PUBLIC SCHOOLS OF ROBESON COUNTY

Board of Education Meeting – 4320 Kahn Drive

Summary of Minutes

March 10, 2020

The Board of Education for the Public Schools of Robeson County convened in a regular scheduled meeting on March 10, 2020 - 6:00 P.M. – Central Office, Lumberton, NC.

John Campbell, Chairman

Charles Bullard, Vice Chairman

Dr. Linda Emanuel

Brenda Fairley-Ferebee

Brian Freeman

Craig Lowry

Randy Lawson

Steve Martin

Dwayne Smith

Mike Smith

Also in attendance were Superintendent Dr. Shanita Wooten; Dr. Robert Locklear, Karen Brooks-Floyd, Melissa R. Thompson and Jennifer Freeman, Assistant Superintendents; Erica Setzer, Chief Finance Officer, and Attorney Grady Hunt.

**ORDER OF BUSINESS**

1. **Call to Order:** Superintendent Dr. Shanita Wooten

2. **Invocation:** Mr. Dwayne Smith

3. **Adoption of the Agenda:** Chairman, John Campbell. The Board approved the revised agenda.

4. **INFORMATION ITEMS**

**A. Students of Excellence**

Ms. Mary Ann Prevatte recognized the students of Excellence along with the Area Chamber of Commerce Representative’s from Pembroke, Red Springs, St. Pauls and Rowland. The following students were recognized:

**Purnell Swett High**

9th Kayleigh Goolsby

10th Garyen Maynor

11th Lydia Ruth Mansfield

12th Fred Anderson

**Red Springs High School**

9th Sheriyah Galbreathj

10h Kirsten Locklear

11th Jazlyn Jones1

12th Baniz Zangana

12th Morgan D. Harris - Highlander Academy

**Lumberton High School**

9th Kinsey Chavis

10th Citlai Capote-Mata

11th Jacob Britt

12th Alyssa Pittman

**Robeson Early College**

9th Grace Rodriguez

10th Elizabeth Lopez

11th Ethan Driggers

12th Marilyn Regules

13th Kayla Biggins/Advanced Senior

**St. Pauls High School**

9th Alicia McCrimmon

10th Bryson Stewart, Jr

11th Jasmine Acosta

12th Amethyst Revels

Fairmont High School

9th Thomas Brooks

10th Alyssa Shockly

11th Perry Brooks Jr.

12th Elizabeth Goodman

**B. Certified/Classified Employees of the Month**

Ms. Melissa Thompson, Assistant Superintendent of Human Resources, recognized the Certified and Classified Employees of the Month.

**Certified Employee of the Month:**

**Travis Jenkins – Deep Branch Elementary School**

**Classified Employee of the Month:**

**Lynn Dial – Peterson Elementary School**

**Bus Driver of the Month**

**Marvin Anthony Jacobs – Red Springs High School**

**D. Safety & Health Update**

Ms. Stephaine Locklear, Director of Nursing gave an update on the Coronavirus that has impact our nation and our state. All Board members received a copy of the preliminary work in your packet. Ms. Locklear presented a presentation of some of the preliminary work that has taken place at the district level. Ms. Locklear said we also have with us this evening the Director of Nursing Ms. Beth Rawls with the local Robeson County Health Department and Health Director Mr. William Smith.

Ms. Stephaine Locklear mention on March 5, 2020 the district team all of the department heads came together to look over a plan that was a framework of some resources that we have gathered from CDC and NC Department of Health and Human Services. We went over how to prepare for the outbreak within our communities, along with coronavirus fact sheet, resources, community services. Ms. Locklear mention that they had come up with a plan that is adaptable with coronavirus or any communicable illness that we will face in our school community. Our policy has driven our work and with that we talk about that policy as well. How to reduce the transmission of communicable disease and minimize illness. Ms. Locklear presented an overview of the plan which all board members received a copy.

**E. Summer Testing Calendar**

Mr. Bobby Locklear, Director of Testing said that according to State Board of Education policy, retesting is no longer an option in the North Carolina Testing Program. However, for the 2019 – 20 school year, the Department of Public Instruction will allow testing at the conclusion of a Summer School Program. The assessments available for Summer School Testing are End of Grade Mathematics 3 – 8, Science 5 and 8, End of Course for Biology, NC Math 1 and NC Math 3.

One of the criteria for Summer School Testing is that the Public Schools of Robeson County must offer a remediation program to all students not scoring proficient on eligible End of Grade or End of Course Assessments (Grade 3 ELA/Reading Not Included). Participation in Summer School Testing and any Remediation is completely voluntarily for students and will not have an impact on the student’s promotion or retention or final grade for a course. **Beginning for the 2019 – 20 school year, students must attend remediation in order to participate in testing.** Parental Permission Letters will go home with students prior to testing and remediation. Transportation and lunch will not be provided during Summer School Testing. Our plan is to begin remediation of these students as soon as test results are available. All schools administering paper/pencil test will test on May 12 – 13, 2020 with remediation beginning by May 15. All schools administering online test will begin testing on May 11 – 22, 2020 with remediation beginning as soon as scores become available. High schools will test on May 18 – 22 and offer remediation to students as results become available. As a district, we will offer a whole day of remediation on June 1, 2020.

Testing Dates (All Summer Testing will be Online)

EOG English Language Arts Grades 4 – 8 June 2 – 3

EOG Science Grades 5 and 8 June 2 – 3

End of Course June 16 – 17

**School Calendar 2020-2021**

Mr. Bobby Locklear, Director of Testing said he it is time to approve the 2020-2021 school calendar. He said the same process was follow to develop the two options as in the past. Mr. Locklear said there were two options: (1) traditional calendar and (2) flex calendars. The votes were for Option A. 712 and Option B. 339. The Board set aside policy to accept the 2020-2021 School Calendar – Option A as presented. Mr. Locklear said the Board provided the Early College High School Calendar, which needs approval. He said Early College High School typically has one calendar and their faculty has voted. The Board set aside policy to accept the 2020-2021 Early College High School Calendar as presented.

Mr. John Campbell, Chairman ask Mr. Mike Smith senior board member to preside because he needed to leave because the vice-chair is not here tonight. Mr. Mike Smith mention that it was understanding that he actual went to the emergency room today and was not feel well. Mr. Smith mention that he is willing to help any way that he can.

**F. Cost Savings Plan**

Ms. Erica Setzer mention that we continue to have our discussion every month related to the cost savings that has occurred due to the school closure and we discussed in

length. In January and February Updates we have shown consistent cost savings. Of course, it various month to month based on the number of substitute cost that is really the biggest area that fluctuate because from month to month that is an area that we do not know how many teachers are going to stay out and be absence and what those cost are. Ms. Erica mention that is why we compare apples to apples. Looking at January 2019 to January 2020 we show a savings of 254 positions with dollars totaling 675,096 Thousand. In February 257 positions at a cost saving of 735,388 Thousand. Totaling since September that we have been tracking this Ms. Erica stated that we are a little over 4.1 Million dollars and as we have indicated this does not help our local fund budget in anyway what these savings from these state program areas mostly from certified teacher allotments. This saving would be use to cover the gaps that we exist in our state budget and those gaps. Ms. Erica mention that she hate to sound like a broken record but I say every month we discuss in three areas (PRC003) which is our custodians, substitute teachers and office staff. (PRC032) which is state Exceptional Children and (PRC056) which is transportation. Transportation we have not gotten enough funds in our state allotment in any of the twenty years that I have been here. Ms. Erica said, that these are the three areas, which this 4.1 million would go towards in helping cover cost, and we would not have to use any of our local funds balance to fill in those gaps this year and that is the biggest positive thing that came from the savings. Therefore, we want see an impact to those local dollars.

Ms. Melissa Thompson, Assistant Superintendent mention that should would like to add is for example I am just going to use at the end of the 18-19 school year we have appropriately five million dollars in our fund balance and when area got ready to balance that we did not have enough money to pay the bills. Therefore, she had to take four million dollars out of the fund balance to pay our bills. Which left us with one million dollars in our savings account. Ms. Thompson said that if we would come up with four million dollars short at the end of this school year we only have one million dollars. The four millions we saved is actually the four millions she had to move out last year but it does not go back. This is just what we know we are going to have to pay as overages. Ms. Thompson said that were we had a fund balance of five million and we had to use four million just to pay the bills. This year if we had played the exact same cards this year we would only have one million dollars. Ms. Thompson said that is where the money difference is. Ms. Erica ask if any questions related to the cost savings.

**G. Finance & Construction Committee Update**

Mr. Mike Smith, School Board Member said that he is the chair of the Finance Committee and Mr. Randy Lawson, School Board Member is the chair of the Construction Committee. Mr. Randy Lawson mention that he would like for

Mr. Hugh McIIwain, Internal Auditor to go first. He mention that the alternative procedures from FEMA this is back after hurricane Matthew when we loss West Lumberton Elementary, our Central Office and everything else at the Central Office complex including the planetarium. We applied for alternative procedures grant and that allows us to combine those projects together to get a little bigger pot of money.

Mr. McIIwain mention that over time back and forth, we have now not settled with FEMA but we have made some head way with FEMA to get a bigger pot of money through the architect and what it would take to rebuild. Mr. McIIwain said that FEMA is asking for alternative procedures for a list of projects for the ninety million dollars that we may receive with alternative procedures this list of projects will be towards that. The money is a grant from FEMA for us to use for similar to what we have loss.

Mr. McIIwain mention that when we had our committee meeting we made a list of projects.

Mr. Randy Lawson, School Board Members said that we had a meeting with the finance committee, which we put together which Mr. Craig Lowry and Mr. Mike Smith are on the construction committee. We met with finance committee and what we bring as far as what we feel like are the best procedures and routes to go because what FEMA is doing is asking what the projects are and the order needed. Mr. Lawson said that they are not talking about location yet but this what we bringing from the construction committee which includes a Career and Technical High School or Schools, Transportation Department because it flooded both times. Planetarium and on the back end will be the Central Office. We know that we might not have money to do that but it is on the list.

Mr. Lawson said that he would like to set aside policy to number these in the order that the construction and finance committee mention and go with that. The board approved the motion.

Mr. Mike Smith spoke about the middle soccer in the finance and construction committee meeting. We anticipate that we would like to start the middle school soccer next year and we have the cost down and the initial cost is about fifteen thousand for the first year to get started for all of the **middle schools but they** did not have enough students to participate. We would like to increment that if we could and get the full board pleasure on that. Ms. Brenda Ferebee, School Board Member said concerning Townsend in the overcapacity were does that fit in at. She indicated that we have to do something and I know that plans have been prepared. Mr. Mike Smith, School Board Member mention that let us not get on Townsend just yet let us do what we have talked about earlier. Mr. Smith mention are you talking about soccer? Let us finish the soccer and we will see. Mr. Smith said that Townsend was not discuss at the construction and finance committee. Ms. Brenda Ferebee indicated it would have been but could not get to meeting because she had car trouble. Mr. Smith mention what is the pleasure of the board in reference to soccer at all middle schools. Mr. Smith mention that we need to set aside policy for approval. Mr. Randy Lawson, School Board Member said he would like to set aside policy for the 2020-2021 school term for middle school soccer. Ms. Brenda Ferebee said that she did not vote and we need eight votes. She indicated that the reason she did not vote was that she felt like the school should come first because of the overcrowdings.

Ms. Brenda Ferebee said that you know that I love the athletics but I choose a school to be taken care of first. (Discussion) It takes eight people to vote according to your policy. Ms. Brenda Ferebee said that she put students over athletics because of the overcrowdings and the fire department is on us already. Like I mention I did try to make the meeting but we had car trouble and I try calling individuals and texting but I was not able to make it. We also had the blencher at Purnell Swett High because they had an issue. I do know if you would support that or not, if not we would go to the next item. Mr. Ferebee said school first. Mr. Craig Lowry, School Board Member mention that he would like to speak about a situation at Purnell Swett High School. About a month before Basketball season was over we had a student at one of the games one night because of the gap in the blencher was far apart that she felled down through almost up to her knees and it took about an half hour as my understanding to get her out of the blenchers. She was not injured but that happen one night. The same night approximately a three-year old child, the gap there was small but that child also felled half way to her ankle to the knees. That happen right next to me at the game. So several of us was able to get that child removed from danger. Blencher has been there since the school was built, so we were going to bring it up next time I just wanted to give that information. That is the reason we were looking at this. I know it has been mention before and we did gain some prices on replacing them but we can bring it up again next month. Ms. Brenda Ferebee, School Board Member said she did not mind voting for it but we approved for the school to be close we said that we would go ahead and move mobile units and we voted on that than and it still have not taken place.

I need to make that motion and it needed it to pass. Mr. Mike Smith, School Board Member said we would but the item on the agenda next month.

**H.** **Budget 2019-2020 School Year**

Mr. Mike Smith, School Board Member said that everyone should have a copy of the budget and hopefully you had time to review the budget and if you have questions at this time. Ms. Erica Setzer, Chief Finance Officer said that we had two meetings were we discuss the budget in detail and we shared some of the driving factors related to increasing retirement rate, matching retirement and hospital rates just for example in 2018-2019 the district has to pay 8.14 percent for matching retirement for all employee. Also four thousand one hundred and fifty seven for hospital. For the 2019-2020 school year, that matching retirement is now 19.7 percent and all indicators are it would be over 20 next year and matching hospital insurance is six thousand three hundred and six dollars. It has been increasingly more expensive each year to continue to employ the same employees whether they receive an increase in compensation or not. Ms. Setzer said and those were some of the items, that we discussed and I can answer any questions. This would become the operational budget and we move forward with amendments as we need too.

Mr. Steve Martin asked if that money had to come out of local money. Ms Setzer said only if we have local paid employees so whatever funding source the employee main salary comes out those matching funds have to follow. We pay our maintenance department out of local so those cost for maintenance only would come out of our local. Ms Erica Setzer said that Child Nutrition pay for their own matching. Also state and federal follow their original fund source. Dr. Linda Emanuel, School Board Member mention if the county commissioner would be given and how much. Ms. Erica Setzer said that is part of the other discussion we had at the finance committee and thinking about the planning for the 2020-2021 school year and putting together our request to the county commissioners. We would have until May 15, 2020 to provide that information to the county. At this point, we are in that planning phase for next year and developing that list and prioritize form of what the Public Schools of Robeson County would like to put into a request to the county commissioners. Mr. Mike Smith, School Board Member mention that we know that the list is not getting any smaller because we have spoken about adding and one was Early College that we have talked about. Ms. Martin mention ask if we sent that list in previous year. Ms. Erica Setzer said yes and Mr. Martin asked if we got back anything on the list. They have agreed to fund the 1 percent in teacher supplements. Mr. Steve Martin said a motion to set aside policy for approval of the budget. Motion to adopt the budget as presented. Motion to approve the budget for the 2019-2020. The Board approved the motion.

1. **Action Items**

Motion to approve the finance report. The Board approved the motion.

Smith’s/Allenton property to be convey to the county based on paper work completed back in 2006 that somehow was not recorded.

Motion to approve the Smiths/Allenton property being convey to the County. The Board approved the motion.

5. Motion that the Board of Education for the Public Schools of Robeson County go into closed session for the purposes of discussing certified and classified personnel (N.C. Gen. Stat.§143-318.11 (a) 1 (6), student transfers (N.C. Gen. Stat. §115C-402 and N.C. Gen. Stat. §143-318.11 (a) (1) The Board approved the motion.

6. Motion to come out of closed session. The Board approved the motion.

7. Motion to approve personnel as presented. The Board approved the motion.

8. Motion to adjourn. The Board approved the motion.

**B. Public Comments**

**Douglas McBroom**

It appears that people realized that you are accountable and decided to remove half you from the board. Mr. Lowry you ran unopposed and you had a lot more votes against

you than for you chances are that you had one candidate enter against you would probably be headed for the door as well. Either way those that are up for re-election 2020-2022 I will do everything I can that you would be replaced as well. In the meantime just do your jobs. Ms. Loistine DeFreece was ineligible to sit on board when she sold her property in May she remained on the board and voted and collected a pay check until October. I have two things why have you not recast the vote and brought this to you in November and it has been a half a year and you have not done anything which means you have refused to do your duty. Mr. McBroom asked why have you not done anything to recoup the money are you saying it is ok for thousands of dollars to spent by the county for someone you did not deserve it are that what you are saying. So maybe you should do that because by doing it you are violating your oath of office. General Status 115C: 35 the county board of education in each county shall consist of five members. House bill 701 that was passed in 1991 said this board could have eleven members that was thirty years ago what kind of past does that help you now. I understand why it was done at that time but there are too many cooks in the kitchen. This is the largest board in the state I will be working to cut the board down to numbers that would work for the children rather than just for you. The board cost general cost a one hundred thousand dollars per year. You want to talk about money, this is money that the board is getting because your board so large that you are getting paid seven hundred and eighty dollars a month. Just to do some of the basis work and that does not even count when going to conferences. Because some of you went to conferences last year and it was totaled nearly twenty thousand dollars and you did not bring anything back to the county that helps, so why attend. I have requested information from Dr Wooten and since it is public records I am sure that I will be getting all the cost of you the board has incurred because I believe that it is very important for everybody to know exactly how much money is being spent on this board especially the past couple of years because it has been wasted money. I spoke with Ms. Ferebee and she talked about her email address not being the correct one. On the website that was the school board website whatever those email addresses are that should be the one you used. There is no excuses for that, it you have a different one and you want to use that and you are allowed to use it fine. Therefore that is what should be on the board. Because there is no way around any professional notice whatever your website is that is you information. If it is not accurate that is your fault so fix it I do not care what you do and what one you use but fix it because it should not be like that it is incredibly unprofessional. When you start saying things like set aside policy like you did right before the close session why set aside policy and had the policies and all you can do is randomly when you feel like it.

**Jeff McNeill**

It is always a pleasure to see students and staff with the Public Schools of Robeson County and parents. My concern is the policy 1710 – 4021 – 1730 concerning bullying I would like some feedback because it would probably be tonight because we are in here know. I would like some feedback on concerning for amendments and the changes of these policies. Which allow the unlawful bullying process for the board, principals, teachers because it say unlawful so we allowing the law to process when it comes to bullying. I understand that these are case by case base for tolerance for certain things but who gets to determine these cases as far as the situation in bullying. This crowd of under paid teachers and principals if so it is unfair to the child who the person that is being bullying. You see I was one of those children and if you do not address any other policy this is one that needs to be revisited. Let look at the Ethnic policy on representing your or standing in for your friends and understand that you can build friendships here on this board and how important it is to have them but in the same breath you are going to create a friendship I am talking about five to five with board members show the same courtesy to the assistant superintendent. When we sitting on this board we are here to serve in the best interest of the Public Schools of Robeson County providing leadership and the full objectives. We create a policy and establish standards and accountable evaluation of the central operation of the school system. We are hiring a superintendent so support the superintendent in his or her administration and evaluate and respond to recommendations made by the superintendent including recommendations pertain to educational programs and facility needs. You are directing personnel base on the recommendation of the superintendent. You are being advocate for the school system for the employees and especially for the students in all interactions with governmental entities in the public. That is first policy which I just read and I do not know how long it has been impacted know when I say I am talking about a broken system it is easy for me to stand here and make these suggestion but it is not. We all know that you are overworked and underpaid, it is like Mr. McBroom said about the stipend you receive let us put the tax payer’s dollars to work and fix a broken system that we have allowed for the last twenty five years. I am not bashing the whole system because you have done some great work but if you unite the board instead of always spitting let us do what is best interest of the children. Also do not forget about the 2020 Census. Thanks

Respectfully submitted,

John Campbell, Chairman

Dr. Shanita Wooten, Secretary