

Board of Education Meeting

April 13, 2026

6:30 PM, in the Stearns Education Center Boardroom

Members Present: Chairman Ashworth, Vice-Chairman Mr. Covil, Ms. Allen, Ms. Gibbs, Ms. Jackson, Ms. Page

Members Absent: Mr. Stich

Others: Superintendent Todd Murphy, Director of Curriculum and Instruction Jan Crump, Human Resource Specialist Tonya Odel, Director of Operations Brandon Schweitzer, and Attorney John Henning, Jr.

Call to Order and Welcome

Mr. Ashworth called the meeting to order at approximately 6:30 PM and welcomed all in attendance.

Pledge of Allegiance

Student Presentation

First-grade teachers Wendy Owens and Shea White from Tryon Elementary School, along with several of their students, presented a poem to the Board highlighting the parts of speech. Fifth-grade teacher Lindsey Lewis and several of her students also delivered a presentation on body systems, in addition to sharing examples of narrative writing.

Approval of March 9, 2026 Board Minutes (Action)

Chairman Ashworth called the Board's attention to a copy of the March 9, 2026, Board Minutes. Mr. Ashworth asked if there were any additions or corrections and there were none. Mr. Ashworth entertained a motion to approve minutes as presented. Ms. Jackson made the motion to approve the minutes as presented. Ms. Allen seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

State Soccer Recognition

PCHS Director of Athletics Michelle Fagan recognized the men's soccer team and coaches for achieving first runner-up in the state soccer championship, as well as for the individual awards earned by several players during the season.

State Wrestling Recognition

PCHS Director of Athletics Michelle Fagan recognized state champion Zalen McCraw and state runner-up Styler Blackwell, along with their coaches, for an outstanding season.

I. INSTRUCTIONAL

Dogwood Health Trust Grant – Chauncey Barber and Ashley Gilbert

FFA officers from Mr. Barber's and Ms. Gilbert's agricultural classes delivered a presentation, including an electronic slideshow attached to the agenda, outlining how grant funds have been and will be utilized.

Passion Projects – Jeanne Ferran and Andrea Walter

Ms. Ferran and Ms. Walter provided the Board with a comprehensive presentation outlining the process from start to finish and shared an electronic presentation highlighting selected projects.

National Board – Lori Byars

Pre-K Director and Polk County National Board Facilitator Lori Byars recognized Jeanne Ferran for achieving National Board Certification and Andrea Walter for renewing her certification. She noted that recertification occurs every five years. Polk County currently has 21 National Board-Certified teachers. Ms. Byars explained that National Board Certification is a voluntary process funded by teachers themselves and requires significant commitment of time and effort. She added that being a National Board-Certified teacher is a prestigious honor. Ms. Byars presented plaques to be displayed outside the teachers' classroom doors.

FranklinCovey Training- Todd Murphy

Superintendent Murphy provided an update on the upcoming FranklinCovey training scheduled for later this month. He noted that the training is being provided through a grant and expressed appreciation for the opportunity, as it will be offered at no cost to the district and conducted on-site, eliminating the need for travel expenses.

Summer Programming- Jan Crump

Director of Curriculum and Instruction Jan Crump informed the Board about upcoming summer programming. She noted that the district is required by the state to offer a Summer Reading Camp for second and third grade students, which will be held at all elementary schools and is by invitation only. The PEAK After-School Summer Program, also by invitation only, will serve pre-K through fifth-grade students and will be held at Tryon Elementary, Saluda Elementary, and Polk Central Elementary. Additionally, a YMCA Summer Program for students ages five and older will be hosted at Polk County Middle School, with enrollment limited to 100 students and a cost of \$199 per week.

II. ADMINISTRATIVE

Child Nutritionist/CEP - Jennifer Peeler (Action)

Child Nutrition Director Jennifer Peeler presented this year's Community Eligibility Provision (CEP) for the 2025-2026 school year. Mr. Ashworth called for a motion regarding CEP for Polk County Schools. Mr. Covil made a motion to approve CEP for the District and it was seconded by Ms. Gibbs. The motion passed 6-0.

Budget Amendment - Debbie Lovelace (Action)

Debbie Lovelace reviewed the budget amendment included with the agenda. Chairman Ashworth called for questions or comments and there were none. Chairman Ashworth asked for a motion that the budget amendment be approved. Ms. Allen made the motion to approve the Budget Amendment, and it was seconded by Ms. Page. The motion was approved 6-0.

Student Transfer Request - Brandon Schweitzer (Action)

The Board agreed that there was no need to discuss the student transfer requests further in closed session. Chairman Ashworth called for a motion to approve the student transfer requests. Ms. Gibbs made a motion to approve the student transfer requests as presented and it was seconded by Ms. Allen. The student transfer requests were approved 6-0.

Sunny View Playground Bid - Brandon Schweitzer (Action)

Dr. Brandon Schweitzer presented to the Board regarding the proposed Sunny View Elementary playground replacement project. He noted that in the fall, Sunny View Elementary teacher Brandy Roddy led an initiative to secure grant funding for the replacement of the school's main playground. As a result of her efforts, the school was awarded a \$15,000 grant from the Gateway Wellness Foundation to support the project. Polk County Schools has agreed to match this amount, and the Sunny View PTA will work to raise the remaining balance.

Principal Preston Allen provided a letter outlining the project and the bid process. The selected project exceeds the Board's approval threshold, with a total cost of \$56,000. Partial funding has already been secured. Sunny View

Elementary is requesting Board approval to allocate local capital funds for the upcoming fiscal year while continuing to raise funds to cover the remaining cost.

Dr. Schweitzer explained that early approval is necessary due to equipment lead times; delays could prevent installation in time for use at the beginning of the next school year. The bid was awarded to Creative Playscapes, a company the district has previously worked with on Pre-K playground projects. Sunny View Elementary has selected the “Charlotte Project” design. Additionally, local efforts are being organized to complete demolition of the existing playground structure at no cost.

Attorney John Henning, Jr. recommended the use of his firm’s Small Projects Form Contract to ensure appropriate protections, including verification of insurance coverage and background checks for all contractor personnel working on school grounds. He also advised that volunteer waiver forms be completed for any individuals assisting with the project.

Co-Chairman Covil inquired about the source of the funds being advanced to Sunny View Elementary. Dr. Schweitzer stated that the funds will initially come from the district’s capital fund allotment, with the understanding that the school will reimburse the district as fundraising efforts continue. The Sunny View PTA has planned multiple fundraisers, including allocating proceeds from its fall festival, and two local churches have also committed to supporting fundraising efforts.

Chairman Ashworth directed Dr. Schweitzer to coordinate with legal counsel regarding contractual matters. He then called for a motion to approve the Sunny View Elementary Main Playground Project as presented. Mr. Covil made the motion, which was seconded by Ms. Page. The motion passed unanimously, 6–0.

Manage Print Services Bid - Brandon Schweitzer (Action)

Dr. Schweitzer presented information regarding the district’s Managed Print Services contract, which is rebid every five years. This contract covers leasing printing equipment and the per-click cost of printing (black-and-white and color), excluding supplies such as paper and staples.

Polk County Schools has partnered with Advanced Business Equipment (ABE) for the past 10 years. While the partnership has been positive, ABE was not the lowest bidder in the current bid cycle. Toshiba was selected as the winning bidder.

Dr. Schweitzer provided cost context, noting that the district spent approximately \$102,000 last year under the current contract with ABE. The newly proposed contract with Toshiba is estimated at \$69,000 annually, with a projected maximum of \$75,000 after minor adjustments.

As part of the new contract, the district plans to reduce the number of copiers and implement secure release printing. This system allows users to send print jobs to a cloud queue and release them at a printer using their employee badge. Industry data indicates this approach can reduce printing costs by approximately 20% due to decreased waste.

The bid was intentionally structured to include a fixed lease cost and a per-click printing rate, with no minimum usage requirements or hidden fees.

Approval of the contract is contingent upon finalizing non-material adjustments, including machine placement and finishing options. Dr. Schweitzer clarified that no significant material changes will be made that would require rebidding (e.g., adding a substantial number of additional machines).

Attorney Hennings, Jr., confirmed the agreement is a lease, and the district will not own the equipment. Ms. Jackson inquired about the ability to print partial color pages and be charged proportionally. This option is not available under the proposed contract. Dr. Schweitzer highlighted the inclusion of PaperCut print management software, which provides detailed print tracking and allows for optional usage controls. PaperCut also prompts users when a document contains minimal color, encouraging them to print in black and white to reduce costs. Additional features include enhanced document handling capabilities, such as direct scanning to Google Drive.

Chairman Ashworth asked if there were any further questions or comments and there were none. Chairman Ashworth called for a motion to approve the Manage Print Services Bid as presented. Ms. Gibbs made a motion to approve the bid, and it was seconded by Ms. Allen. The Manage Print Services Bid was approved 6-0 as presented.

Tryon Elementary School Roof Bid - Brandon Schweitzer (Action)

The only planned roofing project for this summer is at Tryon Elementary School, specifically the two-story building. An aerial view of the original structure was provided for reference, with the project area identified.

Within the identified section, the southern portion consists of the auditorium space, where the roofing system was replaced within the past five years and is expected to remain serviceable for approximately 20 more years. The northern portion includes a shingled roof that is nearing 30 years of age and will require attention in the near future.

The section under consideration for this project is an existing TPO (thermoplastic polyolefin) roofing system, estimated to be approximately 28 years old. After initial failure, a silicone overlay system was installed, which is permissible under North Carolina Building Code. However, as only two roofing layers are allowed, and both have reached the end of their useful life, the structure is now experiencing shrinkage. This has resulted in stress on the parapet walls and ongoing leaks in the original structure.

Due to these conditions, the project will require complete removal of the existing roofing system down to the original wooden decking, followed by installation of a new roofing system.

Bids were received, and Grier Roofing submitted the lowest responsible bid in the amount of \$70,353.00. The project is expected to be completed during the summer months without disruption to school operations.

Chairman Ashworth inquired about the funding source. Dr. Schweitzer stated that the project will be funded through repair and renovation lottery funds. If approved, Dr. Schweitzer will return at the May meeting with the necessary lottery funding approvals, after which funds will be allocated and prepared for disbursement.

Finance Officer Debbie Lovelace and Dr. Schweitzer have been working to avoid advancing funds for projects. Instead, they are coordinating to ensure that lottery funds are available at the county level in advance of project payments.

Attorney Henning Jr. reviewed the bidding process and indicated that it appeared to be in order. He recommended utilizing his firm's standard roofing contract to ensure appropriate protections, including verification of workers' compensation insurance and other requirements. Chairman Ashworth called for a motion to approve the Tryon Elementary School Roof Bid as presented. Ms. Page made a motion to approve the bid, and it was seconded by Ms. Gibbs. The Tryon Elementary Roof Bid was approved 6-0 as presented.

Budget Information – Todd Murphy (Information)

Superintendent Murphy reported to the Board that budget meetings with each school and department have been completed. He noted that, although more detailed information is typically available at this stage, the state legislature is scheduled to reconvene on April 21. He indicated that he is awaiting the outcomes of that session before proceeding with further budget discussions. Superintendent Murphy advised that there is potential for a finalized state budget following the session, and that several key items remain under consideration. He anticipates providing the Board with additional information at the May meeting.

III. OLD BUSINESS

School Pictures – (Todd Murphy - Information)

Superintendent Murphy provided an update regarding school photography services. He referenced a discussion from the March meeting concerning Lifetouch and informed the Board that the elementary schools and the early college currently use Strawbridge for school pictures. He further reported that the high school has contracted with Cady to provide senior portraits and yearbook photography services. Additionally, since the last Board meeting, the middle school has entered an agreement with Strawbridge for its photography needs.

IV. NEW BUSINESS

Superintendent Murphy informed the Board that the district is currently in discussions with Blue Ridge Health, which operates the Health Center at the middle school. He noted that the district has worked with the organization for many years. He further reported that Blue Ridge Health has expressed interest in potentially establishing a presence at the high school to provide services to students a few days per week. Superintendent Murphy and Dr. Schweitzer are scheduled to meet with Blue Ridge Health on April 17 to discuss this possibility further. He stated that he will continue to keep the Board informed as discussions progress.

Mr. Murphy requested Board approval for an overnight field trip: the PCHS FFA trip to the NC FFA Camp in Elizabethtown, NC. The camp will be held June 1-5. Chairman Ashworth called for a motion to approve the overnight NC FFA Camp. Mr. Covil made a motion to approve the request, which was seconded by Ms. Jackson. The motion passed 6-0.

V. INFORMATION

Head Start Policy Council Minutes

Preschool Monthly Report

Pre-K Financial Report

Monthly Financial Report

Month to Date Credit Card Report

NCSBA OFFERED OPTIONAL BOARD TRAINING

Governance Webinar: Community Engagement for Student Achievement – April 23, 2026, 11:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.

Summer Leadership Conference – June 15-19, 2026, 8:00 am – 1:00 pm, Wrightsville Beach

Core Training – July 16, 2026, 9:00 am, July 17, 2026, 12:00 pm

Fall Law Conference – October 15, 2026, 12:00 pm – October 16, 2026, 12:00 pm, Asheville, NC

2026 NCSBA Annual Conference, November 9, 2026, 8:00 am – November 11, 2026, 11:00 am, Greensboro, NC

NCSBA Video Training Library

VI. PUBLIC INPUT

There was no public input.

VII. CLOSED SESSION

Closed Session

At 7:54 PM Mr. Ashworth entertained a motion to go into closed session for the purpose of discussing personnel and preserving Attorney-Client Privilege. Ms. Gibbs made the motion to go into closed session, and it was seconded by Ms. Page. The motion carried 6-0.

RETURN TO OPEN SESSION

Resumption of Regular Session: With all discussion concluded in closed session, Mr. Ashworth called for a motion to return to open session. At 9:32 pm, Ms. Allen made a motion to return to open session. Ms. Page seconded the motion. The motion carried 6-0.

Mr. Ashworth called the Board's attention to those matters on the personnel agenda that required Board approval. Mr. Ashworth asked the Board's pleasure in regard to a motion. Ms. Allen made the motion to approve the recommendations of the Superintendent and the Human Resource Officer. Ms. Page seconded the motion. The motion carried 6-0. Chairman Ashworth called for a motion for the contract renewal portion of the personnel agenda.

Ms. Jackson made a motion to approve the amended contract renewals presented and it was seconded by Ms. Page. The contracts that were on the amended list were approved 6-0.

Information:

Amy Scott	Family Services Specialist	All Schools	Rescinded Retirement	
Ginger Rackley	Teacher	Saluda	Retiring	
Mark Emory	Teacher Assistant	Transferred from PCHS to PCMS		
Blair Ruth	Teacher Assistant	Transferred from PCMS to PCHS		
Lisa Wessell	Teacher Assistant	Forbes	Retiring	
Barbara Davis	Cafeteria Worker	PCMS	Resigning	
Sydney Cash	Varsity Head Cheer Coach	PCHS	Resigning	
Stephanie Fletcher	Teacher	Saluda	Resigning	
Lindsey Burnett	Pre-K Teacher	SVE	Resigning	
Tiffany Dennis	PEAK Afterschool Director	All	Resigning	
Jordan Heafner	Custodian	PCMS	Terminated	
Kennedy Edwards	Teacher	Saluda	FMLA	
Brooke Brandt	Teacher	TES	FMLA	

Action:

Name	Position	School	Hometown	College	Licensure Area	Years Exp
Madison Magyar	Teacher	Saluda	Greensboro, NC	UNC Greensboro	Elem Ed, EC	2
Lauren Delgado	Teacher	Saluda	Lutz, FL	University of South Florida	Elem Ed	14
Leah Hudgens	Teacher	TES	Boiling Springs, SC	Western Governors University	Pending	0
Lillian Nicole Marcengill	Teacher	Saluda	Rock Hill, SC	Walden University	Elem Ed	9
Madelyn Terrell	Teacher	PCHS	Charlotte, NC	NC State	Mathematics 6-12	3
April Conner	PT Cafeteria Worker	PCHS	Forest City, NC	N/A	N/A	N/A
Debra Bailey	Substitute	All	Columbus, NC	N/A	N/A	N/A
Kaitlyn Mackenzie Carroll	Add to Sub List	All	Tryon, NC	N/A	N/A	N/A
Lindsay Laura Cooper	Substitute	All	Columbus, NC	N/A	N/A	N/A
Frank O. McFarland	Bus Driver	All	Rutherfordton, NC	N/A	N/A	N/A

VIII. ADJOURNMENT

With no more business to come before the Board, Mr. Ashworth declared the meeting adjourned at 9:33 pm.

Mr. Ashworth, Board Chair

Todd Murphy, Board Secretary
TM/RC