CASWELL COUNTY BOARD OF EDUCATION MINUTES
March 9, 2026

The Caswell County Board of Education met in regular session on Monday, March 9, 2026, at 9:00 a.m. in the Administration Building of Caswell County Schools. Members present: Chairman Mel Battle, Vice Chair Joel Lillard, Vennie Beggarly, Lisa Johnson-Knight, Nicole McGhee, Nicole Smith, and Trudy Blackwell. Others present include Interim Superintendent Lance Stokes, Brook Underwood, Jane Frazier, Kevin Brady, Alan Poteat, Kelsey Burnett, John Berdine, Decolia Carter, Bushia Moore, Kawanda Swanson, Shannon Moretz, Cris Coleman, Doug Burns, Nicole Rivers, NaVaeh Smith, James Fowler, Lisa Lassiter, and Board Attorney Ron Bradsher. Connie Kimrey recorded the minutes. (*Note: Others may have been present but did not sign the roster or names were not legible*).

I. A. CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order by Chair Mel Battle. A moment of silence was observed, followed by the Pledge of Allegiance.

I. B. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Nicole Smith moved, seconded by Joel Lillard, to approve the minutes of the February 23, 2026 regular meeting, special called meetings for February 17, 2026 and February 19, 2026, and joint meeting with Board of County Commissioners on January 13, 2026 as presented. The motion carried unanimously.

I. C. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Interim Superintendent Lance Stokes recommended approval of agenda as presented. Nicole Smith moved, seconded by Trudy Blackwell, to approve the agenda as presented with changes as noted. The motion carried unanimously.

I. D. ANNOUNCEMENTS

Interim Superintendent Lance Stokes shared congratulations to the Bartlett Yancey Senior High School Track Team. The track team was in attendance and recognitions were extended to:

- Dalleon Johnson — 3A State Champion (Boys Long Jump); 2nd Place (Boys Triple Jump); 2nd Place (Boys High Jump)
- Zavion Hughes — 3rd Place (Boys Long Jump)
- Ryan Robinson — 8th Place (Boys Shot Put)
- Takyra Henderson — 7th Place (Girls Shot Put)

Also recognized was James Fowler who recently retired with over thirty years of service. James was recognized for his service and dedication to Caswell County Schools.

Bus Drivers of the month for February included Bushia Moore and Kawanda Swanson.

Interim Superintendent Lance Stokes shared we received a check from McDonalds as Caswell was selected as one of the recipients for "Fries for Supplies." The amount was $262.81. We are grateful for the partnership with McDonalds and their donation to the school system.

Chair Mel Battle read aloud a thank you note from Karen Williamson on behalf of the Caswell Art's Council.

Chair Mel Battle also congratulated Joel Lillard, Vennie Beggarly, and Nicole Smith on the recent re-election of their board seats for four more years.

I. E. PUBLIC COMMENTS

Kelsie Burnett
Kelsie Burnett shared concerns with the Board in regards to her child and the issues that have been shared previously with staff and administration. She has requested ABA services for her child and nothing has been put in place at this time. She was told that quotes would be shared with the board at the February 9th meeting and told again that fifteen quotes would be shared with the board at this meeting today. She has not received any input and expressed concerns with the process of receiving an IEP and the failure of the EC Director and the IEP team. Her son is not receiving the support he needs and there have been no timelines for decisions. She asked that the director be held accountable and referenced the attitude has been rude and felt the director should be her child's advocate noting more should have been done.

Megan Bridges
Megan Bridges shared she has a Masters in Science and has been a substitute in the school system as well as a substitute bus driver. Her child attends Oakwood in the Pre-K classroom. She noted there is no certified teacher in the classroom but a long term substitute. She shared her concerns with the teacher in place being physically aggressive with her son and this has been brought to the attention of the principal and noted the teacher has been seen screaming, pulling and aggressive which has been visible to other parents even in the car line. She does not want her child to continue to be exposed to this behavior. She has voiced concerns with administration and has been told the situation is being worked on. Her child was moved to another classroom instead of moving the teacher and felt this was unfair to uproot him from the classroom and environment he is familiar with. The teacher has been very ugly and shared the struggles of her son noting he has been on a feeding tube previously and he is given ranch dressing to entice him to eat; however, the teacher opened a packet of hot sauce and placed it on his plate and forced him to eat this. She also shared staff have been told not to speak to board members or not to ask any questions.

Joel Lillard questioned if she knew who gave the directives for staff not to speak to board members. She shard it is all over the school and again shared that the same teachers who are the problem are still in the classroom but her child was moved.

Nicole Smith questioned the hot sauce incident. Mrs. Bridges shared that the ketchup is provided in cafeteria. Her son is mentally delayed and shared the teacher ripped open the hot sauce packet and put it on his tray.

Trudy Blackwell questioned who she knew about staff not talking to board members. Mrs. Bridges shared it is all over the school and she also has a friend who was in the meetings.

II. REPORTS

None at this time.

III. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

CDL Class License Reimbursement

Updates were shared regarding the CDL procedures as shared at the last meeting. Transportation Director John Berdine answered questions from the board. There were concerns shared regarding if someone does not want to drive a yellow bus and if the schools have the funding to provide reimbursement as it was shared that would be a principal decision as it would be using school funds.

Upon review, Joel Lillard moved, seconded by Nicole Smith, to approve the CDL Class License Reimbursement as presented. The motion carried unanimously.

<u>Recommended Procedure Revision for CDL Reimbursement</u>

Eligible employees will receive reimbursement of up to $250.00 for approved CDL-related expenses such as license, endorsements and DOT physicals.

Any employee seeking reimbursement for obtaining OR renewing their CDL Class B License with Passenger (P) and School Bus (S) endorsements and Medical Certification must meet all of the following requirements:

- Complete two (2) months of employment driving a bus;
- Have no driving incidents during the probationary period; and
- Have driven a minimum of five (5) regular yellow bus routes with in the school calendar year.

Any employee seeking reimbursement for renewing their Class B CDL with P&S endorsement and Medical Certification must also meet all of the above requirements.

Activity bus driving does not qualify toward the five-route minimum requirement. Employees who do not meet the minimum yellow route driving requirement will not be eligible for transportation state funds reimbursement, this includes reimbursement for Medical Certification's as well.

Additional Requirement
All CDL holders, including staff and coaches who drive exclusively for non-route purposes (e.g., athletic trips or extracurricular activities), shall participate in mandatory random drug and alcohol testing in accordance with requirements established by the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction (NCDPI) and all applicable state and federal regulations.

IV. NEW BUSINESS

1. Consent Agenda

   Nicole Smith moved, seconded by Joel Lillard, to approve the consent agenda as presented. The motion carried unanimously.

   Requests for Transfer

   Parker, Audrey Caswell to Orange (4th)

   Additional Fundraiser
   NL Dillard Middle School Pie in the face event

2. CTE Middle/High School New Courses

   Interim Superintendent Lance Stokes shared that the state now requires that rising eighth graders take one computer science class. This does not require any board action as this is a directive from the NC Legislature. This course will be offered at NL Dillard next school year. A new course which will be offered is the Foundations Course for English I and will require board approval.

   - Introduction to Computer Science for NL Dillard Middle School (offered to rising 8th graders beginning next year)
   - A Foundations Course for English I (new course)

Trudy Blackwell moved, seconded by Lisa Johnson-Knight, to approve the new Foundations Course for English I as presented. The motion carried unanimously.

3. Contingency Funds

Per board policy, information is required to be shared with the board if contingency funds are used. These were needed for NL Dillard Middle School due to a power outage.

- Lewis Boiler Supply $3,892.59
- Womack Electric Supply $1,063.39

4. Needs Based Grant = Oakwood Elementary School

Kevin Lynn with Brady Trane Services was present to share an overview of the plans for the $18.8 Million Needs Based Grant.

Brady Trane Services was selected as design-builder based on a RFQ to evaluate Oakwood Elementary School, establish grant scope and support the grant application in May 2023. The district applied in December 2023 and 2024 and were unsuccessful. Upon applying in October 2025, the district was awarded the grant in December 2025. Brady interviewed architects and selected Becker Morgan Group based on their qualifications.

It was shared that Oakwood's needs have been identified noting multiple buildings built in 1967, aging old equipment with electrical overloads along with ADA challenges which require upgrades. Looking at the big need of heating, cooling, and electrical needs, Kevin Lynn shared that Dr. Medina Jones reached out to NCDPI on how we can make the grant work and be accessible to Caswell. It was shared that the fire alarm system is outdated and although it doesn't require a sprinkler system, it will be added when the updates are made. Security system upgrades will also be made. He shared there will be no major changes to the school as far as appearance; however, there will be more internal upgrades made. This is the direction that has been set to align with the budget.

Joel Lillard questioned if we have a signed agreement with Brady. Mr. Lynn shared that a letter of procurement was sent; however, the design phase will need to be signed off on.

Questions were asked regarding specifics on the funding and when the district agreed to the 5% match. Interim Superintendent Lance Stokes shared the grant was applied for and received additional feedback to do the criteria and he informed the board when applying and this was part of the grant.

Concerns were shared that the board did not set aside money and did not agree to this amount nor did the county agree to this amount. Mr. Stokes shared it was discussed at the joint meeting with the Board of County Commissioners.

Mel Battle shared lottery funds are the only source we can use and nothing as far as amounts were agreed upon that he is aware of or what funding would be needed. Mel Battle said he signed the last page but was not given the agreement and was not aware of a 5% match.

Kevin Lynn shared the state authorized the grant value which requires 5% be paid out over the course of three fiscal years and noted we are basically in the first year and will have two more fiscal years. He noted the lottery funds and possibly how you could shift how you use capital funds.

Joel Lillard expressed that the district does not have this funding and the commissioners do not either. He questioned what are the next steps.

Kevin Lynn replied that the district could forfeit the grant or making a small project which would not address as many problems and reduce the amount of match that is required. Joel Lillard shared he is very disappointed the board was not informed of the matching amount for this grant and noted the board should have approved an amount. Nicole Smith questioned what was given to the commissioners as far as paperwork and asked if only the signature page was provided.

Lisa Johnson-Knight questioned when the grant was applied for previously was the 5% included? It was shared in 2023 a matching amount was discussed and it was a three to one match and discussion took place to use lottery funds.

Trudy Blackwell asked the Finance Officer Brook Underwood to give an update on the process. Brook Underwood shared each time the application was signed by both of the board chairs and noted she was not involved and not asked to present anything to the board.

Mel Battle shared that the board was never informed they would be required to have matching funds in this amount and was under the impression it was a 3 to 1 match. He shared $18.8 million is a huge gift and he would hate to see us lose this money.

Discussion continued on how did we get here and Kevin Lynn concluded with his presentation noting that different funding sources may be used; however, the design build was based on this amount and the schedule to work within the budget. The design proceeds through the end of the year with a few more assessments and then NCDPI will review. He shared we are looking at twelve months of construction and if beginning in January 2027 it will last approximately twelve months. He shared this will bring disruption to the school and shared NCDPI will not release funding until the agreement is signed off.

Interim Superintendent Lance Stokes shared that the board will need to move to approve the design phase with Brady as this is the only entity we have worked with.

Mel Battle shared the board will need to clear up facts before proceeding and see the actual contract. Mr. Stokes shared a copy of the contract was shared with the board attorney and he has not replied back.

5. Resolutions

Mel Battle read aloud the resolution for Queen Blackwell and Joel Lillard read aloud the resolution for Jimmy Kistler.

Vennie Beggarly moved, seconded by Nicole Smith, to approve the resolutions for Queen Blackwell and Jimmy Kistler as presented. The motion carried unanimously.

Resolution in Memorial and Appreciation
Of the Life of Queen Esther Blackwell

WHEREAS, Queen Esther Blackwell, was born on January 1, 1924, and resided at 1515 Mineral Springs Road, Pelham, North Carolina, until the time of her death on February 14, 2026, and

WHEREAS, Queen Blackwell, was a faithful and loving daughter, aunt, cousin, and friend and her family's welfare was her major and constant concern; and

WHEREAS, Queen Blackwell, was educated in the Caswell County Public System and graduated from the Caswell County Training School in 1943. She later attended Shaw University in Raleigh, North Carolina where she received her BS Degree in Religion and Social Studies with a concentration in Early Childhood Education in 1949, she also attended NC Central University in Durham, North Carolina and Appalachian State University in Boone, North Carolina. She was employed with the General Baptist State Convention, Raleigh, North Carolina in 1951 and the Board of Education in Wilkesboro, North Carolina for over sixteen years in Lincoln Heights School and later at Caswell County Public Schools at Jones and Duncan Elementary Schools until her retirement in June 1983; and

WHEREAS, Queen Blackwell was involved in numerous religious, civic and social organizations. She served on the Board of Directors of the Women's Auxiliary and General Board of Cedar Grove Missionary Baptist Associations. She devoted time to the Roots of Love and Mammie Judy Barber organizations both in Wilkesboro, North Carolina, the Caswell County Chapter of Shaw University Alumni, NAACP, Dillard Educational and Economic Development services (DEEDS) and Caswell County Senior Citizens; and

WHEREAS, Queen Blackwell formed many wonderful friendships throughout her life and her impact will continue to be felt for generations through the lives she touched, the policies she shaped, the young people she believed in and the lives she guided; and

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Caswell County Board of Education wishes to honor the memory of Queen Blackwell and expresses its sympathy to her family by causing a copy of this Resolution to be spread upon the official minutes of the Board of Education and a copy forwarded to the family.

This the 9th day of March 2026.

Mel Battle, Chairman	Joel Lillard, Vice Chair
Vennie Beggarly	Trudy Blackwell
Lisa Johnson-Knight	Dr. Nicole McGhee
Nicole Smith	Lance Stokes, Interim Superintendent

Resolution in Memorial and Appreciation
Of the Life of
James Walker "Jimmy" Kistler, Sr.

WHEREAS, James Walker "Jimmy" Kistler, Sr. was born April 14, 1948, and resided in Burlington, North Carolina, at the time of his death on February 20, 2026, and

WHEREAS, Jimmy Kistler, was a faithful and loving individual, husband, father, and friend to many and his family's welfare was his major and constant concern; and

WHEREAS, Jimmy Kistler was a graduate of Western Alamance High School in Elon, North Carolina; and

WHEREAS, Jimmy Kistler devoted many years to teaching and coaching girls' basketball at Bartlett Yancey Senior High School in Yanceyville, North Carolina. He also taught at NL Dillard Middle School and in schools throughout Guilford County and most recently at Clover Garden Charter School in Burlington, North Carolina; and

WHEREAS, Jimmy Kistler, in most recent years worked as a courtesy driver for Cox Dodge and Tour Director for Holbrook Field Trips. Jimmy found his greatest joy in working with the students he taught, coached and guided on countless field trips, leaving a lasting impression on the many lives he touched; and

WHEREAS, Jimmy Kistler, was a lifelong member of Stoney Creek Presbyterian Church. Over the years, he faithfully served as Deacon, Elder, Clerk of Session, Sunday School teacher, Lay Reader, choir member, and member of the Destiny Quartet; and

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Caswell County Board of Education wishes to honor the memory of Jimmy Kistler and expresses its sympathy to his family by causing a copy of this Resolution to be spread upon the official minutes of the Board of Education and a copy forwarded to the family.

This the 9th day of March 2026.

Mel Battle, Chairman	Joel Lillard, Vice Chair
Vennie Beggarly	Trudy Blackwell
Lisa Johnson-Knight	Nicole McGhee
Nicole Smith	Lance Stokes, Interim Superintendent

6. Interim Superintendent Contract

Trudy Blackwell moved, seconded by Nicole McGhee, to approve the interim superintendent contract as presented. The motion carried 4-3 with Beggarly, Lillard and Smith voting "No."

Contract runs from April 8, 2026 to May 8, 2026.

V. SUPERINTENDENT UPDATES

- CTE Survey results were included in packet for review
- Flyer was included on guidance for measles and is in line with the health department
- Capital Reserve (888) has a balance of $146,000 to be spent and guidance was requested on how to use the remaining amount for areas at Stoney Creek Elementary

or the East Wing at Bartlett Yancey Senior High School. Mr. Stokes will bring quotes to the next meeting.

Discussion took placing noting that at the joint meeting the remaining balance was approximately $4,000 and it was questioned what has changed. Discussion took place regarding Stoney Creek and noted that some quotes have come back higher and others lower. Joel Lillard questioned that quote amounts having that large of a difference of roughly $100,000. It was shared with the commissioners at the joint meeting that there was a balance of $4,000 left. It was expressed that we need to be transparent and they are questioning why we have not already spent the money as it was approved in July and nothing has been submitted to them.

It was requested that the board be provided with a list of what we have spent and quotes for repairs at the next meeting. Trudy Blackwell asked that the Finance Officer also let us know what amounts have already been spent.

Finance Officer Brook Underwood shared that she did not have that amount readily available as she was not prepared to speak on that today.

VI. ATTORNEYS REPORT

None.

VII. BOARD MEMBER COMMENTS

Vennie Beggarly had none.

Lisa Johnson-Knight shared she visited Oakwood and talked with teachers, visited Stoney Creek and briefly spoke with the principal and observed combo class as they were working on a project and visited South; however, the principal was at North that day and she also visited NL Dillard and spoke with principal and visited classrooms.

Nicole Smith shared she attended the FFA quarter auction and shared it was a lot of fun and the community supported it very well. Hats off to Sarah Chandler for doing good things.

Joel Lillard had none.

Nicole McGhee shared she also attended the FFA event and it was enjoyable. Congratulations to the track team and all of the athletic teams in our district.

Trudy Blackwell shared she visited Oakwood and students were engaged and also spoke with the principal. She encouraged everyone to give their best as the days are getting warmer and thanks to parents for what they do.

VIII. CLOSED SESSION

Nicole Smith made a motion to go into closed session for the purpose of considering a personnel action that involves an officer or employee of this Board (NC General Statute 143-318.11(a)(6); and for the purpose of discussing information that is privileged, confidential or not a public record (NC General Statute 143-318.11(a)(1) and to confer with legal counsel. Lisa Johnson-Knight seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

IX. OPEN SESSION

Nicole Smith made a motion to return to open session. Lisa Johnson-Knight seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

Note: Vennie Beggarly left the meeting during closed session.

X. PERSONNEL LISTING

Mr. Stokes recommended approval of the personnel listing as presented for Items # 1-6. Lisa Johnson-Knight moved, seconded by Nicole Smith. The motion carried unanimously.

Mr. Stokes recommended approval of the personnel listing Item # 8.
Joel Lillard moved, seconded by Nicole Smith, to approve personnel Item # 8 with stipulation that volunteer must be supervised at all times to help with home games and is not to attend away games. The motion carried 5-1 with Blackwell voting "No." (Beggarly was not present).

Resignations	
Central Office / Transportation	Paul Davis, Fuel Truck Driver = Eff. 2/27/26
Central Office / AIG	Annabelle Jones, AIG Support Coordinator = Eff. 2/25/27
NL Dillard Middle School	Dawn Suitt, Instructional Coach = Eff. 4/3/26
Retirement	
Oakwood Elementary	Sharone Hamlett, EC Asst. = Eff. 7/1/26
Employment	
Bartlett Yancey Sr. High School	Charles Saunders, Custodian = Eff. 3/16/25

	Rodney Carolina, Custodian = Eff. 3/16/26
Volunteer	Jonathan Sims, Jr. (to volunteer at HOME games only with adult supervision – not to volunteer at AWAY games)

COMMUNICATIONS

It was shared a joint meeting with the Board of County Commissioners is scheduled for Monday, March 30, 2026 at 5:00 p.m. at Oakwood Elementary.

XI. ADJOURN

Joel Lillard moved to adjourn the meeting, Lisa Johnson-Knight seconded the motion and it carried unanimously.

The next regular meeting of the Board of Education will be held on March 23, 2026, at 5:30 p.m. in the Caswell County Schools Administration Building.

_____ _____

Mel O. Battle
Chairman

Lance Stokes
Interim Superintendent