

**Jackson County Board of Education  
Minutes of Regular Meeting  
Sylva, North Carolina**

398 Hospital Road, Sylva

April 23, 2024

6:00 p.m.

The Jackson County Board of Education held their regular session on Tuesday, April 23, 2024, at 6:00 p.m., at the Board of Education Administrative Office Boardroom, Sylva, North Carolina. The following members were present:

Elizabeth Cooper, Chairperson  
Wes Jamison, Vice Chairperson  
Abigail Clayton  
Kim Moore  
Dr. Lynn Dillard

Also present were Dr. Dana L. Ayers, Superintendent; Jake Buchanan, Deputy Superintendent; Ashley Leonard, School Board Attorney; and Cora Fields, Board Assistant.

**CALL TO ORDER**

Chairperson Elizabeth Cooper called the business meeting to order.

Smokey Mountain Elementary School 5<sup>th</sup> through 8<sup>th</sup> Grade Students led the Pledge of Allegiance and sang the National Anthem.

**APPROVAL OF AGENDA**

*Upon a motion by Mr. Wes Jamison and seconded by Mrs. Abigail Clayton, the board voted unanimously to approve the Agenda.*

**SPECIAL RECOGNITION**

Dr. Ayers presented certificates of recognition to the following students:

1. SMES Battle of the Books - Angelina Ly, Emily Keat, Lili Alvarez, Brookstyn Adams
2. Vanessa Rivas Aguilar - CVES 6<sup>th</sup> Grade Student - Jackson County Soil and Water District – *Living Soil*
3. Sarah Morris – JCEC – ACT Perfect Score

**CONSENT ACTION AGENDA**

**Action:** *Upon a motion by Mr. Wes Jamison and seconded by Mrs. Abigail Clayton, the board unanimously approved the consent action agenda:*

- A. Draft Open Session Minutes of Regular Meeting of March 19, 2024.

## INFORMATION AGENDA

### A. **Agenda Item:** Superintendent's Report

**Presenter:** Dr. Dana L. Ayers, Superintendent

Dr. Ayers reported on the following:

1. The whirlwind of the final weeks of school has begun and we are busier than ever. The intentionality of instruction I have witnessed in the last couple weeks is evident in the staff and students actions. I am confident the EOG and EOC results will be impressive and our academic progress and growth will soar.
2. Last week, in collaboration with multiple local agencies and first responders, JCPS participated in an active shooter drill at Smoky Mountain High School. This drill also affected the Fairview campus for a short period of time. The purpose of this drill was to practice procedures in the event such a tragedy were to occur. The drill was a successful way to determine areas for improvement for everyone involved. I am indebted to our local agencies who responded quickly, with professionalism and with one goal in mind, to protect our students and staff while securing the campus. I am very grateful to Deputy Superintendent, Jake Buchanan, who took the lead and appropriate actions with this drill. I am saddened that these types of drills must take place but have peace that we would know how to act if necessary.
3. Great news for students at Blue Ridge Early College and Smoky Mountain High School. Our partnership with Southwestern Community College is allowing us to bring additional college in-person classes to both campuses. This is extremely beneficial for students to take transferable college courses on their high school campuses at no cost. Although there are a couple classes already offered, this initiative and growing partnership is bringing many new college courses for students beginning this fall!
4. These additional SCC college offerings will require classroom space. At last month's board meeting, I shared information about Western Carolina University's The Catamount School and our need for space at SMHS. That school operates independently on the campus of Smoky Mountain High School even though they are not part of JCPS. Since that meeting, I have shared with board members the plan to relocate The Catamount School to the campus of Jackson Community School. We have offered comparable space for TCS on a smaller campus where middle school students are attending. Fortunately, we have more than sufficient available space on that campus and a plan for continuing our collaboration with WCU.
5. Lab schools are being reexamined across the state. In fact, some school districts are completely ending their partnerships with universities. This is the case in Elkin City with Appalachian State University. Because JCPS values the collaboration with WCU, we have strategically created a relocation plan to accommodate TCS.
6. Our seniors have a new experience this year in preparation for graduation. The first-ever JCPS Grad Walk will take place on Friday, May 3rd. Seniors will wear their graduation robes, walk through all four feeder elementary schools during the morning and then proceed to the courthouse for a photo opportunity at 1:00 pm. Next, they will make their way along the sidewalks to Bridge Park. I encourage our community to come and make this day special for our graduates!
7. Finally, I invite everyone to support the SMHS musical theater department at the show this weekend, Beauty and the Beast. This will be Mrs. Linda Haggard's final musical and

we are so excited to applaud her and our students on a job well done. Shows are on Friday night, Saturday and Sunday afternoon.

**B. Agenda Item:** JCPS Education Foundation, Inc.

**Presenter:** Mrs. Laura Dills, Erin Daniel, and Melissa Lewis

Mrs. Dills presented information about the establishment of the JCPS Education Foundation.

**C. Agenda Item:** JCEC Senior Internship Experience

**Presenter:** Inga Sutton Instructor – Students: Lillian Haigler, AJ Cardona-Cosner and Kaitlin Ly

Ms. Sutton introduced three students from JCEC, Lillian Haigler, AJ Cardona-Cosner, and Kaitlin Ly. The students presented their senior internship experiences that included job shadowing and actual hands-on experience with HIGHTS, Rolling Start Garage, RK&K Civil Engineering, and the Jackson County Airport.

**D. Agenda Item:** Social Media Engagement

**Presenter:** Shaneka Allen, Public Information Officer

Ms. Allen provided a summary of the JCPS Social Media engagement for the previous year which showed a significant increase in posts and viewership.

**E. Agenda Item:** Mental Health Awareness

**Presenter:** Meagan Crews

Ms. Crews provided an overview of the JCPS Mental Health NC Project AWARE – Advancing Wellness and Resiliency in Education.

**F. Agenda Item:** ESS – Substitute Review

**Presenter:** Teri Walawender, Director of Human Resources and Kristie Walker, Chief Financial Officer

Mrs. Walawender and Mrs. Walker provided a cost analysis and review of the ESS Substitute program in JCPS.

**G. Agenda Item:** Internal Audits

**Presenter:** Mrs. Kristie Walker, Chief Financial Officer

Mrs. Walker informed the board that the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> quarter internal audits and Bank of America purchase card audits have been completed with no findings.

**H. Agenda Item:** Unaudited Financial Summary

**Presenter:** Mrs. Kristie Walker, Chief Financial Officer

Mrs. Walker presented the Unaudited Financial Summary as of April 2024.

## OPEN SESSION FOR PUBLIC COMMENTS

Ms. Kim Winter, Ms. Angela Lunsford, Ms. Jill Wolfe, and Ms. Bonnie Claxton spoke to the board about the Catamount School (TCS). They summarized the accomplishments and positive impact of TCS on the students and discussed the updates to the SMHS facility that have been made by TCS. They asked the board to allow TCS to remain on the campus of Smoky Mountain High School or delay a decision about relocation of the school.

### ACTION AGENDA

**A. Agenda Item:** Budget Amendments

**Presenter:** Mrs. Kristie Walker, Chief Financial Officer

Mrs. Walker presented budget amendments to the Capital Outlay Fund, Federal Grants Fund, Local Current Expense Fund, and the State Public School Fund and asked for board approval.

*Action: Upon a motion by Mr. Wes Jamison and seconded by Mrs. Kim Moore, the board voted unanimously to approve the budget amendments to the Capital Outlay Fund, Federal Grants Fund, Local Current Expense Fund, and the State Public School Fund.*

**B. Agenda Item:** Smokey Mountain Elementary School Civil War Studies

**Presenter:** Dr. Dana L. Ayers, Superintendent

Dr. Ayers presented a request from SMES for approval to bring weapons on campus for Civil War studies and asked for board approval.

*Action: Upon a motion by Mr. Wes Jamison and seconded by Mrs. Kim Moore, the board voted unanimously to approve the display of weapons as part of the Civil War Studies at SMES.*

**C. Agenda Item:** The Catamount School Relocation

**Presenter:** Dr. Dana L. Ayers, Superintendent

Dr. Ayers presented a detailed plan to relocate the Catamount School from Smoky Mountain High School campus to Jackson Community School, due to the need for additional classroom space at SMHS, and asked for board approval.

*Action: Upon a motion by Mr. Wes Jamison and seconded by Mrs. Kim Moore, the board voted three to two to move forward with the relocation of the Catamount School. Abigail Clayton and Dr. Lynn Dillard cast the dissenting votes.*

**D. Agenda Item:** Phone Provider Approval for FAX lines, 911 Fire Alarms and Elevators

**Presenter:** Greg Stewart, Chief Technology Officer

Mr. Stewart presented a proposal to contract with Granite Government Solutions to provide phone service for FAX lines, 911 Fire Alarms and Elevators and asked for board approval.

**Action:** *Upon a motion by Mr. Wes Jamison and seconded by Mrs. Kim Moore, the board voted unanimously to approve the contract with Granite Government Solutions to provide FAX lines, 911 Fire Alarms and Elevators.*

- E. **Agenda Item:** 2025-2026 LEA Based Calendar Weather Waiver  
**Presenter:** Angie Dills, Assistant Superintendent

Mrs. Dills presented the 2025-2026 LEA Based Calendar Weather Waiver request and asked for board approval.

**Action:** *Upon a motion by Mr. Wes Jamison and seconded by Mrs. Kim Moore, the board voted unanimously to approve the 2025-2026 LEA Based Calendar Weather Waiver.*

- F. **Agenda Item:** NCDOT Right of Way Agreement for Smoky Mtn High  
**Presenter:** Jake Buchanan, Deputy Superintendent

Mr. Buchanan presented a Summary Statement/Contingent Offer to Purchase Real Property due to the Acquisition of Right of Way and Damages for Smoky Mountain High School property and asked for board approval.

**Action:** *Upon a motion by Mrs. Abigail Clayton and seconded by Mrs. Kim Moore, the board voted unanimously to approve the NCDOT Right of Way Agreement for Smoky Mountain High School. Mr. Jamison recused himself from the vote.*

- G. **Agenda Item:** Field Trips  
**Presenter:** Dr. Dana L. Ayers, Superintendent

1. CVES, Grade 6 - Dollywood, Pigeon Forge, TN, May 3, 2024, TT9352

Dr. Ayers presented the above-listed field trip and asked for board approval.

**Action:** *Upon a motion by Mr. Wes Jamison and seconded by Mrs. Kim Moore, the board voted unanimously to approve the field trip.*

### **CLOSED SESSION**

*The board unanimously approved a motion by Mr. Wes Jamison and seconded by Mrs. Abigail Clayton, to enter into closed session pursuant to G.S. 143.318.11 for the following purposes: under subsection; (a) (1) to prevent the disclosure of privileged or confidential personnel information pursuant to G.S. 115C-319-32 and (a) (3) to discuss matters protected by attorney-client privilege.*

*Upon a motion by Mr. Wes Jamison and seconded by Mrs. Abigail Clayton, the board voted unanimously to return to open session.*

### **OPEN SESSION**

- G. **Agenda Item:** Amend Agenda to include BREC Washington D.C. Field Trip

**Presenter:** Dr. Dana L. Ayers, Superintendent

Dr. Ayers requested the board amend the agenda to include the Blue Ridge Early College field trip to Washington D.C. that was tabled at the February BOE meeting for additional information.

2. BREC, Grades 10, 11 and 12 - Washington, D.C., 01-18-25 to 01-21-25, TT8962.

**Action:** *Upon a motion by Mr. Wes Jamison and seconded by Mrs. Abigail Clayton, the board voted unanimously to amend the agenda and approve the BREC field trip.*

**H. Agenda Item:** Amend Agenda and approve BSI Change Order for Blue Ridge School

**Presenter:** Jake Buchanan, Deputy Superintendent

Mr. Buchanan presented a change order for Blue Ridge School and asked for board approval.

**Action:** *Upon a motion by Mr. Wes Jamison and seconded by Mrs. Abigail Clayton, the board voted unanimously to amend the agenda and approve the BSI Change Order for Blue Ridge School.*

**Action:** *Upon a motion by Mr. Wes Jamison and seconded by Mrs. Abigail Clayton, the board unanimously approved the consent action agenda:*

A. Closed Session Minutes of Regular Meeting of March 19, 2024.

### **PERSONNEL ACTION AGENDA**

**Action:** *Upon a motion made by Mr. Wes Jamison and seconded by Mrs. Abigail Clayton, the board voted unanimously to approve the personnel agenda as recommended by Dr. Ayers. The board unanimously approved the following recommendations:*

#### **Employee Recommendations:**

1. Branch, Bailee – Teacher, SCES
2. Bugg, Samantha – Instructional Support Assistant, FES
3. Collins, Joseph “Dale” – Field Trip and Substitute Bus Driver, FES
4. Collins, Stacey – Instructional Coach, FES
5. Cook, Carly – Interim College Success Coach, JCEC
6. Crisp, Rayna – Assistant Principal - Extended Employment, FES
7. Danner, Sherrie – School Nutrition Assistant, FES
8. Dowdle, Ashley – Teacher, SCES
9. Flintoff, Amy – School Nutrition Manager, FES
10. Garner, Marvin “Edward” – Teacher, BREC and BRS
11. Jones, Kimberly – Finance Assistant 1, Central Office
12. Kennedy, Paula – School Counselor - Extended Employment, BREC
13. Lawson, Kimberly – Assistant Principal, BRS and BREC
14. Mathis, Allison – Teacher, SCES
15. Mayse, Tim – Athletic Director - Extended Employment, BREC
16. McAbee, Dustin – Teacher, SMHS
17. Nicholson, Natalie – Instructional Support Assistant, FES

18. Parham, Carleen – Data Manager - Extended Employment, FES
19. Parsons, Laura – Bus Monitor, SMHS
20. Patten, Jennifer – Instructional Coach - Extended Employment, CVES
21. Payne, Brittany – Instructional Coach - Extended Employment, FES
22. Rogers, Cassie – Pre-School Coordinator - Extended Employment, Central Office
23. Sams, Nicole – EC Teacher Assistant, SCES
24. Watson, Josh – Assistant Principal - Extended Employment, CVES and JCS
25. Webb, Austin – Instructional Support Assistant, FES

**Employee Recommendations – Summer Programs:**

1. Ammons, Stephanie – Reading Camp Teacher, FES
2. Bates, April – School Nutrition Manager, CVES
3. Beam, Michael “Gage” – Paint Crew Lead, District-wide
4. Benitez-Repreza, Evelyn – Reading Camp Teacher, FES
5. Boud, Sarah “Denise” – Custodian, FES
6. Bowers, Brittany – Reading Camp Teacher, FES
7. Elders, Melissa – School Nutrition Manager, SMES
8. Evans, Kayla – School Nutrition Assistant, CVES
9. Flintoff, Amy – School Nutrition Manager, FES
10. Gotay, Keyshla – School Nutrition Assistant, SCES
11. Green Tiffany – School Nutrition Assistant, SMES
12. Haney, Teresa – Paint Crew, District-wide
13. Howell, Wendy – Reading Camp Teacher, FES
14. Howell, Wendy – Custodian, FES
15. Maney, Emma – Reading Camp Teacher, FES
16. McCoy, Susan – School Nutrition Manager, SCES
17. Mercer, Heather – School Nutrition Assistant, SCES
18. Price, Anna – School Nutrition Assistant, SMES
19. Roper, Becky – School Nutrition Manager, FES
20. Sexton, Jennifer – Paint Crew, District-wide
21. Smith, Kelsey – Reading Camp Teacher Assistant, FES
22. Smithdeal, Erica – Bus Cleaning, Bus Garage
23. Sutton, Brandi – Reading Camp Teacher, SMES
24. Sutton, Natalie – Reading Camp Teacher, CVES
25. Swartzwelder, Katie – Reading Camp Teacher, SCES
26. Tidwell, Wendy – Reading Camp Teacher, SMES
27. Valentine, Rebekah – School Nutrition Manager, BRS
28. Verrault, Gina – Reading Camp Teacher, SCES
29. Watkins, Susan – Reading Camp Teacher, BRS

**Employee Resignations:**

1. Crawford, Jamie – Custodian, Central Office
2. deRivera, Linda – School Nutrition Assistant, FES
3. DuPree, Jason – Custodian and Bus Driver, CVES
4. Frese, Jamie – Assistant Principal, SMES
5. Jondro, Lorraine – School Nutrition Assistant, BRS
6. Mills, Jordan – Teacher, SMHS
7. Rave, Sarah – Teacher, CVES

8. Spillman, Sandra – Teacher Assistant, SCES
9. Stewart, Samantha – School Nurse, FES

**Employee Retirements:**

1. Hoxit, Lisa – Data Manager and Bookkeeper, BRS

**Special Requests – Leave of Absence:**

1. Medford, Sydney – Teacher, SCES

**Staff, Non-Staff and Returning Coach Recommendations:**

1. Albury, Tiffany – Assistant Coach Softball, SMES – Returning Staff
2. Menickelli, Kristin – Head Coach Varsity Men’s Track, SMHS – New Staff

**ANNOUNCEMENTS**

**The next regularly scheduled business meeting of the Board of Education is May 28, 2024, at 6:00 p.m., at the Board of Education Administrative Office, 398 Hospital Road, Sylva, NC.**

**ADJOURNMENT**

There being no objection, Chairperson Elizabeth Cooper adjourned the meeting at 9:10 p.m.

---

Elizabeth K. Cooper, Chairperson

---

Dr. Dana L. Ayers, Secretary