

MINUTES
ASHE COUNTY BOARD OF EDUCATION
November 4, 2019

The meeting was held as scheduled with all members present. Chairman Jones called the meeting to order, welcomed those in attendance and led the Pledge of Allegiance.

After adding an addendum to personnel, the agenda was approved by general consensus of the Board.

A motion by Mr. McClure and a second by Mrs. Jones gave unanimous approval to the minutes for the regular meeting of the Board on October 7, 2019 and the special meeting on October 8, 2019.

A motion by the Vice Chairman and a second by Mrs. Eldreth gave unanimous approval to the requests from the following 19 students for early graduation—Bridgett B., Kierra B., Mackenzie B., Katelyn B., Jordan B., Daniel B., Keith C., Chase C., Boen C., Ethan F., Hannah L., Silas P., Bailey S., Katherine S., Keshia S., Erika S., Justin S., Ashley T. and Noah W.

A motion by Mrs. Eldreth and a second by Mr. McClure gave unanimous approval to the change in the bakery bid from Flowers Baking Company to Bimbo Bakeries USA effective November 30, 2019 as requested by Child Nutrition Director Martha Turner.

A motion by Mrs. Jones and a second by the Vice Chairman gave unanimous approval to the 2019/20 District Strategic Plan as presented by Co-Chairs of the District Strategic Plan Committee Earl Pennington and Julie Taylor. The Board was informed that school improvement planning is now a framework for change that can assess, plan and monitor chosen indicators through NCSTAR, a web-based tool that guides and manages the continuous improvement process. NCSTAR builds accountability as well as helps districts and schools track their improvement plans.

A motion by Mr. McClure and a second by Mrs. Jones gave unanimous approval to the following personnel recommendations as presented by Human Resources Director Roy Putman.

CERTIFIED

Employee Resignation

- Resignation of Kevin Jones, LAN/WAN technology facilitator for Ashe County Schools, effective end-of-day November 1, 2019

Employee Leaves

- Request from Ruth Ashe, 5th grade teacher at Blue Ridge, for a medical leave of absence beginning on September 26, 2019 and ending on December 16, 2019
- Request from Kasey Jones, math and science teacher at Ashe Middle, for a medical leave of absence beginning on November 13, 2019 and ending on January 1, 2020
- Request from Rachel Nave-Lewis, 3rd grade teacher at Mountain View, for a medical/parental leave of absence beginning on December 5, 2019 and ending on February 28, 2020

Teachers

- Resignation of Courtney Barker as health occupations teacher at Ashe High effective January 2, 2020

Prior approval to employ the following vacant positions

- Substitute teachers
- LAN/WAN technology facilitator for Ashe County Schools

CLASSIFIED

Cafeteria

- Employment of Amanda Carpenter as part-time (5 hours/day) cafeteria assistant at Ashe High effective October 23, 2019
- Resignation of Jessica Howard as part-time (5 hours/day) cafeteria assistant at Ashe High effective October 21, 2019
- Resignation/retirement of Debra Church, assistant cafeteria manager at Westwood, effective January 1, 2020
- Reassignment/promotion of Kristina Graybeal from substitute teacher to full-time cafeteria manager trainee at Ashe high effective November 12, 2019 (prior approval)

Coaches

- Addition of Madison Osborne as assistant 7th grade girls' basketball coach at Ashe Middle effective 2019/20 season (paid position)
- Addition of Eric Miller as assistant 8th grade girls' basketball coach at Ashe Middle effective 2019/2020 sports season (volunteer position)
- Addition of Dale Wineberg as assistant wrestling coach at Ashe High effective for the 2019/20 winter sports season contingent upon pre-employment screenings (volunteer)
- Addition of Zachariah Bare as assistant wrestling coach at Ashe High effective for the 2019/20 winter sports season contingent upon pre-employment screenings (volunteer)

Teacher Assistants

- Resignation of Missi Rash as teacher assistant for exceptional children at Ashe High effective end-of-day November 8, 2019
- Reassignment of Heather Phillips from substitute teacher to teacher assistant for exceptional children at Ashe High effective November 12, 2019

Prior approval to employ the following vacant positions

- EL tutor, part-time, at Ashe High
- Part-time cafeteria assistants at Ashe High and Ashe Middle
- Substitute bus drivers
- Substitute cafeteria assistants

Strategic Partnership Executives Morris West and Debbie Owens and K-12 Curriculum Director Julie Taylor gave an in-depth overview of Thinking Maps, the building blocks of brain-based learning. The brain is built to learn and remember, and understanding the way the brain learns and remembers is key to optimizing the learning process. The school system has been using the Thinking Maps framework over the last four

years which has produced positive results in student learning. The framework is made up of eight specific visual patterns, each based on a fundamental cognitive process. The brain is primarily an image processor, and these images help students store and retrieve information, communicate and comprehend and analyze complex information. Patterns enable the brain to connect to the eight core cognitive processes—defining, describing, comparing and contrasting, classifying, whole-to-part relationships, sequencing, cause and effect, and analogies and relationships. These core processes allow students to move from simply acquiring facts to making sense of the information. When students understand and are able to apply these modes of cognition, they are able to engage with and master virtually any kind of content. The presenters called attention to the fact John Hopkins University completed a study in 2019 that examined the achievement outcomes of 70 elementary and middle schools who used Thinking Maps—the study indicated that the use of Thinking Maps across grades 2-8 outpaced the achievement growth of non-users.

Maintenance Director Jerry Baker shared quotes from Blue Ridge Electric (\$49,096.57) and Skyline (\$7,661) for a proposed project to the new practice football field that would reroute existing power and phone supply lines by removing one existing power pole, relocating another pole and burying approximately 580 feet of power wire and cable. This project would allow for the practice field to be widened and eventually lengthened without any overhead wires creating an obstruction to a future-planned regulation-size field. The Board will take this matter under consideration and requested quotes for spectator seating.

Architect Larry Greene and Engineer Jason Herman reported that the middle school grading project is two-thirds complete. No rocks have been encountered, and the soil is suitable for fill. Mr. Herman is very pleased with the work by Vannoy Construction. The town water line was not found in the location designated by the Town of Jefferson. Both the architect and engineer felt it wise to relocate the water line with an eight-inch pipe at this point in time and recommended that the Board approve Change Order 1 in the amount of \$62,773. A motion by the Vice Chairman and a second by Mrs. Eldreth gave unanimous approval to this request. This will change the original contract from \$649,000 to \$711,773 and will increase the timeline an additional 30 days. Fire hydrant connections will be done later, and the town sewer line will be addressed in the next phase. Mr. Greene then asked about the possibility of moving another 35-40 cubic tons, crowning the site from the center while the equipment is on site. This will help jumpstart digging for footings in the Spring. He then recommended that Change Order 2 for \$213,000 be issued and approved. The cost is comparable to the original contract. A motion by Mr. McClure and a second by Mrs. Jones gave unanimous approval to this recommendation. Both change orders will extend the completion deadline to April 15.

Discussion was heard in September on the feasibility of having a policy on remote participation at Board meetings. Direction was given to investigate the matter further and report back to the Board. Technology Director Amy Walker presented sample policies on remote participation at Board meetings and stated that remote access is feasible from a technology standpoint. Mrs. Walker will research the cost for the necessary equipment and report her findings at the December meeting. Although a variety of methods are available, some of which include both audio and video, it was the consensus that a land line would provide the most stable and reliable access. Mrs. Eldreth did ask about the possibility of having two options.

Finance Officer Amanda Coldiron and Human Resource Director Roy Putman reported on the School Business Modernization Project. In 2016, the North Carolina General Assembly mandated a plan for modernizing public school business systems. The State Board of Education and the Friday Institute created the initial plan which was subsequently funded in 2017. A four-year modernization project with a statewide roll-out began in 2018. The State issued a Request for Proposals (RFP), and two companies were selected—Oracle and Tyler Technologies. The new software will incorporate both finance and human resource needs. After reviewing both products, Mrs. Coldiron and Mr. Putman felt that Tyler Technologies was the best

product for Ashe County Schools. Ashe County must commit to a software by December 31. A motion by Mrs. Jones and a second by Mr. McClure gave unanimous approval to signing a letter of intent to commit funds to streamline the reporting process. Ashe County will begin the converting process in 2022.

The Superintendent offered comments on the following.

- *State of the Schools Event*—Tuesday, November 12, Ashe High auditorium, 6:00 pm
- Call from Bill Powell, LT Consulting, LLC, regarding funding choice for the middle school project
- Attendance at Parent/Teacher Conferences
- National Board for Professional Teaching Standards—Ashe County Schools named a National Board Accomplished District
- Accomplishments of the Husky Vanguard Band
- FFA Luncheon at Ashe High on Saturday, November 16, at noon
- American Education Week—November 18-22—Central Support Services planning to serve all employees a pancake breakfast at each school—Board members invited to attend
- *The Reality of Money*—Tuesday, December 3, 8th grade—State Employees Credit Union—gives students a “peek” into the future as they are “transformed” into young adults

The following announcements and items of information were shared with the Board.

- Veterans Day Programs
 - ✓ Ashe Middle—Wednesday, November 6, 1:00 pm
 - ✓ Westwood—Thursday, November 7, 10:30 am
 - ✓ Mountain View—Thursday, November 7, 1:30 pm
 - ✓ Ashe High/Early College—Friday, November 8, 9:30 am
 - ✓ Blue Ridge—Friday, November 8, 1:30 pm
- Monday, November 11—Veterans’ Day—holiday
- Tuesday, November 12—*State of the Schools*—Ashe High auditorium, 6:00 pm
- Saturday, November 16—FFA luncheon at Ashe High at 12:00 noon
- American Education Week—November 18-22, 2019
- Friday, November 22—*Find Your Voice, Inspire Others* Leadership Day at Blue Ridge—8:15-11:30 am
- November 28-29—Thanksgiving holidays—*early release on November 27*
- The next regular meeting of the Board is scheduled for Monday, December 2, 2019, 7:00 pm, at the Central Office annex. *This is an organizational meeting.*
- Tuesday, December 3—*The Reality of Money for 8th grade students*—Ashe Middle gymnasium, 8:00 am
- Thursday, January 23, 2020—Spelling Bee, 6:30 pm, Ashe High auditorium—snow date is Thursday, February 6

At 8:55 pm, the Board took a short recess prior to going into closed session for the purpose of considering a personnel action that involves an officer or employee of this Board [N.C. General Statute §143.318.11(a)(6)] and real estate [N.C. General Statute §143.318.11(a)(5)]. The Board went into closed session at 9:05 pm and returned to regular session at 10:10 pm.

There being no further business, a motion by the Vice Chairman and a second by Mr. McClure immediately adjourned the meeting.