

The Rockbridge County School Board held a special joint meeting with the Rockbridge County Board of Supervisors on Wednesday, September 17, 2025. The meeting was held at the Maury River Middle School.

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

Board of Supervisors Members Present: Leslie Ayers, R.W. Day, D.E. Lyons, David McDaniel; Spencer Suter, County Administrator and Clerk to Board. Absent: A.J. Lewis.

CALL TO ORDER

School Board Chairman Burant called the meeting to order at 5:03 p.m.

SPECTRUM DESIGN – RECREATION CENTER STUDY

Superintendent Thompson expressed his appreciation to both boards for their participation and framing the discussion around the ongoing issue of limited gym space at Rockbridge County High School. He also expressed his appreciation to Spectrum Design for compiling the study in short order explaining that the need for additional athletic facilities, such as concession stands and restrooms for softball, tennis, and baseball, has long been part of the capital improvement plan. The conversations also included RARO and the community in relation to gaining more gym space. He stated that rather than tackling these projects separately, he encouraged the group to think about how all of these needs could be addressed through one comprehensive facility.

Mr. Granville Grant, Project Manager, Spectrum Design, expressed his appreciation for the opportunity to present the study to both boards and for the opportunity to work with both Rockbridge County and Lexington City. He provided an overview of the recreation center study. Mr. Grant stated that he did a site visit with Superintendent Thompson in December 2024, noting that the proposed location lies between Greenhouse Road and I-64. Mr. Grant stated that he then recommended an assessment study to examine current conditions, program requirements, and a roadmap for the future. A building committee was established in early 2025, and their work is documented in the planning document distributed to the boards. Perkins & Orrison of Lexington, Virginia, conducted surveying work on the property to ensure accuracy and avoid future complications.

Ms. Kimberlyn Lindsay, Interior Designer, Spectrum Design, provided information on the proposed site plan, which places the facility between the softball and baseball fields, utilizing the existing crosswalk of Rockbridge County High School. The proposed building would be built where the tennis courts are currently located. She stated that there would be increased student parking with potential of expansion in the future, and would provide for emergency vehicular security access around the perimeter.

- Mr. Grant stated that stormwater management would be redirected toward the east of the site, and plans also include fire and vehicle access around the perimeter of the building, as well as safety improvements to the crosswalk.

Mr. Nathan Harper, Director of Design, Spectrum Design, provided an overview of the programming vision for the building. The 42,000-square-foot facility would include three gymnasiums, a flex space with fitness equipment, locker rooms, restrooms, concessions, and team rooms. There is an eight-foot fall in the property which will create a natural separation between what would be considered predominantly RCHS space and community space. The design separates the high school and community spaces with a solid wall and divider curtain, while a central commons corridor and elevator would provide full accessibility. Tournament play would allow the entire facility to be opened. The second floor would feature offices, restrooms, a community room, an open lobby, and a suspended walking track. Storage areas and a secured outdoor activity space were also included in the plans. A metal roof was recommended for longevity, with options for solar tubes and consideration of solar panels in the future. The exterior materials would combine split-face block with corrugated metal, and outdoor dining areas would be available on both the school and community sides. The team also discussed the possibility of synthetic turf in the flex area and considered various construction approaches based on material pricing.

Ms. Lindsay provided an overview of three exterior design schemes.

Mr. Grant stated that KNA Contracting, who served as the general contractor for the Rockbridge Innovation Center, reviewed the design and provided a cost estimate. The projected cost, including site, building, and soft costs, is approximately \$12.7 million.

- Trustee Whitmore inquired about the distance between the site perimeter and I-64.
 - Mr. Harper estimated at roughly 125 feet.
- Trustee O'Jure asked if the design could better reflect the appearance of the RIC or RCHS.
 - Mr. Grant stated that brick construction could be considered but would increase costs; split-face block was chosen for durability and low maintenance.
 - Supervisor McDaniel noted that the facility, while located on the high school campus, is intended as a community center, making its design distinct from both the RIC and the school.
- Trustee O'Jure also inquired if the office spaces include plans for certain people.
 - Supervisor McDaniel explained that the second floor would house a permanent office for RARO (Rockbridge Area Recreation Organization). Trustee Burant asked about the visibility into the facility. Mr. Harper explained that the design team could adjust the use of glass on the doors, noting that they recommend applying a reflective film which allows clear visibility outward, while limiting visibility inward.

Mr. Grant stated that there was a programmatic discussion to move the weight room, noting that the weight and exercise area was important.

- Supervisor Ayers inquired if the move of the weight room would free up space at RCHS.
 - Supervisor McDaniel stated that the weight room would go back to the originally designed wrestling room.

Chairman Burant expressed her sentiment that solar tubes are very effective and that the garage door effect allows patrons and students to see out and in, but questioned the amount of privacy that will be allowed.

- Mr. Harper stated that there would be a tall fence around it and that it can be decided how much view will be allowed in. The glass on the doors will be limited using reflective film which will allow vision out, but limited vision to see inside. He also stated that doors will offer natural ventilation with plans for a canopy over the doors.
- Mr. Grant stated that the film would be the same as used at the Rockridge Innovation Center.

Chairman Burant inquired what type of flooring would be used.

- Ms. Lindsay stated that it will be a rubber floor, which is lower maintenance.
- Supervisor McDaniel stated that the courts will be multi-functional with each court being regulation size. This would include a couple of tiers of bleachers, which will not be retractable.

Supervisor Ayers invited Lexington City representatives to ask questions if they would like.

- A patron expressed appreciation for the study and inquired if this is a project of Rockbridge County Public Schools and the County of Rockbridge, and asked if RARO will be a part of the project. The patron also inquired if the funding for the project has been determined.
 - Supervisor Ayers stated that this will be worked out with future committee meetings, noting that the study is a way to see how things can be brought together and worked out with partners.

A patron inquired if Rockbridge County High School is giving up the tennis program.

- Superintendent Thompson stated that the program will be moved and a location will be found as administration recognizes it is important to keep the program.

A patron inquired if Rockbridge County High School will have access to use throughout the day and inquired about school safety.

- Mr. Chad Coffey, Executive Director, RARO, stated the RARO side will be open to the community at all times, managed by the RARO, but the school side will be managed by school personnel. The building will be secured from the public. He stated that there is a standing use agreement in place now, which is a great resource for future use.
 - Superintendent Thompson echoed the same sentiment as Mr. Coffey that the process is working well now and he envisions it continuing to coordinate the needs of the community and the needs of Rockbridge County High School.

A patron inquired if the Perkins & Orrison Survey confirmed no property line issues or assessment issues.

- Mr. Grant stated that it is all documented with no issues.

A patron expressed concern that there were no offices on the high school side and that strength coaches may need an office to treat athletes or for treatment of general population injuries.

- Supervisor McDaniel stated that there is a team room, not a locker room, which would have a table and shelving space. He stated that this would not be a strength training room.

Supervisor McDaniel inquired about the opening of the 2025-2026 school year.

- Superintendent Thompson stated that it had been a strong start with the division moving forward with many positive initiatives. He added that average daily membership (ADM) has dropped by 10–15 students when compared to projections.

Supervisor Day inquired about enrollment studies.

- Superintendent Thompson explained that enrollment in Rockbridge County has historically ebbed and flowed with population changes, describing it as a “slow roller coaster ride” that has continued for decades.

Supervisor Lyons inquired about student academic performance.

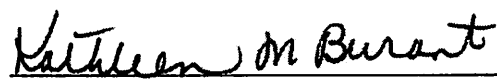
- Mr. Timothy Martino, Assistant Superintendent, reported that while there are both areas of strength and areas needing improvement, overall student engagement is increasing. He highlighted the impact of the Virginia Literacy Act in grades K–8, which replaced PALS, bringing greater rigor to literacy instruction. He also noted the addition of student success strategists who are now working directly with teachers in classrooms to support instruction.
- Superintendent Thompson stated that Rockbridge County is on par with surrounding school divisions.

Supervisor Day stated that he had conversation with the parent of an eighth grader who is taking classes online and he asked for confirmation if they are not required to take SOL's.

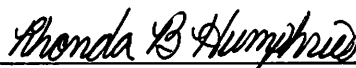
- Superintendent Thompson stated that he would need more specific information regarding the type of instruction the student is taking. If the student does not have “seat-time” at MRMS, then the student is not counted.
- Supervisor Lyons stated that the national trend for reading and math reflect divisions being behind since the pandemic. He also stated that school divisions who don't make up missed days are losing seat time and instructional time.

ADJOURNMENT

Upon motion by Trustee Berkstresser, seconded by Trustee Brown and passed by 5-0 vote, the meeting was adjourned at 6:17 p.m.



Kathy M. Burant, Chairman



Rhonda B. Humphries, Clerk of the Board

The Discipline Committee of the Rockbridge County School Board held a special meeting on Monday, September 29, 2025 at the Rockbridge Innovation Center.

Present: Trustees Corey Berkstresser, Catie Brown, and Neil Whitmore; Randy Walters, Chief Operations Officer; Ashley Rhodenizer, Discipline Committee Liaison.

CALL TO ORDER:

Trustee Berkstresser called the meeting to order at 5:08.m.

Under Section 2.2-3711.A (2) of the State Code, Trustee Brown recommended that the Board go into a **Closed Meeting** to discuss two student discipline matters. Motion was made by Trustee Brown, seconded by Trustee Whitmore, and passed by 3-0 vote.

The Board entered into the **Closed Meeting** at 5:09 p.m.

The Board returned to open session at 6:49 p.m.

Trustee Brown read the following motion to Certify the Closed Meeting:

WHEREAS, the Rockbridge County School Board has convened a closed meeting on this date pursuant to an affirmative recorded vote and in accordance with the provisions of the Virginia Freedom of Information Act; and

WHEREAS, Section 2.2-3712.D of the Code of Virginia requires a certification by this School Board that such closed meeting was conducted in conformity with Virginia law;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Rockbridge County School Board hereby certifies that, to the best of each member's knowledge, (i) only public business matters lawfully exempted by Virginia law were discussed in the closed meeting to which this certification applies, and (ii) only such public business matters as were identified in the motion convening the closed meeting were heard, discussed or considered.

Upon initial motion of Certification of Closed Meeting by Trustee Brown, and seconded by Trustee Whitmore the motion passed by the following roll call vote:

- Trustee Berkstresser - Aye
- Trustee Whitmore - Aye
- Trustee Brown - Aye

Upon motion by Trustee Brown, seconded by Trustee Whitmore, and passed by unanimous vote, the following action was taken regarding student case number 2526-100-09 as a result of a violation of the student code of conduct.

1. Student is subject to random drug testing and searches.
2. Student is to attend Rockbridge Recovery.
3. Student and family must complete FAPT referral paperwork.
4. Student will be on social probation for remainder of the 2025-2026 school year.
5. Student must not have further discipline referrals.
6. Consider one period of NEST.
7. Student should check in with Assistant Principal the first thing each day.
8. RAHC counseling at school.
9. The school will offer resources for Covington Boys Home, if needed.

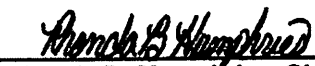
Upon motion by Trustee Brown, seconded by Trustee Whitmore, and passed by unanimous vote, the following action was taken regarding student case number 2526-099-10 as a result of a violation of the student code of conduct.

1. CSB Intake appointment must be completed before returning to school.
2. The ten-day suspension will be lifted once the CSB appointment is completed.
3. Student will check in with her school counselor weekly.
4. Student will be on social probation for the remainder of the 2025-2026 school year.

ADJOURNMENT

Upon motion by Trustee Brown, seconded by Trustee Whitmore, and passed by 3-0 vote, the meeting adjourned at 6:51 p.m.


Corey W. Berkstresser, Trustee


Rhonda B. Humphries, Clerk of the Board