

Minutes
Ashe County Board of Education
November 2, 2020

The regular meeting was held at 6:00 pm as scheduled. All members were present during roll call. Chairman Jones called the meeting to order, welcomed those in attendance.

The Pledge of Allegiance and the Leader in Me pledge was led by Blue Ridge 6th grade student, Andrew M., and 4th grade student, Madison Mash.

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 informed the Board that the Ashe County Schools Child Nutrition program had received a \$33,000 grant from No Kid Hungry NC. The funds are aimed at help with emerging needs and feed more children during COVID-19. The program is called Ashe County Schools Meal Time Express. The funds will be used to purchase a van and pay for fuel to deliver meals. This will hopefully increase participation. Chairman Jones asked if there were any matching funds required. Mrs. Turner responded that there were not. Dianne Eldreth asked if there had been an increase in participation since moving to Plan A. Mrs. Turner replied yes there had been but not a huge increase since the number of packed-out meals had decreased.

Mrs. Jamie Little shared with the Board that Ashe County Schools received a U.S. Department of Justice grant that would focus on threat assessments. The grant is for three years and would employ a social worker.

The agenda was approved as presented.

The minutes were from the October 5, 2020 meeting were presented for approval. Vice-chair Beckworth made the motion to accept the minutes as presented. Polly Jones seconded the motion. There was no discussion. The motion passed.

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

The following students were presented for approval to graduate early.

Paige A.
Mason B.
Litcy B.
Austin B.
Chase C.
Jennifer C.
Michael James D.
Jeffrey E.

Dakota H.
Laci H.
Christian K.
Charles K.
Christian L.
Nathanial M.
Talía R.
Yuwa R.

Dianne Eldreth made the motion to approve the early graduates. Vice-chair Beckworth seconded the motion. The motion carried.

Dr. Eisa Cox presented to the Board policies for approval. Policy 1710-4020-7230 Discrimination and harassment prohibited by Federal Law was presented first. A motion by Vice-chair Beckworth and a second by Polly Jones was presented. Vice-chair Beckworth mentioned that in policy 1710 sexual orientation wasn't specifically mentioned. Dr. Cox clarified according to the NC School Boards Association, sex also implies sexual orientation. The motion carried.

The next policy presented was 1720-4030-7235 Title IX Nondiscrimination on the basis of sex. Keith McClure made the motion to accept the policy as presented. Dianne Eldreth seconded the motion. The motion carried.

Policy 1725-4035-7236 Title IX Sexual Harassment-Prohibited Conduct and Reporting Process was the next policy presented. Diane Eldreth made the motion to accept the policy as presented. Vice-chair Beckworth seconded the motion. The motion passed.

Policy 1726-4036-7237 Title IX Sexual Harassment Grievance Process was next on the agenda. Polly Jones made the motion to accept the policy as presented. Keith McClure seconded the motion and the motion carried.

Policy 4329/7311 Bullying and Harassing Behavior Prohibited were presented. Vice-chair Beckworth made a motion to accept the policy. Polly Jones seconded the motion. The motion passed.

Policy 7232 Discrimination and Harassment in the Workplace was brought forth for approval. The motion was made by Keith McClure to accept it as presented. Polly Jones seconded the motion and the motion carried.

Policy 2302 Remote Participation in Board Meetings. A motion was made by Dianne Eldreth to accept policy 2302 with the following change to section E.8, meetings would be live-streamed when technologically possible. Vice-chair Beckworth seconded the motion. The motion passed.

Dr. Cox presented the following policies to be repealed as the updated Title IX policies replaced the current policies.

- 1710/4021/7230 Prohibition Against Discrimination Harassment and Bullying
- 1720/4015/7225 Discrimination, Harassment, and Bullying Complaint Procedure
- 1735 Harassment Defined
- 1736 Sexual Harassment Defined

Dianne Eldreth made the motion to accept the repeal of the listed policies. Keith McClure seconded the motion. The motion passed.

Mr. Jerry Baker, Director of Maintenance, and Chris Robinson, Vice-Dean of Wilkes Community College, brought forth for approval an agreement for an easement with Blue Ridge Electric to provide power to the new facility on the Ashe Campus of Wilkes Community College. Dianne Eldreth made the motion to grant the easement. Keith McClure seconded the motion. The motion passed.

Mr. Earl Pennington, Director of Accountability and Testing, requested approval for the articulated classes with Wilkes Community College. It is a standing articulation agreement. Mrs. Eldreth asked who helped support students at Ashe County High School with College and Career Promise. Mr. Pennington stated that Mrs. Jennifer Glass supports students through the process. Vice-chair Beckworth made the motion to accept the agreement. Polly Jones seconded the motion and the motion passed.

Roy Putman, Director of Human Resources presented a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) from Lees McRae University related to the placement of student teachers. Mr. Putman had the school board attorney review the document and he advised Mr. Putman to remove "as needed" where it states "their program will conduct criminal background checks at predetermined points and share with the LEA as needed". Attorney Johnson stated that the school system needs those results prior to the student teachers entering the buildings. Mr. Putman explained that as with the current MOU with Appalachian State University, student teachers are subject to HR's discretion. Ashe County Schools can request or require Criminal Background Checks.

Roy Putman, Director of Human Resources presented a second Memorandum of Understanding from UNC Charlotte related to the placement of student teachers. Dianne Eldreth made the motion to accept the MOU as presented. Vice-chair Beckworth seconded the motion. The motion passed.

Mr. Putman also presented personnel recommendations to the Board. Dianne Eldreth made the motion accept as presented. Keith McClure seconded the motion. The motion carried.

Amanda Coldiron, Finance Officer, updated the Board on the initiative created by the state for Business Modernization. Currently, the initiative is unfunded. Without state support, it is not an option for Ashe County to continue with Tyler Technologies. Human Resources and Finance have pursued a more cost-effective option with LINQ. The annual cost would \$7 per student annually and \$15,000 for implementation. There would be one year with an annual subscription to the current system and the new system but after the first year, cost should be reduced. Polly Jones made the motion to pursue an agreement with LINQ. Keith McClure seconded the motion and the motion passed.

Dr. Eisa Cox presented a COVID-19 update to the Board. The numbers looked great on Thursday, October 29, 2020. However, they were beginning to increase. There were 4 positive staff cases and still no spread in the schools. There have been very few clusters in public schools across the state. The county had a total of 87 cases. The availability of bus drivers is continuing to be a challenge as there are not enough substitutes. Currently, 5 transportation staff employees are out. 23 employees were quarantined at the time of the meeting. The Remote C Plan has been sent out. Vice-chair Beckworth inquired about online student failures. Dr. Cox stated that the schools were continually contacting parents and had made 1,000's of contacts.

Julie Taylor, Director of Curriculum and Federal programs, updated the Board on the Remote C Plan and snow days/inclement weather days. There will be 5 remote days.

David Koontz, Ashe County High School Athletic Director, updated the Board on the athletic schedules and the new athletic handbook. He also informed the Board of the capacity available for attending sporting events. He is pursuing live streaming events.

Mr. Dustin Farmer, Ashe County Middle School Principal, brought holiday cheer to the Board with the announcement that ACMS will be hosting the Making Spirits Bright Light show on the weekends beginning December 4 through December 20, 2020. This will be a fundraiser for the school. It is \$10 per car and \$20 for church vans. They have also partnered with Warrensville and Lansing Fire Department and the fire departments will receive the Sunday proceeds.

Dr. Cox gave the board a few updates. Schools will be closed on November 11, 2020, in honor of Veteran's Day. Due to COVID-19, the traditional celebration cannot be held but students are creating videos to honor the veterans.

Dr. Cox shared with the Board a general schedule of how the policies would be updated over time. The staff will start with student policies. This will allow time for any changes to be reflected in the student handbooks.

At 9:07 pm, the Board took a short recess prior to going into a closed session meeting for the purpose of considering a personnel action that involves the officer or employee of the Board [N.C. General Statute §143.318.11(a)(6)]. The Board returned to open session at 9:56 pm. No other action was taken.

Vice-chair Beckworth made the motion to adjourn. Keith McClure seconded the motion. The motion carried.