

Hamlet, North Carolina
March 25, 2025

The Richmond County Board of Education met in a quarterly work session on March 25, at 5:00 p.m. The meeting was held at the Central Office in Hamlet, North Carolina.

The members present: Cory Satterfield, Chairman, Bobbie Sue Ormsby, Vice-Chairman, Jerry Ethridge, Ronald Tillman, Daryl Mason, Scotty Baldwin and Bess Shuler.

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, Dr. Tesha Isler, Executive Director of Human Resources, Melvin Ingram, Assistant Superintendent of School Safety and Support Services, Dawn Jordan, Executive Director of Finance, Cameron Whitley, Executive Director of Communications, Steven King, Director of Maintenance, and Eva Dubuisson, Board Attorney.

Meeting Commencement

After noting that a quorum was present, Cory Satterfield, Chairman, called the meeting to order at 5:00 p.m. After adopting the agenda, the board entered into closed session at 5:03 p.m. pursuant to G.S. 143-318.11(a)(3), (6). The open session was not formally adjourned, as the board reconvened in open session at 7:06 p.m. following the closed session to continue with the agenda items.

Discussion on RFQ for Architectural Services

Steven King provided an update on the recent Request for Qualifications (RFQ) for architectural services related to the preliminary design of a new elementary school. The architectural firm selected from this RFQ will gather information for a preliminary design to support an application for a need-based capital grant to replace the existing elementary school.

A total of nine architectural firms submitted their qualifications. Each submission was thoroughly reviewed and evaluated based on the criteria outlined in the RFQ. The evaluation process included scoring the firms and selecting the top three candidates for in-person interviews. Dr. Ferrell participated in this interview process.

Key factors considered in the selection process included:

- Firm qualifications and experience
- Availability to undertake the project
- Presence of in-house mechanical, electrical, and plumbing engineers (as the board identified a disconnect with firms relying on external engineers)
- Success rate in securing similar grants
- Overall confidence in the firm's ability to execute the project effectively

Following the evaluation process, Moseley Architects was selected for the preliminary design of the replacement elementary school. Negotiations will begin with Moseley to finalize a contract for this phase of the project and will be brought before the board for approval.

Additionally, the selected architect will assist the board in making an informed decision regarding which elementary school to replace. While two potential schools have been identified, a comparative analysis is being prepared to aid in the decision-making process. The board plans to work closely with the chosen architect to develop this side-by-side comparison and schedule walkthroughs of the identified schools.

It was noted that Moseley Architects previously designed and oversaw the construction of East Rockingham Elementary School, which opened in 2010. The school has functioned well over the past 15 years, with minimal issues related to heating, cooling, and roofing, reinforcing confidence in Moseley's capabilities.

Facility Upgrades

Dr. Julian Carter presented to the board ways to upgrade our facilities, emphasizing that all schools should benefit from the process rather than just a select few. Due to financial constraints, it is not feasible to address all schools simultaneously; however, upgrades will be carried out in a systematic manner with fundamental fairness in mind.

Dr. Ferrell has worked with the county commissioners to secure funding through sales tax revenue. The funds allocated thus far have been utilized for:

- A new sound system for the gymnasium at Richmond Senior High School, which has already been installed and is currently in use.
- Washers and dryers for the new building.
- Engineering services for the baseball field and track, which remain ongoing projects.
- Outfitting the new weight room with weights and flooring, with completion expected by April 16.

Phase 1 Facility Upgrades (Now – June 30)

Two high-priority projects will take place:

1. Richmond Senior High School Primary Gym Floor Refinishing (\$28,305) – The existing floor will be stripped down to the bare wood and refinished. The coaching staff has selected a design that includes the outline of Richmond County in the center. This project is scheduled to be completed during spring break.
 - A cost-saving opportunity was identified: Superior Court Systems offered a \$5,500 discount if the work is completed before May 1.
2. RMS Softball Netting Upgrade (\$13,500) – This project, which is critical for safety, will include the installation of netting, poles, cables, and other necessary materials.

Phase 2 Facility Upgrades (April 1 – June 30)

Improvements include:

- Repairs and repainting of fascia boards on ticket booths, concession stands, dugouts, and press boxes. A single Raider Green paint color has been finalized for consistency.

- Installation of a Jumbotron at the stadium. The board, measuring approximately 14.5' -15' x 25', will generate revenue through advertising and sponsorships. Schools in the surrounding areas with similar Jumbotron's have reported earning between \$26,000 and \$75,000 per year. The existing scoreboard may be repurposed as a backup.
- Football/Band Practice Field Lighting – LED lighting will replace outdated poles and improve visibility. The project is expected to be completed within two weeks.
- The current signage at the front and back entrances will be updated. The new design includes an 8-foot "R" and will be backlit.
- To improve accessibility at RSHS football stadium, handrails will be installed.
- Richmond Senior High School's chorus room carpet will be replaced over Easter break.
- Relocation of bleachers from Ninth Grade Academy to the practice field to provide seating for spectators.
- Baseball locker room renovation – This includes lockers, improved lighting, and general repairs.
- Elevated Band & Football Practice Platform Maintenance – The platform will be repainted to prevent rusting.

2025-2026 Proposed Budget

Dawn Jordan presented the 2025-2026 Proposed Budget to the board. The presentation began with the Capital Outlay Budget and Sales Tax Projects. This budget has historically been set at \$2,005,500.00. Last year, an increase was requested from the county in the amount of \$311,000.00. This additional funding was allocated to cover the cost of Richmond Senior High School's weight room, the sound system for the new gym, a washer and dryer, and engineering services related to the baseball facilities.

Dawn noted that preparations are underway to issue a Request for Proposal (RFP) for the track. Discussions with Carrie Garner considered the possibility of including these funds in the next fiscal year's budget. The RFP for the track is expected to be completed by April 29, allowing sufficient time for submission to the county commissioners. However, Steven advised that work on the project would not commence until after June 9, so it may not need to be included in next year's budget.

Budget Breakdown:

- Regular Capital Outlay
The maintenance budget remains at \$423,500.00. This allocation has not changed since 2014.
- All Funds Budget Review
The comparison of all funds between fiscal years 2023-2024 and 2024-2025 reflects several key changes:
 1. Fund 1 (State)
 - The decrease in state funds is attributed to a reduction in grants received, including Safe Schools funding. This grant operates on a two-year cycle, requiring reapplication upon expiration.
 2. Fund 2 (Local)

- There was an increase in Fund 2 to compensate for the reduction in other funding sources.
- 3. Fund 3 (Federal)
 - There was a decrease was due to ESSER (Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief) funds going away.
- 4. Fund 4 (Capital Outlay)
 - An increase was necessary due to the appropriation of \$1 million toward a construction project.
- 5. Fund 5 (Child Nutrition)
 - The increase in the fund balance was allocated to meet budgetary needs.
- 6. Fund 8 (Other Local)
 - Some funds previously received and processed under Fund 8 were discontinued. One notable example was the Nurse Extenders funding went away.

The total budget for the 2023-2024 fiscal year was \$114,885,405.00, while the budget for 2024-2025 is \$107,613,878.00. This represents a decrease of \$7,271,527.00 in funding for the 2024-2025 fiscal year.

For the 2024-2025 fiscal year, the funding breakdown is as follows:

- 55% from State funds
- 20% from Federal funds
- 11% from Local funds
- 6% from Child Nutrition funds
- 4% from Capital Outlay funds
- 4% from Other Local funds

2023-2024 Budget vs Actual Revenues – Fund 2										
	COUNTY APPROPRIATION	FINES & FORFEITURES	FUND BALANCE APPROPRIATED	INDIRECT COST	INT EARNED ON INVESTMENTS	MISCELLANEOUS REVENUE	RENTAL OF SCH PROPERTY	ROTC	SALES & USE TAX REFUND	GRAND TOTAL
SUM OF BUDGET	\$8,694,378.60	\$110,000.00	\$1,100,000.00	\$335,000.00	\$25,000.00	\$201,200.00	\$1,500.00	\$102,000.00	\$55,000.00	\$10,624,078.00
SUM OF YTD	48,694,379.00	\$112,964.40	\$0.00	\$206,585.79	\$100,210.91	\$265,187.08	\$400.00	\$97,810.04	\$65,967.52	\$9,543,504.70

Some board members questioned what indirect cost was. Dawn explained that indirect cost is like an administrative fee we are allowed charge a program. It is mainly charged to Federal Programs and Child Nutrition. Each year, the state gives a new indirect cost rate, which varies by county. The rate dropped from 2.2% to 0.38% last year resulted in a significant revenue decrease for the district. The money made can be used for various expenses, including Title I salaries, but not for capital equipment purchases or contracted services.

Dawn noted that 1% of Fund 2 is allocated for transfers to Charter Schools.

- In 2022-2023, the district paid \$49,832.39 to Charter Schools.
- In 2023-2024, this amount increased significantly to \$76,068.70.

This represents a substantial increase in payments to Charter Schools compared to the previous year.

Dawn presented the proposed local budget for the 2025-2026 fiscal year. Due to the identified needs the district will need to request additional funding from the county beyond the normal county appropriation.

Cost of Identified Needs	
5% Increase in Local Teacher Supplements	\$81,985.56
3% Payroll Increase	\$123,667.18
3% Fixed Cost Increase	\$141,155.38
Implementation of Third Phase Salary Study: Teacher Assistants, Custodians, Monitors, Child Care Assistants, All Remaining Classified Staff	\$990,251.82
Additional Total Request to the County	\$1,337,059.94

County Appropriation	
2024-2025 Budget	\$9,500,613.00
2025-2026 "Proposed Budget"	\$10,837,672.94
Amount Difference	\$1,337,059.94



She finished the budget presentation by discussing an increase in teacher supplement funds from the county. Now is a good time to request a supplement increase because the state is implementing new compliance rules that require counties to maintain a certain level of local funding for teacher supplements. If we don't gradually increase the supplement, we risk falling below the required percentage, which could lead to the state labeling it as "supplanting" and requiring us to pay money back. While we skipped an increase last year, taking action now ensures we stay ahead of these changes and avoid future financial strain.

Return to Closed Session

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

On a motion by Bobbie Sue Ormsby, seconded by Bess Shuler, the board voted unanimously to return to closed session at 8:27 p.m.