

Hamlet, North Carolina
October 22, 2024

The Richmond County Board of Education met in a work session on October 22, 2024, at 5:00 p.m. The meeting was held at the Central Office in Hamlet, North Carolina.

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

The administrators present: Dr. Joe Ferrell, Superintendent, Dr. Julian Carter, Associate Superintendent of Auxiliary Services of Operations and Athletics, Dr. Kate Smith, Assistant Superintendent of Curriculum and Instruction, Melvin Ingram, Assistant Superintendent of School Safety and Support Services, Dr. Tesha Isler, Executive Director of Human Resources, Dawn Jordan, Executive Director of Finance, Cameron Whitley, Executive Director of Communications and Eva Dubuisson, Board Attorney.

Meeting Commencement

After noting that a quorum was present, Cory Satterfield, Chairman, called the meeting to order at 5:00 p.m.

Agenda Modification

Chairman Satterfield noted a need to a closed session to the agenda following the business item. On a motion by Jerry Ethridge, seconded by Bobbie Sue Ormsby, the agenda was unanimously adopted with the addition of the closed session.

Facility Closing Study

Dr. Julian Carter presented the findings of a Facility Closing Study, a continuation of a district-wide facility study conducted by Jim Watson. This study was mandated to evaluate the impact and feasibility of relocating students, specifically focusing on the Ninth Grade Academy, Monroe Avenue, and the James Building.

- **Relocation of Ninth Grade Academy Students to Richmond Senior High School;** Dr. Carter discussed moving Ninth Grade Academy (NGA) students to Richmond Senior High School to unify grades 9-12 on one campus.
 - The rationale for this move includes a decade-long decline in student population and the high costs of operating multiple facilities.
 - The NGA facility, originally built as an elementary school, has adequate classrooms but now serves a limited student population, which has decreased from 605 to 442 since its establishment.
 - Moving NGA students to Richmond Senior will provide access to Richmond's full range of academic and extracurricular programs, create a more cohesive high school experience, and address communication gaps between grades.

- The move will eliminate the need to shuttle students between campuses, improving efficiency and reducing transportation costs.
- **Staffing Adjustments**
 - The consolidation will allow the district to streamline administrative and support staff roles by gradually reducing duplicate positions through natural attrition, with no immediate job losses.
 - Staff will be reassigned as needed across both campuses, and class sizes in core subjects are not expected to change significantly. However, minor adjustments may be made in Career and Technical Education (CTE) staffing to align with program needs.

Relocation of Monroe Avenue Elementary to the Ninth Grade Academy Facility

- Monroe Avenue Elementary, originally built in 1953, is approaching the end of its service life and requires substantial repairs, including a new roof, plumbing adjustments, and improved safety features. Dr. Carter noted that while some sections of the building are newer, significant updates are still needed.
- The Ninth Grade Academy facility will be adapted to accommodate Monroe Avenue's elementary students. Modifications include adjusting plumbing fixtures and bathroom access for younger students, creating age-appropriate learning spaces, and installing playgrounds. Estimated costs for playground installations are approximately \$25,000 per playground, although efforts will be made to repurpose existing equipment where possible to reduce expenses.
- The relocation is expected to address the structural and safety concerns associated with the aging Monroe Avenue building, provide a more suitable learning environment, and allow for the eventual closure of the Monroe Avenue facility, thereby reducing long-term maintenance costs.

Staff Relocation from the James Building

- Staff currently based in the James Building will be relocated to the Ninth Grade Academy facility, which will streamline district operations and reduce maintenance costs through facility consolidation.

Public Hearing Requirement

- Board Attorney Eva Dubisson advised that a public hearing is required before the board can vote on closing NGA.
- The board discussed potential dates and options for publicizing the hearing, including posting updates on the district website and social media to ensure community awareness and engagement.

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

On a motion by Jerry Ethridge, seconded by Scotty Baldwin, the board voted unanimously to go into closed session at 6:51 p.m.