

Hamlet, North Carolina
December 11, 2025

The Richmond County Board of Education met in regular session on December 11, 2025, at 10:00 a.m. The meeting was held at the Central Office in Hamlet, North Carolina.

The members present were Cory Satterfield, Chairman; Bobbie Sue Ormsby, Vice-Chairman; Jerry Ethridge; Ronald Tillman; Scotty Baldwin; Bess Shuler; and Daryl Mason.

The administrators present were Dr. Joe Ferrell, Superintendent; Dr. Julian Carter, Associate Superintendent of Operations and Athletics; Dr. Kate Smith, Assistant Superintendent of Curriculum and Instruction; Dr. Tesha Isler, Executive Director of Human Resources; Melvin Ingram, Assistant Superintendent of School Safety and Support Services; Dawn Jordan, Executive Director of Finance; Cameron Whitley, Executive Director of Communications; and Eva DuBuisson, Board Attorney.

Meeting Commencement

After noting that a quorum was present, Cory Satterfield, Chairman, called the meeting to order at 10:02 a.m. Ronald Tillman requested a Moment of Silence and led the Pledge of Allegiance.

Amend the Agenda

Scotty Baldwin made a motion to amend the agenda to allow public speakers to address the Board later than originally scheduled. Bess Shuler seconded the motion, and the Board voted unanimously to approve.

Approval of Minutes

On a motion by Jerry Ethridge, seconded by Daryl Mason, the open session minutes of November 10, 2025, were unanimously approved.

NBPSCF Grant Next Step

Ashley Dennis of Moseley Architects provided an update on the next steps related to the NC Public School Construction Fund (NCPSCF) grant. She began by noting that the first step is simply to acknowledge and celebrate the awarding of the grant, extending congratulations to the Board and the community. She emphasized that receiving this grant represents significant progress and creates substantial opportunities for Richmond County Schools and L.J. Bell Elementary School.

Ms. Dennis then outlined the upcoming steps in the process. The next major action is the issuance of Requests for Proposals (RFPs) or Requests for Qualifications (RFQs) to select the project's designer, design-build team, or other qualified professionals, as required by applicable statutes and Board policy. She explained that the decision regarding the delivery method must be made prior to issuing any RFPs or RFQs, because the required materials differ significantly based on the delivery method chosen.

She further noted that once an RFP for a designer or a Construction Manager at Risk (CMAR) is issued, there is limited ability to change to another delivery method such as design-build without canceling and reissuing solicitations. In a design-build model, the designer and contractor submit jointly, making the RFP structure substantially different. This is why selecting the delivery method before issuing solicitations is an essential step in the sequence.

Ms. Dennis stated that her projected timeline is intentionally aggressive, and she explained the rationale for the dates included. Issuing RFPs/RFQs and allowing adequate response time is a process that cannot be rushed. Firms must be given sufficient time to prepare comprehensive and thoughtful submissions. The Board may also choose to shortlist applicants and conduct interviews,

which adds additional time to the procurement process. Based on these options the projected start date for a designer would likely occur around March 2026.

Following the procurement process, contract negotiation and issuance of a Notice to Proceed would take place, allowing the selected team to begin design work. Ms. Dennis stated that for a project of this scale, the design phase is expected to take approximately twelve months. While some delivery methods may offer modest schedule efficiencies, the general timeline would bring the design phase to last until March 2027 with final project completion to July 2028.

She reminded the Board that this timeline aligns with the one previously presented and emphasized the importance of ensuring the school is fully ready ahead of the start of the academic year. This includes providing time for furniture installation, staff acclimation, and administrative preparation.

Q & A:

- Q (Chairman Satterfield): Although the timeline is aggressive, you believe it remains manageable?
 A (Ashley Dennis): Yes, absolutely. When I use the word “aggressive,” I don’t mean unmanageable. The timeline is fully achievable. I describe it as aggressive because it requires the Board to begin making decisions either today or at your next board meeting. To stay on track the Board will need to move quickly into decision-making so the project can move forward.

Construction Updates

Steven King presented the following construction updates to the Board:

RNGA to an Elementary School	HVAC piping replacement completed 12-2-25. Pipes to be insulated and metal cover to be installed. Painting and general construction bids received and PO’s to be issued. Work to start week of 12-15-25. Playground bids to be received 12-8-25. Working on writing RFP’s (fencing, lighting upgrades, plumbing, sidewalks, rubber wall base).
RSHS Baseball Field Reno	(Substantial completion 12-1-25, Final completion 12-7-25) Owner, Engineer, contractor site meeting 12-5-25. All drainage and irrigation installation are complete. Sod, infield clay, warning track, and pitcher’s mound are complete.
RSHS Track Reno	Substantial completion 12-15-25, Final completion 1-10-25) The rubber running material was delivered 11-21-25. Contractor was supposed to start 11-21-25 but has been delayed due to equipment failures. Email notification 12-3-25, work to start back 12-15-25 through 12-24-25 weather permitting.

Former RNGA General Renovations Contract

Stephen King provided the Board with an update on the former RNGA general renovation project. He noted that an RFP was issued for the general renovations at the school, which include work in several classrooms, Pre-K and EC areas, reinstalling classroom bathrooms, and other construction and demolition tasks.

Mr. King reported that only one bid was received for the general renovations. Prior to the bid deadline, the project was posted on the district website, and several local companies were contacted. When only one bid had been submitted, Mr. King stated he reached out directly to another local contractor, Southern Builders, to confirm their intentions. They informed him before the bidding period closed that they would have to decline due to their current workload. Hawks Builders was the only contractor to submit a bid.

The bid from Hawks Builders totaled \$92,179. A purchase order has been issued to them. Because the project amount is under \$500,000, the district was not required to obtain multiple bids.

A Board member commented that it is reassuring to see staff reaching out to local companies and encouraging participation, noting that while it is not ideal to receive only one bid, it is important to know that all potential contractors were given the opportunity.

Mr. King thanked the Board and confirmed that the contractor plans to begin work this coming Monday.

Former RNGA Interior Painting RFP

Stephen King provided the Board with an update on the former RNGA interior painting project. He reported that three bids were received from Capel Painting, Haynes Painting, and New Life Painting.

Mr. King explained that the original plan was to distribute portions of the painting work among all three major local painting contractors to help expedite the project. However, one contractor submitted a bid that was significantly higher than expected. As a result, the district moved forward with the two remaining contractors and divided the work between them.

The project will be split by hallway sections, with two painting contractors working on site simultaneously. Haynes Painting was awarded work with a contract in the amount of \$58,500, and New Life Painting was awarded work with a contract in the amount of \$48,531.

Q & A:

- Q (Ronald Tillman): How's the past work history of the agencies we've selected?
A (Steven King): Haynes Painting recently painted the upstairs and downstairs gym and lobby all the way to the cafeteria on the bottom floor, and then all the way up past the CIC towards the media center at the high school. New Life Painting painted all the exterior athletic stuff this past summer at high school. So, we use both of those contractors frequently.
- Q (Ronald Tillman): Do the contractor provided warranty on their work and is it in their contract?
A (Steven King): Yes, it is. I met with a local Sherwin-Williams paint representative, and together we walked through the Ninth Grade Academy and tested the paint on the walls. He prepared a detailed packet outlining the required preparation and materials for each type of surface: metal, concrete, and drywall. This packet specified the correct preparation steps, primers, and paint products to be used. These Sherwin-Williams guidelines were included in the RFP, and contractors are required to follow them.

Naming the Soccer Field at RSHS

Dr. Ferrell reminded the Board of a November agenda item in which James Johnson, Athletic Director, and Chris Larsen, teacher and coach at Richmond Senior High School, presented a proposal to name the soccer field in honor of longtime coach Bennie Howard. The matter was tabled to the December meeting.

Chairman Satterfield opened the floor for discussion.

Scotty Baldwin stated that two facilities at Richmond Senior High School had previously been named outside of Board policy under a prior administration. He expressed difficulty denying the current request, as proper procedures were followed, and suggested approving the soccer field naming and retroactively approving the softball field and batting cage to establish a clean slate before revising policy.

Ronald Tillman expressed concerns regarding the lack of established criteria for naming facilities, noting that retroactive approvals could create precedent issues and additional requests. He emphasized the need for a formal process.

Chairman Satterfield stated that Richmond Senior High School has a long history involving many contributors and expressed concern that naming facilities could be inequitable. He noted the Hall of Fame as a more appropriate recognition method and stated he would not support removing existing names.

Bess Shuler stated she was conflicted, acknowledging Coach Howard's contributions while also expressing concern about fairness and the lack of clarity in past naming decisions.

Bobbie Sue Ormsby stated that Mr. Tillman raised an important issue regarding the lack of process. She questioned whether the Board should be responsible for naming facilities and expressed concern about where such decisions would end.

Ms. Ormsby asked Eva Dubuisson for guidance. Ms. Dubuisson stated there is no law governing this issue and that it is at the Board's discretion. She explained that the current policy language is unclear, as it references both "schools" and "facilities." She emphasized the importance of checks and balances, noting that decisions about naming facilities can outlast individual administrators. She also noted that some school districts use plaques or memorial displays as an alternative to naming facilities.

Daryl Mason stated that if facilities are to be named, clear criteria and public notification must be established prior to any decisions. Dr. Ferrell confirmed no such criteria currently exist.

Jerry Ethridge made a motion that the Board not name any school building or field in honor of any individual from Richmond County Schools moving forward. He recommended doing recognition through the Hall of Fame and plaques instead.

Daryl Mason seconded the motion.

Chairman Satterfield clarified that the motion applied moving forward only and did not address previously named facilities. Dr. Ferrell stated that if approved, policy would prohibit facility naming, eliminating the need for criteria.

Following discussion, the Board voted 5–2 in favor of the motion. Opposed: Scotty Baldwin, Bess Shuler.

School Improvement Plans

Dr. Kate Smith presented the conclusion of the 30-day review period for the School Improvement Plans and requested Board approval of the plans.

On a motion by Jerry Ethridge, seconded by Scotty Baldwin, the board voted unanimously to approve the School Improvement Plans as presented.

Community Schools Partnership MOU

Dr. Kate Smith presented the Community Schools Partnership Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between Richmond County Schools and Duke University on behalf of Duke's Clinical Research Institute. This agreement establishes the role of the Community Schools Coordinator.

The MOU outlines the structure and process for implementing the community schools model, which is designed to improve teaching and learning for students at Washington Street Elementary School. It clearly defines the roles and responsibilities of the Community Schools Coordinator and explains how Richmond County Schools will collaborate with Duke University.

The Board's attorney has reviewed the MOU, and the district is prepared to move forward with its adoption so work may begin.

On a motion by Scotty Baldwin, seconded by Ronald Tillman, the Board voted unanimously to approve the Community Schools Partnership MOU.

EC Contract

Dawn Jordan presented an addendum to the AMN Healthcare contract for Board approval. The original contract was approved in the amount of \$173,000. The proposed addendum increases the contract to \$220,000 due to the resignation of the district's Occupational Therapist, requiring the service to be contracted for the remainder of the school year.

This represents an increase of \$47,000; however, the cost is expected to balance out to approximately what the district would have paid otherwise.

On a motion by Jerry Ethridge, seconded by Bobbie Sue Ormsby, the Board voted unanimously to approve the addendum to the EC contract as presented.

25-26 Budget Amendments

Dawn Jordan presented the following 25-26 budget resolutions for board approval.

- ★ State Funds
 - The budget appropriation has been revised from \$58,188,082.20 to \$58,591,755.20 representing an increase of \$403,673.00.
- ★ Local Funds
 - The budget amount in the current amended budget is \$11,751,605.00.
- ★ Federal Funds
 - The budget appropriation has been revised from \$4,636,745.51 to \$11,365,645.10 representing an increase of \$6,728,899.59.
- ★ Capital Outlay Funds
 - The budget appropriation has been revised from \$4,468,276.50 to \$4,584,942.50 representing an increase of \$116,666.00.
- ★ Other Local Funds
 - The budget appropriation has been revised from \$2,617,250.47 to \$2,894,312.99 representing an increase of \$277,062.52.

On a motion by Scotty Baldwin, seconded by Daryl Mason, the board voted unanimously to approve the budget amendments as presented.

Policies for Adoption

Melvin Ingram presented the conclusion of the 30-day review period, asking the board to adopt amendments for the following policies.

Policy Numbers/Regulation Code:

- Policy: 3101 Dual Enrollment
- Policy: 3220 Technology in the Educational Program
- Policy: 3225-4312-7320 Technology Responsible Use
- Policy: 3226-4205 Internet Safety
- Policy: 3227-7322 Web Page Development
- Policy: 3460 Graduation Requirements
- Policy: 4050 Children of Military Families
- Policy: 4130 Discretionary Admission
- Policy: 4150 School Assignment
- Policy: 4152 Unsafe School Choice Transfer
- Policy: 4318 Use of Wireless Communication Devices
- Policy: 6560 Disposal of Surplus Property
-

Discussion and Q & A:

Ms. DuBuisson shared that, during a previous discussion regarding the surplus property policy, the Board discussed whether this dollar amount should be increased, as requiring approval for many low-value items can be inefficient.

Q & A:

- Q (Dr. Ferrell): What amount is typically used by other school districts?
A (Eva DuBuisson): \$5,000 is common.

Dr. Ferrell stated that, as Superintendent, he is not comfortable with a \$5,000 threshold. He explained that when disposing of property belonging Richmond County Schools, he believes Board approval is important. He noted that the current \$500 threshold reflects his comfort level as a policy follower and his commitment to keeping the Board informed and avoiding surprises.

- Q (Bobbie Sue Ormsby): How long had the \$500 threshold been in place?
A (Melvin Ingram): Mr. Ingram responded that Richmond County Schools previously had no minimum amount. The \$500 threshold was suggested by the Board attorney to establish a clear baseline consistent with the intent of the policy.

Ms. DuBuisson provided an example, explaining that if the district wanted to dispose of a low-value item, such as an old mower being sold for scrap on GovDeals, each item would currently require Board approval. Some surplus items are minor enough that Board approval may not be necessary.

Mr. Tillman shared that he appreciates the Superintendent's practice of bringing matters to the Board and emphasized that transparency is always a positive for everyone involved.

On a motion by Ronald Tillman, seconded by Scotty Baldwin, the Board voted unanimously to adopt the policies as presented.

Field Trips

Melvin Ingram presented the field trips.

- Monroe Avenue Elementary School – Beta Club to Greensboro, NC – January 31, 2026 – February 1, 2026
- Richmond Senior High School – Seniors to Orlando, FL – March 27, 2026 – March 31, 2026

Surplus

Dr. Ferrell requested board approval for the following items to be listed for sale on GovDeals:

• Maintenance: 2018 FORD F150 CREW CAB 4X4 (mechanical issues)
• CTE: Dishwasher and Microwave (Ninth Grade Academy)
• Various size laptop charging carts
• 2 Letter Board/Directory Boards (Central Office)

On a motion by Jerry Ethridge, seconded by Ronald Tillman, the board voted unanimously to approve listing the surplus items for sale on GovDeals.

LJB Construction Method Options

Ms. DuBuisson presented information to the Board regarding the different construction delivery methods available for future projects. She explained that during closed session later in the meeting, Board members would have the opportunity to seek legal advice related to these options, including which methods have worked best, the reasons why, and the potential liabilities. Legal discussions would take place in closed session; however, factual questions about how each method works were appropriate for open session.

Ms. DuBuisson emphasized that the Board was not being asked to make a decision at this meeting. Instead, the purpose was for Board members to review the information, ask questions, and consider the options, with the intention of making a decision at the January meeting.

She explained that there are three primary construction delivery methods under consideration.

Single Prime (Design–Bid–Build)

The first method discussed was Single Prime, which is the traditional construction method and the one used for the district's most recent projects. Under this method, the owner hires a designer through a request for qualifications (RFQ). Once the design is fully completed, the project is put out to bid, and a general contractor is selected based on the lowest responsible and responsive bid. The general contractor includes major subcontractors in their bid, and the owner directs the contractor throughout the construction process.

Ms. DuBuisson noted that one of the main benefits of Single Prime is that the owner maintains the greatest level of control. The entire design is completed before bidding begins, and contractor selection is cost-based, which can simplify the process. However, there are several drawbacks. This method requires the most involvement from the owner, as the owner essentially manages the construction. Because the builder is not involved during the design phase, there is no opportunity for contractor input regarding cost efficiencies or constructability. This can result in more questions once construction begins. The process can also take longer since design, bidding, and construction occur sequentially, which can increase costs. Additionally, selecting the contractor primarily based on the lowest bid limits control over overall quality.

Construction Manager at Risk (CMAR)

Ms. DuBuisson then discussed Construction Manager at Risk, a method authorized by the General Assembly approximately 15–20 years ago. Unlike Single Prime, CMAR requires the Board to publicly determine that this method is the best option after reviewing all available delivery methods.

Under CMAR, the district first hires a designer and then issues a request for qualifications for a construction manager early in the process. The construction manager is selected based on

qualifications rather than price, and the district negotiates a fee with the most qualified firm. If a fair price cannot be reached, negotiations may move to the next qualified firm.

The construction manager participates throughout the design phase, providing input and collaborating with the designer, though they remain separate entities. Once the design is complete, the construction manager provides a Guaranteed Maximum Price (GMP). At that point, the construction manager assumes the risk for costs exceeding the GMP, which typically includes contingencies for anticipated changes. Ms. DuBuisson stated that it is rare for projects to exceed the GMP due to these built-in allowances.

Advantages of CMAR include transferring some financial risk away from the owner, establishing a firm price before construction begins, and reducing administrative burdens on district staff, as the construction manager handles bidding and subcontractor procurement. Transparency requirements remain in place, including sealed bids and public subcontractor selections. The presence of both a designer and construction manager can create productive tension, allowing design issues to be identified and resolved early. If the GMP is too high, the district may renegotiate, revise the design, or choose a different delivery method. Construction managers typically do not self-perform work, incentivizing them to select quality subcontractors rather than cutting corners.

Ms. DuBuisson noted that CMAR is generally not used for small projects, which explains why it was not selected for the district's recent smaller projects, but it is well suited for large projects such as a new school.

Design Build

The third method discussed was Design Build, where the district would hire a single entity or team that includes both the designer and the general contractor. Advantages include a simplified process, potentially faster timelines, and reduced staff involvement. Design and construction can occur simultaneously, allowing work to begin sooner.

However, Ms. DuBuisson explained that Design Build offers less owner control. Design and construction decisions are handled internally by the Design Build team, which can limit the owner's visibility and involvement in day-to-day decisions. There is no separate entity advocating for the owner's interests, which can reduce accountability. Because of these concerns, additional legal requirements are necessary to use Design Build, including determining that the district can adequately define the project, meet time constraints, and have sufficient staff to remain actively involved and avoid being sidelined.

Ms. DuBuisson noted that Design Build selections are qualification-based rather than cost-based and that some firms capable of Design Build may also submit qualifications for CMAR.

Board Discussion

Chairman Satterfield shared that after attending a session on Design Build at the Greensboro conference, he initially found the concept appealing, but further investigation revealed its complexities. Ms. DuBuisson agreed, stating that Design Build can be appropriate for certain projects, citing a personal example of a home addition where reduced owner involvement was acceptable.

Chairman Satterfield commented that CMAR appeared especially beneficial given the district's fixed \$44 million budget, which cannot be exceeded. Ms. DuBuisson confirmed that both CMAR and Design Build involve knowing the available budget upfront, but CMAR provides greater control over details.

Mr. Baldwin observed that when comparing advantages and considerations, CMAR appeared to have the strongest balance, particularly due to the Guaranteed Maximum Price. He referenced past capital projects where change orders resulted from oversights, such as missing wiring for automatic sinks, and asked whether CMAR would reduce those issues. Ms. DuBuisson confirmed that CMAR typically reduces change orders because the construction manager is involved throughout design and bears responsibility for costs exceeding the GMP. Mr. Baldwin stated that he appreciated the added accountability. Chairman Satterfield added that the district intends to fully utilize awarded funds rather than return unused money.

Chairman Satterfield asked where Steven King's role would fall under CMAR. Mr. King explained that he would serve as the owner's representative on site during construction or demolition, documenting issues and acting as the district's eyes and ears throughout the project.

Mr. Baldwin asked whether it would be beneficial to move forward immediately to issue RFQs. Mr. Tillman stated that he was not ready to move forward yet and wanted additional time to review liability concerns and past project issues. He emphasized the importance of fully understanding responsibilities and ensuring all awarded funds are spent appropriately.

Ms. DuBuisson noted that making a decision today would not significantly accelerate the process due to the time of year and procurement timelines.

Chairman Satterfield clarified that Design-Bid-Build was used for the previous three projects and expressed that he would not want to repeat that approach due to communication issues between architects and contractors. He stated that he feels the decision effectively comes down to CMAR or Design Build.

Dr. Ferrell reiterated that the goal of the meeting was to ensure Board members were well informed, could ask questions, receive legal guidance in closed session, and take time to consider the options before a recommendation is brought forward in January.

Chairman Satterfield and Mr. King discussed timelines, with RFQs potentially going out in early February, pending attorney assistance. Chairman Satterfield asked the Board if they were comfortable with the proposed aggressive timeline, noting the importance of completing the project with the current Board and opening the school by 2028.

Board members agreed to continue reviewing the information, reach out with questions, and move forward according to the proposed timeline. Ms. DuBuisson added that legal counsel would also be available during closed session.

Cory Satterfield citing NCGS 143-318.11(a)(1), (3), and (6) requested a motion to go into closed session.

On a motion by Jerry Ethridge, seconded by Ronald Tillman, the board voted unanimously to go into closed session at 11:33 a.m.

On a motion by Daryl Mason, seconded by Scotty Baldwin, the board voted unanimously to reconvene into open session at 12:16 a.m.

Personnel Report

Dr. Tesha Isler presented the personnel report and addendum.

On a motion by Ronald Tillman, seconded by Bobbie Sue Ormsby, the board voted unanimously to approve the personnel report and addendum.

Adjourn

There being no further business, on a motion by Scotty Baldwin, seconded by Bess Shuler, Chairman Satterfield adjourned the meeting at 12:17 a.m.