

MINUTES
ASHE COUNTY BOARD OF EDUCATION
May 4, 2020

Prior to the regular meeting, the Board met electronically in closed session beginning at 5:12 pm 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)]. The Board left closed session at 5:55 pm. No action was taken.

The regular meeting was held at 6:00 pm as scheduled with all members present. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the meeting was held electronically and was open to the public. Chairman Jones called the meeting to order and led the pledge of allegiance.

A motion by Vice Chairman Beckworth and a second by Mrs. Eldreth gave unanimous approval to the agenda.

The Board recognized Brittney Rutherford for completing her Associate in Arts degree from Wilkes Community College, Ashe Campus, by participating in the Career and College Promise Program.

A motion by Mrs. Eldreth and a second by Mr. McClure gave unanimous approval to the Board meeting minutes for the regular meeting on April 6, 2020.

Mrs. Eldreth suggested that the writing of the minutes include the name of both the Chairman and Vice Chairman.

A motion by Mr. McClure and a second by Mrs. Jones gave unanimous approval to the request from Adam and Damiana Pyles, who reside in Ashe County, to allow their son to attend school in Watauga County effective the 2020/21 school year.

A motion by Mrs. Eldreth and a second by Vice Chairman Beckworth gave unanimous approval to the request from Adam and Adrienne Stumb, who reside in Ashe County, to allow their children to attend school in Watauga County effective the 2020/21 school year.

A motion by Mrs. Eldreth and a second by Mr. McClure gave unanimous approval to the request from Student Services Director Jamie Little to apply for a grant from the US Department of Justice to Prevent School Violence. The three-year grant at \$250,000 per year can be used for safety training or threat assessments. If received, the school system would partner with RTI International headquartered in Research Triangle Park.

A motion by Vice Chairman Beckworth and a second by Mrs. Jones gave unanimous approval to the employee contract recommendations as presented by Human Resources Director Roy Putman. A copy of the recommendations is on file in the Department of Human Resources.

A motion by Mrs. Jones and a second by Mrs. Eldreth gave unanimous approval to the personnel recommendations as presented by Roy Putman.

CERTIFIED

Teachers

- Resignation/retirement of Deborah Baldridge, science teacher at Ashe High, effective July 1, 2020
- Resignation/retirement of Cynthia Wells, teacher for exceptional children at Blue Ridge, effective July 1, 2020
- Resignation/retirement of June Neaves, school counselor at Blue Ridge, effective July 1, 2020
- Resignation of Alice Everette, English teacher at Ashe High, effective end-of-day June 5, 2020

- Resignation of Stella Sexton, math and science teacher at Ashe Middle, effective end-of-day June 5, 2020
- Transfer of Todd Rivver from English teacher at Ashe Middle to English teacher at Ashe Early College effective the beginning of the 2020/21 school year
- Transfer of Tania Rollins from 6th grade teacher at Blue Ridge to English teacher at Ashe Middle effective the beginning of the 2020/21 school year
- Transfer of Julie Jones from school counselor at Ashe Early College to school counselor at Blue Ridge effective the beginning of the 2020/21 school year

Prior approval to employ the following vacant positions

- Certified staff to begin 2020/21 school year
- Substitute teachers

CLASSIFIED

Custodian

- Resignation/retirement of Danny Osborne, custodian (12-month) at Mountain View, effective July 1, 2020

Employee Leaves

- Request from Sherrie Harless, cafeteria assistant manager at Blue Ridge, for a family medical leave of absence, effective April 6, 2020—ending date to be determined

Prior approval to employ the following vacant positions

- Full-time cafeteria assistant manager at Ashe High
- Two full-time custodians at Mountain View
- Classified staff to begin 2020/21 school year
- Substitute bus drivers
- Substitute cafeteria assistants

A motion by Vice Chairman Beckworth and a second by Mr. McClure gave unanimous approval to the Resolution in Honor of Teacher Appreciation Week May 4-8 as presented by Superintendent Yates.

WHEREAS, a strong, effective system of free public education for all children is essential to our democratic system of government and our country's future depends upon providing quality education to all students; and

WHEREAS, teachers mold future citizens through guidance and education; and

WHEREAS, teachers encounter students of widely differing backgrounds who have unique strengths and needs and that teachers strive to instill within their students a lifelong love of learning while helping students achieve their goals; and

WHEREAS, teachers spend countless hours preparing lessons, evaluating progress, counseling and ensuring their students' academic, social and emotional well-being. Further, Ashe County teachers, through their service as mentors, coaches, club sponsors and model citizenship, encourage students to perform community service and contribute to their communities and the world; and

WHEREAS, teachers should be accorded high public esteem, reflecting the value the community places on public education.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Ashe County Board of Education proclaims May 4-8, 2020 to be *Teacher Appreciation Week*; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Ashe County Board of Education expresses its sincere gratitude to all Ashe County teachers who enthusiastically dedicate themselves to our public schools and students. Further, the Board of Education strongly encourages all members of our community to pay tribute to our teachers for their dedication and commitment in their endeavor to ensure that all students realize their full potential when educating our children.

Due to the coronavirus pandemic, discussion was heard on the status of the July Endowment Golf Tournament scheduled for July 23 at Jefferson Landing. Currently, only members are being allowed to play the course and other tournaments have already been cancelled for the year. Superintendent Yates and Endowment Liaison Marcia Elledge thought this might be the time to cancel, regroup and revitalize the structure of the Endowment. The Board agreed and authorized the Endowment Committee to explore and choose different fundraising ideas on its behalf.

Principal Amanda Hipp gave an update on plans for the 2019/20 graduation ceremony. She surveyed the 186 current seniors. Of the 137 responses to the survey, 89 percent voted for walking across the stage even if it meant walking at a date later than May 29. Mrs. Eldreth asked about the possibility of doing something now and then again later and expressed concern about what would happen if COVID-19 rebounds. Mrs. Hipp and her staff plan to recognize seniors in various ways throughout the month of May, including a pickup day for caps and gowns and the yearbook. She is keeping in close contact with Sheriff Howell about restrictions on mass gatherings from the Governor's office. Project Graduation is in the process of securing yard signs for each of the seniors. The Committee is working with Skyline to stream Project Graduation on May 29—each senior will receive a prize and a t-shirt.

Director Terry Richardson gave an update on the PreK DIAL screenings for 2020/21. All parents on the PreK list have been called and are bringing in the required paperwork. She believes this is an efficient process—the actual face-to-face screening will be done at a later date on an appointment basis. Mrs. Richardson and staff are doing home visits and taking goodie bags to this year's 72 PreK students who are moving on to kindergarten in 2020/21. They visited 17 homes today. The PreK teachers are writing a progress summary on each student to pass along to the kindergarten teachers.

Principal Jennifer Holden gave an update on kindergarten screenings for 2020/21. The actual DIAL screening process is not required by the State for kindergarteners, only for PreK. Therefore, the plan is to send letters to parents requesting all the appropriate and required paperwork to register for kindergarten. Hopefully, the elementary schools can host a Kindergarten Roundup in the summer so that parents can bring their children to tour the school and meet their teachers. This activity will depend upon the COVID-19 restrictions at that time.

Superintendent Yates shared a copy of the documentation from North Carolina local governments to members of the General Assembly requesting that they consider the financial impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on local governments across the state. The collective communication to the General Assembly was from NC Association of County Commissioners, NC League of Municipalities, NC School Boards Association and the NC Sheriffs Association.

Superintendent Yates gave an update on the following.

- Online remote learning is still going well—teachers continue to go beyond expectations.
- To date, almost 90,000 breakfast and lunch meals have been prepared and delivered to students.

- BREMCO should begin its work to bury selected power lines at the high school in the next couple weeks. Supplies are in and the workforce is back at full capacity.

Chairman Jones shared a request to the Board from the Lost Province Center for the Cultural Arts Committee for a letter in support of securing grant funding. The Board would like to be provided more information at the June meeting on the Committee's project before making a commitment to the request.

The next regular meeting of the Board is scheduled for Monday, June 1, 2020, at 6:00 pm and will be held either at the Central Support Services annex or electronically.

A motion by Mr. McClure and a second by Mrs. Jones gave unanimous approval to adjourning the meeting at 7:09 pm.