

Hamlet, North Carolina
January 13, 2026

The Richmond County Board of Education met in regular session on January 13, 2026, at 5:00 p.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 5:00 p.m. Jerry Ethridge requested a Moment of Silence and led the Pledge of Allegiance.

Approval of Minutes

On a motion by Jerry Ethridge, seconded by Scotty Baldwin, the open session minutes of December 11, 2025, were unanimously approved.

Recognition of Inspiring Excellence Awards

Cameron Whitley introduced Windy Taylor, Principal of Rockingham Middle School, who presented plaques to two of her staff members: Shana Payne and Nora Carrillo. Next, Cameron Whitley introduced Dina Gunnells, Principal of Washington Street Elementary School, who presented plaques to two of her staff members: Mitch Gibson and Joannetta McBride. These recipients were honored for their outstanding contributions and dedication to students and the school community.

Athletic Recognitions

Cameron Whitley recognized the winners of the fall conference championships in athletics. The winning teams were as follows:

- The county as a whole won the girls middle school track championship.
- Charleigh Nantz won the individual girls golf championship.
- Richmond Senior High School had another standout year for its football program, successfully defending its title to become back-to-back conference champions. The team's hard work and resilience powered a deep postseason run, advancing all the way to the third round of the state playoffs.

Community Schools Washington Street Elementary School, Kendra Fairies

Dr. Kate Smith introduced the newly filled Community Schools Coordinator position and shared excitement about the work that will begin at Washington Street Elementary School.

Following interviews conducted with Student U, Kendra Fairies was selected for the role. Kendra brings experience as a Richmond County Public Health Educator, secondary science teacher, and Guardian ad Litem, with a strong background in behavioral health, community partnerships, and family support.

Based on her experience, references, and interview, she demonstrated a clear commitment to working collaboratively with schools, families, and local partners. She has already begun establishing a Family Resource Center at Washington Street Elementary School and identifying potential

community partners. The Board was given the opportunity to meet Ms. Fairies, and district leadership expressed enthusiasm for the work ahead.

Caddell-McGee Scholarship: Wingate Wayfind Award Recognition

Dr. Kate Smith presented to the Board the following recipients of the Caddell-McGee Scholarship: Wingate Wayfind:

<u>Recipient</u>	<u>School</u>
Cherise Baker	HMS
Jacob Benton	EMS
Macy Bowden	HMS
Erin Carter	RMS
Sydney Carter	EMS
Dean Cottle	RMS
Alexandra Gonzalez	EMS

<u>Recipient</u>	<u>School</u>
Justin Jenkins	RMS
Jayce Prisk	RMS
Nolan Robinson	RMS
Miranda Perez	RSHS
Myrae Broady	RSHS
Erin Drumwright	RSHS
Shalah Mills	RSHS

Construction Updates

Steven King presented the following construction updates to the Board:

RNGA to an Elementary School	Painting and general construction - Work in progress - WIP Playground bids to be received 12-8-25. Review of bids/discussion with BoE attorney - WIP RFPs for fencing, lighting upgrades, plumbing, sidewalks, rubber wall base - WIP
RSHS Baseball Field Reno	Substantial completion 12-1-25, Final completion 12-7-25 Punch list items - Complete Monitoring irrigation, sod growth, and drainage
RSHS Running Track Reno	Substantial completion 12-15-25, Final completion 1-10-25 Rubber running material delivered 11-21-25 Waiting on opportunity to complete work in favorable weather conditions
Various Projects	Central office technology renovations - Complete RSHS football booster sign renovations - Complete RSHS soccer netting replacement - WIP RSHS football stadium restroom (home & visitors) remodel - Planning RSHS partial roof replacement - Engineering WIP RMS auditorium remodel and chair replacement - Planning RMS baseball backstop netting replacement - WIP LJB facility replacement (construction delivery method, professional services RFQ, placement of students/staff during construction) - WIP

Discussion Q & A:

Ronald Tillman asked whether it would be possible to hold a silent auction for the RMS auditorium seats. Eva DuBuisson responded that the Board could sell the seats if they are grouped together and valued at less than \$30,000.00. In that case, the seats could be declared surplus and listed on GovDeals. She noted that the seats would need to come before the Board for approval as surplus prior to being listed on GovDeals.

Several Board members discussed the possibility of selling the seats on a first-come, first-served basis. During the discussion, Bobbie Sue Ormsby questioned where the seats would be stored while awaiting sale. It was noted that the seats would require a large storage area, and currently there is not adequate space available.

Scotty Baldwin recommended removing and selling a reasonable number of chairs rather than all of them. Ronald Tillman added that, in order to follow Board policy, the seats should be listed on GovDeals.

Dr. Ferrell concluded the discussion by stating that there is still time to research the best option for handling the seats. Once additional information is gathered, the matter will be brought back to the Board for further consideration.

Construction Method Decision

Eva DuBuisson reminded the Board that, at the previous Board meeting, various construction delivery methods were discussed and reviewed. She noted that the same presentation materials are available in BoardDocs for further reference and offered to revisit any portion of the information if requested by Board members. Eva stated that, after reviewing all available information, administration recommends proceeding with the Construction Manager at Risk (CMAR) construction method.

Eva further explained that state statute requires the Board to adopt a formal resolution documenting the rationale for selecting a construction delivery method. She reviewed the resolution presented to the Board, outlining the proposed reasons for selecting the Construction Manager at Risk method, including the opportunity for the construction manager to be involved during the design phase to provide ongoing feedback and collaboration with the architect, as well as the ability to establish a guaranteed maximum price while still utilizing a public bidding process.

On a motion by Ronald Tillman, seconded by Scotty Baldwin, the Board voted unanimously to approve the resolution authorizing the use of the Construction Manager at Risk construction method as presented.

★ *Dr. Ferrell requested that the Board hold a work session on Monday, February 23, at 5:00 p.m., for the purpose of receiving and considering a recommendation for architect selection for the project. It was noted that architect selection would be the sole agenda item for the work session. The Board agreed that the work session was necessary.*

Placement of LJ Bell Students

Steven King presented a detailed review of the advantages and challenges associated with each relocation option for LJB students and staff during the new school construction period.

	<u>Pros</u>	<u>Cons</u>
<u>Option #1</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Relocate students/staff to former RNGA Demo existing building Build new Move back to new school 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Relocate students/staff to former RNGA Existing furniture has a place to be moved to Full access to site for demo, utility rework, & construction 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 2 moves required Demo existing building Additional transportation cost (+-\$42,00.00 over 2 years) Additional bus ride times = 10-15 minutes
<u>Option #2</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Leave students/staff at LJB in the existing building Build new school Move into new school Demo existing building 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1 move required No increased transportation cost or bus ride times 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Disruptions to students/staff due to demo & construction New Building needs to be built where existing building is Students/staff exposed to construction Traffic flow challenges due to construction activities Off site parking would be needed for staff

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Power, internet, water services may be interrupted at times due to demo & construction •Potentially no access to playgrounds •Limited site spaces increase the risk of delays and higher construction costs
<p style="text-align: center;"><u>Option #3</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Relocate students/staff into mobile units on LJB campus Demo existing building Build new school Move from mobile units into new school 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •No increase transportation cost or bus ride times 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •2 moves required •30 mobile units are required & there may not be enough room to accommodate all 30 •Cost to lease mobile unites including delivery & setup = \$1,193,080.00 •Cost for septic pumping & temp utilities = \$220,000.00 •Students/staff exposed to weather & construction activity going to/from cafeteria/gym •Access to playgrounds/space for outdoor recess limited or possibly unavailable •Traffic flow challenges due to construction activities •Off site parking would be necessary for buses and staff •Food may have to be brought in from other locations due to utility work/cafeteria closure •Power, internet, water services may be interrupted at times due to demo & construction •Security cameras/intercoms would have to be temporarily installed in mobile units

Following this review, Steven King requested the Board to select the option they wish to pursue.

After discussion, the Board indicated that relocating LJB students and staff to the former RNGA facility was the only viable option, noting that Options 2 and 3 were not practical and did not adequately meet the needs of students and staff. Scotty Baldwin stated that he was voting “with heartburn” on the relocation but agreed it was the only option that made sense.

On a motion by Jerry Ethridge, seconded by Ronald Tillman, the Board voted unanimously to approve the relocation of LJB students and staff to the former RNGA facility for the duration of construction of the new school.

The Board further emphasized the importance of ensuring Monroe Avenue Elementary School staff that the safety and well-being of both students and staff remain a top priority.

Playground Bids for the Former RNGA

Steven King presented playground bids for the former Ninth Grade Academy (RNGA) and requested Board approval. He reported that a Request for Proposals (RFP) was issued and three bids were received from Play with a Purpose, Barrs Recreation, and Cunningham Recreation.

Steven explained that the RFP included a base bid and three alternates:

Base Bid: Certified playground wood fiber/chips to appropriate depth for fall heights, with weed fabric, plastic border, and ADA ramp(s) as needed.

Alternate 1: Poured-in-place rubber fall surface in lieu of wood fiber/chips.

Alternate 2: Rubber tile fall surface in lieu of wood fiber/chips.

Alternate 3: Turf with shock and drainage pad in lieu of wood fiber/chips.

Steven stated that Dr. Carter, Dr. Ferrell, and he reviewed the proposals and selected a preferred playground based on play elements, number of structures, and overall design. To ensure objectivity, an additional staff member who was not aware of bid pricing independently reviewed the proposals and selected the same playground based on those criteria.

Steven reported that Play with a Purpose was excluded from consideration due to an extended project completion timeline of June, lack of warranty, and absence of third-party inspection certification. The remaining two vendors, Barrs Recreation and Cunningham Recreation, both estimated a project duration of approximately 10 weeks from issuance of a purchase order.

The base bid from Cunningham Recreation was \$257,804.33, and the base bid from Barrs Recreation was \$275,132.30. Although Barrs Recreation submitted a higher bid, they were recommended based on the quality of the play structures, overall student experience, and prior successful work with the district, including a recently completed playground project at Mineral Springs Elementary School. Steven noted that the prior project was completed satisfactorily and only had a minor issue that was promptly addressed by the company.

Steven further stated that Eva DuBuisson, Board Attorney, confirmed that selecting a higher bid is permissible when documentation supports that the selected proposal provides greater value and benefit to students.

Bess Shuler asked whether grant funding had been received to support the project. Steven confirmed that grant funds had been secured. Dr. Carter reported that the district will receive \$10,000 from Amazon and \$96,530 from the Community Foundation of Richmond County, totaling approximately \$106,530 toward the project cost.

Ronald Tillman asked whether the playground equipment would include warranty and how often inspections would be conducted. Steven stated that the district contracts a third-party inspector to inspect the districts playgrounds. He further explained that Barrs Recreation will install the equipment then a third-party inspection will follow installation to ensure compliance and safety.

Steven reported that both Barrs Recreation and Cunningham Recreation offer a one-year labor warranty and material warranties of up to 15 years. He noted that certain plastic components carry a shorter warranty period of approximately three years due to sun exposure, while metal structures are warranted for up to 15 years.

Eva addressed the Board regarding bid selection requirements. She explained that state law does not require acceptance of the lowest bid, but rather the lowest responsible bid, taking into consideration factors such as quality, performance, reliability, and project timeline. Eva stated that if the Board determines that Barrs Recreation meets these criteria, then it may be considered the lowest responsible bid, and the selection would be permissible under the law.

On a motion by Jerry Ethridge, seconded by Bobbie Sue Ormsby, the board voted unanimously to approve the Barrs Recreation playground bid 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 \$58,591,755.20 to \$58,601,714.20 representing an increase of \$9,959.00.

- ★ Federal Funds
 - The budget appropriation has been revised from \$11,365,645.10 to \$11,546,962.60 representing an increase of \$181,317.50.
- ★ Capital Outlay Funds
 - The budget appropriation has been revised from \$4,584,942.50 to \$4,855,533.50 representing an increase of \$270,591.00.
- ★ Other Local Funds
 - The budget appropriation has been revised from \$2,894,312.99 to \$3,497,852.55 representing an increase of \$603,539.56.

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

Policies for Review

Melvin Ingram presented the following policies and a regulation code for a 30-day review.

Policy Numbers/Regulation Code:

- Policy: 1600 Governing Principle - Professional Development
- Policy: 1750-7220 Grievance Procedure for Employees
- Policy: 2127 Board Member Technology Use
- Policy: 2302 Remote Participation in Board Meetings.
- Policy: 7425 School Administrator Contracts
- Policy: 7910 Retirement

Field Trips

Melvin Ingram presented the field trips.

- Rockingham Middle School – Beta Club to Greensboro, NC – February 1 – 3, 2026
- Cordova Middle School – Beta Club to Greensboro, NC – February 1 – 3, 2026

Board Members' Comments

Bobbie Sue Ormsby

- RCS has good music and art programs.
- Education Foundation meeting had good attendance at today's meeting.
- Education Foundation Clay Shoot is May 1, 2026.

Jerry Ethridge

- Amazed at how talented singers are at all schools.
- I attended the Lead with Confidence workshop. I encourage all Board members attend that workshop. It was as good as the Fall Law Conference.

Superintendent's Report

Dr. Ferrell

- Martin Luther King, Jr. celebration and luncheon will be held on January 19, 2026, at 12:00.
 - Poster and Essay contest winners will be present.

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

On a motion by Jerry Ethridge, seconded by Daryl Mason, the board voted unanimously to go into closed session at 6:35 p.m.

On a motion by Jerry Ethridge, seconded by Scotty Baldwin, the board voted unanimously to reconvene into open session at 7:05 p.m.

Personnel Report

Dr. Tesha Isler presented the personnel report and addendum.

On a motion by Bobbie Sue Ormsby, seconded by Bess Shuler, the board voted 6:1 to approve the personnel report and addendum. Scotty Baldwin recused his vote.

Adjourn

There being no further business, on a motion by Scotty Baldwin, seconded by Jerry Ethridge, Chairman Satterfield adjourned the meeting at 7:06 p.m.