

The Rockbridge County School Board held their regular meeting on Tuesday, January 13, 2026, at the County of Rockbridge Administration Building.

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

CALL TO ORDER

Superintendent Thompson called the meeting to order at 5:30 p.m. and requested that everyone rise for the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag.

Superintendent Thompson stated that the first order of business would be the Board’s re-organization for the year 2026 and asked for nominations for Board Chairman. Trustee Ojure nominated Trustee Burant for Chairman and passed by a 5-0 roll call vote, with Trustee Burant being elected as Chairman.

- Trustee Berkstresser – Yes
- Trustee Brown – Yes
- Trustee Burant – Yes
- Trustee Ojure – Yes
- Trustee Whitmore – Yes

Chairman Burant asked for nominations for Vice-Chairman. Trustee Brown nominated Trustee Whitmore for Vice-Chairman, and passed by a following 5-0 vote roll call vote with Trustee Whitmore being elected as Vice-Chairman:

- Trustee Berkstresser – Yes
- Trustee Brown – Yes
- Trustee Burant – Yes
- Trustee Ojure – Yes
- Trustee Whitmore – Yes

Upon recommendation by Superintendent Thompson, motion by Chairman Burant, seconded by Trustee Brown, and passed by a 5-0 vote, the Board appointed Ms. Rhonda Humphries as Clerk, through June 30, 2026.

Upon recommendation by Superintendent Thompson, motion by Trustee Berkstresser, seconded by Trustee Ojure, and passed by a 5-0 vote, the Board appointed Mr. Timothy Martino as Deputy Clerk for the calendar year 2026, through January 31, 2027.

Upon recommendation by Superintendent Thompson, motion by Trustee Berkstresser, seconded by Trustee Ojure, and passed by a 5-0 vote, the Board named Mr. Timothy Martino as Superintendent’s Designee through January 31, 2027.

Upon recommendation by Superintendent Thompson, motion by Trustee Brown, seconded by Trustee Whitmore, passed by a 5-0 vote, Dr. Phillip Thompson, Superintendent; Mr. Timothy Martino, Assistant Superintendent; Dr. Jason Kirby, Chief Business Officer, and Mr. Randy Walters, Chief Operations Officer were appointed as School Board Fiscal Agents with the authority to approve the payment of bills if the School Board is unable to meet, through January 31, 2027.

Chairman Burant stated that the committee assignments for calendar year 2026 are as follows:

- Discipline Committee: Trustee Berkstresser, Trustee Brown, Trustee Ojure
- Ad Hoc Committee: Trustee Burant, Trustee Whitmore
- Rockbridge County Public Schools Foundation: Trustee Brown

Chairman Burant announced that the Board will continue to conduct their regular meetings on the second Tuesday of each month beginning at 5:30 p.m.

CHANGES TO THE AGENDA: None

Superintendent Thompson recognized Dr. Mike Craft, former Principal of Rockbridge County High School, who retired on December 31, 2025. Several months prior to that date, Dr. Craft unexpectedly faced health challenges that kept him out of the school building a little more often than anticipated and, as a result, he was not recognized at the December meeting of the Rockbridge County School Board. Superintendent Thompson expressed appreciation to Dr. Craft for his years of leadership, commitment, and dedication to our school division and to Rockbridge County High School. He led Rockbridge County High School for the past nine years with integrity, vision, and did so in a steadfast way with a focus always on students and staff. Under his leadership, RCHS has continued its proud tradition of academic excellence, and innovation in career and technical education, beyond his steady hand during a normal school day. Under normal circumstances, he guided the school community through unprecedented challenges of the global pandemic and together with his team implemented a detailed and thoughtful plan to maintain operations during the renovation of The Rockbridge Innovation Center, just a little over a year ago. Even in the midst of these challenges, Rockbridge County High School continued to improve on many fronts, culminating with RCHS being named last year as a recipient of the Virginia Board of Education Continuous Improvement Award, an honor given to only about five percent of high schools in the Commonwealth. These are just three of the many accomplishments from Dr. Craft’s tenure. There were countless other victories both large and small, some very private, some public; all were done with his dedication and leadership. Superintendent Thompson expressed appreciation that through his leadership, both RCHS and the broader school division, have grown stronger and are better because of his service. After nearly forty-four years of serving thousands of students, not only in Rockbridge County but also Buena Vista, he has more than earned a well-deserved retirement and will be deeply missed.

Superintendent Thompson officially welcomed Mr. Shaun Sparks as the Principal of Rockbridge County High School.

CONSENT AGENDA

Upon recommendation by Chairman Burant, motion by Trustee Whitmore, seconded by Trustee Ojure, the board approved the following items on the Consent Agenda:

- Minutes: 1) December 9, 2025 [Regular Meeting]
- Field Trip and Bus Use Requests
- Fundraiser Requests
- Applications for Use of Facilities
- Appointments and Resignations

Appointments

Professional Staff

Amy O’Meara, Teacher, Mountain View Elementary School, effective January 14, 2026

Support Staff

Bruce Dinges, Custodian, Rockbridge County High School, effective January 20, 2026
Rebecca Hartless, Custodian, Rockbridge County High School, effective January 20, 2026
Tiffany Smith, Teacher Assistant, Mountain View Elementary School,
effective January 20, 2026
Cinthea Wade, Custodian, Central Elementary School, effective January 20, 2026
Garfield Garrison, Custodian, Maury River Middle School, effective January 20, 2026
Casey Brooks, School Nurse, Maury River Middle School, effective January 20, 2026
Dalton Tomlin, Custodian, Fairfield Elementary School, effective January 20, 2026

Substitute

Caitlyn Whitesell
Jessica Kessler
Nicole Wyant
Eva Sheller
Lillian Dove

School Nurse Substitute

Cheryl Hong

Bus Driver

Donald Grant
Jeremy Clark

Professional Staff**Retirement**

David Miller, Teacher, Rockbridge County High School, retiring effective end of the 2025-2026 school year

Support Staff**Resignation**

Sydney Taylor, Teacher Assistant, Central Elementary School, resigning effective January 16, 2026

Abigail Lynch, Teacher Assistant, Natural Bridge Elementary School, resigning effective January 27, 2026

Support Staff**Retirement**

Calvin Smith, Custodian, Fairfield Elementary School, retiring effective February 18, 2026

- **Business Items**

- Approved appropriation to Fund 50 for new grants in the amount of \$5,166.00.
- Monthly Financials in the amount of \$3,792,288.32.

PUBLIC COMMENT: None

BUDGET PLANNING:

Superintendent Thompson stated that Governor Youngkin's budget is still out and the Rockbridge County Public Schools administration is still waiting on current Governor Spanberger to potentially amend the budget.

COMMITTEE REPORTS: None

INSTRUCTIONAL REPORT:

Dr. Matthew Crossman, Director of School Services, introduced Mr. Brian Pims, Associate Director of Operations, Rockbridge Area Health Center. This is year two of a partnership with Rockbridge County Public Schools. Mr. Pims provided an overview of the programs that are offered at Rockbridge County High School and Maury River Middle School, which include medical and behavioral health services. The program at RCHS includes four 10-hour days; Monday, Tuesday, Thursday and Friday / 7:30 AM to 6:00 PM. The program at MRMS includes Tuesday and Thursday / 7:30 to 3:30 PM. Services are available to all students and staff, as well as community members who are appropriate to be in the schools. All individuals are vetted and checked in through the school office before participation in the program; this would include parents of students.

- Trustee Ojura inquired if elementary school students can participate in the program at MRMS.
 - Mr. Pims stated that elementary school students can go to MRMS.

Mr. Pims stated that he and Mr. Crossman have been working on a project with Mountain View Elementary School and Natural Bridge Elementary School to get it started. He provided a piece of equipment called "Tyto Care" which will provide telehealth between nurse and medical staff remotely. This will allow for a prescription to be called in so it will be ready for the parent to pick up from their personal pharmacy. The service provides a convenience for families and provides possibility of keeping students if it is a false alarm and student can return to class and remain in school. This service provides families access to care in general. The Community Health Worker, CHW, provides connective resources in the community, and is located at both locations. He noted that wellness visits will produce notes that are then sent to PCPs for the individual records.

- Chairman Burant inquired if student insurance is still offered.
 - Dr. Crossman stated that student accident insurance is still offered for parents to purchase, which is different than medical insurance.
- Chairman Burant expressed her concern over the past few months has been the threat of not continuing the subsidies with the ACA and didn't know what some people would be able to do. She stated that this will fill that void.
 - Mr. Pims stated that it did pass in the House a few days ago and is now on the Senate for a three-year extension. CHW's are trained to keep up with the ACA as well as Medicaid. There have been several cases where folks did not take insurance because of the cost of the premium. This program is able to set up payment plans and to make health care accessible.
- Trustee Whitmore inquired into the availability of the pharmacy if it is kept on-site. He also inquired about billing.

- Mr. Pims stated that the program works with local pharmacies. The program only keeps vaccines on-site. He stated that the program will bill Medicaid, does accept private pay, and if a person does not have insurance, will provide a slide-scale application.

INFORMATIONAL ITEMS: None

ACTION ITEMS:

Upon recommendation by Chairman Burant, motion by Trustee Brown, seconded by Trustee Whitmore, the board approved the 2026-2027 School Calendar as presented.

Upon recommendation by Chairman Burant, motion by Trustee Ojure, seconded by Trustee Whitmore, the board approved the Rockridge County High School Program of Studies as presented.

Upon recommendation by Chairman Burant, motion by Trustee Ojure, seconded by Trustee Whitmore, the board approved the Maury River Middle School Program of Studies as presented.

Upon recommendation by Chairman Burant, motion by Trustee Brown, seconded by Trustee Whitmore, the board approved the Division Literacy Plan as presented.

Upon recommendation by Chairman Burant, motion by Trustee Berkstresser, seconded by Trustee Ojure, the board approved the Rockbridge Church Lease Renewal as presented.

Upon recommendation by Chairman Burant, motion by Trustee Berkstresser, seconded by Trustee Ojure, the board provided approval for Superintendent Thompson to sign and enter into a contract with the Architectural and Engineering Firm, Spectrum Design, so they can continue to move forward and design the proposed new Rockbridge Recreation Center.

- Chairman Burant stated that it is a similar contract to the Rockbridge Innovation Center and has been reviewed by our division attorney.
 - Superintendent Thompson stated that when the attorney vetted the contract with Spectrum Design for the Rockbridge Innovation Center, it took a couple of weeks and was intense. The same contract was taken to the Rockbridge County Public Schools' attorney for review with change in key items such as names, etc. Superintendent Thompson stated it was a much easier process this time which was more proficient and money saving.
- Chairman Burant noted that there are a lot of parallels to the design process for the Rockbridge Innovation Center to the proposed Rockbridge Recreation Center. She stated that it will make a huge difference to the school capacity, and a great addition to our community.
- Trustee Berkstresser confirmed that Rockbridge County School Board is allowed to sign the contract because it will be on school property. He also stated that the RCSB will not relinquish the property to the county in the future.
 - Superintendent Thompson confirmed that the Rockbridge County School Board will remain the owner. All of the RCPS buildings are RCSB property. The school division applied for two SCAP (School Construction Assistance Program) Grants and obtained \$2.4 million for the Rockbridge Innovation Center. The school division has applied for another SCAP Grant for the Rockbridge Recreation Center and was able to do so because it is on Rockbridge County School Board property.
- Trustee Whitmore received confirmation from Superintendent Thompson that the design and construction success at the Rockbridge Innovation Center have helped to streamline this process.

NEW BUSINESS:

Chairman Burant stated that the Rockbridge County School Board was honored to welcome Delegate Ellen McLaughlin, and Delegate Terry Austin to tour the newly renovated Rockbridge Innovation Center. She also expressed appreciation to seniors Kate Brown and Jacob Wallace, who provided the tour from their own perspective of the RIC and the impact it is having on our students.

Chairman Burant expressed her appreciation to Dr. Mike Craft and offered congratulations on his well-deserved retirement for his unwavering commitment to students and staff.

Chairman Burant expressed her appreciation to principals in honor of Principals Appreciation Week and asked that they relay that to administrative interns, and assistant principals for their dedication and leadership.

Chairman Burant expressed her appreciation to fellow board members, to the Rockbridge County Public Schools staff, to our students, for an exciting and impactful 2025 and is looking forward to 2026.

SCHOOL BOARD

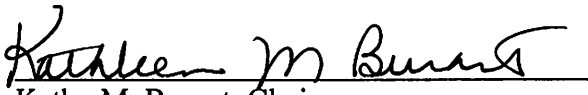
There will be a Joint Meeting with the Rockridge County Board of Supervisors on Thursday, January 15, 2026 / Location: Rockbridge County School Board Office, 2893 Collierstown Road, Lexington, Virginia.

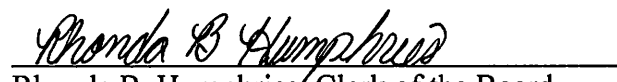
The Rockbridge County School Board will hold a Public Hearing for the purpose of allowing citizen input for the Fiscal Year 2027 school budget needs on Tuesday, February 10, 2026 at 5:00 p.m.

The next Regular Monthly Meeting of the Rockbridge County School Board will begin at the conclusion of the Public Hearing. The Public Hearing and regular monthly meeting will be held at the County of Rockbridge Administration Building, 150 South Main Street, Lexington, Virginia.

ADJOURNMENT

Upon motion by Trustee Whitmore, seconded by Trustee Ojure, and passed by 5-0 vote, the meeting was adjourned at 6:26 p.m.


Kathy M. Burant, Chairman


Rhonda B. Humphries, Clerk of the Board