

Hamlet, North Carolina
February 23, 2026

The Richmond County Board of Education met in a work session on February 23, 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. Chairman Satterfield requested a Moment of Silence and led the Pledge of Allegiance.

Architect Selection for the LJ Bell Elementary School Project

Steven King reported on the Request for Qualifications (RFQ) process for design services for the new LJ Bell School project. Six responses were received. Dr. Ferrell, Dr. Carter, and Steven King reviewed the submissions and narrowed the field to four firms, which were invited to interview on February 17.

After deliberation and consideration of multiple factors, the administration recommended the selection of Moseley Design Services for the new LJ Bell School project and requested Board approval to enter into a contract with the firm for the purpose of beginning fee negotiations for design services.

Upon approval, the administration will negotiate the proposed fee and return to the Board at a future meeting with a contract for final approval.

Steven shared several reasons for recommending Moseley Design Services:

- Moseley designed East Rockingham Elementary School, with minimal problems
- The firm was involved in pre-design work for grant applications
- Previous positive working relationship with the district team
- Quality of work demonstrated at other district facilities

On a motion by Scotty Baldwin, seconded by Ronald Tillman, the Board voted unanimously to approve entering into contract with Moseley Design Services to begin fee negotiations.

Discussion

Board members inquired about the project timeline, particularly regarding demolition of the current building and whether it could occur before September. Steven noted that the timeline is somewhat fluid and will be influenced by the selection of the Construction Manager at Risk.

Ashley from Mosley Design Services confirmed that a 14-15 month construction timeline starting in March would be very possible for a school the size of LJ Bell Elementary School. This would allow the school to open in August.

Test Scores Review

Dr. Kate Smith presented fall test score comparison data requested by the Board and provided members with a detailed packet highlighting fall-only results. She explained how to read the data, including circled fall 2025–2026 scores and the “Proficient” column from the previous fall, as well as how to compare current fall results to historical data using color-coded sections. The data sets included Biology, English II, and Math III.

She noted that comparisons are somewhat limited because advanced and honors course results, which are factored in during the spring, are not yet included. Additional advanced sections this year (three in Biology, three in English II, and six in Math III) could impact overall performance data. Regional comparison data is not yet available and is typically released later.

In discussing the results, Dr. Smith emphasized that school leaders and teachers are intentionally focused on improving student achievement. High school teams are using research-based curriculum, closely analyzing standards, collaborating in content PLCs, and implementing small-group instruction in EOC courses. Administrators are also conducting frequent classroom walkthroughs to provide feedback and support continuous improvement.

Adjournment

There being no further business, on a motion by Scotty Baldwin, seconded by Jerry Ethridge, Chairman Satterfield adjourned the meeting at 5:15 p.m.