

Board of Education Meeting
February 9, 2026
6:30 PM, at Stearns Education Center Boardroom

There was an audit committee meeting at 6:00 prior to the regularly scheduled Board Meeting.

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

Members Absent: None

Others: Superintendent Todd Murphy, Director of Curriculum and Instruction Jan Crump, Human Resource Specialist Tonya Odel, Director of Operations Brandon Schweitzer, Finance Officer Debbie Lovelace, and Attorney Cynthia Lopez

Call to Order and Welcome

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

Pledge of Allegiance

Student Presentation

Students in Ms. Roddy's first-grade class at Sunny View Elementary have been exploring the four seasons as part of their recent studies. To showcase their learning, the class performed a delightful play about a young girl who brings a snowman to school. The cast, including Ms. Smith, Lucy, Maya, Snowman, and Principal Jones, delivered outstanding performances.

Approval of January 12, 2026 Board Minutes (Action)

Chairman Ashworth called the Board's attention to a copy of the January 12, 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. Page seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

2025-2026 Audit Presentation - Anderson, Smith, & Wike PLLC (Action)

Chairman Ashworth turned the floor over to Mr. Andy Deal of Anderson, Smith & Wike, PLLC, to present the 2025–2026 audit findings for Polk County Schools. Mr. Deal informed the Board that Polk County Schools received an unmodified audit report in all areas, indicating no findings and representing the cleanest audit opinion possible. He noted that his only recommendation was to increase the General Fund balance; however, due to rising costs and decreasing funding, many school districts are currently facing similar challenges. Mr. Deal briefly reviewed the audit report with the Board and had previously discussed it in greater detail with the Budget Committee prior to the Board meeting. Chairman Ashworth then called for a motion to approve and accept the 2025–2026 audit. Mr. Covil made the motion, which was seconded by Ms. Jackson. The motion carried unanimously, 6–0.

The Janice Anderson Brumley Educational Grant Recipient – George Alley (Information)

George Alley presented the Janice Anderson Brumley Educational Grant Award to this year’s recipient. The educational grant fund was established by the family of Janice Anderson Brumley, a longtime Polk County teacher who consistently strived for excellence in education. The fund awards up to \$1,000 annually to educators who demonstrate the same dedication to the profession.

Mr. Alley presented the Janice Anderson Brumley Educational Grant Award to Rachel Culbreth, a teacher at Polk Central Elementary School. Ms. Culbreth will use the grant to attend the *Get Your Teach On* Conference in Nashville, Tennessee.

Arts and Letters Curriculum Integration- Jan Crump and Brooke Benfield (Information)

Ms. Crump and Ms. Benfield presented information to the Board regarding Community Foundation–funded field trips. These field trips are grade-level specific and are designed to build content knowledge progressively each year by integrating text-based instruction with real-world experiences, all aligned with the Arts and Letters Curriculum Integration. Slides electronically attached to the agenda outlined each grade level’s learning modules and approved field trip locations. Ms. Crump expressed appreciation for the opportunity to work in Polk County and gratitude for the continued support of the district and the Polk County Community Foundation.

I. INSTRUCTIONAL

Overnight Field Trip Requests –Todd Murphy (Action)

Superintendent Murphy requested Board approval for the following overnight field trips: the PCHS FFA National Land Judging Competition in El Reno, Oklahoma, May 3–8, 2026; the PCHS FFA State Poultry Judging Career Development Event in Raleigh, North Carolina, March 30–31, 2026; and the PCHS HOSA State Leadership Conference in Greensboro, North Carolina, March 25–27, 2026. Chairman Ashworth called for a motion to approve the presented overnight field trip requests. Ms. Gibbs made the motion to approve, which was seconded by Ms. Allen and Ms. Jackson. The motion carried, and the overnight field trip requests were approved unanimously, 6-0.

II. ADMINISTRATIVE

Budget Amendment – Debbie Lovelace (Action)

Finance Officer Debbie Lovelace presented the budget amendment included in the agenda. Chairman Ashworth opened the floor for questions and there were none. Chairman Ashworth requested a motion to approve the budget amendment as submitted. Ms. Allen made the motion, and Ms. Gibbs seconded. The motion was approved 6-0.

School Calendar Discussion (Action)

Superintendent Murphy discussed a handout with the Board outlining the total number of instructional hours completed by students. Even after accounting for days missed due to inclement weather, Polk County Schools continues to exceed the instructional hour requirements established by the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction (NC DPI). Mr. Murphy proposed a revised calendar designating February 16 and March 13 as required instructional days. Chairman Ashworth called for a motion to approve the proposed calendar revision. Vice Chairman Covil made the motion, which was seconded by Ms. Gibbs. The motion passed unanimously, 6-0.

Mr. Murphy also discussed with the Board the option of implementing virtual learning days for the 2026–2027 school year. This option would provide greater flexibility in the event school days must be canceled. A virtual learning plan must be submitted to the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction (NC DPI) for approval in June 2026 for the 2026–2027 school year.

Chairman Ashworth called for a motion to approve the option to implement virtual learning days for the 2026–2027 school year. Ms. Gibbs made the motion, which was seconded by Ms. Jackson. The motion was approved unanimously, 6–0.

III. OLD BUSINESS

Chairman Ashworth inquired about the implementation of the Yondr pouches in the schools. Superintendent Murphy reported that the rollout has proceeded smoothly. Chairman Ashworth noted that he has not received any complaints, and Superintendent Murphy confirmed that he has likewise not received any concerns regarding the program.

IV. NEW BUSINESS

Superintendent Murphy informed the Board that the School Transportation and Maintenance Departments went above and beyond in their efforts during the recent ice and snowstorms. He commended both departments for their dedication and hard work to ensure the safety of students, staff, and school facilities throughout the severe weather events.

V. INFORMATION

Pre-School Monthly Report Presented to the Board
January Head Start 2026 Minutes
NC Pre-K Committee Meeting Minutes
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
February 16, 2026 - Required Teacher Workday

NCSBA OFFERED OPTIONAL BOARD TRAINING

Western Leadership Education and Training - March 3 - WRESA
Spring Law Virtual Conference - March 19
Spring Law Conference - Virtual Event - April 3 - April 4
Summer Leadership Conference-Wrightsville Beach - June 15 - June 19
NCSBA Video Library

VI. PUBLIC INPUT

There was one community member who wished to offer public input. A verbatim account of public input and all open meeting Board discussion is available via digital audio recording.

VII. CLOSED SESSION

Closed Session

At 7:06 PM Mr. Ashworth entertained a motion to go into closed session for the purpose of discussing personnel. Ms. Gibbs made the motion to go into closed session, and it was seconded by Ms. Allen. 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 7:39 pm, Ms. Gibbs made a motion to return to open session. Ms. Allen 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. Jackson made the motion to approve the recommendations of the Superintendent and the Human Resource Specialist. Ms. Allen and Ms. Page seconded the motion. The motion carried 6-0.

Information:

Name	Position	School	
Clowie Upton	Pre-K Teacher Assistant	TES	Resigned
Christina Mintz	Pre-K Teacher Assistant	TES	Transferred from Pre-K Teacher Assistant Floater
			to Full Time Pre-K Teacher Assistant

Action:

Name	Position	School	Hometown	College	Licensure Area	Years Exp
Shaun Jenne’	Tennis Coach	PCHS	Mill Spring	N/A	N/A	N/A

VII. ADJOURNMENT

With no more business to come before the Board, Mr. Ashworth declared the meeting adjourned at 7:40 pm.

 Mr. Ashworth, Board Chair

 Todd Murphy, Board Secretary
 TM/RC