

Board of Education Meeting
April 8, 2024
6:30 PM, at Stearns Education Center Boardroom

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

Members Absent: None

Others: Superintendent Aaron Greene, Director of Human Resources Todd Murphy, Director of Curriculum and Instruction Jan Crump, Director of Operations Brandon Schweitzer, 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 March 11, 2024 Board Minutes (Action)

Chairman Ashworth called the Board's attention to a copy of the March 11, 2024 Board Minutes. Mr. Ashworth asked if there were any additions or corrections. There was one spelling correction made to the minutes presented. Ms. Jackson made the motion to approve the amended Board minutes and it was seconded by Mr. Covil. The motion carried unanimously.

I. INSTRUCTIONAL

Early Literacy Specialist Update - Brooke Benfield (Information)

Brooke Benfield, Early Literacy Specialist (ELS), presented to the Board regarding literacy instruction and Polk County Schools. Ms. Benfield shared a presentation about all things literacy. She explained some new curriculum delivery tools to the Board and shared experiences in implementing "Wit & Wisdom." She stated that teachers and students are enjoying this process. Superintendent Greene asked Ms. Benfield how Polk County Schools is performing against the rest of the state and if nearly half of the third graders in the district are still passing the BOGs. Ms. Benfield stated that we are among the best in the state and the District's third graders still have about half passing the BOGs. Mr. Parsons asked where the District stands compared to where we were prior to COVID. Ms. Benfield stated that she believes we are back up to where we were prior to COVID. The Board shared their appreciation to Ms. Benfield for her work and support to the District.

ESSER Audit Update – Jan Crump (Information)

Curriculum and Instruction Director, Jan Crump, offered a summary of the District's recent ESSER Audit to the Board. She stated that DPI praised Polk County Schools for the handling of ESSER funds and the District's preparation for the audit. Ms. Crump stated that this was a team effort with several district staff members.

Overnight Field Trip Requests - Aaron Greene (Action)

Superintendent Greene shared information regarding overnight field trip requests for Science Olympiad and Bridge Building. Superintendent Greene stated that each one had a principal endorsement and met all requirements. Ms. Gibbs made a motion to approve the overnight field trip requests and it was seconded by Ms. Jackson. The Science Olympiad and Bridge Building overnight field trip requests were approved 7-0.

II. ADMINISTRATIVE

Child Nutritionist/CEP – Jennifer Peeler (Action)

Jennifer Peeler presented to the Board regarding CEP for the upcoming 2024-2025 school year. Ms. Peeler went over meal participation data from previous years, and pointed out the difference in participation when meals are free to students. There was discussion among the Board regarding potential positives and negatives on both sides of the decision and the Board agreed to table the CEP decision to the May meeting.

Budget Amendment - Debbie Lovelace (Action)

Debbie Lovelace reviewed the budget amendments included with the agenda. Chairman Ashworth asked for a motion that the budget amendments be approved as submitted. Ms. Allen made the motion, which Ms. Page seconded. Chairman Ashworth called for questions or comments and there were none. The motion was approved 7-0.

Proposed 2024-2025 Budget - Debbie Lovelace (Action)

The 2024-2025 Proposed Operations Budget and Capital Outlay for submission to Commissioners were attached to the electronic agenda with total expenditures at \$6,432,765 and Capital at \$312,000. Chairman Ashworth called for any questions or comments from the Board and there were none. Ms. Jackson made a motion to approve the 2024-2025 proposed budget and capital outlay as presented. Ms. Gibbs seconded the motion. The 2024-2025 proposed local budget and capital outlay budget were approved 7-0.

Lottery Distribution Request 1 - Brandon Schweitzer (Action)

Dr. Brandon Schweitzer requested approval from the Board to submit a Public School Building Capital Fund NC Education Lottery Request. This particular request is for \$23,827.66. This is to help with construction projects at Tryon Elementary, Sunny View Elementary, and Saluda Elementary. More detail of the project is documented on the request attached to the agenda. Mr. Covil made a motion to approve the lottery distribution request as presented and the motion was seconded by Mr. Parsons. The lottery distribution request was approved as presented 7-0.

Lottery Distribution Request 2 - Brandon Schweitzer (Action)

Dr. Brandon Schweitzer requested approval from the Board to submit a second Public School Building Capital Fund NC Education Lottery Request. This request is for \$65,473.08 and for Athletic Facility Repairs at PCHS. Chairman Ashworth called for questions or comments and there were none. Ms. Allen made a motion to approve lottery distribution request and the motion was seconded by Ms. Gibbs/Ms. Page. The lottery distribution request was approved as presented 7-0.

PCHS Paving Phase 2 - Brandon Schweitzer (Action)

Dr. Brandon Schweitzer spoke with the Board regarding plans for the Phase 2 PCHS Paving. He shared a presentation with maps and proposed options included the project design. Approval will allow the district to open bids for the project. Chairman Ashworth called for questions or comments and there were none. Ms. Jackson recused herself from voting on this matter. Mr. Covil made a motion to approve the opening of bids for PCHS Paving phase 2 and it was seconded by Ms. Gibbs. The motion was approved as presented 6-0.

Saluda Farmers Market/Use of Property - Attorney Feagan (Action)

Attorney Feagan spoke with the Board about the shared use of Polk County Schools property by the Saluda Farmers Market. There was an agreement between Polk County Schools and the city of Saluda that allowed the City of Saluda to use the property afterschool hours and weekends. Attorney Feagan discussed the agreement in detail. Mr. Feagan has drafted a modified agreement to finish out the current arrangement and he discussed the details in that new agreement. Ms. Jordan, Ag Development Director for Polk has been working with the City of Saluda and shared information regarding the needs of the Saluda Farmers Market. Ms. Page made a motion to approve the agreement and allow Superintendent Green and Attorney Feagan to work together to execute the details. The motion was seconded by Mr. Parsons. The motion was approved 7-0.

III. OLD BUSINESS

2024-2025 School Calendar – Aaron Greene (Information)

Superintendent Greene revisited the approved 2024-2025 school calendar with the Board. Administration had been reviewing the calendar and noticed that spring break is four weeks before the end of the year. The Board discussed the 2024-2025 school calendar and decided to change the 2024-2025 Spring Break to March 31- April 4, 2025. Chairman Ashworth called for a motion to approve the change. Mr. Parsons made the motion to change the 2024-2025 spring break to March 31 - April 4, 2025 and it was seconded by Ms. Page. The motion to change the 2024-2025 school calendar was approved 7-0.

Facilities Update – Brandon Schweitzer

Brandon Schweitzer provided a facilities update to the Board. The roof on the cafeteria at Polk Central was replaced. The Tryon Elementary School Pre-K building is coming along well. Dr. Schweitzer gave a list of what has been completed and what is left to complete. Dr. Schweitzer shared several pictures of the building and property to show the Board the progress made.

IV. NEW BUSINESS

Superintendent Greene spoke with the Board regarding a survey regarding a gifted student nurturing program. Mr. Greene is going to encourage this survey to be an opt in. Once the survey is ready Mr. Greene will send that to the Board so they will be aware of the questions and intent.

Superintendent Greene discussed the District's property next to The Rural Seed in Columbus. The Rural Seed is wanting to work on the grounds and make a true parking area, meaning they want to scrape, level, and gravel. Mr. Greene will be meeting with them and bring the details back to the Board.

Superintendent Greene invited the Board to have lunch with Representative Jake Johnson on Monday, April 15, identified across NC as bring your Legislator to work day.

Superintendent Greene stated that he would like to meet with the Board's Curriculum Committee to take a look at graduation honors criteria. Increasing numbers are driving this analysis and discussion. Superintendent Greene said that he will send a date and time out to the members.

V. INFORMATION

Preschool Monthly Report

Pre-K Financial Report

Monthly Financial Report

Month to Date Credit Card Report

OPTIONAL NCSBA OFFERED BOARD TRAINING

2024 Spring LEAD Training Session/WRESA/4-29-24/11:00-2:00

Summer Leadership Conference/June 10-June 14

Core Training/NCSBA/July 15-July 16

NCSBA Video Training Library

VI. PUBLIC INPUT

None

VII. CLOSED SESSION

Closed Session

At 8:11 PM Mr. Ashworth 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. 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 8:50 pm, Mr. Parsons made a motion to return to open session. Ms. Allen 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. The Personnel Agenda was divided into three parts. Ms. Jackson made the motion to approve the recommendations of the Superintendent and the Human Resource Officer on the first portion of the personnel agenda. Mr. Parsons seconded the motion. The first portion of the agenda carried 7-0. Chairman Ashworth called for a motion to approve the second portion of the personnel agenda. Ms. Gibbs made a motion to approve the second portion of the personnel agenda and it was seconded by Mr. Parsons. The second portion of the personnel agenda was approved 6-0 with the recusal of Ms. Allen. The third portion of the personnel agenda, contract renewals, was divided into four parts. Mr. Parsons made a motion to approve the 1-year contracts and it was seconded by Ms. Page. The 1-year contracts were approved 7-0. Ms. Gibbs made a motion to approve the 2-year contracts and it was seconded by Ms. Allen. The 2-year contracts were approved 7-0. Ms. Page made a motion to approve the 2-year rolling contracts and it was seconded by Ms. Page. The 2-year rolling contracts was approved 7-0. Ms. Gibbs made a motion to approve the part-time contracts and it was seconded by Ms. Allen/Ms. Jackson. The part-time contracts were approved 7-0.

Information:

Name	Position	School	
Lisa Obermiller	School Counselor	PCMS/Saluda	Retiring
Melissa Gillespie	3rd Grade Teacher	Saluda	Retiring
Karen Prady	4th Grade Teacher	Tryon	Retiring
Tyrone Stott	PE Teacher	Tryon	Retiring
Pam McNeil	Part-Time Music Teacher	Saluda	Retiring
Debbie Metcalf	Full-time Food Service Aide	PCHS	Retiring
Kati Connolly	Full-time Food Service Aide	Tryon	Resigning
Emma Bradley	Teacher Assistant/Afterschool Group Leader	Polk Central	Resigning TA Job
Arianna Chavez	Afterschool Group Leader	Polk Central	Resigning
Wes Curry	Custodian/Bus Driver	Polk Central	Resigning

Action:

Name	Position	School	Hometown	College	Licensure Area	Years Exp
Ashley Allen	Payroll Clerk	Stearns	Mill Spring	USC Upstate	N/A	Years
Shanon Brower	EC Teacher Assistant	PCHS	Forest City	Covington Theological Seminary	N/A	Years

Matthew Pilgrim	Groundskeeper	Maintenance	Columbus	Spartanburg Community College	N/A	10
Amanda Caputo	Substitute Teacher	All Schools	Mill Spring	Florida International University	N/A	1

VII. ADJOURNMENT

With no more business to come before the Board, Mr. Ashworth declared the meeting adjourned at 8:54 pm.

Mr. Ashworth, Board Chair

Aaron Greene, Board Secretary
AG/TO