

Board of Education Meeting
October 18, 2021
6:30 PM, at Polk County High School Auditorium

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

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

Special Work Session

There was a special work session prior to the regular scheduled board meeting that included school improvement plan presentations and Head Start Governance training. All school improvement plans were attached to the electronic agenda for review. Each school principal and a selected Improvement Team representative briefly presented the goals and highlights of their school improvement plans. Chairman Covil called for questions or comments after each presentation. School Improvement Plans are voted on after closed session once safe school plans are discussed.

Call to Order and Welcome

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

Pledge of Allegiance

Election of Board Officers

Superintendent Greene stated that Chairman Covil had decided to step down as Board Chair due to health issues, resulting in the need to nominate and elect officers. Ms. Allen made a motion for Mr. Ashworth to be the Chairman of the Board and it was seconded by Ms. Page. The motion for Mr. Ashworth to take the position of Board Chair for the Polk County Board of Education was approved on a vote of 7-0. Superintendent Greene called for a motion for Vice-Chair. Ms. Allen made a motion for Mr. Covil to be the Vice Chairman of the Board and it was seconded by Mr. Ashworth. Superintendent Greene asked if there were any other nominations and there were none. The motion for Mr. Covil to take the position of Vice Chairman of the Polk County Board of Education was approved on a vote of 7-0. The meeting was turned over to Chairman Ashworth.

Principal Appreciation Month – Aaron Greene

Chairman Ashworth turned the floor over to Superintendent Greene to speak regarding Principal appreciation month. Superintendent Greene commended the principals and school administrators for their selfless dedication to the students and staff of Polk County Schools. Mr. Greene said thank you to all principals and school administrators within Polk County Schools.

Approval of September 7, 2021 and September 13, 2021 Board Minutes (Action)

Chairman Ashworth called the Board's attention to a copy of the September 7, 2021 and September 13, 2021 Board Minutes. The Board agreed to vote on both sets of minutes together. 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 both sets of minutes as presented. Ms. Allen seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

I. INSTRUCTIONAL

Beginning Teacher Support Plan - Jan Crump (Action)

Ms. Crump made a presentation to the Board regarding the Beginning Teacher Support Program (BTSP). The NC State Board of Education Policy for beginning teachers has been updated, and as a result, the Polk County Schools BTSP plan has to be revised to match the State Board Policy. The educator preparation program portion of the plan has been revised, and Ms. Crump covered all revisions in detail. This plan only has to be updated if the State Board changes their policy. Chairman Ashworth entertained a motion to approve the revisions to the Beginning Teacher Support Program. Ms. Gibbs made a motion to approve the revisions to the BTSP Plan and it was seconded by Ms. Jackson, and The Beginning Teacher Support Program plan revisions were approved on a vote of 7-0.

Head Start Construction Grant - Kathy Harding (Information)

Kathy Harding provided information to the Board about the district's receipt of a Head Start Construction Grant. After several years of hard work by administration, the Polk County Pre School Program has been awarded \$1.5 million to help build an annex onto Tryon Elementary to house preschool students currently at Forbes Center. Chairman Ashworth called for questions or comments and there were none.

Overnight Field Trips - Aaron Greene (Action)

Superintendent Greene presented overnight field trip requests with the Board, specifically the FFA Veterinary Science Competition Overnight Trip and Land Judging Overnight Trip. He briefly went over the attached information and stated that both overnight trips were endorsed by both the principal and superintendent. Ms. Gibbs made a motion to approve both overnight field trips and it was seconded by Ms. Jackson. The FFA Veterinary Science Competition Overnight Trip and the Land Judging Overnight Trip were approved on a vote of 7-0.

II. ADMINISTRATIVE

Safe Schools/Crisis Plans - Aaron Greene (Action)

Superintendent Greene stated that the details of the Safe Schools/Crisis Plans are discussed in closed session due to the confidentiality of the plans. Approval of the plans will take place after closed session.

COVID Update & Policy Discussion - Aaron Greene (Action)

Superintendent Greene provided a COVID update to the Board. He went over the current COVID numbers. The temporary requirement of face coverings effective on September 8 significantly reduced the numbers of quarantines and impact from COVID, and anecdotally the district saw no further classroom spread as there were no further clusters verified in the school setting since September 8. Currently the district is experiencing approximately two cases each day. According to the CDC there is still high community and regional spread. There has been no change in NC DHHS quarantine rules or the obligation to follow the guidelines. There are 98 out of 115 North Carolina school districts that still have a mask mandate in place. Mr. Greene stated that the district is still monitoring DHHS guidelines and quarantining procedures that could possibly impact the decisions regarding mask mandates and other mitigation efforts. Health experts recommend several weeks of sustained decline and low numbers before changing mitigation efforts. The recommendation from the superintendent is to continue the temporary mask requirement for now, and there will be continued communication with the Board on weekly updates. Ms. Jackson asked where the numbers would need to be at to change the mandate. Superintendent Greene stated that from a county perspective there would need to be several weeks at seven or below. Another way to look at it is to have two cases a week instead of two cases a day for a couple

of weeks. The advice from the CDC and NC DHHS is that local transmission should be low before removing mitigation like masking. Chairman Ashworth stated that if the temporary mask mandate were to end the district would go back to quarantining more students, taking a step back. Ms. Allen asked if there would be a certain percentage of younger children being vaccinated before go back to mask optional. Mr. Greene stated that it would be Board decision. Chairman Ashworth asked that when the vaccination becomes available would there be enough vaccines and availability of the vaccine in Polk County. Superintendent Greene state that regardless of anyone's stance on vaccines, Polk County has done an incredible job in making the vaccine available and easily accessible and he feels it will be the same with the vaccine for the younger children. Ms. Jackson asked what grade levels are seeing the most COVID cases. Mr. Greene stated that probability takes a large part in this. There are more cases at PCHS and PCMS, but they are larger schools. There are cases of COVID throughout the district. Ms. Jackson asked if there is a number that the health department has given the district that determines with/if schools will be shut down. Mr. Greene stated that the health department has not given us any specific number. Ms. Jackson asked if the number keep decreasing if there is a possibility of have some schools with mask optional and some schools mask mandatory. Mr. Greene stated that he would not recommend putting one population at more risk than another but ultimately it is a Board decision. Ms. Jackson made a motion to amend the agenda to hear public input before taking action on this item and it was seconded by Ms. Gibbs. This motion was approved 7-0.

After School - Certified Teacher Tutor Pay - Aaron Greene (Action)

Superintendent Greene addressed the Board regarding Afterschool certified teacher tutor pay. Mr. Greene stated the district would like for any certified staff that tutors in afterschool to be paid at \$25 an hour. Mr. Covil made the motion to raise the certified teacher tutor pay to \$25 an hour and it was seconded by Ms. Bell. The motion was approved 7-0.

FFCRA Update - Rachael Haynes-Wood (Information)

Rachael Haynes-Wood presented an update to FFCRA to the Board. She stated that the FFCRA expired on September 30, 2021. Currently, if an employee has a sick child or their child is quarantined, they must use their own sick leave. If an employee is sick themselves and quarantine by the health department they can use "Contagious Leave" for those absences and not their own personal sick leave. Chairman Ashworth called for questions or comments and there were none.

Surplus Property List - Dave Scherping (Action)

Assistant Superintendent David Scherping presented a list of items and related information to the Board regarding the District's next surplus property sale. The bid opening will be November 5, 2021 and the items must be removed by November 12, 2021. Mr. Ashworth asked the Board's pleasure in declaring the items on the list as surplus and to provide for the receiving of bids. Ms. Jackson made a motion to approve the surplus sale plan and Ms. Gibbs seconded the motion. The surplus plan was approved 7-0.

PCHS Construction Update - Dave Scherping (Information)

Assistant Superintendent Dave Scherping gave an update to the Board on the construction project at PCHS. Mr. Scherping went over the details of the HVAC construction. He specified pieces of equipment that have been delivered, those, on backorder, and those that will be delivered shortly. The construction will begin this week. Chairman Ashworth called for questions or comments and there were none.

III. OLD BUSINESS

None

IV. NEW BUSINESS

Superintendent Greene spoke to the Board regarding a shortage of school bus drivers. This shortage is spread across the state of NC. The DMV at the state level has lost two trainers and this exacerbates the shortage. There will be an all call to staff and families that informs everyone that there may be times when buses will be canceled, combined, or made double routes.

V. INFORMATION

September Head Start Policy Council Minutes Presented to the Board

Focus Area 1 Head Start Monitoring Review (11/5/21-11/19/21)

Pre-K Monthly Report Presented to the Board

Pre-K Financial Report Presented to the Board

Monthly Financial Report Presented to the Board

Year to Date Credit Card Report Presented to the Board

BOARD TRAINING

NCSBA Annual Conference 11/11/21-11/13/21 - Greensboro, NC

VI. PUBLIC INPUT

Mr. Covil made a motion to hear from all public that signed up to speak and it was seconded by Ms. Gibbs. The motion passed on a vote of 7-0. 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.

After public comment concluded, Mr. Ashworth stated that he doesn't want mask on students and hasn't wanted them. If students stop wearing mask now, students are going to be quarantined and sent home. Mr. Ashworth stated that he wants kids to stay in school and the only way for that to happen right now is to keep masks mandatory. Ms. Jackson stated that she wants to kids to stay in school as well but every child learns differently, therefore she believes that making mask optional is the best choice. Ms. Jackson made a motion to make masking optional and it was seconded by Ms. Gibbs. The motion failed 2-5. Ms. Bell made a motion to keep the temporary mask mandate in place and it was seconded by Ms. Page. Ms. Gibbs stated that if the temporary mask mandate was going to still be in place there needed to be mandatory mask breaks and if students were outside their masks needed to be off and Mr. Ashworth agreed. The motion carried to continue the temporary mask mandate on a vote of 5-2. Ms. Gibbs stated that she would like to see something put into place for elementary students and staff, when working on phonics, be able to remove their mask. There was discussion among the board regarding details of this topic, such as how many students, how long, etc. Ms. Gibbs made a motion to make an addendum allow students to remove their mask during literacy, when they are called upon, in grades K-5 which was seconded by Ms. Jackson. Ms. Bell stated that she would like more information before she voted on this matter, and abstained from the vote. The motion was approved on a vote of 6-0.

VII. CLOSED SESSION

Closed Session

At 8:30 PM Mr. Ashworth entertained a motion to go into closed session for the purpose of discussing personnel, safe schools, and an attorney-client matter. Mr. Covil 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 9:11 pm, Ms. Gibbs made a motion to return to open session. Ms. Bell seconded the motion. The motion carried 7-0.

Mr. Covil 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. Gibbs made the motion to approve the recommendations of the Superintendent and the Human Resource Officer. Ms. Bell seconded the motion. The motion carried 7-0.

Chairman Ashworth called the Board's attention to the School Improvement Plans/Crisis Plans that require Board approval and confirmed that details regarding the safe schools and crisis plans for the district and schools had been detailed and discussed in closed session. The Chairman asked the Board's pleasure regarding a motion. Mr. Covil made the motion to approve the School Improvement Plans/Crisis Plans and Ms. Gibbs seconded. It was approved 7-0.

Information:

Name	Position	School	
Trina Burnett	Food Service	PCHS	FMLA
James Burnett	Custodian	PCHS	FMLA
Karen Hall	Title I	Tryon	FMLA
Amy Fox	food service	Sunny View	C Leave
Amanda Doornbos	Food Service	PCHS	C Leave
Brandi Roddy	Teacher	Sunny View	C Leave
Cindy Gilbert	Teacher	PCHS	C Leave
Jenny Lail	Teacher	PCHS	C Leave
Nicole Travieso	Teacher	Tryon	C Leave
Jamie Reeves	Mechanic	Bus Garage	C Leave
Kerri Troutman	Teacher	Tryon	C Leave
Donyell Walker	food service/custodian	Tryon	C Leave
Amanda Huddelston	TA	Saluda	C Leave

Julia Tackett	Teacher	Polk Central	C Leave
Beth Queen	Teacher	Polk Central	C Leave
Emily Moore	Teacher	Polk Central	C Leave
Debra Fagan	TA	Polk Central	C Leave
Elisabeth Blanton	TA	Tryon	C Leave
Michelle Fagan	Teacher	PCMS	C Leave
Debra Fowler	TA	Saluda	C Leave
Carey Upton	Teacher	Polk Central	C Leave
Angie Upton	Teacher	Tryon	C Leave
Larissa Ingle	TA	Saluda	C Leave
Stacy Harris	Afterschool	Saluda	C Leave
Jon Ezell	teacher	PCHS	C Leave
Megan McDaniel	Teacher	Polk Central	C Leave
Cora (Beth) Queen	Teacher	Polk Central	C Leave
Sherrie Huffman	Counselor	PCMS/Saluda	C Leave
Eli Edwards	Technician	Stearns	C Leave
Dennis Owensby	Mechanic	Bus Garage	C Leave
Tonya Odel	Clerical	Stearns	C Leave
Josh Money	TA	PCEC	C Leave
Tiffany Fowler	Teacher	Tryon	C Leave
Lori Byars	Teacher	Polk Central	C Leave
Ashlyn Searcy	Teacher	Polk Central	C Leave
Lydia Ramsey	TA	Sunny View	C Leave
Linda Sage	Counselor	PCMS	C Leave
Jessica Searcy	TA	Saluda	C Leave
Hannah Rimer	Teacher	Polk Central	C Leave

Michael Darpino	Teacher	Polk Central/Sunny View	C Leave
Brooke Benfield	Teacher	Polk Central	C Leave
Jennifer Doten	TA	Saluda	C Leave
Kenny Blackburn	Custodian	Polk Central	C Leave
Hannah Rimer	Teacher	Polk Central	C Leave
Shelly Twitty	TA	Polk Central	C Leave
Debbie Gilbert	School Nurse	All Schools	C Leave
Leslie Meeks	TA	PCHS	C Leave
Kim Jolley	Secretary	Polk Central	C Leave
Christen Smith	Teacher	Tryon	C Leave
Yvonne Bruce	Payroll	Tryon	C Leave
Adam Giles	Teacher	PCHS	C Leave
Robert Gilbert	Maintenance Director	Maintenance	C Leave
Elisabeth Blanton	TA	Tryon	C Leave
Caroline Edwards	TA	Polk Central	C Leave
Jamie Kilgore	teacher	Tryon	C Leave
Felicia Pegg	food service	Tryon	C Leave
David Minnich	teacher	PCHS	C Leave
Jennifer Morton	teacher	Tryon	C Leave
Heather Elliott	TA	Tryon	C Leave
Shelneatta Allison-Twitty		Polk Central	C Leave
Jennifer Painter	TA	Polk Central	C Leave
Lyla Johnson	teacher	Polk Central	C Leave

Jessie Roush	teacher	Tryon	C Leave
Wendy Berryhill	teacher	Saluda	C Leave
Kati Conolley	food service	Tryon	C Leave
April Crowder	TA	Sunny View	C Leave
Jackie Carpenter	TA	Saluda	C Leave
Kevin Weis	Principal	Tryon	C Leave
Virginia Bowyer	Food Service/Afterschool	PCMS	C Leave
Wanda Reid	food service	PCHS	C Leave
Brooke Benfield	Teacher	Polk Central	C Leave
Jenny Lail	Teacher	PCHS	C Leave
Brandon Schweitzer	Principal	PCHS	C Leave
Katie Buckner	Food Service	Saluda	C Leave
Heather Elliott	TA	Tryon	C Leave
Cindi Rhodes	Teacher	PCHS	C Leave
Stephanie Champion	Teacher	PCMS	C Leave
Jennifer Schweitzer	Teacher	Tryon	C Leave
Karen Rhodes	Teacher	PCEC	C Leave
Rachael Haynes-Wood	HR	Stearns	C Leave
Patricia Evans	Food Service	Sunny View	C Leave
Adam Giles	Teacher	PCHS	C Leave
Kimberly Benson	Teacher	PCMS	C Leave
Lauren Harris	Food Service	Sunny View	C Leave
Amanda Lammers	TA	Polk Central	C Leave

Sylvia Avellaneda	ESL	Tryon	C Leave
Patricia Evans	Food Service	Sunny View	C Leave
Amy Crowder	PreK Teacher	Polk Central	C Leave
Emily Moore	Teacher PreK	Polk Central	C Leave
Lacey Bolt	TA	Polk Central	C Leave
Ashley Bell	Counselor	Polk Central	C Leave
Linda Sage	teacher	PCMS	C Leave
Jennefer O'Rear	TA	Saluda	C Leave
Marti Hardin	Food Service Manager	Polk Central	C Leave
Amanda Lammers	TA	Polk Central	C Leave

Action:

Name	Position	School	Hometown	College	Licensure Area	Years Exp
Jessica Marrow	EC Teachers Assistant	PCMS	Columbus	N/A	N/A	Years
Alan Roman	Moving to Afterschool Assistant Director	Tryon	Tryon	N/A	N/A	N/A
Debra Greene	Food Service Aide	PCMS	Columbus	N/A	N/A	Years
Shelly Bolt	Food Service Aide	Sunny View	Rutherfordton	N/A	N/A	8
Mario Rodriques	Afterschool Group Leader	Polk Central	Rutherfordton	N/A	N/A	N/A
Edith Simpson	Food Service Substitute	All Schools	Tryon	N/A	N/A	N/A
Melissa Cary	Teacher	Sunny View	Rutherfordton	University of Phoenix	Elementary	Years
Mollie LeBude	Teachers Assistant	Polk Central	Saluda	N/A	N/A	Years

VII. ADJOURNMENT

With no more business to come before the Board, Mr. Ashworth declared the meeting adjourned at 9:16 pm.

Mr. Ashworth, Board Chair

Aaron Greene, Board Secretary
AG/TO