County of Rockbridge Administration Building, 150 South Main Street, Lexington, VA 24450.

CLOSED MEETING

Under Section 2.2-3711.A (1) of the State Code, Chairman Lovell recommended that the Board go into a *Closed Meeting* to discuss one personnel matter. Motion was made by Trustee Berkstresser, seconded by Trustee Whitmore, and passed by 5-0 vote.

The Board entered into the *Closed Meeting* at 6:16 p.m.

[Trustee Burant left the meeting at 6:45 p.m.]

The Board returned to open session at 6:55 p.m.

Chairman Lovell read the following motion to Certify the Closed Meeting:

WHEREAS, the Rockbridge County School Board has convened a closed meeting on this date pursuant to an affirmative recorded vote and in accordance with the provisions of the Virginia Freedom of Information Act; and

WHEREAS, Section 2.2-3712.D of the Code of Virginia requires a certification by this School Board that such closed meeting was conducted in conformity with Virginia law;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Rockbridge County School Board hereby certifies that, to the best of each member's knowledge, (i) only public business matters lawfully exempted by Virginia law were discussed in the closed meeting to which this certification applies, and (ii) only such public business matters as were identified in the motion convening the closed meeting were heard, discussed or considered.

Upon initial motion of Certification of Closed Meeting by Chairman Lovell, and seconded by Trustee Berkstresser, the motion passed by the following roll call vote:

Trustee Berkstresser - Aye
Trustee Hostetter - Aye
Trustee McDaniel - Aye
Trustee Whitmore - Aye
Chairman Lovell - Aye

ADJOURNMENT

Upon motion by Trustee Whitmore, seconded by Trustee Hostetter, and passed by 4-0 vote, the meeting was adjourned at 6:57 p.m.

Wendy W. Lovell
Wendy W. Lovell, Chairman

Rhonda B. Humphries
Rhonda B. Humphries, Clerk of the Board