

Minutes of the Vance County Board of Education Meeting
October 13, 2025

The Vance County Board of Education met in regular session on October 13, 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 September 8, 2025 minutes was motioned by Mrs. White and seconded by Mrs. Hartness, 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 and Revised Personnel Minutes
- C&I Revised Minutes
- Transfers/Releases Revised

Recognitions/Announcements

POE Center's Educator of the Year

Each year, the Poe Center recognizes individuals and organizations in our community who helped make significant contributions to advancing our mission to "educate and empower children, youth, and their families to make healthy choices." Their support is critical to our success. Recipients were recognized during the Poe Center's annual meeting and VIP conference held in September. Mrs. Marylaura Christopher-Rubin plays the role of about 10 regular staff in Vance County. Her passion for educating the children of Vance County is always evident in every conversation. She is a go-getter and champion of student wellness and has partnered with the Poe Center to bring her vision of healthy students and families in Vance County to reality. She has booked health-education programming for students and staff and has partnered with our gardening team to bring school gardens to four Vance County elementary schools.

National Custodian Appreciation Day

National Custodian Day is an annual observance on October 2 to recognize and thank the custodians who keep our schools, offices, hospitals, and public spaces clean, safe, and organized. Custodial staff are vital to the daily operations of countless facilities, from ensuring a pleasant environment to performing necessary maintenance and repairs. In the fall they will be recognized again at a meal provided by the facilities and operations department.

National Principals Month

National Principals Month is celebrated annually in October to recognize and honor the work of school principals. The month highlights their leadership, dedication, and impact on students, staff, and the school community. Principals will be recognized on social media throughout the month.

School Bus Safety Week

Safety week is held during the third full week of October each year, National School Bus Safety Week is an active and evolving public education program and an excellent way for parents, students, teachers, motorists, school bus operators, school administrators, and other interested parties - to join forces and address the importance of school bus safety. *Buster the Bus* will be visiting schools on October 20-25, 2025 promoting school bus safety.

National Bullying Prevention Month, Unity Day and Red Ribbon Week

October is National Bullying Prevention Month, a nationwide campaign to raise awareness about bullying and promote kindness, acceptance, and inclusion. It was founded in 2006 by PACER's National Bullying Prevention Center to educate communities about the issue and its devastating, long-term effects on young people. The campaign's signature event is Unity Day, held on the third or fourth Wednesday of October. Participants wear orange to send a message of unity for kindness, acceptance, and inclusion. Red Ribbon Week is an annual drug, alcohol, tobacco, and violence prevention awareness campaign in the United States, typically observed in October and is now the nation's longest-running drug prevention program. The red ribbon itself is a symbol for several causes, including drug prevention, which is how it became associated with this week of observance. The SAVE Promise Club at VCHC was recognized for their efforts and having a great "See Something, Say Something" bulletin board.

Comments from the Public - None

Superintendent's Report

The Fiscal Oversight Monthly Report was shared for information only. The audit is due to the Local Government Commission by December 31, 2025 and principal's state bonuses were paid this month. There is not a State budget and districts will not receive funds to cover the increase in retirement and health insurance rates. The first payroll deduction for the new health plan will occur in December. The County Commissioners approved the 14 Needs Based Public School Capital Fund applications and they have been sent to NCDPI with approvals/denials sent out by the first of November.

Title I Application

Title I schools are schools with high numbers or high percentages of students from low-income families. A minimum of 40% low-income student enrollment is required for a school to be eligible for the Title I designation. The purpose is to provide supplemental financial assistance to school districts and schools with the highest number to help ensure that all students meet challenging state academic standards.

Upon motion by Mrs. White and seconded by Mrs. Lewis, the Board unanimously (7-0) approved the Title I application.

2025 NC School Board Association (NCSBA) Voting Delegates

The annual meeting of NCSBA's delegates is Wednesday, November 12, for board members to participate in the direction of the association's future. Mr. Oxendine, Mrs. White, Mrs. Cobb, and Mrs. Lewis were nominated as the 2025 voting delegates for Vance County Schools and Mr. Perry as an alternate.

Upon motion by Mr. Oxendine and seconded by Mrs. Cobb, the Board unanimously (7-0) approved the Mr. Oxendine, Mrs. White, Mrs. Cobb, Mrs. Lewis and Mr. Perry as the 2025 NCSBA Voting Delegates and alternate for Vance County Schools.

Walk to School Day and Digital Citizenship Week

Ruby Bridges Walk to School Day is a commemorative event held every November 14th to honor civil rights activist Ruby Bridges and her courageous act of integrating William Frantz Elementary School in 1960. The day encourages students to walk to school and engages in educational discussions about activism, anti-racism, and anti-bullying to commemorate her legacy. Each year during the third full week of October, Digital Citizenship is promoted by having a healthy, balanced, and positive approach to media and tech use among young people.

Indigenous People's Day

Indigenous Peoples' Day occurs on the second Monday in October in many parts of the United States. In 2025, it is observed on Monday, October 13. Indigenous Peoples' Day honors the histories, cultures, and perspectives of Indigenous peoples and their ancestors who lived on the land now known as North America. They existed in these areas for thousands of years before the first European explorers arrived. This day promotes awareness of Indigenous peoples' struggles, resilience, and unique traditions, fostering understanding and unity among diverse cultures.

Best Elected Official

Vance County School Board member, Ayana Fritz Lewis was named The Daily Dispatch's 2025 Reader's Choice Winner as Voted Henderson's Best "Elected Official" !

Carver and New Hope Elementary Schools

Mrs. White and Mrs. Lewis praised Carver and New Hope for having students using cursive writing in the classroom. Cursive is a style of penmanship in which the symbols of the language are written in a conjoined, or flowing, manner, generally for the purpose of making writing faster. The North Carolina Department of Public Instruction (NCDPI) mandates cursive writing instruction to ensure students can create readable documents in cursive by the end of fifth grade. This requirement, part of the 2010 adopted ELA standards, means public schools must provide instruction so students can meet the legible handwriting standard by grade five. Specific standards for cursive are included in grades 3 through 5.

Board of Education Standing Committees

Personnel

Mr. Oxendine shared information from the October 7, 2025 meeting.

I. EMPLOYMENT RECOMMENDATION(S)

LOCATION	EMPLOYEE NAME	RACE/SEX	POSITION	EFFECTIVE DATE
Advance Academy	Roderick Williams	B/M	Instructional Support Assistant	09/15/2025
Carver	Tori Reavis	W/F	Instructional Support Assistant	09/23/2025
Clarke	Bonita Williams	B/F	Tutor	09/22/2025
Clarke	Clenette Cheek	B/F	Tutor	09/15/2025
Dabney	Amanda Vaughan	W/F	Teacher	10/13/2025
EOY / LBY	Delores Noel	B/F	Guidance Counselor	09/15/2025
New Hope	Tony Manning	B/M	Custodian	09/22/2025
VCMS	Ethan Bowser	W/M	Teacher	10/13/2025
Aycock	Weldon Perry	B/M	Custodian	10/20/2025
E.O. Young	Patricia Twisdale	W/F	Tutor	10/08/2025
New Hope	Kristin Keeton	W/F	Cafeteria Assistant	10/15/2025
VCMS	Crystal Richardson	B/F	Tutor	10/06/2025
VCMS	Shaolyn Robinson	B/F	Exceptional Children’s Teacher	10/06/2025

II. RESIGNATION(S)

LOCATION	EMPLOYEE NAME	RACE/SEX	POSITION	REASON	EFFECTIVE DATE
Clarke	Latesha Powells	B/F	Teacher Assistant	Other	10/06/2025

III. RETIREMENT(S)

LOCATION	EMPLOYEE NAME	RACE/SEX	POSITION	DATE
Advance Academy	Hazel Henry	B/F	Bookkeeper	10/31/2025

IV. LEAVE(S) – For Information Only

LOCATION	EMPLOYEE NAME	RACE/SEX	LEAVE TYPE	POSITION	EFFECTIVE DATE
ASC	Elaine Webb	W/F	Medical	CTE Director	10/23/25-01/23/26
Carver/EOY	John Twisdale	W/M	Medical	Teacher	09/02/25-10/06/25
Clarke	Olga King	W/F	FMLA	Cafeteria Assistant	08/18/25-09/23/25
E.M. Rollins	Gilbert Caballes	P/M	FMLA	Teacher	10/14/25-11/11/25
Maintenance	Chadwick Denton	W/M	Medical	Groundskeeper	09/10/25-09/22/25
Transportation	Petronia Hicks	B/F	FMLA	Bus Driver	09/10/25-09/19/25
VCHS	Alphonso Collins	B/M	Medical	Community Support Specialist	08/14/25-09/15/25
VCHS	Cicily Marsh	B/F	FMLA	Behavior Support Specialist	08/26/25-10/07/25
VCMS	Rowena Vida	A/F	FMLA	Teacher	09/11/25-09/24/25
Dabney	Raquelle Dunston	B/F	FMLA	Teacher	09/22/25-10/09/25
VCHS	Ebony Mitchell	B/F	FMLA	Teacher	10/01/25-06/30/26

VCMS	Brenda Burton	W/F	FMLA	Teacher Assistant	10/07/25-01/20/26
Zeb Vance	Natonna Robinson	B/F	FMLA	Guidance Counselor	09/12/25-06/30/25
Dabney	Raquelle Dunston	B/F	FMLA	Teacher	09/22/25-10/09/25

***Note:** Extended Medical Leave does not qualify as FMLA.

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

NEW LOCATION	EMPLOYEE NAME	NEW POSITION	OLD POSITION	/LOCATION	EFFECTIVE DATE
ASC	Whitney Davis	CTE - CIMC Tech	CTE Teacher	VCMS	09/29/2025
Advance Academy	Bonnie Edwards	Teacher	Teacher	VCMS	09/26/2025
Advance Academy	Lennis Sample	Teacher	Teacher	VCMS	09/26/2025
Clarke	Latesha Powells	Teacher Assistant	Administrative Assistant	VCMS	09/15/2025
Pinkston	Robin Littlejohn	Teacher	Teacher Assistant	Pinkston	08/28/2025
V3A	Whitney Brown	Teacher	Teacher	VCMS	09/26/2025
Clarke	Michelle Wells	Teacher/Autism Program Coordinator	Assistant Principal	Dabney	10/08/2025
Dabney	Yolande Dixon	Assistant Principal/ Instructional Facilitator	AIG Coordinator	CFI	10/06/2025

VI. SUBSTITUTE TEACHER(S)

LOCATION	EMPLOYEE NAME	RACE/SEX	POSITION	EFFECTIVE DATE
All Schools	Aliesha Lewis	B/F	Substitute Teacher	09/15/2025
All Schools	Angela Hawkins	B/F	Substitute Teacher	09/22/2025
All Schools	Blake Harmon	W/F	Substitute Teacher	09/15/2025
All Schools	Brenda Montague	B/F	Substitute Teacher	09/29/2025
All Schools	Cordelia Thomas	B/F	Substitute Teacher	09/29/2025
All Schools	Delthine Watson	B/F	Substitute Teacher	09/15/2025
All Schools	Dennis Williams	B/M	Substitute Teacher	09/22/2025
All Schools	Destini Paige	B/F	Substitute Teacher	9/22/2025
All Schools	Elizabeth Wachter	W/F	Substitute Teacher	09/22/2025
All Schools	Jackie Davis	B/F	Substitute Teacher	09/22/2025
All Schools	Janice Campbell Harris	B/F	Substitute Teacher	09/22/2025
All Schools	Juanita Wilkerson	B/F	Substitute Teacher	09/10/2025
All Schools	Lakaevyn Holden	B/F	Substitute Teacher	09/22/2025
All Schools	Letecia Terry	B/F	Substitute Teacher	09/22/2025
All Schools	Lisa Hedgepeth	W/F	Substitute Teacher	09/29/2025
All Schools	Loretta Pettaway	B/F	Substitute Teacher	09/29/2025
All Schools	Marie Newhouse	W/F	Substitute Teacher	09/15/2025
All Schools	Pamela Burton	B/F	Substitute Teacher	09/15/2025
All Schools	Pamela Pendergrass	W/F	Substitute Teacher	09/29/2025
All Schools	Frances Robertson	B/F	Substitute Teacher	09/15/2025
All Schools	Shandelan Hightower	B/F	Substitute Teacher	09/29/2025
All Schools	Tannis Jenkins	B/F	Substitute Teacher	09/29/2025
All Schools	Willien Booth	B/F	Substitute Teacher	09/29/2025
All Schools	Cammeader Hammie	B/F	Substitute Teacher	10/06/2025
All Schools	Latasha Cooper	B/F	Substitute Teacher	10/06/2025
All Schools	Megan Cooper	W/F	Substitute Teacher	10/06/2025
All Schools	Nadera Person	B/F	Substitute Teacher	10/13/2025
All Schools	Shirley Pendergrass	W/F	Substitute Teacher	10/06/2025
All Schools	Tyress Thorpe	B/M	Substitute Teacher	10/06/2025
All Schools	Virginia Young	W/F	Substitute Teacher	10/06/2025
All Schools	Zkaria Little	B/F	Substitute Teacher	10/06/2025

The district has 20 projected vacancies.

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

Finance

Mr. Suther shared information from the September 25, 2025 meeting on the contracts, large purchases.

Just Right Reader - This is a textbook resource for 1st graders to increase reading application and opportunities to apply newly learned phonics skills. Students will be able to take the book home and teachers will also use in small group instruction. The books are in English and Spanish versions. \$64,925.00 of State funds will be used for this resource.

Upon motion by Mrs. Cobb and seconded by Mrs. White, the Board unanimously (7-0) approved the purchase of the Just Right Reader textbooks.

Annual Lottery Payment for Debt Service – The annual approval of two applications to allow the County to use NC Education Lottery funds to service debt incurred on behalf of the Vance County School Board. Current Lottery balance as of 8/27/25 is \$2,454,371.48.

Quality School Capital Bond (QSCB)	\$261,621.33
(Construction of 3 elementary schools multi-purpose rooms & NVHS HVAC)	
This will be paid in full on June 30, 2026	

Quality Zone Academy Bond (QZAB)	<u>\$123,154.63</u>
(Roof replacements, painting, installations of energy efficient windows/lights)	
This will be paid in full on June 30, 2028	\$384,775.96

Upon motion by Mrs. White and seconded by Mrs. Hartness, the Board unanimously (7-0) approved the annual lottery payment for debt service.

The County approved the design fee request for Carver Elementary and now waiting on NCDPI’s approval/denial.

Building and Grounds

Mrs. Hartness shared information from the September 25, 2025 meeting. Pinkston roof replacement is almost complete and EMR roof replacement is at 20% complete. Transportation has 15 potential candidates set to attend training next week and still waiting on the third replacement bus from the State. The County approved the needs-based applications and notifications from NCDPI are expected late October or November. The tiny house is near completion and the Kerr-Tar lease is being reviewed. The maintenance department completed 699 work orders.

Policy

Mr. Horner shared information from the September 25, 2025 meeting. The 3000 Policy Series – Educational Programs didn’t have any changes. The remainder of the NC School Board Association summer policy updates were presented except policy 4318 was tables until the next meeting.

1310/4002	Parental Involvement
3210	Parental Inspection of and Objection to Instructional Materials
3320	School Trips
3510	Religious-Based Exemptions from School Programs
3620	Extracurricular Activities and Student Organizations
4120	Domicile or Residence Requirements
4318.OPTA	Use of Wireless Communication Devices (Tabled until November)

4318.OPTB	Use of Wireless Communication Devices (Tabled until November)
5024/6127/7266	Emergency Epinephrine Delivery Systems
5070/5350	Public Records – Retention, Release, and Disposition
6125	Administering Medicines to Students
6340	Transportation Service/Vehicle Contracts
7100	Recruitment and Selection of Personnel
7820	Personnel Files

Upon motion by Mrs. Cobb and seconded by Mr. Oxendine, the Board unanimously (7-0) approved the summer special policies listed above except policy 4318.

Curriculum

Mrs. Lewis shared information from the September 25, 2025 meeting. For the month of August, the district a total of 1,198 contact hours were logged with 716 staff members participating. This year, the district PLCs sessions are hosted at different school sites, while larger groups are offered virtually. All PLC dates for the year are posted on the Vance Core professional development calendar for staff access. In 2024-2025, 304 students were enrolled in the Pre-K program and this year 222 of those students returned to Kindergarten. A survey asking families about their plans to remain was suggested. Fourteen Pre-K students required psychological testing this year and only 3 schools were understaffed with kindergarten teacher assistants. Literacy Intervention trainings are provided and they are a total of 242 staff members trained. Sound Sensible and Spire are programs used to help students reach their tier 2 and 3 levels. The programs offer supplemental, intensive, structured, spiraling curriculum covering phonological awareness, phonics, spelling, fluency vocabulary and comprehension. The technology department completed 212 work orders.

Community & Business Relations

Mrs. Sandlin shared information from the September 25, 2025 meeting. Recent programming and upcoming events were shared. The district has 49 volunteers and 15 confirmed facility rentals. Communications “News You Can Use” newsletter has 400+ readers.

October 14 – VCS Retirement Banquet
 October 17 – VCHS Homecoming Game
 October 21 – Student Spotlight Recognitions
 October 21 – VCHS Greenhouse Ribbon Cutting

New Business - None

Field Trip Request – None

Transfer Requests

Dr. Bennett presented 9 requests to transfer into the district and one to be released from the district.

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

Executive Session

Upon motion by Mrs. Gooche and seconded by Mr. Oxendine, 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 6:50 pm.

The Board returned to the open session at 7:38 p.m.

Duke Energy will install twelve new poles to change the power lines running to Dabney Elementary School. Some trees will be cut to allow the installation.

Upon motion by Mr. Oxendine and seconded by Mrs. Lewis, the Board voted unanimously (7-0) for the installation of Duke Energy utilities under existing easement.

Being no further business, upon motion by Mrs. White and seconded by Mrs. Lewis, the Board voted unanimously (7-0) to adjourn the meeting at 7:39 p.m.

BOARD CHAIR, DOROTHY W. GOOCHE

SECRETARY, CINDY W. BENNETT