

MINUTES
ASHE COUNTY BOARD OF EDUCATION
February 4, 2019

Prior to the regular meeting, a reception honoring employee and student recognitions was held in the Commons area of Ashe County High School. Music was provided by the Beckworth family. During the transition to the auditorium, the Ashe County High Jazz Band played two selections. The regular meeting began at 7:00 pm in the auditorium with all members present except Mr. McClure who had a family emergency. The 6th grade chorus from Blue Ridge Elementary sang at the beginning of the meeting, after which 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.

During open comments, Brian Jones, a parent from the Pond Mountain area, spoke about how the routes for buses 202 and 175 are putting children in that area in jeopardy and how children from that area are not being treated fairly. A response to this comment will be heard at the regular March meeting. On behalf of the Ashe Arts Council, Rebecca Williams gave an overview of the Spring 2019 school programming available to the schools in the areas of theatre, dance, music and visual arts. She emphasized that these programs are made possible by the long-standing partnership between Ashe County Schools and the Arts Council.

Each February, the Board recognizes the achievements of its employees and students. Human Resource Director Lesia Goodman recognized the following 2018/19 recipients and presented each with a certificate or plaque on behalf of the Board of Education. Mrs. Goodman made comments on the importance of each award and how proud the Board was of each individual's accomplishment.

- Recognition of Sam W., Senior at Ashe High, for scoring 1000 points, Ladies Huskies Varsity Basketball
- Recognition of Ashe High students selected for the 2019 Virginia Tech Honor Band—Emily R., trumpet; Emma L., clarinet; Miguel G., tuba; Joey V., trombone; Gabby G., clarinet; and Jordan C., alto sax
- Recognition of Ashe High students selected for the NC All-District Band—Marissa L., flute/Symphonic Band; and Joey V., trombone/Concert Band
- Recognition of Ashe Middle student Matthew M.—overall winner of the 8th grade Dr. Martin Luther King Essay Contest sponsored by Ashe Arts Council
- Recognition of Ashe Middle students selected for the Middle School All-District Band 2019—Hudson M. and Kaylee M.
- Recognition of Ashe County's 2018/19 Oddie Cox Teacher of the Year Award and nominees—Stephanie Stolt, Ashe High; Jill Gambill, Ashe Middle; Susan Poe, Blue Ridge; Kim Treadway, Mountain View; and John Franca, Westwood—Jill Gambill was the overall 2018/19 Oddie Cox Teacher of the Year
- Recognition of Ashe County's 2018/19 Classified Employee of the Year and nominees—Tammy Woods, Ashe High; Jeffery Wegmann, Ashe Middle; Tina Greer, Blue Ridge; Deborah Cox, Mountain View; Ed Robinson, Westwood; and Dean Rupard, Central Support Services—Tina Greer was the overall 2018/19 Classified Employee of the Year
- Recognition of Ashe County's 2018/19 Support/Supervisory Employee of the Year and nominees—Travis Bennett, Ashe High; Julie Taylor, Ashe Middle; Tonya Denny, Blue Ridge; Beth Shelton, Mountain View; and Libby Matheson, Westwood—Tonya Denny was the overall 2018/19 Support/Supervisory Employee of the Year
- Recognition of Ashe County's 2018/19 Teacher of Excellence for Exceptional Children—Tonya Blevins, Blue Ridge

- Recognition of Ashe County's 2018/19 National Board recipients—Allie Shoemake, Blue Ridge; and Tania Rollins, Blue Ridge
- Recognition of Ashe County's 2018 North Carolina Council of Teachers of Mathematics Outstanding Secondary Math Teacher—Heather Windish, Ashe Middle
- Recognition of Ashe County's North Carolina Council of Teachers of Mathematics 2018 Innovator Award—Christina Pennington, Ashe High; Carmen Wilson, Ashe High; Susan Poe, Blue Ridge; Barbara Heufel, Mountain View; and Mandy Keziah, Westwood
- Recognition of the 2019 Parent Health Watch Hero for Young Hearts Advocacy Champion Adult—Amy Walker, Central Support Services
- Recognition of Excellence in Financial Reporting from the National Government Finance Officers Association for the 2017 fiscal year—Amanda Coldiron, Finance Officer; Kevin Anderson, Assistant Finance Officer; Geneva Spencer, Accounts Payable and Purchasing; Sandy Rhodes, Payroll; and Laken Lyall, Accounting Specialist

The Ashe County Teacher of the Year award is named in honor of Oddie Cox who spent 50 years in education in Ashe County. The Superintendent is to contact the State Superintendent about putting a plaque on the wall at the Department of Public Instruction honoring Mr. Cox along with other educators who have spent 50 years or more in education.

A motion by Vice Chairman Beckworth and a second by Mrs. Jones gave unanimous approval to the minutes for the regular meeting of the Board on January 7, 2019.

A motion by Mrs. Jones and a second by Mrs. Eldreth gave unanimous approval to the request from Meghan Minton, who is the process of moving to Ashe County, to allow her daughter, Kailey Minton, to continue school in Watauga County effective immediately.

A motion by Mrs. Eldreth and a second by the Vice Chairman gave unanimous approval to the request from Roxanna Isaacs, who resides in Ashe County, to allow her son, Cohen Isaacs, to attend school in Watauga County effective immediately.

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

CERTIFIED

Teachers

- Reassignment of Brian Armstrong from substitute teacher to temporary science teacher at Ashe Early College effective January 22, 2019 (prior approval)
- Reassignment of Rebecca Hilton from substitute teacher to interim science teacher at Ashe Middle effective January 3, 2019 (prior approval—filling leave of absence)

Substitute Teachers

- Addition of Alice Greer to the approved substitute teacher list

Employee Leaves

- Request from Cynthia Coldiron, EL teacher at Westwood and Ashe High, for a medical leave of absence beginning on or about March 4, 2019 and ending on September 2, 2019 (FMLA exhausted)

Prior approval to employ the following vacant positions

- Substitute teachers

CLASSIFIED

Coaches

- Request from Kasee Roberts, Spring assistant men's and women's track coach, for a sabbatical from coaching Spring 2019 at Ashe High
- Addition of Bill Corriher as assistant track coach to the approved coaches list at Ashe High contingent upon drug and background screenings (paid, non-faculty—replaces Kasee Roberts)
- Addition of Sherman Lyle as assistant women's soccer coach to the approved coaches list at Ashe High (paid, non-faculty—replaces Josh Poe)
- Addition of Sarah Houck as assistant softball coach to the approved coaches list at Ashe High contingent upon drug and background screenings (paid, non-faculty—replaces Lynn Ferguson)
- Addition of Chase Wall as assistant men's basketball and softball coach to the approved coaches list at Ashe High contingent upon drug and background screenings (volunteer, non-faculty, student teacher)
- Addition of Donald Conrad as assistant baseball coach to the approved coaches list at Ashe High (paid—current ACHS employee)
- Resignation of Nathan Colvard from head junior varsity baseball coach at Ashe High
- Reassignment of Andy Cheek from assistant baseball coach to head junior varsity baseball coach at Ashe High (paid, non-faculty)
- Reassignment of Phil Morrison from assistant men's and women's track coach (volunteer) to assistant men's and women's track coach at Ashe High (paid)
- Reassignment of Bill Kumerow from assistant junior varsity men's soccer coach to assistant baseball coach at Ashe High (volunteer, non-paid)
- Request from Justin Wood, head softball coach, to be removed from the coaches list at Ashe Middle effective January 29, 2019
- Addition of David Osborne as head softball coach to the approved coaches list at Ashe Middle contingent upon drug and background screenings
- Reassignment of Kevin Wonsick from assistant girls' basketball coach to assistant softball coach at Ashe Middle (TBA on coaching list)

Teacher Assistant

- Reassignment of Amanda Church from substitute teacher with Ashe County Schools to temporary, part-time teacher assistant at Mountain View effective January 28, 2019 and ending on or about May 13, 2019 (to fill teacher assistant student teaching—student days only)

Prior approval to employ the following vacant positions

- Math tutor at Ashe High (GearUp funding)
- Interim cafeteria assistant at Ashe High (to fill leave of absence)
- Interim cafeteria assistant at Westwood (to fill leave of absence)
- Substitute bus drivers
- Substitute cafeteria assistants

A motion by Mrs. Eldreth and a second by Mrs. Jones gave unanimous approval to adopting the following resolution supporting local control of school calendars.

WHEREAS, the North Carolina General Statutes give local boards of education powers of supervision and control of local school systems; and

WHEREAS, local control over establishing school calendars is an integral component of school system supervision and administrative powers with which local boards of education have been vested; and

WHEREAS, in 2004 the North Carolina General Assembly seized control of setting school calendars and imposed a one-size-fits-all mandate on how school calendars are to be set; and

WHEREAS, the current one-size-fits-all school calendar start date is no earlier than the Monday closest to August 26 and the end date is no later than the Friday closest to June 11; and

WHEREAS, the State mandated late August start date means high schools do not complete the first semester until mid to late January; and

WHEREAS, the current law essentially requires high school students to take first semester exams after the winter break, which negatively impacts test scores, according to students and educators; and

WHEREAS, the second semester for high schools starts two to three weeks later than community colleges and universities; and

WHEREAS, superintendents report that the calendar misalignment makes it nearly impossible for high school students or recent winter graduates to take courses at a nearby community college or university during the second semester; and

WHEREAS, exams for Advanced Placement and International Baccalaureate classes are given on the same day nationwide, and the current calendar law shortens the amount of time North Carolina's students have to learn the material before test day; and

WHEREAS, it is well-documented through multiple studies that children will experience a phenomenon known as summer learning loss, which has a disproportionate impact on low-income children; and

WHEREAS, long summer breaks can also negatively impact child nutrition, as low-income children who have access to regular meals at school through the free and reduced priced meal program may not have access to regular meals at home; and

WHEREAS, with little flexibility built in to the calendar, scheduling make-up days is extremely challenging; and

WHEREAS, major hurricanes and severe winter snow storms have caused Ashe County Schools to miss 29 school days over the past three years; and

WHEREAS, Ashe County Schools was only able to make up 21 missed days over the past three years; and

WHEREAS, fall sports and band begin August 1, schedules for extracurriculars have not changed to coincide with the State-mandated school calendar; and

WHEREAS, local boards of education are best equipped to understand the balancing act of meeting the community's needs and maximizing student success; and

WHEREAS, restoring local control of school calendars will allow local boards of education to best meet the calendar preferences of the families, educators, and businesses in our community while allowing for innovative experimental approaches to improve student achievement.

THEREFORE, be it resolved that the Ashe County Board of Education requests that the Ashe County Board of County Commissioners pass a resolution in support of calendar flexibility.

Mike Wike from Anderson Smith & Wike presented the Financial Audit for Ashe County Schools for the year ended June 30, 2018. Professional standards require that the audit firm provide the Board with information about the audit firm's responsibilities under generally accepted auditing standards and *Government Auditing Standards* and OMB Circular A-133. The auditors issued an unmodified, or clean, report on all financial statements, which is the highest level of approval. All compliance requirements received an unmodified rating as well. Even though the Child Nutrition program is currently self-supporting, Mr. Wike felt he needed to make the Board aware that revenues are decreasing due to loss in participation. This is true of school systems across the state.

Trey Simmons, Chairman of the School Improvement Team (SIT) at the high school and Curriculum Coach Christina Pennington asked the Board to consider revising Policy 4400 *9-12 Attendance* as recommended by the team. The current attendance policy allows students to miss 10 days per semester. Chronic absenteeism is defined as missing 10 percent or more of a school year and shows that it affects student achievement as well as student attitude and behavior at school. Students with 8 absences this semester are considered chronically absent. After much discussion and reviewing policies from other counties, the School Improvement Team recommended limiting the number of allowable absences from 10 to 6 days per semester in hopes of better preparing students for college or career choice. Per policy, the Board will take action on this request at its regular meeting in March. Dr. Beckworth commented that he was glad the SIT had become stricter and that the waiver committee now voting by secret ballot was a good move. The Board applauded the current work of the team and stated that the proposed changes puts responsibility back on students rather than teachers.

Maintenance Director Jerry Baker presented funding options on the outside window replacement at the high school. Rather than replacing the windows over a five-year period as first approved in the 2018/19 budget, the project can come in under budget if all windows are replaced at one time. If the project is spread over three years, the additional cost will be \$19,299—spreading the project over five years will be an additional cost of \$57,380. The initial budget was \$250,000 spread over five years. By completing all windows this summer, the project will cost \$240,402, a savings of \$9,598.

CTE Director Joallen Lowder provided an update on Career and Technical Education (CTE). February is CTE month, and Mrs. Lowder provided the Board a one-page snapshot of CTE facts and figures for Ashe County Schools. She also gave information on what teachers at Ashe Middle and Ashe High are doing to promote CTE month in their schools. One of the highlights will be high school and middle school teachers "trading spaces" or classrooms for a day. Promotional posters have been placed around the schools to reflect the value of CTE classes and the impact they make on student career choices. Mrs. Lowder thanked the Board of Education, the Superintendent and school administrators for their support of CTE programs. She ended with providing dates to remember: April 18—Career Fair at Ashe County Middle and April 30—Construction Career Day sponsored by Ashe/Alleghany Home Builders Association at Ashe County High.

The Superintendent reported that as of this date the school system has missed 12 full days plus the equivalent of 3.5 days for delays or early releases due to inclement weather. The goal is to keep Spring Break and not go to school on Saturdays unless absolutely necessary. To help make this happen, February 15 and March 18 are now full instructional days for students. As of this date, the last day for students is still May 30, 2019—graduation will be on May 31st.

The Superintendent reported that the landscape architect employed by Architect Larry Greene is preparing the site design development documents and that Civil Engineer Jason Herman has staked out the building location. The site will require a large amount of cut and retaining walls. Mr. Greene has been consulting with his structural engineer and the plumbing, mechanical and electrical engineers. He is also in the process of finishing the large scale plans for each of the different areas in order to meet with staff and teachers to determine the location of furniture, fixtures, equipment, and other items requiring electrical, plumbing or mechanical connections.

The Superintendent reported that Ashe Early College Principal Elaine Cox has received 65 completed applications, including 3 homeschoolers as of January 29. There are additional applications expected from the middle school. The interview process will begin in February.

The Board was informed that Laurel Ridge Camp, Conference and Retreat Center had received a \$75,000 grant and that the Board of Directors has decided to give Ashe, Alleghany and Wilkes counties \$25,000 each to use for projects of their choice. The monies must be spent within a five-year period. The Superintendent will discuss with principals what student projects they would like to see.

Bids for the tennis courts will be let in the near future so that the work can begin as soon as men's tennis is over in May.

The Superintendent shared the listing of Spring 2019 NCSBA Legal Webinars. Board members are to contact the Superintendent if they are interesting in registering for any of the offerings.

The following items of information were shared with the Board.

- Thursday, February 7—Spelling Bee, 6:30 pm, Ashe High auditorium
- February 2019—CTE Month
- National School Counseling Week—February 4-8, 2019
- Bus Driver Appreciation Week—February 11-15, 2019
- The next regular meeting of the Board is scheduled for Monday, March 4, 2019, 7:00 pm, at the Central Support annex.
- Friday, March 14—Battle of the Books (BOB)—Grades 6-8, 9:00 am, Ashe High auditorium
- Friday, March 14—Battle of the Books (EBOB)—Grades 4-5, immediately following BOB
- DIAL 4 Kindergarten Screenings
 - PreK—March 19-22
 - Blue Ridge—April 2-4
 - Westwood—April 9-11
 - Mountain View—April 15-17
- Tuesday, April 2, 2019—Board meeting will be held at Ashe County Arts Council beginning at 7:00 pm. The meeting was rescheduled again due to the elementary chorus festival being held on April 1 in the high school auditorium.

At 8:54 pm, the Board took a short recess prior to going into closed session for the purpose of considering a personnel action that involves an officer or employee of this Board [N.C. General Statute §143.318.11(a)(6)] and real estate [N.C. General Statute §143.318.11(a)(5)]. The Board went into closed session at 9:06 pm and returned to regular session at 9:35 pm.

Upon return to regular session, a motion by the Vice Chairman and a second by Mrs. Jones gave unanimous approval to replacing all the outside windows at the high school at the same time due to substantial cost savings. The Superintendent will advise the Director of Maintenance of this decision.

There being no further business, the Chairman immediately declared the meeting adjourned.