

The Rockbridge County School Board held their regular meeting on Tuesday, September 10, 2024, at the County of Rockbridge Administration Building.

Present: Chairman Neil Whitmore; Trustees Corey Berkstresser, Catie Brown, Lenna Ojure, Kathy Burant; Assistant Superintendent Timothy Martino, Clerk Rhonda Humphries.

CALL TO ORDER

Chairman Whitmore called the meeting to order at 5:30 p.m.

CHANGES TO THE AGENDA: None

STUDENT / STAFF RECOGNITION:

Mr. Adam Haynes, Athletic Director, Rockbridge County High School, recognized Mr. Spencer Pfaff, student, who participated in, and won the Class 3 State Championship in the 50 Yard Freestyle which took place on February 17, 2024 at the Swim-RVA Collegiate School Aquatics Center in Richmond, Virginia. Mr. Pfaff was presented his state championship ring on August 22, 2024.

CONSENT AGENDA

Upon recommendation by Chairman Whitmore, motion by Trustee Burant, seconded by Trustee Berkstresser, the board approved the following items on the Consent Agenda:

- Minutes: 1) August 13, 2024 [Regular Meeting
- Field Trip Requests
- Fundraiser Requests
- Application for Use of Facilities
- Religious Exemption Request
- Appointments and Resignations

Appointments

Support Staff

Tracey Camden, Teacher Assistant, Rockbridge County High School, effective September 11, 2024

Tristen Ayers, Teacher Assistant, Central Elementary School, effective September 11, 2024

Pamela Martin, Secondary Instructor Nurse Aide, Rockbridge County High School, effective September 11, 2024

Rebecca Eichelberger, Teacher Assistant, Natural Bridge Elementary School, effective September 23, 2024

Robert Ayers, Custodian, Rockbridge County High School, effective September 16, 2024

Timothy Whitesell, Custodian, Rockbridge County High School, effective September 16, 2024

Kristie Higgins, Custodian, Rockbridge County High School, effective September 11, 2024

Nathan Clark, Custodian, Maury River Middle School, effective September 11, 2024

Wyatt Higgins, Custodian, Rockbridge County High School, effective September 11, 2024

Abigail Higgins, Teacher Assistant, Mountain View Elementary School, effective September 23, 2024

Food Service

Brooke Hicks

Carolyn Hill

Food Service Substitute(s)

Carolyn McNeil

Travis Chaplin

Allison Steger

Jean Alcantara

Car Driver

April White

Fall Coaches 2024-2025

RCHS

Football

Landon Joines, Volunteer Coach

Boys' Cross Country

Sebastiano Blandino, Assistant Coach

- Business Items
 - Approved appropriations for High School Innovation Center in the amount of \$3,927,152.00
 - Approved appropriation for Fund 50 for new grants in the amount of \$675,175.00
 - Approved appropriation to Fund 50 for carryover grants in the amount of \$5,004.00
 - Approved Monthly Financials in the amount of \$4,850,031.9785

PUBLIC COMMENT:

One person addressed the board concerning the new legislation regarding cell phones in schools.

BUDGET PLANNING: None

COMMITTEE REPORTS: None

INSTRUCTIONAL REPORT:

Ms. Lindsey Flint, Coordinator for Gifted and EL Programs, provided information on “English Language Learners” (ELs). She stated that Rockbridge County Public Schools is growing and changing and that it is an exciting time in Rockbridge County Public Schools for the EL students. She offered the following information:

- Two licensed teachers
- Languages spoken by families in our school division are Arabic, Burmese, Chinese (Mandarin), German, Gujarati, Korean, Nyanja, Pashto, Russian, Spanish, Tagalog, Ukrainian, and Vietnamese.
- All parents and guardians enrolling children in public school divisions must complete Home Language Surveys as part of the registration paperwork. This survey helps schools and Local Educational Agency identify which students are potential ELs and who will require assessment of their English language proficiency to determine whether they are eligible for language assistance services.
- The quantity and type of EL instruction that a student receives is determined by student level of native language literacy, academic level and grade, and level of English language proficiency. Students receive EL instruction in individualized, small group, and regular classroom settings.
- The ESL teacher also collaborates with classroom teachers to modify lessons to support the needs of ELs in the regular classroom. The ESL teacher also collaborates with classroom teachers, administrators, and students to create an EL Classroom Plan and Student Assessment Participation Plan.
- ELs may receive certain classroom/testing accommodations. As with all students, ELs may test in small groups or individually, and may take breaks during testing.
- Rockridge County Public Schools ESL staff assists parental involvement by providing:
 - Language interpretation from local interpreters or telephone language services to parents for student meetings and events, such as back-to-school nights.
 - Partners with the RCPS Adult Education program in establishing and disseminating information about ESL classes for adults.
 - Assists school nurses, counselors, and administrator in relaying important information to parents.
 - Disseminates information about community events.
 - Hosts family engagement events.
- ELs in grades K-12 in Virginia have annual proficiency testing. Results are reported to school divisions in early June.
- What happens after an EL exits an ESL program:
 - The grades, standardized test scores, attendance, discipline, and general school performance of ELs who exit the ESL program are monitored for four years.

Ms. Flint stated that they have a great team within the ESL program.

- Chairman Whitmore inquired, and received confirmation, that the two teachers travel between schools. He also inquired how the student numbers compare with previous years.
 - Ms. Flint stated that the program is growing each year and noted that three years ago there was one person who was the coordinator and teacher K-12 who worked part-time.
- Chairman Whitmore inquired if, with increase in demand, are there outside sources bringing in additional funding. He also inquired what would trigger an additional teacher being hired.
 - Ms. Flint stated that Rockbridge County Public Schools receives money for Title III and noted that the amount of money that the federal government gives is based on the number of students who qualify for services. She stated that there is a Standard of Quality which is one teacher per fifty students.

- o Trustee Ojure inquired, and received confirmation, that the ESL program utilizes volunteers from Washington & Lee University.

INFORMATIONAL ITEM:

Mr. Randy Walters, Chief Operations Officer, provided a Capital Improvement Project Update. He stated that the Rockbridge Innovation Center is on schedule and nearing completion. He stated that carpet, cabinets, ceiling tiles, and equipment are nearing completion, which provides a crisp, clean look. Once all of the equipment is in place, a deep cleaning will take place, and at that point, KNA will complete their punch list, followed by a punch list by Rockbridge County Public Schools staff. He stated that the Lexington City School Board and Lexington City Council will tour the facility on September 17, 2024 at 5:30 PM and invited the Rockbridge County School Board to join if they would like.

- Mr. Martino stated that the renovations reflect the best outcome that provides flexible spaces, which can be used to offer other programs in the years to come.

ACTION ITEMS: None

NEW BUSINESS:

Trustee Burant shared that Mr. Corey Wallace, CTE teacher, invited her to Mountain Gateway Community College to see their classroom and visit with students. She expressed her appreciation to MGCC for allowing Rockbridge County Public Schools to use their facilities during renovation. She also stated that she met with the Lexington Women's Club and spoke to the Rockbridge Innovation Center, which met with their excitement in hopes of hosting a meeting in the community room of RIC in the future.

The following is a direct quote from Chairman Whitmore:

"The tragic event at Apalachee High School in Georgia last week is another reminder that the safety of our students and staff is always our number one priority. School security requires the eyes and ears of everyone working as a team and looking out for each other. It's a continuous process of awareness, preparation, and training."

We are very fortunate in Rockbridge County to have a team of dedicated school resource officers, and a dedicated group of teachers and staff that work toward that goal every day.

We thank them for the work that they do, and we remain committed to always keeping the well-being and safety of students and staff at the forefront of our work as board members.

The two teachers that lost their lives in the tragedy in Georgia did so while protecting their students and serve as another reminder of the ultimate level of dedication that personifies the title of teacher, educator, school administrator and school resource officer."

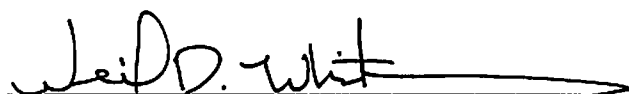
SCHOOL BOARD

The Rockbridge County School Board will attend Virginia School Board Association Training on Friday, September 13, 2024 / 10:00 AM / Location: Virginia School Board Association Office, 200 Hansen Road, Charlottesville, Virginia.

The next regular meeting of the Rockbridge County School Board will be held on Tuesday, September 10, 2024 / 5:30 PM / Location: County of Rockbridge Administration Building, 150 South Main Street, Lexington, Virginia.

ADJOURNMENT

Upon motion by Trustee Berkstresser, seconded by Trustee Ojure, and passed by 5-0 vote, the meeting was adjourned at 6:09 p.m.


Neil D. Whitmore, Chairman


Rhonda B. Humphries, Clerk of the Board