

**Board of Education Meeting
November 12, 2019
6:30 PM, Stearns Education Center Board Room**

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

Members Absent: None

Others: Superintendent Aaron Greene, Director of Curriculum and Instruction Ronette Dill, Director of Accountability and Technology Dave Scherping, Finance Officer Debbie Lovelace and Attorney Phillip Feagan

Call to Order and Welcome

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

Polk County Early College Student Presentation - Coastal Trip

Ms. Sutton, Science teacher at the Polk County Early College, and the members of the Science club spoke to the Board regarding their recent trip to Charleston. Several students discussed all they had learned and shared pictures of their trip with the Board. They all expressed their appreciation to the Board for allowing the opportunity to travel and learn. They shared with the Board how their experiences helped them grow closer as classmates and develop new friendships. Chairman Covil asked how many days were they gone. Ms. Sutton said that they were gone three nights. She commented on how well the students did and stated that they were great ambassadors for Polk County Schools. Ms. Sutton thanked the Board for their support of the field trip.

Recognition of the 2019-2020 Teachers of the Year

Superintendent Greene recognized Sharon Johnston for being Polk County Schools EC Teacher of the Year. Ms. Johnston will be recognized on the state level.

On behalf of the Board of Education, Chairman Covil presented each of the 2019-2020 Teachers of the Year with a plaque. Chairman Covil presented plaques to Leann Wilson from Polk Central Elementary School, Keith Rimer from Polk County High School, Matthew Russell from Polk County Middle School (absent), Christine McGee from Saluda Elementary School, Genie Phipps from Sunny View Elementary School, and Jane Ollis from Tryon Elementary School. Keith Rimer was presented an additional plaque recognizing his selection as District Teacher of the Year. Superintendent Greene gave each of the teachers of the year an opportunity to speak to the Board. Mr. Rimer spoke to the Board regarding the impact that former Board Chairman Geoffrey Tennant had on him as a young man and that he hopes to have an impact like that on children as well. Ms. Wilson spoke to the Board about her experience as a former Polk Schools student, seeing her past teachers and commenting on the difference they made in her life. Ms. Wilson told the Board she was working hard trying to make differences in her students' lives. After the awards were presented, the group was asked to gather in the Stearns' hallway for a group picture before leaving.

Approval of the October 14, 2019 Board Minutes

Mr. Covil called the Board's attention to a copy of the October 14, 2019 Board minutes. Mr. Covil entertained a motion to approve the minutes as presented. Ms. Allen made the motion to approve the minutes and Ms. Page seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

Food Service Update – Jennifer Peeler

Jennifer Peeler, Food and Nutrition Director, and Tammy McIntyre, Food and Nutrition Assistant, spoke to the Board regarding some of the changes that have been made in the Food Service program. Ms. Peeler offered her appreciation to the Board for allowing her to serve as the director and to make some needed improvements. She spoke in detail regarding some of the recent changes such as the menu, the overall look of the PCHS cafeteria, and a move to more batch cooking for freshness. She stated the number of lunches from last year to this year has increased presumably due to the changes that have been made. Ms. McIntyre stated that revenue has increased \$21,000 since the same time last year. Ms. Peeler told the Board that they are working on a Summer Feeding Program that would allow them to feed the community and get reimbursed. Superintendent Greene expressed his appreciation of Ms. Peeler and her efforts, and for the hard work of her staff.

I. INSTRUCTIONAL

National Board Teacher Recognition (Information) - Ronette Dill

Ms. Dill made a presentation to the Board regarding the National Board Teacher Recognition. In order to be recognized at the national level a district must have at least 20% of its teachers National Board Certified. Polk County Schools employs 36 National Board Certified Teachers. The district received a banner and a poster for each teacher to put on the wall in their classroom. Ms. Corley asked if teachers were still being encouraged complete their National Boards and if they still get a salary increase once certified. Mr. Greene stated that yes they get a percentage increase (12%) and that the district supports teachers working toward certification or renewal in a variety of ways. Ms. Dill stated that at the end of the third year of the Beginning Teacher Program she is encouraging teachers to explore this certification. She also commented that the state pays for the teacher to have three days for professional leave and development to complete the program.

SUMMIT Mentoring Program Update (Information) - Linley Foster

Ms. Linley Foster, Afterschool Director, spoke to the Board regarding the SUMMIT Mentoring Program. She expressed her appreciation to the Board for their continued support of the Afterschool Program. About one year ago the Afterschool program received a grant from the Polk County Community Foundation (PCCF) to start the SUMMIT, a supplemental set of activities for students which includes clubs and a mentoring program. There are currently 12 different clubs currently active within the schools. There are a total of 32 volunteer mentors in the program. These mentors are paired with one specific student that they meet with one time a week to help provide a positive and supportive adult presence in the student's life. Ms. Foster had some brochures that she left in case anyone is interested or knows of someone that may be interested. Superintendent Greene offered a public thank you to the PCCF for their support and expressed appreciation for Ms. Foster for her hard work.

II. ADMINISTRATIVE

2019-2020 Budget Resolution – Debbie Lovelace (Action)

The 2019-2020 Budget Resolution was included in the electronic agenda for review prior to the Board meeting. There will be future changes in the resolution as DPI releases more information regarding the 2019-2020 budget. Attorney Feagan asked if the district knows what percentage normally provided in a state budget is now being covered by the mini spending bills. Ms. Lovelace stated that the state gave the district a set of projections to operate from. Chairman Covil asked if the district could possibly overspend. Superintendent Greene responded that the budget is based on last year's allotments and there is a risk for the district due to not knowing the ultimate state figures and how they will impact federal and local costs. Mr. Ashworth asked if the governor vetoed the increase for everybody but then approved an increase for licensed teachers. Ms. Lovelace clarified that what was approved by the state was the step for licenses and not an actual raise. Ms. Gibbs asked

when license staff normally would get the pay increase and if it is back paid. Ms. Lovelace answered that it is back paid. Ms. Lovelace also stated that there are additional issues with the retirement system. The IRS will only let the district go back 90 days for retirement contributions. Mr. Ashworth made a motion to approve the 2019-2020 Budget Resolution and it was seconded by Ms. Page. Chairman Covil asked if there were any more questions and there were none. The Budget Resolution was approved on a vote of 7-0.

Year Round Calendar - Aaron Greene (Information)

Superintendent Greene spoke to the Board regarding a possible “Year Round Calendar” and how school districts are meeting the needs of their students by creatively looking at how they go about planning and adopting the yearly academic calendar. The suggested model would not be the traditional “Year Round Calendar” with terms of nine weeks in session followed by three weeks of break. The district wants to discuss a “three term” calendar; a fall term, spring term, and winter term. The District would be able to use the rule flexibility afforded “Year Round Calendar” adoptions and back up the current school year calendar by two weeks. This would place students on a similar calendar to community colleges and would mean high school exams could be completed before the holiday break. Mr. Scherping went over the two attached draft calendars in detail with the Board. He explained to the Board some of the flexible options that could be implemented. Mr. Ashworth asked how many districts have done this. Superintendent Greene said that 13 out of 115 districts have modified their calendars in this way. Mr. Ashworth asked if there had been any push back from the state. Mr. Greene stated that he has heard the legislators are not very happy about these types of “exceptions” to the law and may come back with some very descriptive rules. Mr. Greene said that there is a possibility of doing the Year Round Calendar for the upcoming year and the legislature changing the law. That would force the district to choose whether to change the calendar last minute or face possible consequences. Ms. Allen asked where the districts are located that have chosen to go this route. Mr. Greene and Mr. Scherping stated that the districts are spread all over the state. Mr. Scherping recommends adopting a traditional calendar for the ‘20-‘21 school year and revisit the Year Round Calendar for the ‘21-‘22 year. Superintendent Greene recommends that the district start talking to the community, schools, and parents to get feedback. Mr. Greene will be going to the Superintendents meeting in early December and will see what news is available at that time. He recommends proceeding cautiously. Mr. Greene will come back at the December meeting with more information.

4202/5029/7272-Service Animals in Schools (2nd Reading) - Dave Scherping

Superintendent Greene recommended Policy 4202/5029/7272 for second reading. Chairman Covil asked if there were any comments and there were none. Mr. Ashworth made a motion and Ms. Gibbs seconded the motion. Policy 4202/5029/7272-Service Animals in Schools was approved 7-0. Superintendent Greene stated that he would make sure that principals understand that if there is an instance where the district is deciding to exclude the service animal or restrict the use of the service animal the action will need to be well documented, and parents will be informed of their rights to file any grievance with the Superintendent and the Board.

Policy Updates (First Reading) - Dave Scherping (Action)

Superintendent Greene and Mr. Scherping presented the following policies for approval on first reading: 1310/1002, 1710/4021/7230, 1720/4015/7225, 1730/4022/7231, 1740/4010, 2300, 2320, 2330, 2335, 2500, 3101, 3520, 3610, 4040/7310, 4300, 4302, 4302-R, 4325, 4333, 4334/5035/7345, 4400, 4700, 4705-7825-R, 5015, 5070/7350, 5071/7351, 5210, 6125, 6225, 6420, 7100, 7130, 7240, 7241, 7410, 7730, 7940. There was a brief discussion regarding these policies and that the Policy Committee had reviewed each in detail at a recent meeting. Attorney Feagan asked about the time period in policy 1720/4015/7225. Ms. Corley stated that the Policy Committee had discussed that the parents needed to know what was going on. Mr. Greene stated that in the policy, the policy also states that “unless additional time is necessary to conduct an impartial thorough investigation.” That part should cover if it got messy. Attorney Feagan asked Mr. Scherping to discuss the amounts in policy 6420. Mr. Scherping stated that “To provide greater flexibility at the school level, the superintendent also may establish circumstances in which principals may enter contracts involving amounts up to

\$10,000” was added to the policy. Attorney Feagan asked for clarification on Policy 7410. Rachael Haynes-Wood stated that the 120 day wording is related to the licensure system. A teacher doesn’t get credit for a year of experience unless they have 120 days present. The 120 days with the break is speaking of the retirement system. Mr. Scherping is to clarify this information before the policy is approved on second reading. Ms. Allen made a motion to approve policies 1310/1002, 1710/4021/7230, 1720/4015/7225, 1730/4022/7231, 1740/4010, 2300, 2320, 2330, 2335, 2500, 3101, 3520, 3610, 4040/7310, 4300, 4302, 4302-R, 4325, 4333, 4334/5035/7345, 4400, 4700, 4705-7825-R, 5015, 5070/7350, 5071/7351, 5210, 6125, 6225, 6420, 7100, 7130, 7240, 7241, 7410, 7730, 7940 on first reading and the motion was seconded Ms. Page. Policies 1310/1002, 1710/4021/7230, 1720/4015/7225, 1730/4022/7231, 1740/4010, 2300, 2320, 2330, 2335, 2500, 3101, 3520, 3610, 4040/7310, 4300, 4302, 4302-R, 4325, 4333, 4334/5035/7345, 4400, 4700, 4705-7825-R, 5015, 5070/7350, 5071/7351, 5210, 6125, 6225, 6420, 7100, 7130, 7240, 7241, 7410, 7730, 7940 were approved on first reading on a vote of 7-0.

Enrollment Summary (Information) - Dave Scherping

Mr. Greene stated that the district is at the same number of enrolled students as last year. From 2015-2016 the district is down about 81 students. Mr. Greene went over the 5-year enrollment summary that was attached to the agenda. This information is taken from the Principals Monthly Report (PMR).

PCHS HVAC Design-Build (Action) - Dave Scherping

Mr. Scherping spoke to the Board regarding the PCHS HVAC Design-Build Project. The District is recommending this project to be a Design-Build Project. Mr. Scherping went over the information that was attached to the agenda which included the criteria, eligibility, and qualifications for the process. Attorney Feagan asked how the bidding process works. Mr. Scherping explained that the district will select a company and the company will then manage the project. The company does the bidding to get the project done within the district’s budget. Ms. Gibbs stated that the district will set a budget and the company chosen is supposed to meet that budget. There was detailed discussion regarding the Design-Build process between the Board, Mr. Scherping, Mr. Greene, and Mr. Lewis from Snyder Electric. Attorney Feagan stated that in the project qualifications the district has communicated a project budget estimated at \$3.7 million, and that he wanted to know how firm that amount is. Mr. Ashworth stated that the \$3.7 million amount was chosen from amounts that were given from companies in prior analyses and \$3.7 million is the high end of the amounts. If the proposal the company brings to the district has an amount that is higher than anticipated or is acceptable, the district will bring that back to the Board and see if they would like to proceed or stop the project. If it is decided to stop the district would only owe design fees. There was more discussion regarding the bidding process, fee for the project and the design fee among the Board. Chairman Covil asked if there were any other questions or comments and there were none. Mr. Ashworth made a motion to approve the request to put the RFQ out for the PCHS-HVAC Design-Build Project and Ms. Page seconded the motion. The motion was approved 6-1.

Licensed Employee Supplement (Action) - Aaron Greene

Superintendent Greene spoke to the Board regarding a proposed change to the Licensed Employee Supplement model. Mr. Greene explained increasing teacher salaries and benefits costs cause any supplement based on a percentage must necessarily increase as well. In recent years the increases have made the district’s model unpredictable and unsustainable. Money spent on local supplements has increased approximately \$220,000 in the past few years. The District formed a “Teacher Supplement Committee” made up of Board members, administrators, and teachers to study the issue and recommend action for the Board. The committee wanted to garner as much feedback as possible and asked that a survey with several possible options be developed. The

District sent out such a survey to all licensed staff with three different options to choose from and shared the results with committee members and all district staff. Understanding the District's need to move towards a more predictable budget process regarding the awarding of local supplements to licensed employees the Teacher Supplement Committee recommends the following modifications to the current model:

- Licensed employee supplements should be “frozen” at the DOLLAR AMOUNT each employee received the preceding year (2018-2019) and no longer calculated by 4.5% of employee salary
- When a current licensed employee moves into a year where they receive a “step” in pay the employee will also receive the associated “step” increase in supplement-again, a fixed dollar amount, not a percentage
- New hires made after January of 2020 will be placed on a different scale to be developed and will not receive a local supplement until the successful completion of one full year with an administrative recommendation to return for a second year in Polk County – this would take place between the end of their first year and beginning of their second year with Polk.

These recommendations take into consideration licensed employee survey responses gathered on November 7-8, 2019 and represent the consensus of the Committee. The recommendations are also supported by District Administration. Chairman Covil commented that the teachers on the committee were some of the best teachers he has ever worked with. Ms. Corley made a motion to approve the recommended Licensed Employee Supplement action and Ms. Allen seconded the motion. The motion was approved 7-0. Ms. Corley asked to make sure the comments weren't going to be looked over because there are possibly some good recommendations in the comments. Superintendent Greene assured her that district administration will be taking the comments into consideration. Ms. Corley wanted to be sure that anytime a comment is made about not being appreciated it is made known that all staff is appreciated, especially by the Board.

Reduction of Transportation Services (Action) - Aaron Greene

Superintendent Greene handed out the Transportation Cost/Bus Reduction Plan for the Board to review and discuss. Due to decreased ridership over the past few years, the District has encountered growing inefficiency in transportation operations. As a result, the state of NC has recommended that the District park six buses. The Transportation Department and Superintendent Greene are recommending a combination of overlapping routes that would enable the removal of four buses from operation. The estimated cost for a yellow bus is \$2.63 a mile. The state will only reimburse 80% of District costs for transportation due to our low efficiency rating if the transportation program stays the same. Parking four buses and merging routes will reduce operations costs significantly and increase efficiency. Doing so should raise the state reimbursement figure to 95%. A reduction will also result in lower personnel costs. The Board discussed which locations, which schools and what buses would be effected. Ms. Page corrected the plan to say Floyd Blackwell Rd instead of Lloyd Blackwell. With this plan there should be a savings of \$55,000 in operations cost and \$45,000 in personnel costs. If everything is left as in previous years there will be an estimated \$120,000 of local money needed to cover the cost. The District would like begin the reduced routes effective December 1, 2019. Superintendent Greene recommends the Transportation Cost/Bus Reduction Plan for approval. Ms. Allen asked what would happen to the buses that are parked. Mr. Ridings stated that once the bus is eight years old they can be offered back to the state for credit. The parked buses will be kept running and be used as backups. Ms. Corley asked if there were parents concerned with the different age groups being together. She asked if the District could have counselors or other staff to speak to the students on the bus regarding behavior with all ages being together. Superintendent Greene said that it had been discussed with principals regarding this matter and that it had also been mentioned about using high school bus monitors that were trustworthy. Ms. Jackson asked if there was a reason that December 1 was chosen and not January 1. Mr. Greene stated that they chose that date to get it started, on a regular schedule and recoup savings as quickly as possible. Mr. Ridings stated that they also chose December 1 so that

everything would be resolved before exams at the high school. Chairman Covil asked if there were any other questions or comments and there were none. Ms. Allen made a motion to approve the recommended Transportation Cost/Bus Reduction Plan and Ms. Corley seconded the motion. It was approved 7-0. Superintendent Greene told the Board that Mr., Ridings and himself will keep a close eye on this transition and keep the Board updated. He also asked that if the Board hears or gets any complaints to let him know so that he can deal with the complaints individually. Mr. Covil asked for clarification on parked buses. Mr. Ridings said that they have to have 30 day inspections and drive ready. Buses that are less than eight years old cannot be parked.

III. OLD BUSINESS

Internship OCS Proposal (Information) Aaron Greene

Attorney Feagan spoke to the Board about the Conflict of Interest statute in the criminal statutes in NC that make it a misdemeanor for an employee or a board member to directly benefit from a contract that they would participate in the obtaining of the contract or be involved in the administration of the contract. Technically this is what Ms. Mason-Freeman's proposal and participation would do. The direct benefit would be her owning 10% or more of the "company" and so would be deemed to have direct benefit. Since this would be a misdemeanor, Attorney Feagan advises the Board not to proceed with this proposal. Superintendent Greene stated that the only way for this to work is for Ms. Mason-Freeman to hire the students outside of the school setting and pay them a wage. The Board agreed for Mr. Greene to speak with Ms. Mason-Freeman about the arrangement.

IV. NEW BUSINESS

Parent Information Night (Information) - Aaron Greene

Parent Information Night is on December 5 at 7pm. They will discuss Vaping/Social Media/Mental Health Awareness.

Superintendent Greene spoke to the Board regarding a fundraiser that will be at the Tryon International Equestrian Center on February 1, 2020. This will be for athletics and academic teams for all schools. This will be sponsored in conjunction with the Polk Schools Fund at Polk County Community Foundation.

The Holiday Party at Stearns is on December 12 from 5:00-6:30. There will be a painting party following the dinner.

V. INFORMATION – Mr. Covil went over these items with the Board:

Thanksgiving Break - 11/27/19-11/29/19

October Head Start Policy Council Minutes

October Pre-K Monthly Report

Pre-K Financial Report

Monthly Financial Report

Monthly Credit Card Report

BOARD TRAINING

November 17, 2019, NCSBA Core Training - Greensboro - Ms. Gibbs to attend

November 18-20, 2019, NCSBA Annual Conference - Greensboro - Mr. Ashworth to attend

VI. PUBLIC INPUT

None

VII. CLOSED SESSION

Closed Session

At 9:03 PM Mr. Covil entertained a motion to go into closed session for the purpose of discussing personnel. Ms. Jackson made the motion to go into closed session and it was seconded by Ms. Page and Ms. Gibbs. The motion carried 7-0.

RETURN TO OPEN SESSION

Resumption of Regular Session: With all discussion concluded in closed session, Mr. Covil called for a motion to return to open session. At 9:35 pm, Ms. Jackson made a motion to return to open session. Ms. Page seconded the motion and it carried 7-0.

Mr. Covil called the Board’s attention to those matters on the personnel agenda that required Board approval. Mr. Covil 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 7-0.

INFORMATION:

Linda Williams	Full-Time Food Service Aide	PCMS	Resigned
Parker Mullinax	Teacher	Tryon Elementary	FMLA

ACTION:

Name	Position	School	Hometown	College	Licensure Area	Years Exp
Courtney Edney	Nurse	PCES/SVES	Rutherfordton	Appalachian State	Nursing	7
Travis Reid	Maintenance	Central Office	Columbus		N/A	19
Leslie O'Shields	Afterschool Group Leader	Tryon	Inman, SC		N/A	
Stephanie Jarvis	Part-Time Food Service Aide	PCMS	Mill Spring		N/A	

VII. ADJOURNMENT

With no more business to come before the Board, Mr. Covil declared the meeting adjourned at 9:36 pm.

Mr. Covil, Board Chair

Aaron Greene, Board Secretary
 AG/TO