

BUNCOMBE COUNTY BOARD OF EDUCATION REGULAR MEETING

4:00 p.m. – Call to Order – Executive Conference Room
(Work Session Updates / Closed Session)

Thursday, June 1, 2023

5:30 p.m. – Minitorium

Broadcast live on BCS Communications YouTube Account

MINUTES

BE IT REMEMBERED: That the Buncombe County Board of Education met in a regular session on June 1, 2023, at 5:30 p.m. in the Minitorium located at 175 Bingham Road, Asheville, North Carolina and streamed live on YouTube, when the following business was transacted.

The following Board members were present:

Ann Franklin, Madam Chair

Peggy Buchanan, Member

Rob Elliot, Member

Judy Lewis, Member

Kim Plemmons, Member

Amanda Simpkins, Member

Amy Churchill, Vice-Chair

Staff present: Dr. Rob Jackson, Superintendent; Dr. Jennifer Reed, Associate Superintendent Curriculum & Instruction; Joseph Hough, Assistant Superintendent Auxiliary Services; Dr. Shane Cassida, Director of Student Services; Robert Frisby, Director of Technology; Tim Fierle, Director of Facilities; Tonya Robinson, Director of Secondary Education; Jeremy Stowe, Director of Transportation; Shanon Martin, Assistant Director of Student Services; Jennifer Hand, Scott Emory and Joshua Ponder, Technology Support Specialists; Dr. Stacia Harris, Director of Communications; Tim Reaves, Assistant Director of Communications; and Hann Henson, Digital Communications Specialists; Tina Thorpe, Chief Finance Officer; Lisa Sharpe, Accounting/Purchasing Manager; Lisa Payne, Director of School Nutrition; Dean Shatley, Attorney and Kim Matthews, Executive Administrative Assistant

MOTION TO CLOSED SESSION

Ms. Plemmons made a motion to enter into closed session at 4:10 p.m. and Ms. Simpkins seconded the motion – the motion was approved unanimously.

The Madam Chair entertained a motion for the Board of Education to enter into closed session pursuant to G.S. 143-318.11 for the following purposes:

- Under subsection (a)(1) to prevent the disclosure of privileged and confidential personnel information pursuant to G.S. 115C-319-321;
- Under subsection (a)(1) to prevent the disclosure of privileged and confidential student information pursuant to 20 U.S.C. 1232g (FERPA);
- Under subsection (a)(3) to discuss matters protected by the attorney-client privilege.

ADJOURNMENT

Ms. Churchill made a motion to adjourn closed session at 5:28 p.m. and Ms. Lewis seconded the motion – the motion was approved unanimously.

WORK SESSION UPDATES

Dr. Jackson reminded everyone that on June 6 the County Commissioner's meeting will be a public hearing on the proposed budget. He will be attending as well as Dr. Causby, Interim Superintendent from Asheville City Schools. Dr. Jackson does not intend to speak. After the County presents their proposals to the Commissioners, small group meetings to discuss the impact on our budget can be scheduled if desired. Mr. Elliot asked if there were any reduction in workforce plans in place. Not for this year, Dr. Jackson stated, they are hoping that attrition will help to lessen the budget shortfall. Dr. Jackson also reminded everyone that most graduations will be held on Saturday, June 10. Dr. Jackson stated that under the direction of Madam Chair, that a small Policy Committee, consisting of Mr. Elliot, Ms. Buchanan, and Mr. Hough, will meet soon to discuss a uniform process for developing and updating board policies. Dr. Jackson will work with the group to put plans in place.

CALL TO ORDER

Ms. Franklin called the meeting to order at 5:35 p.m.

PRESENTATION OF COLORS / PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE / ROBERSON HIGH SCHOOL Instructed by Master Sergeant Michael McCrae, USAF (retired) and Colonel Tom Bell, USAF (retired).

MOMENT OF SILENCE

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Ms. Plemmons made a motion to amend and approve the agenda to include the action item "RESOLUTION TO PRIORITIZE PUBLIC SCHOOLS IN THE 2023-2025 BIENNIAL BUDGET" and Mr. Elliot seconded the motion – the motion was approved unanimously.

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SUPERINTENDENT'S COMMENTS

- Dr. Jackson expressed his appreciation to Senator Mayfield, Representative Ager and Representative Prather for visiting classrooms in three schools during “Bring Your Legislator to School Day”. He thanked them for investing time and energy in witnessing the amazing work that happens every day in our schools.
- Dr. Jackson stated that BCS was honored to host Governor Cooper this week as he spent time in the classrooms of Weaverville Primary School. Dr. Jackson expressed his gratefulness to see the leader of our state engaged in classroom lessons with students and teachers.
- Dr. Jackson thanked the Asheville Breakfast Rotary Club, the Kiwanis Club of Black Mountain, the Rotary Club of Asheville, and the Alpha Phi Chapter of the Delta Kappa Gamma International Society for inviting him to speak to their groups about what he has learned about BCS’ incredible schools and for their support of our students, teachers, and school system. He expressed his joy for every opportunity he receives to tell the story of BCS’ phenomenal students and teammates.
- Over the course of the next nine days, Dr. Jackson noted that parents, family members, loved ones, teachers, administrators, and staff members will gather to celebrate the preeminent accomplishment of our students’ academic careers. Each of our eleven high schools will assemble as learning communities to commemorate an incredible milestone in a young person’s life, graduation. We will celebrate our students on this incredible achievement. Through their hard work and through the support of their families, they have earned their high school diploma.
- Dr. Jackson also acknowledged and recognized each of the educators who have supported and encouraged, who have challenged and pushed, who have loved and cared for our graduates for the last thirteen years of their lives. From the instructional assistants to the bus drivers, to the child nutritionists, to the custodians, to the office support personnel, to the teachers, to the counselors, to the school social workers, to the student support teams, to the instructional support teams, to the administrators, and to all who are such important members of the Buncombe County Schools team, thank you. Dr. Jackson said that with each name that is called, with each hand that is shook, he will celebrate you. He thanked them for choosing to give so deeply of yourselves to our children who are so worthy of our very best efforts.
- Dr. Jackson’s message to the graduates noted that as they prepare for the grand adventure that waits for them on the other side of that handshake, they can step forward knowing that they are well-prepared for the challenges that will pop up!

GOOD NEWS

- “Do the Write Thing Essay” Winner – Hannah Grace Tweedie, Cane Creek Middle School
- NCHSAA 3A Women’s Track State Champion 4x800 Relay Team – Eden Barnwell, Katie Johnson, Avery Mays, and Sophia Banks, North Buncombe High School
- JROTC Distinguished Unit Award – Enka High School Air Force JROTC
- NAEA Southeastern Region Supervision & Administration Art Educator Award – Laura Mitchell, Arts Education Specialist
- NC Art Education Association Special Needs Art Educator of the Year – Kelly Holland, Progressive Education Blended Arts Teacher
- NC Technology in Education Society Outstanding Teacher Award – Kate Whittier, Reynolds Middle School
- The Tracy Lea Calhoun Award, Bus Driver of the Year – Bob Roland, Reynolds High School

CURRICULUM FEATURE

• District Structures to Support Multilingual Learners – Ginny Barrett, Title I & Federal Programs Ms. Barrett and Ms. Tsianina Tovar presented information to the Board on the structures and support in place to support the multilingual learners (ML) in BCS. They provided information on the number of students that participate in the ESL program district-wide and by individual districts too. The different types of groups of ML students were also noted. Ms. Barrett gave information on the number of staff that are involved in serving these students, as well as the types of class structure and curriculum used. Ms. Tovar shared some specific examples of program successes in the schools.

PUBLIC COMMENT

-Phillip Hardin, a Buncombe County resident, and retired community school educator, expressed concern over teacher pay, instructional classroom time and the importance of teachers.

-Courtney Blossman, a resident of south Asheville, spoke against using critical race theory curriculum in schools.

-Hallie Butts, a Black Mountain resident, spoke against abortion, and promotion of gender identity issues.

-Teri Kayne, an Asheville resident, and a retired educator, expressed concern over the direction of education in America and lack of funding for public schools.

-Linda Cobaugh, a Buncombe County resident, read information on the open meeting law statutes, stating that she feels the school board has made decisions in closed session that the public was not allowed to hear.

-The following people expressed concern that there are books in school libraries that they feel have inappropriate content for students: Ronald Gates, pastor of a local church in Asheville: Jay Pfeil, a

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Black Mountain resident; Gail Kerby, a resident of Buncombe County; and Shawna Payne, a parent of a Williams Elementary student.

-Bill Robinson, a resident of Buncombe County, expressed concern over a student suicide.

ACTION AGENDA

- School Nutrition Community Eligibility Provision

Lisa Payne, School Nutrition Director, described what this program is and what participation means for BCS. She highlighted the benefit of free breakfast and lunch for our students. Board members expressed their appreciation for Ms. Payne's work to secure this program for BCS students.

Ms. Plemmons made a motion to approve BCS' School Nutrition to participate in the Community Eligibility Provision Food Service Model and Ms. Churchill seconded the motion – the motion was approved unanimously.

- Buncombe County Schools Code of Character, Conduct and Support

Dr. Cassida, Student Services Director and David Thompson, former director, shared highlights from the BCS Code of Character, Conduct and Support that the Board was asked to approve. The information given included: the groups that worked together to develop the plan; the rights and responsibilities of students, staff, and parents; the behavioral level guide and associated response guide; and the universal expectations for determining disciplinary response. They also provide information on the implementation and training that will be administered to staff. Dr. Cassida and Mr. Thompson answered questions from the Board concerning monitoring the outcomes of this plan and the roles to be played by our staff. Board members expressed their gratitude for the hard work and thoughtfulness that went into developing this county-wide plan, and for the consistency it will provide for our schools.

Mr. Elliot made a motion to approve the 2023 Code of Character, Conduct and Support for Buncombe County Schools and Ms. Plemmons seconded the motion – the motion was approved unanimously.

- Approval of Summer School Contracts

Ms. Thorpe answered questions concerning the number of contracts offered over the different districts.

Ms. Lewis made a motion to approve 2023 summer employment temporary contracts for 421 employees and Ms. Churchill seconded the motion – the motion was approved unanimously.

- RESOLUTION SUPPORTING THE CURRENT ELECTION METHOD FOR BUNCOMBE COUNTY BOARD OF EDUCATION

Mr. Shatley read the resolution.

Ms. Churchill asked Mr. Shatley what would the school board representation look like if this bill were to pass? Mr. Shatley explained that our current board is represented by one person from each attendance district and one at-large seat. If passed, the electoral districts will not necessarily follow attendance lines.

Electoral districts have to be more evenly spread in numbers of people living in an area. It could potentially mean that someone would be elected to represent one attendance district, but not actually live within those attendance lines. Or, that voters may not have a board representative that lives within their attendance line, but rather in the electoral district. Ms. Churchill noted that the current voting method that has been in place for decades allows all Buncombe County voters to elect the board members. Ms.

Simpkins stated that this sounds like a very complicated process. Mr. Shatley agreed and said that for this process, the board would need to hire consultants such as a demographer and election lawyer to develop these electoral zones. He also stated that there are some unique issues in areas where BCS and Asheville City School zones would cross and must determine how to separate the district. Mr. Shatley noted that this will also come at a significant expense for the school system to be paid out of local funds.

Mr. Elliot asked Mr. Shatley about this bill and how it came about. Mr. Shatley stated that this is an amendment to House Bill 66 introduced by Senator Daniel. He explained the steps that will happen to put forth the bill for approval. Ms. Churchill expressed her displeasure at the amendment that was added to an existing proposed bill. She feels that it was purposeful so that discussion of the item could be bypassed. Mr. Elliot stated that if this bill is passed, it will cause problems in our system due to differences in electoral and attendance lines, that it will cost the system a large amount of money to implement that could have been used in classrooms and that it is legislation that the Board of Education or local officials did not ask for. He asked the public to contact their elected legislators to express a desire to have our current election method remain in place.

Ms. Simpkins made a motion to approve the Resolution Supporting the Current Election Method for Buncombe County Board of Education and Ms. Churchill seconded the motion – the motion was approved unanimously.

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- RESOLUTION TO PRIORITIZE PUBLIC SCHOOLS IN THE 2023-2025 BIENNIAL BUDGET (added to agenda)

Mr. Shatley read the resolution for the public.

Ms. Plemmons made a motion to approve the Resolution to Prioritize Public Schools in the 2023-2025 Biennial Budget and Mr. Elliot seconded the motion – the motion was approved unanimously.

CONSENT AGENDA

- Budget Amendment #7
- Minutes: May 4, 2023 – Special Called Work Session
- Minutes: May 4, 2023 – Regular Meeting Open Session
- Personnel Report with Addendum
- Student Parking Fees
- 2023-2024 CTE Local Plan Approval
- Approval of the 2022-2023 Facilities Report
- Black Mountain Primary: Easement for Duke Energy Progress, LLC
- Buncombe County Schools District Mental Health Plan
- Renewal Driver Education Contract with Mountain Professionals, Inc. for 2023-2024 School Year
- Sole Source Procurement Request: Voyager Sopris Learning
- Sole Source Procurement Request: Lexia
- Sole Source Procurement Request: Teacher Created Materials
- 2023 School District Proclamation Declaring the First Friday in June to be National Gun Violence Awareness Day
- Owen High School: Athletic Capital Outlay Request

Ms. Simpkins made a motion to approve the items on the Consent Agenda and Mr. Elliot seconded the motion – the motion was approved unanimously.

INFORMATION AGENDA

- Finance Reports
- Notification of Informal Construction & Repair Projects and Change Orders

ANNOUNCEMENTS / FUTURE MEETINGS

- The Board of Education will hold a Special Called meeting on June 29, 2023, at 1:00 p.m. in the Minitorium at 175 Bingham Road, Asheville, NC 28806.
- The next Board of Education Regular Meeting will be held on August 3, 2023. Work session updates and Closed Session beginning at 4:00 p.m. in the Executive Conference Room, and the Open Session beginning at 5:30 p.m. in the Minitorium at 175 Bingham Road, Asheville, NC 28806.
- Dr. Jackson announced that former Superintendent Dr. Tony Baldwin was awarded the “Order of the Long Leaf Pine” this evening at TC Roberson High School for his faithful long-time service to the state of North Carolina.

ADJOURNMENT

Ms. Plemmons made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 8:30 p.m. and Mr. Elliot seconded the motion – the motion was approved unanimously.

Rob Jackson, Superintendent &
Ex Officio Secretary

Ann B. Franklin, Madam Chair

Minutes for Approval: June 29, 2023
klm