

Hamlet, North Carolina  
December 5, 2024

The Richmond County Board of Education met in regular session on December 5, 2024, at 10:00 a.m. The meeting was held at the Central Office in Hamlet, North Carolina.

The members present: Cory Satterfield, Chairman, Sue Ormsby, Vice-Chairman, Jerry Ethridge, Scotty Baldwin and Bess Shuler. Ronald Tillman and Daryl Mason were not in attendance due to work obligations.

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 10:00 a.m. Bobbie Sue Ormsby, Vice-Chairman, requested a Moment of Silence and led the Pledge of Allegiance.

### **Approval of Minutes**

On a motion by Jerry Ethridge, seconded by Scotty Baldwin, the open session minutes of November 12, 2024, unanimously approved.

### **Principal Recognition**

Cameron Whitley recognized three outstanding principals for their schools' exceptional accomplishments last year. Each of these schools demonstrated remarkable growth in student test scores, placing all of them in the top 10 percent in the state of North Carolina. Special congratulations were extended for their dedication, hard work, and the efforts of their incredible teams who contributed to these achievements.

The recognized principals are:

- Courtney Pearson, Hamlet Middle School
- Joy Harrelson, Richmond Early College
- Windy Taylor, Rockingham Middle School (whose school ranked in the top 5 percent statewide)

The Board expressed their appreciation for the principals' leadership and commitment to excellence.

### **Approval Request for the 2024-2025 School Improvement Plan**

Dr. Kate requested approval for the School Improvement Plan for the 2024-2025 school year. It was noted that Ms. McCrae, from Richmond, included an additional goal to increase the four-year cohort graduation rate from 78.6% to 84%. The plan outlines numerous action steps to support achieving this goal.

On a motion by Scotty Baldwin, seconded by Jerry Ethridge the board voted unanimously to approve the 2024-25 School Improvement Plan that was presented at the November 12, 2024, board meeting.

### **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
  - Electrical wires are currently being pulled.
  - Most of the exterior windows and doors have been installed, and brickwork is complete.
  - Mechanical, electrical, and plumbing work continues, focusing on rough-in tasks.
  - Drywall ceilings, particularly in areas like bathrooms, are scheduled to be installed in approximately two weeks, pending final overhead inspections.
  - The construction company is actively purchasing, procuring, and scheduling.
- The project is progressing well, with an anticipated completion date of mid-to-late March. However, this timeline may be influenced by weather conditions and the availability of long lead-time items. Overall, the high school construction project is advancing successfully and remains on track.
  
- Mineral Springs Elementary School
  - The building completion is nearly finished, with only a few punch list items remaining for both the interior and exterior.
  - Staff have been using the building for several weeks, and all systems are functioning as expected.
  - The geothermal system required some adjustments during its initial operation, but the issues have been resolved. The higher initial cost of this system is anticipated to provide long-term energy savings and a strong return on investment.
- The third and final phase of the project involves constructing a new service road off the bus loop.
  - A setback occurred during the grading process when a guide wire on a utility pole was not accounted for by the surveyor. This guide wire, located about 2 feet into the planned road, required a redesign to meet a minimum 10-foot setback from utilities.
  - Civil engineers have adjusted the road design to accommodate required egress and fire truck accessibility standards. The updated design slightly extends the curve of the road.
  - Work is expected to resume within the next week or two, with an anticipated completion time of about two weeks.
- The goal is to finish this phase by the end of the year, if not sooner.
  
- Fairview Heights Elementary School
  - Only a few minor interior and exterior punch list items remain to be completed.
  - The new sidewalks at the front of the building were poured on the Wednesday before Thanksgiving, allowing for the issuance of the Certificate of Occupancy (CO) this past Monday.

- Coach McDonald and the students began using the new building on Tuesday, December 3, 2024, which coincided perfectly with the arrival of colder weather.
- The project has reached a successful milestone, and the new facilities are already enhancing the student and staff experience.

## **24-25 Budget Amendments**

Dawn Jordan presented the following 24-25 budget resolutions for board approval.

- State Funds
  - The budget appropriation has been revised from \$58,287,085.50 to \$58,329,573.26 representing an increase of \$42,487.76.
- Federal Funds
  - The budget appropriation has been revised from \$12,713,156.77 to \$20,032,234.41 representing an increase of \$7,319,077.64.
- Capital Outlay Funds
  - The budget appropriation has been revised from \$3,429,000.00 to \$3,765,984.00 representing an increase of \$336,984.00.
- Other Local Funds
  - The budget appropriation has been revised from \$4,184,389.60 to \$4,213,241.67 representing an increase of \$28,852.07.

On a motion by Bobbie Sue Ormsby, seconded by Jerry Ethridge the board voted unanimously to approve the budget resolution as presented.

## **Policies for Adoption**

Melvin Ingram presented the conclusion of the 30-day review period, asking the board to adopt amendments for the following policies.

Policy Numbers:

- 1310/4002 Parental Involvement
- 4320 Tobacco Products – Students
- 5026/7250 Smoking and Tobacco Products
- 6120 Student Health Services
- 6140 Student Wellness
- 6200 Goals of School Nutritional Services

On a motion by Scotty Baldwin, seconded by Bobbie Sue Ormsby, the board voted unanimously to adopt policy amendments 1210/4002, 4320, 5026/7250, 6120, 6140, and 6200.

## **Policies for Review**

Melvin Ingram presented the following policies for a 30-day review.

Policy Numbers:

- 2320 Remote Participation in Board Meetings
- 3225/4312/7320 Technology Responsible Use
- 3227/7322 Web Page Development
- 4334/5035/7345 Use of Unmanned Aircraft

Board Attorney Eva Dubuisson provided updates on a recent Court of Appeals ruling regarding remote participation in board meetings. The ruling states that remote board

members can no longer be counted toward a quorum. While remote members may participate in discussions, it remains unclear whether they can vote if a physical quorum is present. Eva advised that to avoid legal challenges, the safest approach is for remote participants not to vote. Board members were encouraged to discuss this issue with legislators to advocate for a clear resolution.

### **Field Trips**

Melvin Ingram presented the field trips.

- Richmond Early College High School – BETA to Greensboro, NC – January 30, 2025 – February 1, 2025
- Richmond Senior High School – BETA to Greensboro, NC – January 30, 2025 – February 1, 2025

### **Board Members Comments**

Scotty Baldwin shared that the North Carolina School Board Association (NCSBA) conference was a great experience, particularly highlighting the delegate session. He noted that he, Chairman Satterfield, Jerry Ethridge, and Ronald Tillman all attended this session, where they had the opportunity to vote on several important issues.

Jerry Ethridge shared details of his recent activities and events:

- He attended Hamlet Middle School's Ram Fest and Rockingham Middle School's Fine Arts program, praising both as excellent opportunities for students to showcase their talents. He mentioned that four board members attended the Rockingham event and complimented the auditorium's acoustics.
- He and Bess Shuler attended the concert at Monroe Avenue Elementary School.
- Mr. Ethridge thanked Richmond County Schools (RCS) art teachers for submitting student artwork to the NCSBA state competition, where RCS received a second-place award and an honorable mention.
- He expressed pride in the Raider Choir for their lunchtime performance at the NCSBA conference.
- He celebrated the Raiders' football team for their conference championship win, noting their great season under Coach Brad Denson, who was named Coach of the Year.
- He attended the CTE Advisory Council meeting, highlighting the significant contributions of individuals and organizations to the district's success and emphasizing the council's critical role.
- Mr. Ethridge also attended the BETA induction ceremony at Richmond Early College High School.

Finally, he encouraged everyone to attend a school holiday concert if their schedule allows.

Chairman Satterfield congratulated the NCSBA video competition winners, highlighting Hamlet Middle School (HMS) for earning first place and Rockingham Middle School (RMS) for securing second place. He also extended his congratulations to Dr. Ferrell and the staff for their efforts in organizing holiday season activities.

### **Superintendent's Report**

Dr. Joe Ferrell provided an update on recent accomplishments and activities within Richmond County Schools:

- During the North Carolina School Board Association conference, Richmond County Schools received widespread recognition, with colleagues noting the district's strong performance across categories during the awards program.
- Highlights included:
  - Second-place winner at the elementary school level.
  - Three honorable mentions at the elementary level.
  - Hamlet Middle School earning first place in the middle school video contest.
  - Richmond Senior High School securing second place in the yearbook competition.
  - An honorable mention submission from Beta Club.

Dr. Ferrell commended the dedication of principals, teachers, and students in these achievements. He also noted the high school chorus's lunchtime performance, which added to the positive experience of the conference.

In sports, fall activities, including football, have concluded, and winter sports such as basketball have commenced.

Additionally, holiday concerts and celebrations are ongoing, leading up to December 20, an early release day that marks the start of the holiday break. Schools will resume in January.

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

On a motion by Scotty Baldwin, seconded by Bobbie Sue Ormsby, the board voted unanimously to go into closed session at 10:20 a.m.

The board returned from closed session at 10:35 a.m.

### **Personnel Report**

Dr. Tesha Isler presented the personnel report, and the addendum.

On a motion by Jerry Ethridge, seconded by Scotty Baldwin, the board voted unanimously to approve the personnel report and addendum as presented.

### **Adjournment**

There being no further business, on a motion by Scotty Baldwin, seconded by Bess Shuler, Chairman Satterfield adjourned the meeting at 10:36 a.m.