

Board of Education Meeting
January 10, 2022
6:30 PM, at Polk County High School Auditorium

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

Members Absent: None

Others: Superintendent Aaron Greene, Director of Curriculum and Instruction Jan Crump, Assistant Superintendent Dave Scherping, Finance Officer Debbie Lovelace and Attorney Phillip Feagan

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

Approval of December 13, 2021 Board Minutes (Action)

Chairman Ashworth called the Board's attention to a copy of the December 13, 2021 Board Minutes. Mr. Ashworth asked if there were any additions or corrections and there were none. Mr. Ashworth entertained a motion to approve both sets of minutes. Ms. Jackson made the motion to approve the minutes as presented. Ms. Page seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

Appointment of Board Member- Saluda Township

Chairman Ashworth stated that due to the recent resignation of Ms. Sara Bell, Board of Education member for Saluda Township, the Board would need to appoint a new member for Saluda township until the next general election. Chairman Ashworth entertained a motion for the appointment of the new Member of the Board. Mr. Covil made a motion to appoint Robert Parsons as the new member of the Polk County Board of Education for the Saluda Township and it was seconded by Ms. Allen. The motion carried unanimously. Mr. Robert Parsons was appointed the Polk County Board of Education member for Saluda Township. Chairman Ashworth called up Pam Hyder, Polk County Clerk of Court, to swear in Mr. Parsons. Mr. Parsons repeated and signed his oath then it was sealed by Ms. Hyder before Mr. Parsons took his seat.

Board Appreciation Month: Recognition of Polk County Board of Education - Superintendent Greene

Mr. Greene read a statement to the Board expressing his appreciation of the Board's valuable service and dedication to excellence. The Superintendent thanked the Board for what they do for Polk County Schools and Polk County's students. A copy of the statement has been included in a press release and is available upon request.

I. INSTRUCTIONAL

ESSER Purchase Order Approval - Action

Assistant Superintendent Dave Scherping spoke to the Board regarding pending ESSER purchase orders being submitted for approval. Currently, Board Policy states that purchase orders over \$ 50,000 must be approved by the Board. Mr. Scherping went over both the Outdoor classroom and classroom instructional displays purchase orders in detail, and there was discussion regarding both. Chairman Ashworth entertained a motion to approve both purchase orders discussed. Ms. Allen made a motion to approve both purchase orders and it was seconded by Ms. Gibbs. The

outdoor classroom purchase order and the classroom instructional displays purchase order were approved on a vote of 7-0.

II. ADMINISTRATIVE

Budget Amendment - Debbie Lovelace (Action)

Debbie Lovelace reviewed the budget amendment included with the agenda. Chairman Ashworth asked for a motion that the budget amendment be approved as submitted. Ms. Allen made the motion, which Ms. Page seconded. Chairman Ashworth called for questions or comments. Ms. Jackson asked if the COVID grant money was used for testing, PPE, etc.? Ms. Lovelace answered that this money was used for an additional nurse to help with testing and COVID protocols. The motion was approved 7-0.

2022-2023 Budget Calendar - Debbie Lovelace (Action)

Superintendent Greene presented the 2022-2023 Budget Calendar to the Board for approval. Chairman Ashworth called for a motion regarding the 2022-2023 Budget Calendar. Mr. Covil made the motion to approve the calendar as presented by Superintendent Greene. Ms. Jackson seconded the motion. The motion carried 7-0.

Discretionary Admission Application - Aaron Greene (Action)

Superintendent Greene addressed the Board regarding the Discretionary Admission Application that the Board had included in their closed session packet. Mr. Greene stated that he would like to have further discussion in closed session regarding this request. The Board agreed to take this application into their closed session part of the meeting and vote after the discussion.

PCHS HVAC Project Update - Dave Scherping (Information)

Assistant Superintendent Dave Scherping presented a PCHS HVAC Project Update to the Board. The fourth phase of the project has been halted for a couple of weeks due to the construction crew having COVID. The project was on time but this situation with illness is causing a delay. There is a possibility the phase will be completed on time once the crew returns to work. Mr. Scherping continued detailed discussion of the other phases coming in the process.

Employee Compensation Changes - Aaron Greene (Action)

Superintendent Greene offered a summary of important employee compensation changes and bonus allotments. Administration will be seeking approval for specific items, like modification of ESSER budgets to ensure staff paid with federal and local funds are compensated commensurate with their state-paid colleagues. The Board will also receive updates on staff raises and how those disbursements will take place. Administration has been working to figure out the employee compensation changes and bonuses found in the newly adopted budget - the number of and complexity of these changes has been very difficult to digest and the District continues to receive changing guidance from NC DPI. In many cases the raises and bonuses cover state employees only, meaning the Board will have to “approve” these changes for non-state funded positions and authorize Administration to utilize funds from ESSER or local allotments to make sure all employees receive “similar” compensation. Administration is also asking the Board to allow us to make changes to the Districts ESSER Planning Allotment to set aside monies for a one-time “retention bonus” to all employees. The final amount and final details will be brought to the February meeting for approval. Administration plans to come back to the Board in February to seek approval for a Bus Driver pay increase above current raises. Administration will update the Board on any new information or changes that come from NCDPI or result from continued finance meetings. Ms. Jackson asked for clarification on what the motion should be. Superintendent Greene stated that Administration is asking approval for all locally, state, and federally paid employees to receive the same increase in compensation and bonuses, and give flexibility in the planning allotment budget for ESSER to give a local retention bonus to employees. Chairman Ashworth entertained a motion to approve the requested motion. Mr. Covil made a motion to approve the motion and it was seconded by Ms. Gibbs. The motion was approved on a vote of 7-0.

School Update - Aaron Greene (Action)

Superintendent Greene gave a School Update to the Board. He stated that currently the District has a temporary mask mandate and the county still has significant community spread. The current positivity rate is at 20% in Polk County. School positivity rates have increased since returning to school from Christmas break. The previous quarantine rules have changed to five days as long as the person is not symptomatic. Superintendent Greene presented information from the CDC, DHHS and the local health department to the Board. Administration is looking at the “Test to Stay” program to see if it will benefit the district. This would allow students who are close contacts with no symptoms to be tested, and if the test is negative, they would be allowed to stay in school. Superintendent Greene stated that temporary closure of classrooms or schools may happen during the upcoming weeks. Administration recommended using the CDC’s community transmission status that uses two different measures, the cases per 100,000 and the percent positive as the “metric” to return to mask optional instead of only the percent positive. Administration recommends to continue the temporary mask requirement until the next meeting or use the CDCs community transmission status to determine if Polk County goes out of High Transmission Range go to mask optional. Chairman Ashworth called for questions or comments from the Board and there were none. Chairman Ashworth entertained a motion to act on the subject of masks. Ms. Jackson made a motion to make mask optional as of February 1 unless the CDC metric determines Polk County out of High Range for seven days prior to February 1, and if that is so, go mask optional as of that date. Ms. Gibbs seconded the motion. Mr. Ashworth stated that he was on board with setting a date until this current surge but now does not want to set a date because of the uncertainty of the virus. The motion failed 2-5. Mr. Covil made a motion to use the CDC metric and when Polk County goes below high for seven days make mask optional. It was seconded by Ms. Allen. Chairman Ashworth called for any questions or comments and there were none. The motion passed 6-1.

III. OLD BUSINESS

None

IV. NEW BUSINESS

Updated 2021-2022 School Calendars - Dave Scherping (Action)

Assistant Superintendent Dave Scherping went over the attached calendars for Saluda Elementary and Tryon Elementary Schools. Saluda Elementary has inclement weather on 1/3/2022 and Tryon Elementary had a day out on 8/23/2021 due to water issues and 1/7/2022 due to staffing issues. Make up days have not been added to the calendar for the days as of yet. Currently, Saluda is at 179 student days and Tryon is at 178 student days. These calendars only show the days out currently. Ms. Gibbs made a motion to approve the attached calendars and it was seconded by Ms. Jackson. Chairman Ashworth called for questions or comments and there were none. The attached calendars were approved 7-0.

V. INFORMATION

December Preschool Monthly Report Presented to the Board
Pre-K Financial Report Presented to the Board
Monthly Financial Report Presented to the Board
Month to Date Credit Card Report Presented to the Board
January 17, 2022 - Optional Teacher Workday
January 18, 2022 - Required Teacher Workday

BOARD TRAINING

Board Officers Academy - Virtual Event- February 18, 2022 - 10:00am-3:00pm
Spring Law Conference - Virtual Event - March 3 @10:00am - March 4 @ 1:00pm

VI. PUBLIC INPUT

Chairman Ashworth stated that there were only four members of the community to speak so there is no action needed at this time. Several Polk County residents attended the meeting and offered public input to the Board. A verbatim account of public input and all open meeting Board discussion is available via digital audio recording.

VII. CLOSED SESSION

Closed Session

At 7:23 PM Mr. Ashworth entertained a motion to go into closed session for the purpose of discussing personnel, and a student matter. Ms. Jackson made the motion to go into closed session and it was seconded by Ms. Gibbs. The motion carried 7-0.

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 7:44 pm, Ms. Jackson made a motion to return to open session. Ms. Page seconded the motion. The motion carried 7-0.

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. Gibbs seconded the motion. The motion carried 7-0.

Mr. Ashworth called the Board's attention to the Discretionary Admission application that was discussed during closed session. Mr. Ashworth asked the Board's pleasure in regard to a motion. Ms. Jackson made a motion to deny the Discretionary Admission request and it was seconded by Mr. Covil. The request was denied on a vote of 7-0.

There was discussion regarding moving the February Board of Education meeting to a different date. Ms. Gibbs made a motion to move the February Board meeting date to February 7 at 6:30 at the Stearns Education Center Boardroom and it was seconded by Ms. Jackson. The motion was approved 7-0. The February Board of Education meeting will be on Monday, February 7, at 6:30 at the Stearns Education Center Boardroom.

Information:

Name	Position	School	
Melanie Harris	Food Service	TES	C Leave
Jamie Kilgore	Teacher	TES	C Leave
Lisa Pack	Teacher	TES	C Leave
Kalie McCrain	Speech	PC	C Leave
Wanda Reid	Food Service	PC	C Leave
Gloria Logan	Food Service	TES	C Leave
Nancy Johnson	Teacher Assistant	TES	C Leave
Katie Conolley	Food Service	TES	C Leave

Michelle Bean	Assistant Principal	PCHS	C Leave
Mackenzie Lewis	Teacher	TES	C Leave
Shanna Pittman	Teacher	PC	C Leave
Whitney Yelton	Food Service	PC	C Leave

Action:

Name	Position	School	Hometown	College	Licensure Area	Years Exp
Breanna Powell	EC Teacher	Polk Central	Columbus			
Carol Cox	Afterschool Group Leader	Saluda	Columbus	University of TX	N/A	2
Elyse Petoia	Transfer from Temporary Part-Time Food Service Aide/Afterschool Group Leader to Permanent Part-Time Food Service Aide/Afterschool Group Leader	PCMS/Tryon	Columbus	N/A	N/A	N/A
Virginia Bowyer	Transfer from Temporary Part-Time Food Service Aide/Afterschool Group Leader to Permanent Part-Time Food Service Aide/Afterschool Group Leader	PCHS/PCMS	Tryon	N/A	N/A	N/A
Linda Sutton	Substitute Teacher	All Schools	Waynesville		Science	Years
Dawn Forward	Substitute Teacher	All Schools	Tryon		Social Studies	Years
Jane Ollis	Substitute Teacher	All Schools	Columbus		EC	Years
Kenneth Burnett	Custodian	Polk Central	Medical Leave/Short Term Disability through 2/14/2022			

VII. ADJOURNMENT

With no more business to come before the Board, Mr. Ashworth declared the meeting adjourned at 7:56 pm.

Mr. Ashworth, Board Chair

Aaron Greene, Board Secretary
AG/TO