

**Minutes
Ashe County Board of Education
October 5, 2020**

The meeting was held as scheduled. All members were counted as present during roll call. Chairman Jones called the meeting to order, welcomed those in attendance.

The Pledge of Allegiance was led by Mountain View Elementary student, Harper Y. Harper is in 2nd grade and won the summer reading contest.

After reviewing the agenda, Vice-chairman Beckworth made the motion to accept the published agenda with the additions of personnel items under 4.07 and 4.08 Budget Resolution for October 2020. Polly Jones seconded the motion. The motion carried.

Dr. Cox informed the Board that there were no public comments.

Martha Turner, Director of School Nutrition, announced to the Board that the three elementary schools have been awarded the Fresh Fruit and Vegetable grant. The grant will provide at least two healthy snacks a week for students in all three elementary schools. The total of the grant is \$85,000.

Dr. Cox informed the Board that the Gear Up grant had been funded for an additional seven years. It is a \$29.5 million grant for ten school districts. It will start this year and run through 2026-2027. The grant will start with sixth and seventh-grade students.

The minutes from the September 8, 2020 and September 24, 2020 meeting were presented for approval. Dianne Eldreth made the motion to accept the minutes as presented. Keith McClure provided a second to the motion. The motion passed.

A request was heard from Patricia Epting, who resides in Ashe County, to allow her child to attend school in Watauga County effective the 2020/21 school year. Keith McClure made the motion to accept Ms. Epting's request as presented. Vice-chair Beckworth gave a second to the motion. The motion passed.

A request from Amanda Weaver to allow her child to attend school in Watauga was tabled due to Ms. Weaver not being present.

Jamie Little requested to apply for the iCares grant for child care during remote learning. The grant is issued through the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction and the request can be up to \$250,000. She would like to apply for \$200,000. Polly Jones made a motion to allow Mrs. Little to proceed with the grant. Dianne Eldreth seconded the motion. The motion carried.

Jerry Baker, Director of Maintenance, and Steve Taylor with Blue Ridge Electric presented an easement for power lines to the new Wilkes Community College facility. The Board tabled the discussion to allow Mr. Baker time to look into the need and to clarify questions.

In the absence of Earl Pennington, Dr. Cox requested permission to explore and apply for the Golden Leaf grant in conjunction with Wilkes Community College. The grant would focus on a Computer Information Technology program. There is currently no program at the Ashe Campus. It would be for equipment and salary for the first two years of the grant. Keith McClure made the motion to allow Dr. Cox to proceed

with exploring and applying for the Golden Leaf grant. Vice-chairman Beckworth seconded the motion. The motion passed.

Roy Putman, Director of Personnel, presented the personnel recommendations to the Board. After discussion, Dianne Eldreth made the motion to approve the recommendations excluding prior approval to hire an assistant principal at Blue Ridge Elementary. Keith McClure seconded the motion and the motion passed.

Amanda Coldiron, Finance Officer, presented the 2020/2021 Budget Resolution. Dianne Eldreth made the motion accept the resolution as presented. Keith McClure seconded the motion. The motion carried.

Terry Richardson, Exceptional Children's Program Director, updated the Board on compensatory services. Services will start on October 7, 2020. 103 students will be served. Transportation is being provided and students will receive breakfast and lunch.

Dr. Cox gave the Board an update about board policies, Title IX policies, and the need to expedite the process of approving the Title IX policies as they went into effect July 2020. Also, the Board needs a policy in place to hold remote meetings if there were to be another shutdown. Ashe County Schools is currently contracting with the North Carolina School Board's Association for policy updates. There are many policies in need of revision that are new, amended, or have been repealed. Ashe County Schools Central Support Services staff will take a section at a time and cross-reference current policies with the policies provided by the North Carolina School Board's Association.

Jamie Little, Student Services Director, presented on mental health practices in Ashe County Schools. Ashe County Schools currently has nine counselors, one social worker, four school nurses, one mental health coordinator with the ASC Center that serves the high school and early college, and one Student Success Coordinator that serves Ashe County Middle School. Students are served in small groups, individually or a referral for outside services can be made. Ashe County Schools currently have a memorandum of understandings in place with Daymark, Jody Province, Youth Villages, and Jenny Holmes. Students are served at school which removes the barrier of transportation. Mrs. Eldreth asked what services were provided for the Ashe Online students. Mrs. Little stated that they are continuously looking in on the well-being of our Ashe Online students. Anytime a teacher sees a need the staff assists them the same way an in-person student would receive services. They are doing a daily check-in by completing an attendance form. The form asks how students are feeling that day. Additionally, other items in place are the Say Something App, Gaggie monitoring, bullying reporting on all school websites, and focusing on training staff on social and emotional learning.

Dr. Cox gave the Board an update on COVID in Ashe County Schools. As of the date of the board meeting, there were three active cases and a total of fifteen cases since school started. Nine parents are currently keeping their children at home and fifteen are waiting on test results. There is currently one positive staff member and a total of three positive staff members since school started.

There being no further business, the Chairman immediately declared the meeting adjourned at 9:36 pm.