**CASWELL COUNTY BOARD OF EDUCATION MINUTES**
**March 24, 2025**

The Caswell County Board of Education met in regular session on Monday, March 24, 2025, at 5:30 p.m. in the Administration Building of Caswell County Schools. Members present: Chairman Mel Battle, Vice Chair Joel Lillard, Vennie Beggarly, Lisa Johnson-Knight, Nicole McGhee, Nicole Smith, and Trudy Blackwell. Others present include Superintendent JoAnna Gwynn, Austin Morris, Brook Underwood, David Useche, Maria Willis, Adam & Casey Evans, Julie Sladky, Cathy Carter, Tyreese Tanner, Flossie Hayes, Lucy Blackwell, Ashley Byrd, Charles Byrd, Shawn Byrd, Lillian Byrd, Abigail Byrd, Emma Bondurant, Donald Byrd, Henry Berry, James Berry, Garry Willie, Dr. Hilary Moore, Michelle Robinson, Julie Allen, John Berdine, Sharon Jones, Rhonda McFalls, Clara Rosales, Christian Daza, Viviana Jaramillo, Shannon Apple, Dwayne Zea, Nelson Showalter, 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 Chair Mel Battle. A moment of silence was observed, followed by the Pledge of Allegiance.

## I. B. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Nicole Smith moved, seconded by Vennie Beggarly, to approve the minutes of the March 10, 2025, regular meeting and listening tour minutes as presented. The motion carried unanimously.

## I. C. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

JoAnna Gwynn recommended approval of agenda as presented. Vennie Beggarly moved, seconded by Nicole Smith, to approve the agenda as presented. The motion carried unanimously.

## I. D. ANNOUNCEMENTS

Superintendent JoAnna Gwynn and HR Director Austin Morris recognized the following:

<u>Student Excellence Awards</u>

- Lillian Byrd, Oakwood Elementary
- Tyreece Tanner, Oakwood Elementary
- Montana Lea, Stoney Creek Elementary
- Gabriela Rosales, Stoney Creek Elementary

<u>Employee Excellence Awards</u>

- Julie Allen, Oakwood Elementary
- Maria Willis, Oakwood Elementary
- Casey Evans, Stoney Creek Elementary
- Sharon Jones, Stoney Creek Elementary

## I. E. PUBLIC COMMENTS

None at this time.

## II. REPORTS

- Viviana Jaramillo, ELL Coordinator, shared a presentation on her duties and what she does within the school system.

- Inspection Reports were reviewed.

## III. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

- Policy # 4342/5020 Regulation = Metal Detectors

  Ms. Gwynn reviewed the policy revisions for the metal detectors. Upon review, Joel Lillard shared that he is hearing that teachers will be used during their planning periods and this was not the board's recommendation and asked that this be relayed to teachers that this was not a directive from the board.

  Trudy Blackwell asked that parents be made aware of the clear bag policy.

  Joel Lillard moved, seconded by Trudy Blackwell, to remove Policy # 4342/5020 Regulation from the table and to approve as an amendment to the policy as presented. The motion carried unanimously.

  It was questioned if this would be included on the website. This will be communicated and posted accordingly.

- Teacher Sign-on Bonus

  Austin Morris, HR Director, shared information on sign-on bonuses. Upon discussion it was questioned why science was eliminated. Mr. Morris shared we currently do not have any vacancies. Mr. Battle shared that doesn't mean we will not have anymore and felt this was one of the hard to fill classes and should be included. Other questioned included why it was limited to the first ten. Mr. Morris shared that with funding it needed to have boundaries. The allotment included $50,000 and if there are additional bonuses, changes will need to be made to the budget. The suggestion was made of paying out in two equal payments versus a monthly payout.

  ACTION: It was requested for Mr. Morris to look at surrounding counties and see what they are doing in regards to sign-on bonuses and bring back more information at the next meeting.

- Child Nutrition Equipment Updates

  A listing of repairs that have been made by maintenance was shared as well as a listing of needed repairs.

- Child Nutrition Refrigerated Truck Updates

  Ms. Gwynn shared that repairs for the truck have not been started as of yet due to the truck storing food. They are working on storage for the food and mechanics are waiting for that to take place before they can begin repairs. Ms. Gwynn shared another food delivery will arrive on Monday and will need storage for that also. Once this is done the repairs to the truck will be made as soon as possible. John Berdine, Transportation Director, shared that upon diagnosis, it appears to be the injectors and he is awaiting White International to give an estimate on cost.

  Questions were asked if there is no other place to store the food. Concerns were shared that this is going on four weeks and there seems to be no urgency in getting repairs made.

  ACTION: Ms. Gwynn is to get back with the board on a plan on where the food can be stored and status of when truck will begin repairs.

## IV. NEW BUSINESS

1. Consent Agenda
   JoAnna Gwynn recommended approval of the consent agenda as presented. Trudy Blackwell moved, seconded by Lisa Johnson-Knight. The motion carried unanimously.

   Requests for Transfer

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| Brann, Millie Jane | Caswell | to | Person (K) |
| Mishue, Savannah | Caswell | to | Person (K) |
| Padilla, Oscar Adrian | Caswell | to | Person (K) |

2. LEGO Education Kits

   Nelson Showalter gave an overview on the LEGO Educational kits and how they will be used and noted that they are available for all students not just AIG. Upon review, Joel Lillard moved, seconded by Vennie Beggarly, to approve the purchase of the LEGO Education Kits as presented. The motion carried unanimously.

   LEGO Education

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| Cost: | $21,652.58 | 15 LEGO Education SPIKE Essential Set |
| | | 30 Personal Learning Kit Essential |

Funding: Split between AIG and Title IV: Student Support & Academic Enrichment Grant funds

3. Child Nutrition Bid Renewals

Ms. Gwynn shared information on child nutrition bid renewals and noted that Pepsi was on hold for additional pricing. Discussion took place and it was noted that no pricing was included for any of the bids; therefore, this item was put on hold.

4. Surazal Systems, Inc.

David Useche reviewed information from Surazal to extend the cloud-hosted telephone service to NL Dillard Middle School and the four elementary schools. This new system will replace BrightSpeed services with a SIP trunk solution, offering a digital alternative to traditional phone lines. This will offer an estimated savings of $4,000 per month ($48,000 annual) after recovering initial set-up costs in approximately three months.

Upon review, JoAnna Gwynn recommended approval of the Surazal (Savvier) proposal as presented. Vennie Beggarly moved, seconded by Lisa Johnson-Knight, to approve proposal with Surazal for extending the cloud-hosted telephone service to NL Dillard Middle and the four elementary schools. The motion carried unanimously.

Total: $16,057.70
Funds: Local existing funds used for BrightSpeed

5. Hiring of Coaches/Approval of Volunteer Coaches/Renewals

Joel Lillard shared he requested for this to be on the agenda for discussion. He shared his concerns with the recent situation that ABSS has had and doesn't want us to get into a similar situation. Currently the Board hires everyone except coaches and felt we need to do this going forward and follow similar processes and renewals should be brought to the board as well. Discussion took place on how this would be handled.

ACTION: Attorney Ron Bradsher was asked to follow-up on this and bring back information to the Board for the 2025/2026 school year.

6. County Vehicles/Leasing Options

A listing of currently owned vehicles was shared which included the vehicle number, mileage, color/make/model and who is assigned the vehicle along with any issues associated with the vehicle. Currently there are several county cars at the central office and per Ms. Gwynn they will be taken back to Whitley Building and put back in the

rotation and will also be cleaned and inspected after each use. Currently a car is assigned to the Superintendent and to David Useche, Chief Operations Officer.

Discussion took place on looking at having the cars with low mileage painted and possibly use the IT Van for Child Nutrition and have it refrigerated. Ms. Gwynn shared that the auto-body class at the high school could do some minor repairs and painting but could not paint the entire car. Discussion took place on how often the cars are cleaned, if log sheets are pulled and reviewed and serviced. Joel Lillard shared we need to look at making minor repairs to the current cars we have with low mileage and focus on getting back on a cycle for activity buses and spend a minimum amount of money to improve the conditions of our current vehicles.

ACTION: John Berdine, Transportation Director, was directed to look into cost on having cars painted. It was agreed to not look at leasing options at this time.

7. Budget Review

Ms. Gwynn shared that some board members wanted more information on the budget and asked if a group presentation is needed or one-on-one. Lisa Johnson-Knight and Nicole McGhee shared they would like one-on-one review to better understand the history and background of the budget before it is presented to the board.

Mel Battle shared that if the board has items they would like to be reviewed to be included in the budget they need to let Finance Director Brook Underwood know by Thursday. The first presentation will be shared at the April 14th meeting and final review will be shared at the April 28th work session meeting and approved.

8. Civic Center IT Operator

Ms. Gwynn reviewed information for an additional IT Operator for the Civic Center to work with Brittany Cody Dance Company when they rent the Civic Center. Vennie Beggarly moved, seconded by Trudy Blackwell, to approve Cody Kesling, to use the sound and lighting equipment at the Civic Center. The motion carried unanimously.

All paperwork has been completed for Cody Kesling and background check.

## V. SUPERINTENDENT UPDATES

Ms. Gwynn shared updates on the following:

- Week of April 7th is Legislators in School Week. She has reached out to our representatives to see if they are available for a school visit during that week.
- Grants applied for include:

- Emily Reagan has applied for a grant with Danville Regional Foundation for $500,000 for elementary intensive interventions and tutoring programs.
- Golden Leaf School Initiative for NL Dillard Middle School in the amount of one million eight hundred dollars over the next five years for transformative schools using research-based strategies with Marzano's High Reliability Schools framework.
- NC Digital Learning in the amount of $90,000 (five year) for ELA and Math at the elementary level.
- Zeta Phi Beta Sorority, Eta Eta Zeta Chapter has offered a limited-time local grant opportunity to enhance support for beginning teachers at a school in Caswell County. They are offering one of the schools $1,000 to support beginning teachers.

- Principals are working at with Superintendent on how to transform schools using a thematic approach snice there is a focus on engineering. Also looking at school options regarding more streamlined and offering options that include language immersion (North), math (South), science (Stoney Creek), and arts (Oakwood).

## VI. ATTORNEYS REPORT

None.

## VII. BOARD MEMBER COMMENTS

Trudy Blackwell visited North and met with the Principal, visited South and saw the year book and visited Oakwood and met with Guidance Counselor Mrs. Graves. She shared all are preparing for testing and all have the same goals but are doing things differently. Joel Lillard shared he attended several baseball games and was impressed with NL Dillard as all three administrators were at the game at some point and has noticed at least one administrator from the high school. He also visited cafeterias and the staff were excited about the new variety of food choices. He shared that if you stop by a school to take time to visit the cafeteria and the custodians. Nicole Smith shared thanks for having the recognition portion of the meetings and felt something small to others makes a big difference to some. Lisa Johnson-Knight shared she volunteered at South and enjoyed that. Vennie Beggarly shared she recently volunteered and worked with Mrs. Chavez at North and the EC students and thoroughly enjoyed that. Mel Battle shared that when visiting other schools to observe how they do things and noted a recent away ball game in which they had golf carts to transport guests to the field due to the length of the walk and noted this was a good gesture.

## VIII. CLOSED SESSION

Joel Lillard made a motion to go into closed session at 1:00 p.m. 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. Trudy Blackwell seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

## IX. OPEN SESSION

Vennie Beggarly made a motion to return to open session. Lisa Knight-Johnson seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

## X. PERSONNEL LISTING

Ms. Gwynn recommended approval of the personnel listing as presented with Item # 7 being only for substitute bus driver. Vennie Beggarly moved, seconded by Trudy Blackwell, to approve the personnel listing as presented. The motion carried unanimously.

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| **Resignations** | |
| North Elementary | Jan Grogan, Child Nutrition Asst. = Eff. 3/26/25 |
| **Retirement** | |
| South Elementary | Cindy Stanfield, Teacher Asst. = Eff. 6/13/25 |
| | Carla Lynch, Teacher = Eff. 6/13/25 |
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| **Employment** | |
| NL Dillard Middle | Terri Gullick, Principal = Eff. 7/1/25 |
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| BYSHS | Rickey Blackstock = Teacher Asst. (Credit Recovery/NCVPS/PCC Support) = Eff. 3/31/25 |
| **Substitutes** | |
| | Emily Hepler, Activity & Sub. Bus Driver = Eff. 3/31/25 |
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| | Kelly Stewart = Bus Driver = Eff. 3/26/25 |

<u>Supplements</u>
Joel Lillard moved, seconded by Trudy Blackwell to approve supplements for elementary principals and assistant principals as discussed. The motion carried unanimously.

Elementary Principals = $3,000
Assistant Principals = $1,500
To be paid out at the same time the low wealth supplement is paid out
Funding = 019

## XI. ADJOURN

Joel Lillard moved to adjourn the meeting at 10:32 p.m., Vennie Beggarly seconded the motion and it carried unanimously.

The next regular meeting of the Board of Education will be held on April 14, 2025 at 9:00 a.m. in the Caswell County Schools Administration Building.

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| Mel O. Battle<br>Chairman | Alyson Beavers<br>Acting Superintendent |