

MINUTES
ASHE COUNTY BOARD OF EDUCATION
February 6, 2017

Prior to the regular meeting, a reception honoring employee and student recognitions was held in the Commons area of Ashe County High School. The regular meeting began at 7:00 pm with all members present. Chairman Jones called the meeting to order, welcomed those in attendance and led the Pledge of Allegiance.

The agenda for the meeting was approved by consensus of the Board.

Board Member Lee Beckworth recognized the following individual school *Teacher of the Year* nominees and presented each with a certificate acknowledging their achievement: Alex Rollins, Ashe High; Dr. Jodi Grubb, Ashe Middle; Katina Wilcox, Blue Ridge; Lori Hensley, Mountain View; and Jane Riffle, Westwood. Dr. Jodi Grubb was then recognized as the *2016/17 Ashe County Oddie Cox Teacher of the Year* and presented with the perpetual plaque honoring recipients of Ashe County's Teacher of the Year award in memory of Mr. Cox. Dr. Grubb was unable to attend the meeting, so her teacher assistant, Ann Combs, accepted the award on her behalf.

Board Member Terry Williams recognized the following individual school *Teacher Assistant of the Year* nominees and presented each with a certificate acknowledging their achievement: Dwayne Farmer, Ashe High; Ann Combs, Ashe Middle; Kathy Shepherd, Blue Ridge; Becky Rose, Mountain View; and Natasha Goodman, Westwood. Kathy Shepherd was then recognized as the *2016/17 Ashe County Teacher Assistant of the Year* and presented with a plaque.

Board Member Lee Beckworth recognized Ashe Middle teacher Alicia Giles as the *2016/17 Teacher of Excellence for Exceptional Children* and presented her with a certificate acknowledging her achievement.

Board Member Polly Jones recognized Callie Grubb, principal at Blue Ridge, as the *2016/17 Ashe County Schools Principal of the Year* and presented her with a plaque acknowledging her achievement.

Chairman Jones recognized Superintendent Phyllis Yates and the finance department—Finance Officer Amanda Coldiron, Geneva Spencer, Kevin Anderson and Sandy Rhodes—for receiving the *2014/15 Excellence Award from the National Government Finance Officers Association*.

Board Member Polly Jones recognized Ashe High students Monica U., Madelyn G., Juan J., Jacob K. and Lucas P. along with teacher sponsor Carmen Wilson for winning the Best in State North Carolina Verizon App Challenge for Grades 9-12. Only one high school team from each state was chosen. Each Best in State team won \$5,000 to enhance STEM education at their school and an Android mobile tablet for each team member. Mrs. Jones commended the team and presented each member with a certificate recognizing their achievement.

Ashe Early Learning was recognized for receiving the Pizza Hut monetary award in the amount of \$2,606. The award, sponsored through First Book, was presented by Jefferson Pizza Hut Manager Cynthia Poe to Terry Richardson, Director for Exceptional Children and PreK Programs, at Ashe Early Learning. Mrs. Richardson stated that the money will be used to purchase classroom literacy books, classroom dress-up costumes for dramatic play, games and playground equipment. The Board commended the local business for its support of education.

A motion by Vice Chairman King and a second by Mr. Williams gave unanimous approval to the minutes for the regular meeting of the Board on January 9, 2017 and the special meeting on January 20, 2017.

A motion by Dr. Beckworth and a second by Mrs. Jones gave unanimous approval to the request from Ashe High JROTC Drill Team for an overnight trip to attend the Hoke County JROTC Drill Competition March 24-25, 2017.

A motion by Mr. Williams and a second by Vice Chairman King gave unanimous approval to the request from Ashe High HOSA for an overnight trip to attend State Competition in Greensboro, March 30-April 1, 2017.

A motion by Vice Chairman King and a second by Mr. Williams gave unanimous approval to the revision of Policy 4270/6145 *Concussion and Head Injury* as presented at the January meeting. The emphasis in the revision is a student's ability to "return to learn" as well as ability to "return to play".

A motion by Vice Chairman King and a second by Mr. Williams gave unanimous approval to the following resolution on K-3 class-size ratios.

WHEREAS, local school districts receive state funding for classroom teacher salaries based on funding ratios of one position per a specified number of students at each grade level; and

WHEREAS, local school districts have traditionally been afforded flexibility to allow class sizes in kindergarten through third grade to exceed the classroom teacher funding ratios within set limits; and

WHEREAS, this approach has provided local school districts with crucial flexibility to fund teaching positions in art, music, and physical education – none of which receive separate funding allotments – by setting aside some teacher allotments to cover salaries for those positions; and

WHEREAS, G.S. 115C-301, as amended by Section 8.33 of the 2016 Budget Bill, codifies funding ratios by statute and precludes these past practices; and

WHEREAS, the loss of flexibility in this area would have immediate and negative effects on school districts throughout the state, including one or more of the following: (i) drastic cuts in art, music, and physical education teaching positions in kindergarten through third grade; (ii) a dramatic increase in class sizes in grades four through twelve to free up state teacher allotments to fund those positions; and/or (iii) sudden new financial burdens on local governments to provide the funding for those same positions, which could necessitate property tax increases; and

WHEREAS, the loss of flexibility in this area would require an immediate reduction in class sizes in kindergarten through third grade, which in turn would increase the number of physical classrooms required at these grade levels, thereby putting additional strains on crowded school facilities; and

WHEREAS, if the issue is not addressed legislatively in the near future, school districts and counties will be forced to develop their 2017-18 budgets in the spring on the assumption and understanding that large increases in local funding may be needed to preserve art, music, and physical education positions in kindergarten through third grade and to meet sudden new demands on school facilities; and

WHEREAS, legislative action is urgently needed to avoid the serious, statewide, negative impacts described above;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Ashe Board of Education respectfully requests that the General Assembly pass legislation as early as possible in the 2017 session to provide local school districts with the class size and funding flexibility needed to avoid the severe negative impacts described above.

A motion by Mrs. Jones and a second by Dr. Beckworth gave unanimous approval to contracting services to implement the Title V Abstinence Grant per recommendation of the consultant for Federal programs at the Department of Public Instruction. According to Student Services Coordinator Jamie Little, the contractual services will be advertised at an hourly wage for 29 hours per week.

A motion by Dr. Beckworth and a second by Mrs. Jones gave unanimous approval to the following personnel recommendations.

CERTIFIED

Teachers

- Reassignment of Phyllis Anna Sutherland from substitute/tutor to middle grades language arts/social studies teacher at Ashe Middle effective August 16, 2016 (this was delayed due to licensure – prior approval)

Substitute Teachers

- Addition of Mary McGrath, Kathy Pennington, Savannah Poe, Austin Thomas and Nicholas Woods to the approved substitute list

Prior approval to employ the following vacant positions

- Substitute teachers

CLASSIFIED

Bus Drivers

- Employment of Richard Dean Bare as part-time (≤ 25 hours per week) regular route bus driver effective January 6, 2017 (prior approval)
- Reassignment of Terry Treadway from substitute bus driver to full-time (≥ 6 hours per day) regular route bus driver effective February 1, 2017 (prior approval)

Cafeteria Assistant

- Promotion of Kimberly Osborne from part-time (5 hours per day) cafeteria assistant at Mountain View to full-time (7 hours per day) at Mountain View effective February 1, 2017 (prior approval)

Cafeteria Assistant Substitute

- Addition of Virginia Sheets to the approved substitute cafeteria assistant list (prior approval)

Coaches

- Addition of Justin Wood as head softball coach at Ashe Middle to the approved coaches list (paid position—replaces David Hudler)

- Addition of Mike Jones as assistant softball coach at Ashe Middle to the approved coaches list (paid position—fills TBD)
- Addition of Johnna Church as head girls track coach at Ashe Middle to the approved coaches list (paid position—replaces George Zeller)
- Addition of Leeann Cronk as assistant track coach at Ashe Middle to the approved coaches list (paid position—fills TBD)

Maintenance

- Resignation/retirement of Wayne Patrick, maintenance mechanic for Ashe County Schools, effective February 28, 2017

Tutors

- Employment of Chelsea Eller as part-time (≤ 29 hours per week) Gear Up tutor at all elementary schools effective January 17, 2017 (prior approval)
- Employment of Yvonne Cornelis as part-time (< 20 hours per week) tutor at Ashe Middle effective date TBD through end of 2016-2017 school year (contingent on drug screen and background check)
- Re-employment of Denise Barden as part-time (< 15 hours per week) tutor at Ashe Middle effective date TBD through end of 2016/17 school year
- Reassignment of Emma Sexton from substitute teacher to part-time (< 20 hours per week) tutor at Ashe Middle effective January 31, 2017 through the end of the 2016/17 school year
- Reassignment of Emily Berglund from substitute teacher to part-time (≤ 29 hours per week) Gear Up tutor at Ashe Middle and Ashe High (prior approval)

Prior approval to employ the following vacant positions

- Maintenance mechanic
- Part-time cafeteria assistant at Mountain View
- Substitute bus drivers
- Substitute cafeteria assistants

On behalf of all the county art teachers, Jill Gambill gave a presentation on the art programs in Ashe County Schools, describing how the local art teachers benefit from a content-based professional learning community (PLC). This no-cost type of professional development utilizes the high quality employees of the school system. In fact, leaders at the State level were so impressed by the local content-based professional development, Ashe County art teachers have been asked to present a webinar on PLCs at the national level in March on the three Rs—resources, reflection and revival. Ms. Gambill stated that art teachers see the value in county-wide PLCs and encouraged the Board to think about making one day a month a county-wide, content-specific PLC day for all teachers.

Athletic Director Marc Payne gave an overview of education-based athletic programs in Ashe County and explained how the make-up of leagues and conferences can impact athletic participation in Ashe County. Mr. Payne discussed the three most prevalent nation-wide problems in athletics—finding qualified coaches, funding and parental expectations. Based upon probable retirements in June 2017, Ashe County will see a loss of three football coaches and one wrestling coach.

Student Services Coordinator Jamie Little gave an update on the dental mobile unit funded by a federally qualified health grant through Appalachian Health. Keaton Mash, DDS, has been employed to provide

dental services for students in grades K-8. The portable dental equipment will rotate between schools, and Medicaid will fund services for qualifying students.

A revision to Policy 7940 *Classified Personnel Suspension and Dismissal* was presented to the Board for consideration. Pursuant to Board policy, action on this policy will be taken at the March meeting.

The following items of information were shared with the Board.

- 2015/16 Dropout and Discipline Information
- National School Counseling Week—February 6-10, 2017
- February 2017—CTE Month
- The next regular meeting of the Board is scheduled for Monday, March 6, 2017, 7:00 pm, at the Central Office annex.
- Friday, March 10—Battle of the Books (BOB)—Grades 5-8, 9:00 am, Ashe County High auditorium
- Thursday, April 13—Battle of the Books (EBOB) Grades 3-4, 9:00 am, Ashe County High auditorium
- DIAL 4 Kindergarten Screenings
 - Mountain View—March 13-15
 - PreK—March 20-23
 - Westwood—March 27-29
 - Blue Ridge—April 3-5
- Monday, April 3, 2017—Board meeting will be held at Ashe County Arts Council beginning at 7:00 pm.

There being no further business, a motion by Vice Chairman King and a second by Mr. Williams adjourned the meeting at 8:23 pm.