

Hamlet, North Carolina
May 7, 2024

The Richmond County Board of Education met in regular session on May 7, 2024, at 5:00 p.m. The meeting was held at the Central Office in Hamlet, North Carolina.

The members present: Wiley Mabe, Chairman, Bobbie Sue Ormsby, Vice-Chairman, Scotty Baldwin, Jerry Ethridge, Cory Satterfield, Ronald Tillman, and Daryl Mason.

The administrators present: Dr. Joe Ferrell, Superintendent, Dr. Julian Carter, Associate Superintendent of Human Resources, Dr. Kate Smith, Assistant Superintendent of Curriculum and Instruction, Melvin Ingram, Assistant Superintendent of School Safety and Operations, Dr. Tesha Isler, Executive Director of School Administration and Policy, Jennifer Taylor, Director of Testing and Accountability, Dawn Jordan, Executive Director of Finance, Steven King, Director of Maintenance, Mike Williams, Director of Technology Systems and Student Information, Katherine Bendell, Director of Instructional Technology, and Cameron Whitley, Executive Director of Communications, and George Crump, III, Board Attorney.

Meeting Commencement: After noting that a quorum was present, Chairman Wiley Mabe called the meeting to order at 5:18 p.m. Chairman Mabe requested a Moment of Silence and led the Pledge of Allegiance.

Approval of Minutes: On a motion by Jerry Ethridge, seconded by Daryl Mason, the minutes of April 9, 2024 (open and closed) meetings were unanimously approved.

RCS District Spelling Bee Winner: Hayley Gordon, Director of 6-12 ELA/SS/AIG/ML recognized Ryan Dawkins, a fourth grader from LJ Bell Elementary School, as the winner of the 2024 District Spelling Bee. He clinched victory with the correct spelling of the word "refugee," demonstrating exceptional dedication to mastering complex words. The district spelling bee was held on March 18, in the auditorium at Rockingham Middle School.

School of Math and Science Acceptance: Hayley Gordon, Director of 6-12 ELA/SS/AIG/ML was honored to share that Connor Thrower, a sophomore at Richmond Senior High School, received acceptance into the prestigious North Carolina School of Science and Mathematics (NCSSM), located at the Morganton campus.

- NCSSM is renowned for its focus on science, technology, engineering, mathematics (STEM), as well as the fine arts and humanities, offering a challenging academic environment for talented high school students statewide.
- The NC General Assembly, with the support of Governor Rory Cooper, authorizes funding to provide a four-year tuition grant for NCSSM high school graduates who enroll in the UNC System University.

Recognition of Inspiring Excellence Awards: Cameron Whitley introduced Courtney Pearson, Principal of Hamlet Middle School, who presented plaques to two of her staff members: Jaiden Tillman and Lauren Brewer. Next, Cameron Whitley introduced Jennifer Beck, Principal of LJ Bell Elementary School, who presented plaques to two of her staff members: Heather Gilliam and Meredith Norwood. These recipients were honored for their outstanding contributions and dedication to students and the school community.

Skills USA Recognition: Greg Norton, Director of CTE, recognized the achievements of students who competed in the SkillsUSA chapter and shared the results from the state leadership conference held from April 23 - 25, 2024.

Jason Perakis, Career Development Coordinator, provided information about the high school program, highlighting the participation of twenty students in the 2024 SkillsUSA competition in Greensboro.

- The high school competitions included: automotive service technology, automotive tool identification, drafting, drone piloting, firefighting, and welding fabrication.
- Notable achievements included:
 - Logan Emory secured second place in the state-level drafting competition.
 - A three-man team (Daniel Bryant, Christopher Hunter, and Mark McCormick) finished in fourth place in the welding fabrication competition.

Greg Norton provided information about the first-ever middle school SkillsUSA chapter, led by Mr. Maynor, teacher at Cordova Middle School. Mr. Maynor took seven middle school students to participate in the competition.

- The middle school competitions included: a chapter display, job skill demonstration, mobile robotics, and t-shirt design.
- Notable achievements included:
 - A three-man team (Kylee Scott, Bella Mikeska and Genesis Gonzalez Luna) from Cordova Middle School received third place in the chapter display competition.
 - Jakhia Baldwin won first place in the job skill demonstration competition.
 - Edwin Esparza Vasquez and Irving Esparza Vasquez received first place in the mobile robotics competition.
 - Blanca Huerta finished fourth place in the t-shirt design competition.

All three first place middle school students will compete at the national conference in Atlanta, Georgia, June 24 - 29, 2024.

International Travel Program Proposal Follow-Up: Daniel Diggs, science teacher at Richmond Senior High School, presented a follow up on his proposal during last month's meeting for the international travel program. The program offers an educational tour experience where students will visit the capitals of the British Isles, including Dublin, Ireland; Belfast, Northern Ireland; Edinburgh, Scotland; London, and England, with several other stops in other cities along the way. This opportunity is exclusively offered to students graduating in June of 2026, with the trip scheduled to take place in July of 2026. The total cost for students to go on this trip is \$4,849. Daniel highlighted payment plans, a scholarship and personal fundraising to help offset the cost for students/parents.

Payment Plans:

1. Pay in Full – Pay the entire balance at the time of enrollment. Payment method accepted: Visa or MasterCard, ATM/debit card and personal checks.
2. Automatic Payment Plan – After enrolling with the \$95 enrollment fee, payments are automatically deducted from your bank account. Payments can be made monthly or bi-weekly but must be paid in full 30 days before to departure.
3. Manual Payment Plan – After enrolling with the \$95 enrollment fee, you receive invoices to make payments. Payment method accepted: Visa or MasterCard, ATM/debit card and personal checks. The trip must be paid in full 110 days before to departure.

Global Citizen Scholarship:

- The scholarship is need-based and merit-based, considering both the applicant's financial situation and academic or extracurricular achievements.
- Each year, Educational Tours allocates \$100,000 to award 100 scholarships, each valued at \$1,000.

- Students applying for the Educational Tours scholarship must submit a completed form and a 2-3 minute video answering the question, How will travel change the way you think, feel, or act about the world? Students also, must relate their answers based on four categories: passion, perspective, purpose, and impact.
- During the scoring process, each category will be assessed individually, and a final score is determined by calculating the average.

Personal Fundraising:

- When students enroll on a tour they receive their personalized fundraising page. This page can be forwarded to family/friends/colleagues/church members/etc. Contributions go directly to the student's account with 100% of the money being used to help pay for the trip. Educational Tours does not charge a fee for this service.

On a motion by Bobbie Sue Ormsby, seconded by Ronald Tillman, the board voted unanimously to approve the International Trip to Capitals of the British Isles – Summer 2026, as presented by Daniel Diggs.

Alternative Schools Modified Accountability System Model: Jennifer Taylor, Director of Testing and Accountability, presented three options for the 2024-2025 school year's modified accountability system for alternative schools. Jennifer Taylor recommended option B being the best choice for Ashley Chapel Education Center.

- Option A: Adopt the same accountability model as traditional schools.
- Option B: Comprised of three components: 20% student persistence, 20% school achievement, and 60% school growth.
- Option C: Allowing the school to modify its accountability system and submit it to the state for approval.

On a motion by Ronald Tillman, seconded by Daryl Mason, the board voted 6-1 to approve option B. Scotty Baldwin was a fan of option A.

Construction Updates: Steven King presented an update on projects at Mineral Springs Elementary School, Fairview Heights Elementary School and Richmond Senior High School.

- Richmond Senior High School
 - 8-10ft of block walls are installed to the exterior of the structure.
 - Tile installation in the new girl's restroom will begin next week.
 - Interior painting has started in some areas.
- Mineral Spring Elementary School
 - Exterior block work is complete.
 - About 80% of the roof structure is in place, starting to install metal roof decking, by the end of the month the roof finish panels will be installed.
- Fairview Heights Elementary School
 - Pre-engineered steel building is complete.
 - Metal framing has started on the inside.
 - Covered canopy will connect existing building to the new building.
 - Bricking up around the bottom of the new building should begin by the end of the month.
 - Drywall installation should begin by the end of the month.

All three new structures are coming along well and will likely be completed ahead of the scheduled completion date.

Budget Amendments: Dawn Jordan presented budget amendment requests for budget numbers 14, 15 and 16.

- Budget #14 State funds received an increase in the amount of \$235,672.00.
- Budget #15 Federal funds received an increase in the amount of \$232,911.45.
- Budget #16 Other Local funds received an increase in the amount of \$714,965.27.

On a motion by Scotty Baldwin, seconded by Cory Satterfield the board voted unanimously to approve budget amendments numbers 14, 15 and 16.

Policies for Adoption: Dr. Tesha Isler presented the conclusion of the 30-day review period, asking the board to adopt amendments for the following policies.

Policy Numbers:

- 3222 Virus Protection Policy
- 3431 Conflict Resolution
- 4302 R-2 Rules for Use of Seclusion and Restraint in Schools
- 4360 Appeals of Consequences No Greater Than Short-Term Suspension
- 4720 Surveys of Students
- 6523 Use of Computers
- 7314 Whistle Blower Policy

On a motion by Cory Satterfield, seconded by Daryl Mason, the board voted unanimously to adopt policy amendments: 3222, 3431, 4302 R-2, 4360, 4720, 6523 and 7314.

Policies for Review: Dr. Tesha Isler presented the following policies for a 30-day review.

Policy Numbers:

- 2127 Board Member Technology Use
- 2310 E-A Request to Speak During Public Comment Time
- 3220 Technology in the Educational Program
- 3225/4312/7320 Technology Responsible Use
- 3420 Student Promotion and Accountability
- 3460 Graduation Requirements
- 6125 Administering Medicines to Students
- 6140 Student Wellness

Wiley Mabe commented to the board, “that’s our reading for the next 30 days.”

Field Trip Proposal: Melvin Ingram presented the JROTC and SkillsUSA field trips for board consideration. The JROTC trip will be held in Fort Jackson, South Carolina this June. The SkillsUSA trip will be held in Atlanta, Georgia in June. Melvin Ingram is requesting the trips for the following schools:

- Cordova Middle School – SkillsUSA – June 24-29, 2024
- Richmond Senior High School – JROTC – June 8-13, 2024

On a motion by Scotty Baldwin, seconded by Bobbie Sue Ormsby, the board voted unanimously to approve both field trips as presented.

Board Meeting Schedule Options for 2024-2025: Dr. Joe Ferrell presented two schedule options for the 2024-2025 board meetings.

Options:

1. Continue to have regular board meetings on the first Tuesday of each month with work sessions added to the schedule.
2. Change regular meetings to the second Tuesday of each month with work sessions added to the schedule. This option would allow:
 - Dr. Ferrell and board members the opportunity to attend the County Commissioners monthly meetings that are held on the first Tuesday of each month.
 - Dr. Ferrell to give periodic school district updates to the county commissioners.
 - Dr. Ferrell, board members, etc. build a rapport with county commissioners and to show we care about what's going on in the county, not just within the school district.

On a motion by Ronald Tillman, seconded by Bobbie Sue Ormsby, the board voted unanimously to change the 2024-2025 board meetings to the second Tuesday of the month beginning on July 11, 2024, and to adopt the calendar with quarterly work sessions added in the schedule.

Board Members Comments: Chairman Wiley Mabe commented on it being a busy time in the school year between schools having their spring chorus and band concerts, banquets and upcoming graduations. Scotty Baldwin shared that he along with Dr. Ferrell and Melvin Ingram had the opportunity to attend and watch, "Teen Court." Scotty Baldwin noted that he was impressed seeing a student prosecutor and a student defense attorney and wanted to commend them for running teen court just like a real case in a courtroom. Jerry Ethridge shared that Cordova Middle School's spring band and chorus concert were great. Jerry Ethridge went on to say that Levi Miranda, chorus and band teacher at Cordova Middle School did a great job with the concerts. Jerry Ethridge commented that the job fair held in the gym at Richmond Senior High School was packed. Jerry Ethridge also shared that he went to STEM night at the Cole Auditorium and said, it's a wonderful event to attend to see what is going on in the school district. Ronald Tillman commended Dr. Ferrell and his executive team for their awesome job presenting at the NAACP meeting. Bobbie Sue Ormsby discussed the Educational Foundation being reorganized and putting emphasis on, "building our own, growing our own, and emphasis on teachers." The Educational Foundation will have a Clay Shooting fundraiser event at DeWitt's Sporting facility this Friday at 9:00 a.m. Bobbie Sue Ormsby remarked that the Educational Foundation plans are to start giving out scholarships at Richmond Senior High School's awards banquet. Daryl Mason made a statement that a lot of people are commenting that they are very proud of the autism event that took place at Richmond Senior High School on the football field. Daryl Mason said he hopes next year's autism event is even bigger.

Superintendent's Report: Dr. Joe Ferrell presented the Superintendent's Report:

- Tina McNeil, assistant principal at Richmond Senior High School did an amazing job helping coordinate the autism event.
- The retirement celebration will be held at the Cole Auditorium on May 28, 2024 at 6:00 p.m.
- The work session for the facility study results will be on May 29, 2024 at 5:00 p.m.

Wiley Mabe citing NCGS 143-318.11(a)(3),(6) requested a motion to go into closed session.

On a motion by Jerry Ethridge, seconded by Daryl Mason, the board voted unanimously to go into closed session at 6:38 p.m.

The board returned from closed session at 7:26 p.m.

Dr. Julian Carter presented the personnel report, and the addendum.

On a motion by Ronald Tillman, seconded by Bobby Sue Ormsby, the board voted unanimously to approve the personnel report and addendum as presented.

There being no further business, on a motion by Jerry Ethridge, seconded by Bobby Sue Ormsby, Wiley Mabe adjourned the meeting at 7:31 p.m.