

CASWELL COUNTY BOARD OF EDUCATION MINUTES

Special Called Meeting

December 20, 2024

The Caswell County Board of Education met in a special called meeting on Friday, December 20, 2024, at 9:00 a.m. in the Administration Building of Caswell County Schools. Members present: Chairman Mel Battle, Vice Chair Joel Lillard, Vennie Beggarly, Trudy Blackwell, Nicole Smith, Nicole McGhee, and Lisa Johnson-Knight. Others present include Superintendent JoAnna Gwynn, Alyson Beavers, Brook Underwood, John Berdine, and Board Attorney Ron Bradsher. Connie Kimrey recorded the minutes. (*Note: Others may have been present but did not sign the roster or names were not legible*).

I. A. CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order by Board Chair Mel Battle followed by the Pledge of Allegiance.

I. B. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Joel Lillard moved, seconded by Trudy Blackwell, to approve the agenda as presented. The motion carried unanimously.

I. NEW BUSINESS

1. Propane Bus

John Berdine, Transportation Director, reviewed information regarding the purchase of a propane bus from Blue Bird & Blossoms Fuel Team. Discussion took place regarding the recent electric bus and Mr. Berdine noted it was not in our best interest to continue to purchase electric buses and noted that the propane is about half the cost and is more effective. Mr. Berdine suggested that going forward with any new buses that they be the propane buses.

The only cost in moving forward with the propane bus will be the electrical hookup and the cost is uncertain due to the exact location. Mr. Berdine did not feel it will be over \$10,000. Mr. Berdine has spoken with other districts that use propane versus electric and they prefer the propane. With the electric bus our hands are tied if problems occur and is costlier to maintain.

It was questioned if the bus has air conditioning and Mr. Berdine confirmed that it does. It was shared that the recent electric bus was purchased through a grant; however, the money was still taken from our allotment. Transportation funds will be used for the electric portion. An exact cost will be shared with the board.

Joel Lillard moved, seconded by Nicole Smith, to approve the purchase of a propane bus from Blue Bird Company in the amount of \$171,302. The motion carried unanimously.

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It was noted that the was the only propane bus to be purchased at this time and will review prior to any other bus purchases moving forward.

2. Corrective Reading Professional Development = Denise Wright

Alyson Beavers, Elementary Curriculum Director & Federal Programs, reviewed a contract with Denise Wright for professional development at a cost of \$1,500 using RLIS (Rural Low-Income Schools) funding.

Trudy Blackwell moved, seconded by Joel Lillard, to approve the contract with Denise Wright for Corrective Reading Professional Development as presented at a cost of \$1,500 using RLIS funds. The motion carried unanimously.

II. CLOSED SESSION

Joel Lillard made a motion to go into closed session for the purpose of considering a personnel action that involves an officer or employee of this Board (NC General Statute 143-318.11(a)(6); and for the purpose of discussing information that is privileged, confidential or not a public record (NC General Statute 143-318.11(a)(1) and to confer with legal counsel. Lisa Johnson-Knight seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

III. OPEN SESSION

Joel Lillard made a motion to return to open session. Trudy Blackwell seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

IV. PERSONNEL LISTING

Ms. Gwynn recommended approval of the personnel listing Items # 1, 2 & 7 as presented. Trudy Blackwell moved, seconded by Vennie Beggarly, to approve the personnel listing of Items # 1, 2 & 7 as presented. The motion carried unanimously.

(Nicole Smith left the meeting at this time).

Ms. Gwynn recommended approval of Michelle Robinson to principal at NL Dillard Middle School. Trudy Blackwell moved, seconded by Lisa Johnson-Knight. The motion failed due to a tie vote with Lillard, Beggarly, and Battle voting "No" and Nicole Smith was not present).

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Ms. Gwynn recommended approval of Elbert Brown as Human Resources Administrative Assistant. Trudy Blackwell moved, seconded by Nicole McGhee. The motion carried 4-2 with Lillard and Beggarly voting “No.”

Resignations	
NL Dillard Middle School	Cherita Williams, Principal = Eff. Jan. 24, 2025
Employment	
South Elementary	Parker Barry, Teacher = Eff. 1/6/25
Human Resources	Elbert Brown, HR Admn. Asst. = Eff. 1/6/25 (Step 12 = Pay Scale 60)
NL Dillard Middle School	Timothy Terry, Bus Driver = Eff. 1/6/25
Substitute	
	Beth Griffin = Eff. 12/2/24

VI. COMMUNICATIONS

Vennie Beggarly shared she received an email from a parent with concerns regarding the exam schedule at the high school.

Vennie Beggarly questioned the status of “traded time” and noted that staff were working concessions at the high school and shared they are basically working for free and are not getting traded time but others at the middle school receive traded time and felt there is inconsistency with how this is being handled.

It was shared that this topic was discussed when the Interim Superintendent was here. Principals work with their staff for events such as working concession; however, traded time is not given to salaried employees (Principals, Directors and Superintendent). Ms. Gwynn questioned if there is a policy that addresses traded time and if not, she has the right to approve traded time as long as employees are not abusing it. She shared individuals at the central office can also do this as long as it is pre-approved by the Superintendent.

Questions were asked of Ms. Gwynn in regards to how she would know when other individuals are working and she shared she would see it regarding games, etc. Joel Lillard asked how she could verify this if she doesn’t actually see it. Ms. Gwynn shared she would hope individuals are being honest.

Ms. Gwynn shared she would like to allow staff to leave early today once the buses are all on the roads.

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Vennie Beggarly shared she would like to look into having someone over the custodians next year and noted that currently the principal is over the custodians but she continues to hear how bad the bathrooms are and are not being cleaned especially at the high school and noted this is a brand-new school. In previous years, custodians were assigned sections and asked if this was currently being done. Ms. Gwynn shared she will address this with principals. Vennie Beggarly also shared that most recently only one hand soap is working at the Civic Center.

Vennie Beggarly also shared that in regards to training that had been mentioned previously by Ms. Gwynn, that she would not be able to do this in January.

Trudy Blackwell shared that she would like to see going forward when groups are recognized by the board that individual names be called for recognition. Also, she shared that parents are concerned with homecoming being recognized at the end of the games and would like to see this go back in the middle of the game as they have done in the past.

VII. ADJOURN

Joel Lillard moved to adjourn the meeting at 11:10 a.m., Trudy Blackwell seconded the motion and it carried unanimously. The next regular meeting of the Board of Education will be held on January 13, 2025 at 9:00 a.m. in the Caswell County Schools Administration Building.

Mel O. Battle
Chairman

JoAnna Gwynn
Superintendent