

Minutes of the Vance County Board of Education Meeting  
August 11, 2025

The Vance County Board of Education met in regular session on August 11, 2025, at 6:00 p.m. in the Administrative Service Center Boardroom. Board members present were Mrs. Dorothy W. Gooche, Chair, Mrs. Ayana F. Lewis, Vice-Chair, Mrs. Linda S. Cobb, Mrs. Gloria J. White, Dr. Omega T. Perry, Mr. Randy M. Oxendine, Mrs. Ruth M. Hartness and Mr. Jerry Stainback, School Board Attorney. Senior staff present were Dr. Cindy Bennett, Superintendent, Mrs. Aarika Sandlin, Chief Officer of Communication and Innovative Support, Ms. Chelsa Jennings, Chief Human Resources Officer, Mr. Kevin Perdue, Chief Operations, Mr. Rey Horner, Executive Director for Student Services, Mr. John Suther, Chief Finance Officer, Mrs. Jacqueline Batchelor-Crosson, Executive Director of Federal Programs & Elementary Education, Dr. Destiney Ross-Putney, Chief Officer of Instruction and Innovation, and Dr. Stephanie Ayscue, Executive Director of Secondary Education.

Mrs. Gooche called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m. and welcomed everyone. A moment of silence was observed.

#### Approval of Minutes

Approval of the June 6 and 27, 2025 minutes was motioned by Mrs. White and seconded by Mrs. Lewis, with a unanimous (7-0) vote.

#### Approval of Meeting Agenda

Approval of the meeting agenda and the following additions were motioned by Mrs. White, and seconded by Mrs. Hartness, the Board unanimously (7-0) approved the agenda with additions.

- Personnel Addendum
- Transfers/Releases

#### Recognitions/Announcements

##### 2025 District Educators of Excellence

Recognized as the 2025 district Educators of Excellence are Teacher of the Year, Brian Schlessinger (VCEC), Beginning Teacher of the Year, Simone Harris (VCMS), Assistant Principal of the Year, LaVonda Williams (Pinkston), and Principal of the Year, Dr. Carnetta Thomas (EMR). The Educator of the Year banquet was held on June 11, 2025 at the Henderson Country Club honoring teachers, staff and administrators from across the district.

##### NC Governor's School

High school students, Alexandria Meeks and Karol Hernandez-Nava, participated in the NC Governor's School. Governor School is a summer residential program for gifted and talented high school students that are recognized for their academic excellence, creativity and leadership. Meeks attended Meredith College in the Mathematics category and Hernandez-Nava attended Greensboro College in the Natural Science category. Both students have been accepted into Harvard Medical Pre-College School.

##### TeamShip/Spark

Vance County Early College students, Jahson Shepherd and Neleh-Kate Sandlin, participated in the District C TeamShip program. Through this innovative, real-world learning experience, the students collaborated with a team to solve an authentic problem for a business, demonstrating critical thinking, creativity, and teamwork. Sandlin worked with GameChangers owned by Dick's Sporting Goods, which is a youth sports app for live streaming, scheduling, and scorekeeping. Shepherd worked with Predicate AI Labs, Inc. which is a healthcare technology company developing predictive artificial intelligence to treat critical illness.

##### National Aeronautics & Space Administration

Mr. Milton Lima, administrative intern at EMR, was selected as a NASA Ambassador for NC and joined the NC Space Education Ambassador Crew 5. Mr. Lima will have the opportunity to deepen our students' engagement in STEM through access to NASA-backed learning experiences, competitions, and real-world problem-solving challenges.

**Government Finance Officers Association**

The Finance and Business Operations department was recognized for earning the Government Finance Officers Association’s Certificate of Achievement for Excellence in financial reporting for the fiscal year ending June 30, 2024. This is the highest form of recognition in governmental accounting and financial reporting, reflecting commitment to transparency, accuracy and excellence.

**Retirements**

Two district employees were honored for their service and commitment of 47 years to the State of North Carolina. Dr. Michael Putney, Sr., principal of Dabney and Mrs. Phyllis Newcomb, Director of Child Nutrition received a rocking chair from the Vance County Schools Board of Education.

Comments from the Public - None

**Superintendent’s Report**

The Fiscal Oversight Monthly Report was shared for information only.

**Accountability Update**

Dr. Bennett shared that the data will be finalized in October but at this time there is not science scores or growth data. The overall proficiency increase in 9/16 schools prior to the calculations of Science is below. The district is anticipating at least 2 schools to increase a letter grade. Dr. Bennett shared data showing that our schools are moving in the right direction in grade level proficiency (GLP).

3 <sup>rd</sup> grade ELA – 4 schools have consistently increased GLP	3 <sup>rd</sup> grade Math – 4 school have consistently increased GLP
4 <sup>th</sup> grade ELA – 5 schools have consistently increased GLP	4 <sup>th</sup> grade Math – 1 school has consistently increased GLP
5 <sup>th</sup> grade ELA – 5 schools have consistently increased GLP for the past 3 years.	5 <sup>th</sup> grade Math – 2 schools have consistently increased GLP for the past 3 years.

	2023		2024		2025				
	Participation 3-8 ELA	Participation 3-8 Math	Participation 3-8 ELA	Participation 3-8 Math	Participation 3-8 ELA	Participation 3-8 Math			
Aycock	100%	100.0%	100%	100%	100%	100%			
Carver	100%	100.0%	100%	100%	100%	100%			
Clarke	100%	100.0%	100%	100%	100%	100%			
Dabney	100%	100.0%	100%	100%	100%	100%			
New Hope	100%	100.0%	100%	100%	100%	100%			
EO Young	100%	100.0%	100%	100%	100%	100%			
Pinkston	100%	100.0%	100%	100%	100%	100%			
EM Rollins	100%	100.0%	100%	100%	100%	100%			
LB Yancey	100%	100.0%	100%	100%	100%	100%			
Zeb Vance	100%	100.0%	100%	100%	100%	100%			
V3A	100%	100.0%	93%	92%	100%	100%			
VCMS	100%	100.0%	100%	100%	100%	100%			
STEM	100%	100.0%	100%	100%	100%	100%			
AA	88%	88.0%	100%	100%	92%	92%			
	2023			2024			2025		
	High School Reading	High School Math	ACT/WorkKeys	High School Reading	High School Math	ACT/WorkKeys	High School Reading	High School Math	ACT/WorkKeys
AA	71%	85%	Insufficient Stuents	Insufficient Stuents	Insufficient Stuents	Insufficient Stuents	64%	Insufficient Stuents	Insufficient Stuents
VCMS	83.30%	75%	100%	80%	100%	88%	95%	95%	93%
Early College	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
V3A	Insufficient Stuents	100%	Insufficient Stuents	Insufficient Stuents	Insufficient Stuents	Insufficient Stuents	Insufficient Stuents	Insufficient Stuents	Insufficient Stuents

**School Status Report**

Vance County High, Vance County Early College and E.M. Rollins STEAM Academy started on Monday, August 11, 2025, and the Human Resource department has narrowed down to 20 vacancies in the district. The transportation department is close to schedule with bus routes and the district continue to maintain a high priority of teaching and learning.

**Board of Education Standing Committees**

**Personnel**

Mr. Oxendine shared information from the August 5, 2025 meeting.

**I. EMPLOYMENT RECOMMENDATION(S)**

LOCATION	EMPLOYEE NAME	RACE/SEX	POSITION	EFFECTIVE DATE
ASC	Elaine Webb	W/F	Director of CTE/Special Populations Coordinator	07/01/25
ASC	Jeremy Hetrick	W/M	School Nutrition Director	08/04/25
Dabney	Miah Hart-Olavis	B/F	Principal	07/28/25
EM Rollins	Trisha Campbell	B/F	EC Teacher	08/04/25
EO Young	Haylee Hargrove	B/F	Media Teacher Assistant	08/18/25
EO Young	Malia Simmons	B/F	*Instructional Support	08/18/25
Maintenance	Dylan Jones	W/M	Carpenter I	07/14/25
Pinkston	Deborah Hawley	B/F	EC Teacher	08/18/25
Pinkston	Kayla Lyons	B/F	Bookkeeper	08/18/25
Pinkston	LaRhesa Whittley	B/F	Teacher	08/18/25
VCEC	Jeanette Noel	B/F	Guidance Counselor	08/04/25
VCHS	Brandon Simmons	B/M	Teacher	08/04/25
VCHS	Kenneth Northcutt	B/M	Band Director	08/04/25
VCHS	Mark Kaleel	W/M	Physical Education Teacher	08/04/25
VCMS	Derron Reece	B/M	Custodian	06/23/25
Aycock	Tabatha Frank	W/F	EC Instructional Support Assistant	08/18/25
Aycock	Quentin Ramseur	B/M	Instructional Support Assistant	08/18/25
EM Rollins	Sherina Terry	B/F	Instructional Support Assistant	08/06/25
EO Young	Rayenna Wimbush	B/F	Teacher	08/18/25
EO Young	Theresa McElhinney	W/F	Teacher	08/18/25
VCMS	Gwyneshia Green	B/F	Instructional Support Assistant	08/18/25
Zeb Vance	Erica Reid	B/F	Teacher Assistant	08/18/25

**II. RETIREMENT(S)**

LOCATION	EMPLOYEE NAME	RACE/SEX	POSITION	EFFECTIVE DATE
VCHS	Bridget Bailey	B/F	Teacher	07/31/25

**III. RESIGNATION(S)**

LOCATION	EMPLOYEE NAME	RACE/SEX	POSITION	REASON	EFFECTIVE DATE
ASC	Ivett Rivera	H/F	Migrant Recruiter	Career Change	07/31/25
ASC	Roderick Lewis	B/M	Technology Technician	Career Change	07/04/25
Aycock	Monica Adams	B/F	Guidance Counselor	To teach in another NC School System	07/17/25
Dabney	Jennie Adams	W/F	Teacher	Family Relocation	06/30/25
Dabney	Jennifer Sullican	W/F	Teacher Development Specialist	To teach in another State	07/01/25
EM Rollins	Ellen McAllister-Flack	B/F	Teacher	Career Change	07/10/25
EM Rollins	Kristy Crowder	W/F	Teacher	Career Change	06/23/25
EM Rollins	Victoria Cash	W/F	Nurse	To continue education	07/28/25
Pinkston	Rodel Jay Calidguid	H/M	EC Teacher	To teach in another NC School System	07/17/25
Pinkston	Ma Vianca Lizette Estrosos	H/F	EC Teacher	To teach in another NC School System	07/13/25
STEM	Edward Ortega	H/M	Principal	Relocation	06/30/25
VCHS	Claudia Dennis	B/F	EC Teacher	To teach in another NC School System	07/31/25
VCHS	Philip Weil	W/M	Athletic Director	To teach in another NC School System	07/03/25
VCMS	Tonique Cheek	B/F	Teacher	Career Change	07/28/25

VCMS	Venice Arellano	P/F	EC Teacher	To teach in another NC School System	07/10/25
LB Yancey	Jennifer Roberson	W/F	Cafeteria Assistant	To work in another NC School System	08/06/25
New Hope	Angela Denton	W/F	Teacher	To teach in another NC School System	08/11/25
STEM	Christian Salinas	W/M	Teacher	To teach in NC Charter School	06/30/25

**IV. LEAVE(S) – For Information Only**

LOCATION	EMPLOYEE NAME	RACE/SEX	LEAVE TYPE	POSITION	EFFECTIVE DATE
Advance Academy	Hazel Henry	B/F	FMLA	Bookkeeper	06/10/25-08/11/25
ASC	Aarika Sandlin	W/F	FMLA/I	Public Information Officer	07/01/25-06/30/26
ASC	Jannie Fisher	B/F	FMLA	Custodian	06/23/25-09/23/25
EO Young/LB Yancey	Caroline Cash	W/F	FMLA	Nurse	05/27/25-06/13/25
Pinkston/Carver	Deidre Taborn	B/F	FMLA	Guidance Counselor	08/18/25-09/30/25
VCMS	Ruby Caballes	B/F	FMLA	Teacher	08/18/25-10/14/25
EM Rollins	Ebony Watkins	B/F	FMLA	Teacher	08/04/25-10/06/25
CFI	Patricia Burroughs	W/F	FMLA	PLTW Facilitator	07/01/25-06/30/26

**V. TRANSFER/PROMOTIONS(S) – For Information Only**

NEW LOCATION	EMPLOYEE NAME	NEW POSITION	OLD POSITION/LOCATION	EFFECTIVE DATE
Advance Academy	Janesha Marrow	Social Worker	Teacher EO Young	08/01/25
Advance Academy	Shanae Reid-Guy	Assistant Principal	Assistant Principal Intern VCMS	08/18/25
AA/V3A	Marsha Harris	Guidance Counselor	Guidance Counselor VCEC	07/28/25
ASC	Devonda Bailey	CTE Facilitator	Teacher Aycocock	08/18/25
ASC	Stephanie Ayscuc	Ex. Dir. of Secondary Education	Principal VCMS	07/01/25
ASC	Yackesha Samuda-Whitton	Elem. Math Science Instructional Spec.	Teacher Development Specialist New Hope Zeb Vance	07/01/25
CFI	Vickie Barnes	AIG Facilitator	Teacher Aycocock	08/11/25
CFI	Yolande Dixon	AIG Facilitator	Teacher Pinkston	08/11/25
Clarke	Laurie Hernandez	Bookkeeper	Bookkeeper Pinkston	07/01/25
EM Rollins	Okito Sleugh	Assistant Principal	Assistant Principal Intern EM Rollins	08/04/25
EO Young	Emily Hunsinger	Kindergartner Teacher	Pre-K Teacher EO Young	08/01/25
LB Yancey	Facetia Branch	Principal	Assistant Principal VCMS	07/01/25
LB Yancey	Latoya Terry	EC Teacher Assistant	EC Teacher Assistant Zeb Vance	08/01/25
LB Yancey	Regina Watkins	Bookkeeper	Bookkeeper VCMS	07/01/25
New Hope	Angela Denton	Teacher	Teacher Advance Academy	08/18/25
STEM	Jessica Austin	Principal	Teacher Development Specialist VCHS	07/22/25
VCHS	Raymond Pagayonan	Teacher	Teacher STEM	08/01/25
VCMS	LaVonda Williams	Assistant Principal	Assistant Principal Pinkston	07/01/25
VCMS	Paris Perkins	Bookkeeper	Bookkeeper LB Yancey	
VCMS	Shannon Bullock	Principal	Principal LB Yancey	07/01/25
Zeb Vance	Justin Wrenn	Teacher	Teacher Dabney	08/18/25
Zeb Vance	Michelle Foster	MCL	MCL Dabney	08/18/25
Zeb Vance	Sallie Lee	Teacher	Teacher Dabney	08/18/25
Zeb Vance	Willonda Gillespie-Cates	Assistant Principal Intern	Elem. Math Science Instructional Specialist ASC	08/18/25
EM Rollins	Sherly Ortiz	Teacher	ESL/LEP Migrant ASC	08/11/25
VCMS	Deon Smith	Assistant Principal	Teacher VCMS	07/01/25

VCMS	Latesha Powells	Administrative Assistant	Administrative Assistant	ASC	08/01/25
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**VI. SUBSTITUTE TEACHER(S)**

LOCATION	EMPLOYEE NAME	RACE/SEX	POSITION	EFFECTIVE DATE
All Schools	Carolyn Baskerville	B/F	Substitute	08/14/25
All Schools	Torriona Parham	B/F	Substitute	08/14/25

The district has 31 projected vacancies.

Upon motion by Mr. Oxendine and seconded by Mrs. White, the Board unanimously (7-0) approved the personnel summary and addendum.

Finance

Mr. Suther shared information from the July 24, 2025 meeting on the contracts, large purchases.

Contracts/Services and Large Purchases

District wide Server Panel Generator

The district does not have a backup generator for the server room at ASC and the room contains internet servers that run the entire district. Breedlove Electric, Inc. will be the provider and the \$39,101.00 funding comes from Kerr-Tar Regional Council of Government rental proceeds.

Upon motion by Mrs. White and seconded by Dr. Perry, the Board unanimously (7-0) approved the purchase of the district wide server panel generator.

School Nutrition Cafeteria Braising Pan

The current braising pan is 35 years old and the School Nutrition department wants a natural gas, 40-gallon stainless steel braising pan with manual tilt. The pan can be used for braising, boiling, steaming, frying, grilling, and simmering.

Upon motion by Mrs. Cobb and seconded by Mrs. Hartness, the Board unanimously (7-0) approved the purchase of the new braising pan for VCHS.

Surplus Braising Pan

The school nutrition department is requesting to surplus the current braising pan after the new one is purchased.

Upon motion by Mrs. Cobb and seconded by Mrs. White, the Board unanimously (7-0) approved to surplus the old braising pan located at VCHS.

Graduation Alliance Contract

This contract is a software-based program that provides a course of study for students at Advance Academy that satisfies the state requirements for a high school diploma. Funds of \$209,000 will come from PRC 069 At-Risk Services/Alternative Schools.

Upon motion by Mrs. Cobb and seconded by Mrs. White, the Board unanimously (7-0) approved the Graduation Alliance Contract.

Carver Elementary Bathroom ADA Upgrade

\$25,000 of the Building Repair & Renovation Fund from the NC Education Lottery has been requested for the Carver Elementary girls and boy's bathroom ADA upgrade planning and design fees. The estimated start date is 9/1/25 and completion date of 3/31/26.

## Classified Local Supplement

The 2025-2026 two-percent classified local supplement will be provided to all employees in December 2025 and June 2026.

Upon motion by Mrs. White and seconded by Dr. Perry, the Board (6-1) approved the 2% classified local supplement that will be paid in December and June. Mr. Oxendine voted no.

## Building and Grounds

Mrs. Hartness shared information from the July 24, 2025 meeting. The committee discussed using \$25,000 state lottery (Repair & Renovate) funding to cover the design and bidding of the Carver Elementary restroom renovations. The painting and roofing projects are almost complete at EM Rollins and Pinkston. The district has several new drivers in the onboarding process. The Solar Station installation at CFI is complete and training will be scheduled. All custodians will be returning to their schools next week. There were 2,850 work orders completed.

Upon motion by Mrs. Hartness and seconded by Mrs. Lewis, the Board (6-1) approved the Carver Elementary Bathroom ADA Upgrades design fee. Mr. Oxendine voted no.

## Policy

Mr. Horner shared information from the July 24, 2025 meeting. The 1000 policy series – Governing Principles had no changes. The remaining 2025 Spring updates were presented and recommended for approval that had minor changes as punctuation and legal/cross references.

### Policy Codes:

3400	Evaluation of Student Progress
3420	Student Promotion and Accountability
3620	Extracurricular Activities and Student Organizations
4023/7233	Pregnant and Parenting Students and Employees
4040/7312	Staff-Student Relations
4240-7312	Child Abuse and Related Threats to Child Safety
6220	Operation of School Nutrition Services
6330	Insurance for Student Transportation
7130	Licensure

Upon motion by Mr. Oxendine and seconded by Mrs. Cobb, the Board unanimously (7-0) approved the remaining Spring updates recommended by the NC School Board Association.

### Policy 4318: Use of Wireless Communication Devices

This policy governs student use of cell phones and other internet accessible devices. The changes included the requirement for student devices be turned off and placed out of sight during instructional hours. The use of cell phones during afterschool activities is allowed and accommodations will be made for emergencies and medical use. The school will take responsibility should any device be confiscated by staff. Also, a Standard Operating Procedure regarding teacher use of cell phones and other devices during the school day is will be enforced.

Upon motion by Mr. Oxendine and seconded by Mrs. White, the Board unanimously (7-0) approved to waive the 30-day notice and approved policy 4318.

## Curriculum

Mrs. Lewis shared information from the July 24, 2025 meeting. The district offered a variety of professional development opportunities for school year 2024-2025 totaling 4,415 staff members earning 14,835 contact hours. A total of 187 students participated in the Read to Achieve camp with 42 students achieving grade-level proficiency. It was recommended that students receive continued support throughout the school year. The district is expanding literacy intervention support through additional educators and long-term substitutes. Students are flagged at the beginning of the year for intervention and a quarterly report will be shared with the Board of the progress. Teachers

should know how to accurately assess and use the mCLASS data which further training will be provided. The high school credit recovery and cohort 2026 acceleration resulted in 297 students earning a combined 543 credits and 10 CPR certifications. According to data, the 2024-2025 graduate survey showed 38% of graduates indicated they will attend a four-year college, 36% plan to enroll in community college and 37% will enter the workforce, military or entrepreneurship. The Technology department completed 1, 685 work orders. Additional training sessions for Insight Analytics and Infinite Campus were scheduled for July and August to ensure staff are equipped to use these systems effectively.

**Community & Business Relations**

Mrs. Sandlin shared information from the July 24, 2025 meeting. Upcoming events are Convocation on August 19, Traditional schools open house on August 21, VIPERS vs. Warren County Football game on August 22 and Traditional Schools First day of class on August 25. Analytics indicate that the three visited pages are calendars, jobs and news. The Optimist Club Mini \$1,000 Grant submission has ended with eight applications submitted by elementary schools and the winner will be announced convocation. A new series called “Teach & Tell (Your Class Their Future Our Story) will empower teachers to share meaningful classroom opportunities that will highlight innovation, student engagement and great teaching across the district. Build the Buzz is a series of videos and radio spots for all schools that are released to WIZS, social media, and the district website. All volunteers must reapply each year (July 1 – Jun 30).

**New Business** - None

**Field Trip Request** - None

**Transfer Requests**

Dr. Bennett presented 10 student release requests to transfer out of the district and 25 to transfer into the district.

Upon motion by Mr. Oxendine and seconded by Mrs. White, the Board unanimously (7-0) approved the 35 transfer and release requests.

**Executive Session**

Upon motion by Mrs. Gooche and seconded by Mrs. White, the Board voted unanimously (7-0) to go into closed session pursuant to the provisions of North Carolina General Statutes 143-318.11 for the purpose of approving executive session minutes and discussing legal, personnel, and property issues pursuant to subsection (a) of the said statute at 6:57 pm.

The Board returned to the open session at 7:41 p.m.

Being no further business, upon motion by Mr. Oxendine and seconded by Mrs. Cobb, the Board voted unanimously (7-0) to adjourn the meeting at 7:41 p.m.

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BOARD CHAIR, DOROTHY W. GOOCHE

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SECRETARY, CINDY W. BENNETT