MINUTES OF
THE WILSON COUNTY BOARD OF EDUCATION MEETING
NOVEMBER 25, 2024

The Wilson County Board of Education held its regular meeting on Monday, November 25, 2024, at 6:30 p.m. at the Administrative Office, 113 N. Tarboro Street. Chairman Christine L. Fitch called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m. with the following members present:

Dr. Christine L. Fitch, Board Chair
Henry E. Mercer, Board Vice-Chair
Velma Barnes
Beverly Boyette
Blake Boykin
Rhyan Breen
Debora Powell
Dr. Lane B. Mills, Secretary

The meeting was televised on Spectrum and Greenlight Channel 22. The public could also view the meeting by downloading the WCSTV22 app.

Others present were Associate Superintendent Dr. Cheryl Wilson, Assistant Superintendent for Administrative Services Dr. Ben Williams, Assistant Superintendent for Instructional Services Robin May, Chief Finance Officer Shannon Collins, Director of Public Relations Amber Lynch and Administrative Assistant to the Superintendent and Board Clerk Linda Horrison, as well as Board Attorney Katie Cornetto and *The Wilson Times* Reporter Olivia Neeley. There were 31 citizens in attendance.

I. After calling the meeting to order, Dr. Fitch asked for approval of the agenda. Ms. Powell made the motion, seconded by Mr. Breen, to approve the agenda for tonight's meeting. The motion passed unanimously, 7-0.

II. At Dr. Fitch's request, Mr. Breen led the Pledge of Allegiance which was followed by a moment of silence.

III. Dr. Fitch presented for approval the minutes of the October 21, 2024, Regular Board meeting, and October 31, 2024, Special Board Meeting. Dr. Fitch asked for approval of the minutes. Ms. Barnes made the motion, seconded by Ms. Boyette, that the minutes of the October 21, 2024, Regular Board meeting, and October 31, 2024, Special Board meeting, be approved. The motion passed unanimously, 7-0.

IV. Under Good News Presentation, Dr. Mills, with the assistance of Mr. Breen, recognized the following:

- Champion of Education Award - Hubert Vester Auto Group was recognized for receiving the Champion of Education Award at the North Carolina School Boards Association (NCSBA) awards ceremony on November 19. The Wilson County Board of Education nominated Hubert Vester Auto Group because of its incredible commitment and support of our students and staff for the past 16 years. Hubert Vester's family is filled with public school educators, which is

why Mr. Vester and his son, Chris, have always felt strongly about their car dealership supporting WCS. Every year since 2008, they have provided our district's Teacher of the Year winner with a free, 1-year lease of a new car. In 2012 when WCS began our Operation Backpack Drive, they were one of the first companies to donate. What started with a contribution of 300 backpacks grew exponentially in the following years to 1,000 backpacks filled with supplies. Other initiatives where they support our students include contributing to an annual coat drive, sponsoring the Wilson Police Athletic League that many of our students are involved in, volunteering as guest speakers in high school classes, and hiring our graduates to work in their service department. Chris Vester also served on the Wilson Education Partnership (WEP) Board of Directors from 2021-2023, and he is still involved in WEP's Communicating with Confidence program where he guides students in mock job interviews. While Hubert Vester Auto Group has received many prestigious awards for car sales, service, and operations over the years, we are thrilled that they can add this award to their collection as true Champions of Education. They have gone above and beyond to support our district for the past 16 years, and we know they will continue to be a driving force of support for our students, staff and families in the future.

- Elementary Poster Contest Winner - Piper Finn, a second-grader at Rock Ridge Elementary, was recognized for winning third place in the NCSBA Elementary Poster Contest. She was our only winner from the district, though we had 12 students whose artwork received Honorable Mention, and all of our middle schools and one of our high schools also submitted videos for the video contest. There were more than 300 entries from across the state. For the contest, students were asked to draw a picture of themselves in the future, achieving their dreams and making a positive impact on the world, thanks to their education. For her design, Piper drew a hospital to indicate she wanted to work in the healthcare field. The NCSBA displayed the artwork during its annual conference held last week in Greensboro for all the attendees to admire. They also provided Piper with a gift to celebrate her achievement. Special thanks to Rock Ridge Elementary Art Teacher LaNicha Richardson and all of our Art Teachers for their guidance and the work they do each day to encourage and enhance the creativity of our students. We are so proud of Piper and appreciate her sharing her artistic talents.
- North Carolina Elementary Honors Chorus Participant - Kelsie Smart, a fifth-grader at Lucama Elementary, was recognized for being selected to perform in the North Carolina Elementary Honors Chorus November 8-10 in Winston-Salem. Approximately 400 students in grades 4-6 from across the state auditioned to be a part of the chorus and only 188 were selected. We are so proud of Kelsie. She was our only representative from WCS, and she represented us well. Prior to the performance at the Benton Convention Center on November 10, Kelsie and the other selected students rehearsed for two days with a clinician from the Young People's Chorus in New York City. Lucama Elementary Music Teacher Jana Winders was also recognized by the Board for supporting Kelsie in her selection and for being there for the performance. We appreciate Ms. Winders' dedication to the arts in our schools.

- Donations to Support School Recognitions - Bill's Grill and Parker's Barbecue were recognized for going above and beyond to assist the Board and Senior Staff in their efforts to thank every employee for the incredible role they play in the success of our students. Last school year, the Board and Senior Staff began the process of treating every staff member to a special lunch that was cooked onsite at the schools. With Board Member Blake Boykin as the grillmaster, they cooked a pig or chicken for each of the schools and the other Board Members provided desserts. In order to make the lunches complete, sides were needed. That's where Bill's Grill and Parker's came in. Vice Chair Henry Mercer asked if they would donate potatoes, green beans and hush puppies for the lunches, and they graciously agreed - which is incredible because WCS has approximately 1,600 staff members. We truly appreciate the generosity of Bill's Grill and Parker's Barbecue. The lunches meant so much to our staff, and we would not have been able to recognize them in this way without their support. Attending the meeting to represent the restaurants were Bill's Grill Owner/Operator Will Jenkins and Parker's Barbecue Kitchen Manager Matt Tedder.

V. Under Chairman's Report, Dr. Fitch:

- Recognized Board Member Velma Barnes as tonight marks the end of her service to the students and staff of WCS in her elected position representing District 2. Ms. Barnes was sworn in on May 20, 2013, to fill the unexpired term of Board Member Marvin Sessoms, due to his untimely death. For the ensuing 11 years and 6 months, Ms. Barnes has used her knowledge of education and experience as an educator to help guide the decisions and direction of WCS. Having started as a teacher assistant in the system, she later became a teacher for 19 years at New Hope Elementary. She also served as an Academically and Intellectually Gifted Teacher and the Initially Licensed Teacher Coordinator, before retiring in 2003. On Friday, November 22, New Hope Elementary honored Ms. Barnes with a reception. Principal Debra Simons shared the following comments at the reception:

  "It's an honor to stand here to recognize and celebrate Ms. Velma Barnes, who has dedicated herself wholeheartedly to the education and well-being of our students and teachers alike.

  For 19 years from 1976-1995, Ms. Barnes served at New Hope Elementary, where she didn't just teach – she transformed lives. Over the years, she taught 1st grade, 1st and 2nd grades combination, 2nd grade, 2nd and 3rd grades combination and 3rd grade. She taught 4th grade during summer school. In 1996, she became an Academically and Intellectually Gifted (AIG) Teacher and served at three schools. Her work in the AIG program exemplifies her commitment to nurturing potential and encouraging her students to aim higher and achieve more. She knew that every child has a unique spark, and she made it her mission to see that spark shine, helping so many students reach new heights.

  Ms. Barnes' dedication didn't stop at the classroom door. She extended her influence to the Central Office, where she became a valuable resource for new teachers. She offered guidance, shared her experience, and provided the support

that so many educators need to feel confident and thrive in their roles. Her passion for mentorship has ensured that her impact reaches far beyond the students she taught directly – echoing through the many educators she's uplifted.

Most recently, as a Board of Education member, Ms. Barnes continued to serve our community with wisdom, vision, and heart. She brought her first-hand understanding of our classrooms and a teacher's perspective to every decision. Her voice spoke not only for our educators and students but also for the values of compassion, dedication, and lifelong learning.

Ms. Barnes, thank you for your years of commitment, your tireless service, and for continuing to be a guiding light in our education system. We are so grateful to have had you as a champion for our students, teachers, and the entire community."

Dr. Fitch shared that Ms. Barnes has served WCS as an educator and Board member through the years with dedication, distinction, energy, enthusiasm and heartfelt joy. Dr. Fitch stated, "It has been a pleasure for myself and the other members of this Board and the members of the 11 ½ years to have worked alongside you for the children and staff of WCS. As I ask the members of the Board to stand and join me in this presentation, we thank you for your service and wish you well as you move forward Ms. Barnes." On behalf of the Board, Dr. Fitch presented Ms. Barnes with a plaque.

VI. Under Superintendent's Report, Dr. Mills:

- Applauded Rock Ridge Elementary for officially being recognized with its National Blue Ribbon Award by the US Department of Education in Washington, DC on November 8. Principal Emily Chilton, Counselor Donna Sharp and Associate Superintendent Dr. Cheryl Wilson were there to accept the award. A National Blue Ribbon Award is the highest honor presented to schools by the US Department of Education. Rock Ridge Elementary is one of only 356 schools in the nation and one of five public schools in the state to receive an award this year. Congratulations again to the students, staff and families on this prestigious recognition.
- Shared that on November 21, the ribbon cutting ceremonies were held for the new Wilson Area School-Based Health (WASH) Center at Darden Middle and the relocated center at Beddingfield High. These were great events with local and state leaders in attendance. While the WASH Centers themselves were amazing, those of us who attended were especially impressed by the students in the Darden Middle Student Government Association for making all of the guests feel welcome. They were an incredible group of students and hats off to Principal Jennifer Parker Fogerty for her leadership and for having them involved in the event. The WASH Center at Darden Middle is our fifth school-based health center, and the clinics are possible because of the partnership between our district, the Wilson County Health Department, the Healthcare Foundation of Wilson and Wilson Forward. The funding and staffing support is generously provided through a grant from the Healthcare Foundation of Wilson. To date, they have invested $2.59 million in the WASH Centers. Special thanks to Dr.

Kim Almkuist and her staff. They provide top-notch health services to our students and staff. Thank you as well to the Wilson Chamber of Commerce for helping to organize the ribbon cuttings; the students who created the beautiful artwork on display; and to Assistant Superintendent Dr. Ben Williams, Executive Director of Facility Services Greg Woodard and the WCS Facility Services Department for all of their hard work in making the centers possible.

- Wished everyone a Happy Thanksgiving and a safe and relaxing break.

VII. Under Public Input, at 6:55 p.m., two people from the public began addressing the Board during this portion of the meeting. Public Input ended at 7:01 p.m. It was the Board's consensus to have the Administration respond to the speakers.

VIII. Under Information/Discussion/Action,

Information Items

A. Under Contract Requiring Board Notification - Administrative Services, Board Policy 6420, *Contracts with the Board,* states that the Superintendent is authorized to enter into contracts involving amounts up to $90,000 and the Superintendent shall report such contracts exceeding $30,000 to the Board at its next regularly scheduled meeting. The following contract is less than $90,000 and pending attorney review: EMS LINQ, LLC, to provide Human Resources, ERP Bundle and Annual Subscription, Fund Management, Payroll, Budget Builder, Employee Portal, Fixed Assets and DB Hosting services, in the amount of $81,630.42.

B. Under Contract Requiring Board Notification - Instructional Services, Board Policy 6420, *Contracts with the Board,* states that the Superintendent is authorized to enter into contracts involving amounts up to $90,000 and the Superintendent shall report such contracts exceeding $30,000 to the Board at its next regularly scheduled meeting. The following contract is less than $90,000: Sherry Rogers Hill dba Speaking Matters Communication and Resource Specialist, for speech-language evaluations, reporting, IEP development, and participation and facilitating of IEP meetings, in an amount not to exceed $50,000.

C. Under Request for Qualifications – Architect for Frederick Douglass Elementary School, WCS submitted a Request for Qualifications (RFQ) for an architect to design Frederick Douglass Elementary. During a Special Meeting held on November 25, 2024, the Board interviewed architectural firms that specialize in school building construction. The Administration provided an update that the Board voted to select Oakley Collier Architect to design Frederick Douglass Elementary at the Special Meeting.

Action Items

A. Under Contract Requiring Board Approval - Administrative Services, Board Policy 6420, *Contracts with the Board*, states that any contract for materials, equipment, or service involving expenditures in excess of $90,000 must be reviewed by the Board attorney and approved in advance by the Board unless provided otherwise in Board Policy. The following contract exceeds $90,000

and requires Board approval, the contract was reviewed by the attorney prior to the Board meeting: SYSTEL Business Equipment, to order two new machines for the Print Shop and the service on the machines, in the amount of $187,032.10/per term of 5 year contract. Mr. Mercer made the motion, seconded by Mr. Breen and Mr. Boykin, that the contract with SYSTEL Business Equipment be approved in the amount of $187,032.10/per a term of a 5-year contract. The motion passed unanimously, 7-0.

B. Under 2024-2025 Budget Amendments, the enclosed budget amendments represent the 2024-2025 State Public School Fund, Budget Amendment #1, and Federal Expense Fund budgets. General Statute 115C-434 authorizes the Board of Education to make appropriations for the budget year. The Board will need to approve the budget amendments. Mr. Mercer made the motion, seconded by Mr. Breen, that the Board approve the 2024-2025 Budget Amendments for the State Public School Fund and Federal Expense Fund. The motion passed unanimously, 7-0.

C. Under Proposed 2025-2026 Traditional Calendar, based on feedback from a survey conducted with traditional high school staff, 75% of respondents preferred ending the semester in December. Based on this data, the draft calendar was created. A survey was conducted to allow parents and educators to give input on the 2025-2026 Traditional calendar. The survey was offered both in English and Spanish. The survey was also offered both online and in paper form. A total of 281 people participated in the survey; 51% of those who responded were educators; and 32% of those who responded were parents. This calendar was created pursuant to G.S. 115C-84.2. A copy of the proposed 2025-2026 Traditional calendar was provided for the Board's discussion and approval. The Administration shared that November 4 is being recommended as a mandatory workday due to the election. Ms. Barnes made the motion, seconded by Mr. Breen and Mr. Mercer, that the Board approve the proposed 2025-2026 Traditional Calendar as presented by the Administration. The motion passed unanimously, 7-0.

D. Under Proposed 2025-2026 Restart Calendar (Barnes Elementary and Hearne Elementary), the Administration presented a separate calendar for Barnes Elementary and Hearne Elementary using Restart flexibilities. A copy of the proposed 2025-2026 Restart calendar was provided for the Board's discussion and approval. Ms. Barnes made the motion, seconded by Ms. Boyette and Ms. Powell, that the Board approve the proposed 2025-2026 Restart Calendar for both Barnes and Hearne Elementary. The motion passed unanimously, 7-0.

E. Under New High School Course Offerings, the Administration presented five new courses for the 2025-2026 school year. The new courses that are being offered included:
   - BioWorks – Beddingfield High and Wilson Academy of Applied Technology (WAAT) in January; Hunt High and Fike High in the Fall; and Beddingfield High and WAAT in the Spring
   - Beginning Guitar – Beddingfield High

- Intermediate Guitar – Beddingfield High
- Proficient Guitar – Beddingfield High
- Advanced Guitar – Beddingfield High

Ms. Barnes made the motion, seconded by Ms. Powell and Ms. Boyette, that the five high school course offerings being presented by the Administration for BioWorks and the four Guitar classes be approved. The motion passed unanimously, 7-0.

F. Under Restart Annual Report, Barnes Elementary and Hearne Elementary were approved as Restart schools in January 2020. All Restart schools must submit an annual report to the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction by December 1. For the 2023-2024 school year, Barnes Elementary and Hearne Elementary have utilized and will report associated measures for the following: Budget Flexibility, Employment Requirement Flexibility, Calendar Flexibility, Standard Course of Study/Curriculum Flexibility and Walkthrough Instrument Flexibility. Both schools met their Flexibility Outcome Goals for 2023-2024. Mr. Breen made the motion, seconded by Mr. Mercer, that the Board approve the Restart Annual Report for Barnes Elementary and Hearne Elementary. The motion passed unanimously, 7-0.

G. Under Comprehensive Support and Improvement Funding Application (PRC 105), PRC 105 funds are set aside for Comprehensive Support and Improvement Schools from the state Title I allotment. Vick Elementary has been identified as a Comprehensive Support and Improvement School. The funding formula is based on Average Daily Membership (ADM). Ms. Barnes made the motion, seconded by Mr. Breen, Mr. Mercer and Mr. Boykin, that the Board approve the Comprehensive Support and Improvement Funding Application (PRC 105) for Vick Elementary as recommended by the Administration The motion passed unanimously, 7-0.

IX. At 7:29 p.m., Ms. Barnes made the motion, seconded by Ms. Boyette, that the Wilson County Board of Education go into closed session to consider confidential personnel matters as provided in N.C.G.S. 143-318.11(a)(1) and (6) and 115C-319 through 321; to consider confidential student matters as provided in N.C.G.S. 143-318.11(a)(1) and N.C.G.S. 115C-402 and the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act, 20 U.S.C. 1232g; to consult with the Board of Education attorney and preserve the attorney-client privilege as provided in N.C.G.S. 143-318.11(a)(3); and to discuss the handling of *JQB by parent or guardian BB and TF v. Wilson County Board of Education, Case Number 24 EDC 4319.* The motion passed unanimously, 7-0.

At 8:26 p.m., Ms. Barnes made the motion to reconvene to Open Session. The motion, seconded by Mr. Breen and Mr. Mercer, passed unanimously, 7-0.

X. Reporting from Closed Session, there were no Inter-District Reassignment Requests to discuss.

Ms. Barnes made the motion, seconded by Ms. Powell and Mr. Breen, to approve the Closed Session minutes of the October 21, 2024, meeting, but do not release the minutes for public inspection because of confidential personnel matters; and approve the Closed Session minutes of October 31, 2024. The motion passed unanimously, 7-0.

Mr. Breen made the motion, seconded by Ms. Powell and Mr. Boykin, that the Board approve the personnel recommendations as discussed, including the amended personnel report which extended the contract terms for Senior Staff. The motion passed unanimously, 7-0. The list of personnel recommendations is attached.

XI. There being no further business at 8:29 p.m., Ms. Barnes made the motion, seconded by Mr. Mercer, to adjourn the meeting. The motion passed unanimously, 7-0.

William B. Boykin, Chairman

Dr. Lane B. Mills, Secretary

RECOMMENDED PERSONNEL ACTIONS
November 25, 2024

Administrative

Recommendation	Site	Position	Previous Employment	Effective Date	Experience in Education
Bennett, Kenneth	TBD	Educational Consultant	Principal, Johnston County Schools	TBD	33 yrs.

Administrative

For Information - Transfers

Recommendation	Site	Position	Previous Employment	Effective Date	Experience in Education
Phelps-Hodges, Almeta	Lucama ES	Acting Assistant Principal	WCS Acting Assistant Principal	11/12/2024 - 12/31/2024	32 yrs.
Ventura, Robin	Lucama ES	Acting Assistant Principal	WCS Acting Assistant Principal	11/12/2024 - 12/31/2024	33 yrs.

Certified

Recommendation	Site	Position
Jaggars, Courtney	Vinson-Bynum/ Wells ES	Physical Education (PE) Teacher
Webb, Tywanna	Darden MS	8th Grade English Language Arts (ELA) Teacher

Classified

Recommendation	Site	Position
Ackley, Brittany	Wells ES	Teacher Assistant/Bus Driver
Baker, Taylor	Rock Ridge ES	After School Care Enrichment Program (ASCEP) Assistant
Beckwith, Lucy	New Hope ES	School Nutrition Assistant
Bellamy Hinton, Tashica	Barnes ES	Exceptional Children (EC) Teacher Assistant/Bus Driver
Blanchard, Carnisa	School Nutrition	School Nutrition Assistant Substitute

Classified (Continued)

Recommendation	Site	Position
Bottoms, Ashlyn	Lucama ES	ASCEP Student Assistant
Frey, Jazmin	Barnes ES	Teacher Assistant/Bus Driver
Hooper, Lucille	Lucama ES	School Nutrition Assistant
Jackson, Zah'Nya	Frederick Douglass ES	Teacher Assistant/Bus Driver
Knight, Marcques	Beddingfield HS	Custodian
Lucas, Tandra	Beddingfield HS	EC Personal Care Assistant
Page, Tammy	Springfield MS	School Nutrition Assistant
Strickland, Brookie	Lucama ES	Interventionist
Whitley, Sierra	Beddingfield HS	Teacher Assistant - Daycare

Substitute Teachers

Recommendation	Position
Baines, Breanna	Non-Certified
Beer, Paula	Non-Certified
Bullock, Jayla	Non-Certified
Castillo, Lynda	Non-Certified
Cotton, Jordan	Non-Certified
Finch, Lisa	Non-Certified
Gibbons, Paul	Non-Certified
Hines, Jacqueline	Non-Certified
Johnson, Jiovanni	Non-Certified
Jones, Jasmine	Non-Certified
Latham, Marilyn	Non-Certified
Lester, Gracie	Non-Certified
McQueen, Jessica	Non-Certified
Simpson, Anna	Non-Certified
Wells, Savanna	Non-Certified
Woolcock, Deanna	Non-Certified

Substitutes to be Reapproved

Name	Certified or Non-Certified
Clay, Mary	Non-Certified
Daniels, Xavier	Non-Certified
Fretwell, Anna	Non-Certified

Substitutes to be Reapproved (Continued)

Name	Certified or Non-Certified
Melton, Mary	Non-Certified
Powell, Cafiner	Non-Certified
Savage, Lekelia	Non-Certified

Coaches

Recommendation	Site	Position
McNeil, Ronald	Beddingfield HS	Asst. Varsity Girls Basketball
Whaley, Sierra	Beddingfield HS	Asst. Swimming
Hemby, Jordan	Fike HS	Head Indoor Track
Thomas, Willie	Fike HS	Head JV Girls Basketball
Blount, Jeremy	Forest Hills MS	Head Boys Basketball
Davis, Arnechia	Forest Hills MS	Asst. Girls Basketball, Asst. Boys Basketball
Singleton, Leslie	Forest Hills MS	Head Girls Basketball
Blount, Bentley	Hunt HS	Asst. Varsity Boys Basketball
Pipkin, Zackery	Hunt HS	Asst. Varsity Boys Basketball
Bullock, Jayla	Speight MS	Asst. Girls Basketball

RESIGNATIONS/RETIREMENTS

Administrative

Employee	Site	Position	Action	Effective Date
Sage, Scott	Instructional Services	Executive Director of Accountability and Testing	Retirement	7/31/2025

Certified

Employee	Site	Position	Action	Effective Date
Barnes, Lori	Vinson-Bynum ES	Kindergarten Teacher	Retirement	12/20/2024
Bolden, India	Fike HS	School Counselor	Resignation	1/10/2025
Breiholz, Leanne	Barnes ES	Speech Language Pathologist	Resignation	12/31/2024

Certified (Continued)

Employee	Site	Position	Action	Effective Date
Brewer, Karrie	Hunt HS	Career Technical Education (CTE) Family & Consumer Science Teacher	Resignation	12/11/2024
Hutcherson, Kiana	Student Services	School Social Worker	Resignation	11/21/2024
Wairia, Charles	Daniels Learning Center	Social Studies Teacher	Retirement	12/31/2024
Wells, Sophia	Frederick Douglass ES	EC Teacher	Resignation	10/30/2024

Classified

Employee	Site	Position	Action	Effective Date
Bill, Noah	Facility Services	Groundskeeper I	Resignation	11/15/2024
Downing, June	Barnes ES	School Secretary/ Bookkeeper	Retirement	12/31/2024
Gray, Stacey	Jones ES	EC Pre K Teacher Assistant/Bus Driver	Resignation	10/28/2024
Harris, Timothy	Facility Services	Carpenter I	Resignation	11/11/2024
Little, Jeanine	Vick ES	Custodian	Retirement	11/30/2024
Woodard, Joyce	Vinson-Bynum ES	Teacher Assistant/Bus Driver	Retirement	12/31/2024