Minutes
School Board Meeting
Greene County Schools
County Meeting Room
March 12, 2025

Members Present: Mr. Brooks Taylor, Chair; Ms. Rebecca Roach, Vice-Chair; Ms. Kelly Greer, Member; Ms. Cherish Alberts, Member; Ms. Cara Bickers, Member; Olivia Shifflett, Student Board Member; Dr. Andrea Whitmarsh, Superintendent; Ms. Rhonda Houchens, Clerk.

Mr. Taylor called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m. in the School Board Office Conference Room.

Ms. Roach made a motion to move into closed session in accordance with Virginia Code section 2.2-3711(A)(1) to consider and discuss assignment and appointment of specific officers, appointees, or employees of the Board. Ms. Bickers seconded. All Ayes, motion carried.

Ms. Roach made a motion to reconvene in open session in the County Meeting Room. Ms. Greer seconded. All Ayes, motion carried.

Mr. Taylor called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. in the County Meeting Room.

Mr. Taylor stated: The Board will certify by roll call vote that to the best of each member's knowledge only public business matters lawfully exempted from open meeting requirements and identified in the motion to convene in the closed meeting were heard, discussed, or considered.

Ms. Greer – certified
Ms. Bickers - certified
Ms. Roach – certified
Ms. Alberts – certified
Mr. Taylor – certified

Mr. Taylor requested a motion to approve the agenda.

Ms. Roach made a motion to approve the agenda as presented. Ms. Bickers seconded. No discussion. All Ayes, motion carried.

Mr. Taylor invited everyone to join in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Mr. Taylor stated there were no closed meeting actions.

Mr. Taylor requested a motion for the consent agenda:

11-1758 February 18, 2025 Meeting Minutes
11-1759 February 26, 2025 Budget Workshop Minutes
11-1760 February 5, 2025 Expenditures
11-1761 February 10, 2025 Expenditures
11-1762 February 14, 2025 Expenditures
11-1763 February 28, 2025 Expenditures
11-1764 Monthly Finance Report
11-1765 Field Trip Requests
11-1766 Enrollment
11-1767 Staff to be Approved List

Ms. Roach made a motion to approve the consent agenda items 11-1758 to 11-1767 as presented. Ms. Bickers seconded.

No discussion. All Ayes, motion carried.

Mr. Taylor stated it was time for first public comment on matters not listed below on agenda. Mr. Taylor opened the floor for public comment.

There were no public comments at this time, so Mr. Taylor closed public comment.

Dr. Donna Payne presented action item #11-1768, Grades 6-12 Literacy Curriculum. Dr. Payne stated she was there to answer any additional questions you may have regarding the recommendation for the board to move forward with approving McGraw-Hill StudySync to be used as the High Quality Instructional Materials for grades six through twelve English and Language Arts.

Ms. Alberts made a motion to approve McGraw-Hill StudySync to be used as the High Quality Instructional Material for grades six through twelve English and Language Arts in Greene County Public schools. Ms. Bickers seconded. No discussion. All Ayes, motion carried.

Dr. Kyle Pursel presented information/action item #11-1769, Removing Barriers Microgrant. Dr. Pursel provided an overview explanation of the grant: Removing Barriers, how the grant will be used and a timeline of expenditures. Dr. Pursel shared that it has been a collaborative effort between him and Ms. Gillette in getting this grant put together. He stated the expenditure piece is a team effort. Dr. Pursel shared the grant has been divided into two categories: VA Department of Behavioral Health & Development Services amount $7500 and Title I Part A – Removing Barriers Related to Academic Achievement amount $3125. Dr. Pursel provided potential examples of how the funds will be used and provided a timeline of grant process. Total grant amount $10,625.

Mr. Taylor stated it was time for public comment on information/action item #11-1769. Mr. Taylor opened the floor for public comment.

There were no public comments at this time, so Mr. Taylor closed public comment.

Ms. Greer made a motion to approve information/action item #11-1769, Removing Barriers Microgrant as presented. Ms. Bickers seconded. No discussion. All Ayes, motion carried.

Mr. Adam Midock, Ms. Danielle Alicea and Ms. Linda Hirw presented information item #11-1770, Nathanael Greene Spotlight. Mr. Midock shared that Nathanael Greene Primary and Elementary Schools worked together as one. Ms. Alicia shared this year was team, and working in two different buildings, but being one school you have to be a team. The presentation included 2023-2024 season review, 2024-2025 season goals, culture of excellence, exceptional workforce, connections with community, mid-season highlights, and upcoming events. Several 5th grade students shared their Science Projects.

Dr. Kyle Pursel presented information item #11-1771, 25-26 Calendar Changes. Dr. Pursel shared some proposed calendar changes for 25-26 calendar. Dr. Pursel highlighted some changes that includes eliminating some 1 pm dismissals, January 5th Professional Day, February 16th Professional Day and March 13th Professional Day (was a 1pm dismissal). Dr. Pursel shared reasons for proposed changes.

Ms. Jess Peregoy presented information item #11-1772, Perkins FY26 Plan. Ms. Peregoy shared what to expect in 2025-2026 for CTE at GCTEC & WMHS, continued hands on learning opportunities, high quality work based learning, industry credentials, and new programming. Ms. Peregoy stated the Perkins Funds are federal dollars provided to us by the Federal Government, and every year we have to apply for the dollars. So we have to have a plan in place alongside a comprehensive local needs assessment that's filled out based on the information we gather. Information was shared on developing the Perkins Plan, what the Carl D. Perkins V Program is, comprehensive local needs assessment, elements of CLNA, CTE enrollment, enrollment by program, data over time, areas of focus for continued improvement, CLNA findings, estimated Perkins Plan allotment $53,654.72, and goals of the plan.

Dr. Wendy Mitchem presented information item #11-1773, Title VI Plan. Dr. Mitchem stated she was going to share information about the special education annual plan. She provided information about the breakdown of the funding and what is included. There are two sections to the plan. Plan 611 is for our school age kids and section 619 is for our preschool age students. Dr. Mitchem shared the total allocation from last year was $850,503. The presentation included distribution of funds, roles funded with 611 federal dollars, and breakdown of section 619 funds.

Mr. Taylor stated it was time for public comment on information items. Mr. Taylor opened the floor for public comment.

Becky Thompson from the Piedmont Journal Recorder shared she didn't know until listening to all of this, that so much funding comes from Title I, Perkins and Title IV and she wonders if they have any concerns that federal funds might not be available this year and do you have any continued concerns.

There were no other public comments.

Mr. Taylor closed public comment.

Olivia Shifflett presented Student Board Member Spotlight. Olivia spoke in favor of removing 1:00 pm dismissals. She shared that she and Tyler are working on trying to increase student participation for events. She gave some examples. Olivia then invited the board members and the community to some upcoming events: STEM night, March 21st; College & Career Expo, March 27th, Spring Musical, March 27-30 and Arts Festival on March 29.

Dr. Andrea Whitmarsh presented FY2026 Budget Update. Dr. Whitmarsh shared we presented our request to the Board of Supervisors last night. Thanks for Mr. Taylor and Ms. Bickers for being there and making impactful comments. The recommendation at this time is to fund the original amount that the Board of Supervisors approved last year's budget so not the supplemental appropriation but going back to last May. That's a reduction of our request of just over $170,000. There will be another budget workshop Tuesday, March 18th at 4:30 pm. We don't know what the state looks like yet. We are still waiting on final numbers.

Dr. Whitmarsh presented the Superintendent's Report item #11-1776, Superintendent's Update. Dr. Whitmarsh thanked the high school for the school board appreciation gifts and a shout out to the culinary and hospitality classes who did a fantastic job with the school board appreciate dinner that was held earlier this evening. Dr. Whitmarsh shared there was a list of activities in the packet and this is the time of year when things are really ramping up so we wanted to provide you with calendar. Dr. Whitmarsh shared we have officially transitioned from School Messenger to Parent Square and we have got a lot great feedback on that. She gave a Tech Center update: progress continues windows and door frames in place with a few glass inserts still pending, concrete pads are being poured today, dry wall and indoor plumbing is almost finished and duct work for heating and cooling have been installed. It's really moving along quickly. Dr. Whitmarsh shared that the Dairy Alliance has generously awarded our middle and high school two grants of $4,000 each to implement bulk milk dispensers. They were delivered this week and we expect students to be able to enjoy ice cold milk after spring break. She stated there are a lot of benefits to that with increased milk consumption, reduced waste and cost savings. Schools have reported 52% increase in milk consumption for other schools that have done this and 91% reduction in combined packaging and milk waste after making this switch.

Dr. Whitmarsh shared great things happing in Greene. This past weekend, several talented students from William Monroe Middle School excelled at the National History Day Regional Competition at Mary Baldwin University:

1st Place - Junior Group Documentary: *"Paul Jennings":* Colton Fortney, Asahel Maldonado Gomez, Leighann Shifflett, & Jesse Simpson

1st Place - Junior Research Paper: *"A Century-Long Fight for Constitutional Gender Equality":* Lorelei Rousseau

2nd Place - Junior Group Performance: *"The Battle of Blair Mountain":* Ben Franssen, Miles Franssen, Mason Greer, Grantley Rawlings, & Olin Shrum

2nd Place - Junior Individual Exhibit: *"A Strike That Brought U.S. Railroads to a Standstill":* Kellen Ward

2nd Place - Junior Group Exhibit: *"Civilly Responsible: The Tuskegee Airmen",* Caleb Evans & Michael Hardwick

Junior Individual Exhibit: *"Segregation: Jackson P. Burley H.S.",* Carley Evans

Dr. Whitmarsh stated amazing work, Dragons! We are so proud of your dedication and accomplishments!

Dr. Whitmarsh shared as a reminder, GCPS has partnered with The Cook Center to provide families with free access to mental health resources through ParentGuidance.org. This online platform, led by licensed therapists, offers trusted courses, professional support, and a safe community for parents to learn how to support their children's mental health.

Dr. Whitmarsh shared upcoming events: Nathanael Greene Science Fair and Stream Night is Thursday, March 13th, 4:30–7pm, Nathanael Greene is hosting a science fair to show off the amazing work of their students in class, and immediately following there is STREAM night. It will be a great night of family engagement, WMMS Dragon Magic Showcase is Thursday, March 13th, 5-7pm. families can explore classrooms, view amazing student work, enjoy live performances, experience National History Day presentations, dance with a middle school DJ, and participate in fun hands-on activities with students. It's a perfect opportunity to witness the creativity and hard work of our middle school dragons, Career Expo is Thursday, March 27th, the Art Festival is Saturday, March 29th, the Spring Musical is Thursday, Friday, and Saturday, March 27-29th

Dr. Whitmarsh stated something else we have been working on with the shortage of educators. We are offering an Iteach Informational Session - Monday, April 1st, 6pm. Open to anyone. We have engaged in a partnership with iteach, a leading alternative teacher certification program, to help people who might want to become educators become licensed teachers. To provide more information on this opportunity, GCPS is hosting an informational session on Monday, April 1, 2025, at 6:00 PM at the William Monroe High School Library. If you know of anyone who has ever thought about becoming a teacher and has a degree, please send them our way.

Dr. Whitmarsh stated our next School Board meeting is Wednesday, April 2nd. This is a change in our normal schedule due to spring break. It will be the Wednesday before spring break.

Mr. Taylor welcomed board member comments.

Ms. Alberts gave a shout out to the Nathanael Greene Team and their presentation. She stated she just loved seeing what's happening in your schools. She congratulated those involved in National History Day to those at the middle school. Ms. Alberts invited people to search Hopewell City School balanced calendar. She shared there was a team at VA Commonwealth University that did a research study about balanced calendar, about the roll out and one year later and the successes of that program. She shared nothing is changing for next year. It will be really good if folks would start to do some research on it. Ms. Alberts shared she would miss activities tomorrow because her twins turn 17 tomorrow. She spoke

about the amazing dinner and conversation she had. She gave a shout out to Lou Berry and the culinary team for planning out an amazing presentation. Not just the food the entire presentation was so professional and so top notch. She congratulated them.

Ms. Roach thanked everyone for the gifts, food and the appreciation. Everything was wonderful and presented beautifully. She commented on the handmade items the students made. Ms. Roach spoke about the Tech Center and the great things they are doing. She said she was proud of all the students and it was great seeing Olivia's picture up there. She said she would be glad when the building is complete and we can add on to that and give students more opportunities.

Ms. Bickers spoke about the presentations and all the work that goes into them. She said Nathanael Greene's presentation was adorable. She really enjoyed the science fair presentations. Ms. Bickers spoke in favor of the calendar changes for partial days. Ms. Bickers spoke about the Tech Center presentation and she finds it so exciting. Ms. Bickers said the dinner, presentation and the things this evening was so much work and the amazing gift. She thanked everyone for all they do.

Ms. Greer stated so much gratitude for the gifts and the dinner and the culinary and hospitality students it was beautiful. She felt spoiled and it was very much appreciated. She thanked everyone that presented. She thanked Nathanael Greene's Team and please pass along to the students. She spoke about the varies grants and funding sources. She stated she hoped the funds would still available because she knows that the school division is fiscally responsible. Ms. Greer spoke about National History Day and bragged on how all the William Monroe Middle School students that participated is going to states. This speaks highly of our students and teachers. She is grateful that NHD is an elective during the school. It really allows for the students to work on it.

Mr. Taylor stated the presenters did a great job. For them to get up in front of us they did a remarkable job. It was awesome. Report cards will go out March 19th. Mr. Taylor said thank you for the gift box. It was very cool and handmade and it's super awesome and the meal was excellent the set up was great and the company was great. He thanked everyone for that. The boy's basketball season has ended but they had a great season. Spring sports are in full swing and we wish them the best with that. Mr. Taylor stated everyone be safe going home.

Mr. Taylor requested a motion to adjourn.

Ms. Roach made a motion to adjourn. Ms. Bickers seconded. No discussion. All Ayes, motion carried.

Meeting ended at 8:24 pm.

Chair

Rhonda M. Houchens

Clerk