

The Rockbridge County School Board held their regular meeting on Tuesday, June 11, 2024, at the County of Rockbridge Administration Building.

Present: Chairman Neil Whitmore; Trustees Corey Berkstresser, Catie Brown, Lenna Ojure; Superintendent Phillip Thompson, Clerk Rhonda Humphries. Absent: Trustee Kathy Burant.

CALL TO ORDER

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

CHANGES TO THE AGENDA: None

STUDENT / STAFF RECOGNITION:

Moment of Recognition for Retirees

2023: Larry Garrett, Elise Johnson

2024: Jennifer Balkey, Laurie Brooks, Karen Clemmer, Tamara Cummins, Scott Fleshman, James Hickman, Donna Powell, Amy Sholes, Jane Swartz, Deborah Wright

REDOT Awards: June 2024

Mr. Rick Bain, Supervisor of Human Resources, introduced employees who received the REDOT Award, [Rockbridge Employees Doing Outstanding Things]. This is an award designed to highlight the great things our employees are doing. This award is given quarterly, with nominations by a co-worker or an administrator. There are sixteen employees who were recognized during the second quarter:

Kelly Jones	- Central Elementary School
Jerry Losh	- Central Elementary School
Liz Schmidt	- Central Elementary School
Heather Moore	- Fairfield Elementary School
Tricia Jarvis	- Fairfield Elementary School
Christina Harlow	- Mountain View Elementary School
Jean Ramsey	- Mountain View Elementary School
Bonnie McCaleb	- Natural Bridge Elementary School
Leyna Hansley	- Maury River Middle School
Courtney Diette	- Maury River Middle School
David Miller	- Rockbridge County High School
Erin Allen	- Rockbridge County High School
Gracyn Darrington	- Rockbridge County High School
Lindsay Brooks	- Central Office (Adult Education)
Emily Bennett	- Central Office (Occupational Therapy)
Melanie Arritt	- Central Office (Board Certified Behavior Analyst)

CONSENT AGENDA

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

- Minutes: 1) May 14, 2024[Regular Meeting]
- Field Trip Requests
- Fundraiser Requests
- Application for Use of Facilities
- Religious Exemption Request
- Appointments and Resignations

Appointments

Professional Staff

Lisa Gay-Milliken, Media Specialist, Maury River Middle School, effective 2024-2025 school year

Ryan Clifton, Teacher, Natural Bridge Elementary School, effective 2024-2025 school year

Professional Staff

Resignation

Brittany Alexander, Teacher, Maury River Middle School, resigning effective end of the 2023-2024 school year

Support Staff**Resignation**

Ian Felty, Bus Driver, Transportation, resigning effective end of the 2023-2024 school year

Alesa Chaffin, Teacher Assistant, Mountain View Elementary School, resigning effective end of the 2023-2024 school year

Abigail Hattersley, Teacher Assistant, Mountain View Elementary School, resigning effective end of the 2023-2024 school year

Professional Staff**Retirement**

Karen Clemmer, Teacher, Rockbridge County High School, resigning effective end of the 2023-2024 school year

Support Staff**Retirement**

Donna Powell, Bus Driver, Transportation, retiring effective end of the 2023-2024 school year

Leave of Absence

Sarah Matsumoto, Teacher, Natural Bridge Elementary School, effective 2024-2025 school year

- **Business Items**

- Approved debt service payments due July 1, 2024 to US Bank for Rockbridge County Public Schools lease for Energy Performance Contract at Rockbridge County High School in the amount of \$406,336.80.
- Approved debt service payment due July 15, 2024 to US Bank for Rockbridge County VPSA bonds in the amount of \$2,068,476.88.
- Approved Monthly Financials for June 11, 2024 in the amount of \$5,645,268.37.

PUBLIC COMMENT:

One patron addressed the board regarding the his concern for the psychological safety and of readiness of children in regards to LGBTQ+ education, books, and materials aimed at youngest children ages 4-10.

BUDGET PLANNING: None

COMMITTEE REPORTS: None

INSTRUCTIONAL REPORT: None

INFORMATIONAL ITEM:

Mr. Randy Walters, Chief Operations Officer, provided three capital improvement updates:

The Natural Bridge Elementary School HVAC project began on June 3, 2024 with anticipated completion before the beginning of the 2024-2025 school year. The Transportation Office is very near completion with an anticipated move the last two weeks of June. The Rockbridge Innovation Center remains on track to completed on time, with an update meeting on June 12, 2024. The main focus are finishes such as tilework on the interior and paving on the outside. He provided an overview of the progress by KNA as of this date. The biggest piece of the project is the power. He stated that Dr. Thompson has worked with Dominion Power representatives the past couple of weeks to get the new switchgear installed and to make sure that the project stays on track.

- Chairman Whitmore asked for, and received, confirmation from Mr. Walters, that the NBE HVAC project will be completed before the beginning of school.
- Chairman Whitmore asked if the RIC panel came as they had hoped that it would.
 - Superintendent Thompson stated that it did not cause a delay. The panel is there. Dominion Power needed an easement to be able to plant a pole for connection and that has now been completed. He stated that power should be in within the next week or two. Once power is in, the air conditioning will be functional. The building climate needs to be acclimated before the next phase of work, such as cabinetry that needs the proper climate so that humidity will not be an issue. He stated that the work is going well and is going quickly.

Mr. Timothy Martino, Assistant Superintendent, provided a draft of the Division Literacy Plan. Mr. Martino stated that the Division Literacy Plan will have to be submitted to the Virginia Department of Education for final approval and that it has not yet been released to teachers. The plan will not be given to teachers until it is final. The process is slower than hoped with submission to VDOE but he has hopes of getting it back quickly from VDOE for implementation with teachers and help them to get prepared. He stated that Ms. Tracy Hinty, Dr. Jennifer Floyd, and Ms. Lauren Fauber

worked on the plan. He stated that he knows it will be challenging for the people involved but also had some well-respected colleagues who work out of James Madison University take a look at the plan and they were very pleased. He provided a brief overview of the plan that included:

- Section One: Planning for Comprehensive Communication
- Section Two: Selecting High-Quality Instructional Materials
- Section Three: Ensuring Virginia Literacy Act Evidence-Based Reading Research Training
- Section Four: Monitoring Student Assessment and Progress
- Section Five: Assessing Division Level Progress
- Section Six: Engaging Parents, Caregivers, and Community
- Trustee Brown inquired if all school divisions are using the same framework.
 - Mr. Martino stated that it is required that all school divisions use the same framework.
- Chairman Whitmore inquired on the timeframe and date of compliance.
 - Mr. Martino stated that the plan is due to be submitted by June 30 and will begin upon approval.
- Trustee Ojura inquired if this plan will include regular children's literature.
 - Mr. Martino stated that there is time built in the plan because there must be time for enjoyment of the readers.
- Chairman Whitmore inquired if the plan addresses readers at both spectrums of ability and what grade levels. He also inquired if the plan will transition from grade 5 to middle school.
 - Mr. Martino stated that the plan goes back to whole group and then splits into groups; students who need extra help will receive it. He stated that there are thirty-minute blocks built into the plan, addressing grades K-5. He stated that the plan is not finalized for grades 6-8, noting that he anticipates the same plan and that it will not go into effect until school year 2025-2026. With the assistance of Project Based Learning, the hope is that fewer students fall into the low spectrum.
- Trustee Ojura inquired how it would correlate to RTI.
 - Mr. Martino stated that RTI still exists but is modified.

ACTION ITEMS:

Upon recommendation by Chairman Whitmore, motion by Trustee Berkstresser, seconded by Trustee Brown, the board voted 4-0, to approve the Early Retirement Incentive Program as presented.

Upon recommendation by Chairman Whitmore, motion by Trustee Ojura, seconded by Trustee Berkstresser, the board voted 4-0, to approve for the school division to apply for individual and consolidated state and federal entitlement grants.

Upon recommendation by Chairman Whitmore, motion by Trustee Berkstresser, seconded by Trustee Ojura, the board voted 4-0, to approve the Title I Family Engagement Plan 2024-2026, as presented.

Upon recommendation by Chairman Whitmore, motion by Trustee Ojura, seconded by Trustee Berkstresser, the board voted 4-0, to approve a request for reimbursement from the state in the amount of \$206,000 for technology purchases made by Rockbridge County Public Schools.

Upon recommendation by Chairman Whitmore, motion by Trustee Ojura, seconded by Trustee Brown, the board voted 4-0, to forgo the July 2024 Regular School Board Meeting.

Upon recommendation by Chairman Whitmore, motion by Trustee Ojura, seconded by Trustee Brown, the board voted 4-0, to approve authorization for the Superintendent/Designee to process July 2024 financials, accounts payable, payroll, fund appropriations, and fund transfers as necessary for the month of July 2024. A final report summarizing these actions will be distributed during the month of August 2024. All transactions will require signatures of two of the following staff positions: Superintendent, Assistant Superintendent, Chief Business Officer, Chief Operations Officer, or Director of Financial Services.

NEW BUSINESS:

Chairman Whitmore stated that have been a number of outstanding sports accomplishments. He offered congratulations to the RCHS Girls Lacrosse Team and Coach Nye; congratulations to Tennis players Nick Faulds and Nick Vargas for a great season; and congratulations to the Girls Soccer Team for reaching the regional level.

SCHOOL BOARD

The next regular meeting of the Rockbridge County School Board will be held on Tuesday, August 11, 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 4-0 vote, the meeting was adjourned at 6:18 p.m.



Neil D. Whitmore, Chairman

Rhonda B. Humphries, Clerk of the Board