



Minutes
School Board Meeting
Greene County Schools
County Meeting Room
August 14, 2024

Members Present: Mr. Brooks Taylor, Chair; Ms. Rebecca Roach, Vice Chair; Ms. Kelly Greer, Member; Ms. Cherish Alberts, Member; Dr. Andrea Whitmarsh, Superintendent; Ms. Rhonda Houchens, Clerk.

Member(s) of The Greene County Board of Supervisors Present: Mr. Francis McGuigan

Mr. Taylor called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m. in the School Board Office Conference Room.

Ms. Roach made a motion to move into closed session in accordance with Virginia Code section 2.2-3711(A)(1) and (A) (8) to discuss assignment, appointment, and performance of specific officers, appointees, or employees of the Board and legal matters. Ms. Greer seconded. All Ayes, motion carried.

Ms. Roach made a motion to reconvene in open session in the County Meeting Room. Ms. Alberts seconded. All Ayes, motion carried.

Mr. Taylor called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. in the County Meeting Room.

Mr. Taylor stated: The Board will certify by roll call vote that to the best of each member's knowledge only public business matters lawfully exempted from open meeting requirements and identified in the motion to convene in the closed meeting were heard, discussed, or considered.

Ms. Greer – certified
Ms. Roach – certified
Ms. Alberts – certified
Mr. Taylor – certified

Mr. Taylor stated that Ms. Bikers will not be with us tonight.

Mr. Taylor requested a motion to approve the agenda.

Ms. Roach made a motion to approve the agenda as presented. Ms. Greer seconded. No discussion. All Ayes, motion carried.

Mr. Taylor invited everyone to join in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Mr. Taylor stated there were no closed meeting actions.

Mr. Taylor requested a motion for the consent agenda:

- 11-1632 June 12, 2024 Meeting Minutes
- 11-1633 July 10, 2024 Retreat Minutes
- 11-1634 July 1, 2024 Expenditures
- 11-1635 July 11, 2024 Expenditures
- 11-1636 July 16, 2024 Expenditures
- 11-1637 July 24, 2024 Expenditures
- 11-1638 Monthly Finance Report
- 11-1639 Field Trip Requests
- 11-1640 Enrollment
- 11-1641 Staff to be Approved List
- 11-1642 Religious Exemptions

Ms. Alberts made a motion to approve the consent agenda items 11-1632 through 11-1642 as presented. Ms. Greer seconded. No discussion. All Ayes, motion carried.

Mr. Taylor stated it was time for first public comment on matters not listed below on agenda.

There were no public comments, so Mr. Taylor closed public comment.

Dr. Pursel presented action item #11-1643, Policy Updates. Dr. Pursel stated since the June meeting there have been no updates or changes to the policy updates. His recommendation was to approve the Policies as presented.

Ms. Greer made a motion to approve the action item #11-1643, Policy Updates as presented. Ms. Roach seconded. No discussion. All Ayes, motion carried.

Mr. Taylor presented information/action item #11-1644, Greene County School Board Priorities. Mr. Taylor shared last month at the retreat the school board discussed priorities for the upcoming school year. He stated with tonight's vote we will agree that these are the priorities as a board. They are similar to the previous board priorities and they really describe what we as a board believe in and focus on as a board. He read the priorities.

Ms. Alberts made a motion to approve Information/action item #11-1644, Greene County School Board Priorities as presented. Ms. Greer seconded.

Mr. Taylor stated it was time for public comment on information/action item #11-1644, Greene County School Board Priorities. Mr. Taylor opened the floor for public comment.

There were no public comments, so Mr. Taylor closed public comment.

All Ayes, motion carried.

Mr. Taylor presented information/action item #11-1645, Greene County School Board By-Laws. Mr. Taylor shared at the retreat we discussed and reviewed the By-Laws and determined that there were no changes to be made with them, except to the deadline to set the retreat date. We left the By-Laws as they were.

Mr. Taylor stated it was time for public comment on information/action item #11-1645, Greene County School Board By-Laws. Mr. Taylor opened the floor for public comment.

There were no public comments, so Mr. Taylor closed public comment.

Ms. Greer made a motion to approve information/action item 11-1645, Greene County School Board By-Laws as presented. Ms. Alberts seconded.

Mr. Taylor stated this technically doesn't require a vote but since it's a regulation we are going to go ahead and vote on it tonight.

All Ayes, motion carried.

Ms. Kristie Spencer presented information/action item #11-1646, VPSA Technology Grant. Ms. Spencer shared for information and action tonight, the resolution for the Virginia Public School Authority Education Technology Funding. This funding is already included in the budget so there is no additional funding request associated with this. These funds are generated to help public school divisions across the state support infrastructure and hardware and support special initiatives, testing requirements and compliance requirements. The total value of the grant is \$216,000. \$180,000 is through the VPSA and \$36,000 is the required match. This resolution is a procedural component of the grant acceptance. The recommendation is to approve the resolution as presented.

Ms. Alberts made a motion to approve information/action item #11-1646, VPSA Technology Grant as presented. Ms. Roach seconded.

Mr. Taylor stated it was time for public comment on information/action item #11-1646, VPSA Technology Grant. Mr. Taylor opened the floor for public comment.

There were no public comments, so Mr. Taylor closed public comment.

No discussion.

All Ayes, motion carried.

Dr. Pursel presented information/action item #11-1647, Annual Compliance with Standards of Quality Report. Dr. Pursel shared this is an annual certification that the division approves and also seeks board approval. This certification from the board is confirming that the school division has met all 8 standards of quality set by the Code of Virginia. Dr. Pursel stated I'm happy to stand in front of you and say that we have met all 8 standards and so with that in mind my recommendation is to approve the annual certification as presented that GCPS has met all 8 standards of quality set forth by the Code of Virginia.

Mr. Taylor stated it was time for public comment on information/action item #11-1647, Annual Compliance with Standards of Quality Report. Mr. Taylor opened the floor for public comment.

There were no public comments, so Mr. Taylor closed public comment.

Ms. Roach made a motion to approve information/action item #11-1647, Annual Compliance with Standards of Quality Report as presented. Ms. Greer seconded.

Ms. Greer asked if there has been a year that we have not met this. Dr. Pursel responded not that I'm aware of.

All Ayes, motion carried.

Dr. Pursel presented information item #11-1648, Strategic Plan/Division Priorities. Dr. Pursel shared the Division Priorities for the 2024-2025 school year. Dr. Pursel shared Core Values, 2023-2024 highlights, and priorities for 2024-2025. Dr. Pursel provided objectives and action steps for each of the 2024-2025 priorities.

Ms. Brunelle presented information item #11-1649, Wellness Policy. Ms. Brunelle shared information regarding the Triennial Assessment and school wellness policy. Ms. Brunelle stated that every three years the Triennial Assessment must be completed. The assessment covers the last three years. Two forms of assessment are used: WELLSAT and School Level Report Cards. Ms. Brunelle provided a review of the Triennial Assessment. She shared what is included in the wellness policy and shared thoughts on moving forward. The wellness policy will need your approval at the September meeting.

Ms. Alberts asked with the new director if the menus have changed. Ms. Brunelle responded I think there will be some changes.

Ms. Greer asked how the wellness committee will be created. Ms. Brunelle responded anyone that would like to. She will be sending emails out soon. We have started a list of staff, parents, local medical staff, restaurant owners.

Mr. Brunelle presented information item #11-1650, Facilities Spotlight. Ms. Brunelle shared information on the maintenance system and the number of maintenance requests by school for 2023-2024. Also included in the presentation was an overview of completed major projects at each school.

Dr. Whitmarsh presented information item #11-1651 Policy BBBB – Adding Student Representatives to the School Board. Dr. Whitmarsh shared that in the past year she has had discussion with the board members regarding adding a student representative to the School Board. Dr. Whitmarsh stated after the discussion at the retreat in July, she is sharing a policy tonight to allow us to do so. Dr. Whitmarsh reviewed the policy.

Mr. Taylor stated it was time for public comment on information items. Mr. Taylor opened the floor for public comment.

Mr. Francis McGuigan congratulated all the presenters tonight especially Dr. Pursel and the example you have set with the creating a strategic plan and priorities. I think the county can learn a lot from you. He stated keep up the good work. I think you are doing a fabulous job.

Mr. Taylor stated no one signed up and no one wanted to speak so he closed the floor for the second public comment.

Dr. Whitmarsh presented the Superintendent's Report item #11-1652, Superintendent's Update. Dr. Whitmarsh introduced Mr. Trenton Fisher the new Communication Specialist. You have probably seen his work on face book and social media already. We are excited to have him here and he is one of our recent graduates. Dr. Whitmarsh stated that Sharon Gregory our Adaptive PE Teacher for the GCPS has been named Virginia Association of Health and Physical Education, Recreation and Dances Adaptive PE Teacher of the Year for 2024. As the state teacher of the year she is now eligible to compete for the Shape South District Award.

Dr. Whitmarsh share it's been a very busy summer. New Staff returned on August 1st with two days of professional learning and employment session. Huge thanks to Jen Myers who leads our new teacher program. Our new alternative ed building is complete. We received our occupancy permit just before the start of school. It was open for schools yesterday. We will have a future grand opening event but we were in a rush to get in. Just a reminder that building was constructed with our ESSER funds that we received. Another project from our ESSER Funds and Construction Grant Funds is the Tech project. The building has been delivered and we received all our permits and we have had a preconstruction meeting. Dr. Whitmarsh thanked all the staff that worked tirelessly so we were ready to open our doors for the 2024-2025 school year. Thank you to the custodians for getting our buildings deep cleaned and ready for the start, maintenance team for leading the projects and fixing repairs, our principals were busy planning for the new year and hiring new staff. Our office staff was busy registering students, ordering supplies and making sure everything was ready. Our central office administrative team was leading a lot of the professional work that was happening, learning about the

new legislation that applies to us and ensuring our compliance and just so much more. So thank you to everybody. Dr. Whitmarsh stated that as you are aware the Governor ordered an executive order regarding cellphone free education in Virginia. There has been listening sessions across the Commonwealth where they gathered information. Dr. Whitmarsh stated she did attend the one in Waynesboro. VDOE is issuing draft guidelines for feedback. They should be posted by this Friday. Final guidelines will be published by September 16th. These guidelines require school boards to adopt policies for a cellphone free education by January 1, 2025. Currently it's in our code of conduct which is a regulation and JFCR under Communication. Dr. Whitmarsh read the regulation. She stated we will be adopting a policy. We changed carriers for our 403B plan. We went with a company with better rates and investment options for our employees. We are also providing access to FinPath to assist in all this, including online classes, coaching, and access to a lot of financial information. We hope our employees will take advantage of this. All our crisis plans have been updated and reviewed by the Sheriff's Office and Emergency Services. As Ms. Brunelle shared all meals are free for all GCPS students thanks to the Community Eligibility Provision and that will at least be the case for the next three years. We have worked very hard to fill our positions. We are still working to fill some. We have 2 professional positions; a 5th grade position at NGES and a RES counselor and we have 5 IA positions. We have joined the Virginia Association for School Superintendents Cohort for artificial intelligence. It's sponsored by the Virginia Department of Education. More than 60 school divisions are participating and we are learning together on how we approach artificial intelligence as a school division. We are in a smaller cohort with Albemarle and Louisa. Our open houses were very well attended. Thursday night was abruptly ended due to the weather forecast and then well attended on Monday. Yesterday was our first day of school. Traffic always ruff on the Stanardsville Campus but over-all it's been an incredible start thanks to all the work that was done throughout the summer. Thanks to all our teachers and support staff that just returned. Our next board meeting is September 11th.

Mr. Taylor welcomed board member comments.

Ms. Greer thanked Dr. Pursel for his presentations. She thanked him for his thoroughness. The amount of returning students that are now working for the county is so cool. That should be on a banner somewhere. She thanked Ms. Brunelle for the great data with the tracking of the maintenance reports. She stated she appreciated Dr. Whitmarsh shared Trenton would be telling our story that is so important. People don't know what they don't know. Continue to shine the light on the things we are doing well here. Great news about the progress at the Tech Center. She stated she got to tour the high school and the tech center this summer and met with Mr. Wimmer and Ms. Peregoy. She thanked transportation and the bus drivers.

Ms. Roach stated she appreciate the division priorities and looks forward to implementing them. She stated she appreciated the wellness presentation. It's a big part of our kids' day. I'm glad breakfast and lunch is free for all. She thanked the maintenance staff and custodians that got everything ready. She thanked transportation also. She stated she was excited that the Alt Ed building is completed just in time for school. She stated she's excited about the Student Representatives for the School Board. She's looking forward to implementing that. Ms. Roach spoke about the cell phone policy. She's looking forward to see how that goes. She welcomed back everyone and let's have a good 2024-2025 year.

Ms. Alberts stated she loved hearing about past graduates coming back to work here and that you all reached out to them. She spoke about exceptional work force and how she noticed a positive face book post about NGS. She stated cellphones is a tough one and she gave a shout out to maintenance and custodial staff. She spoke about the really awful things they have to fix. She asked parents as they send their kids to school to please ask them to be ready and respectful of our school campus. Please do not create extra work.

Mr. Taylor welcomed back students and staff. He stated we appreciate the 12- month staff and they got us here we appreciate that and we appreciate all the staff and the new ones included welcome to Greene County. We hope this is your home for many years to come. From the custodians to the superintendent. He spoke about the cellphone policy and that it's very much needed and I believe the board agrees with that. Governor Younkin has taken a pretty big stance on that and how it's effecting the mental health of our students. I couldn't agree more and I applaud that. I think as a division we are doing a great job and it's for the health of our children. We look forward to that coming out in January. I think we are leading the way on how we are doing it. He thanked everyone for coming out. He welcomed students and staff. He thanked his colleagues and hopes Ms. Bickers feels better soon.

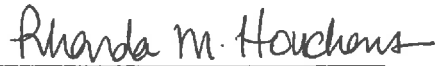
Mr. Taylor requested a motion to adjourn.

Ms. Roach made a motion to adjourn. Ms. Greer seconded. No discussion. All Ayes, motion carried.

Meeting ended at 8:19 pm.



Chair



Clerk

