

**Jackson County Board of Education
Minutes of Regular Meeting
Sylva, North Carolina**

398 Hospital Drive, Sylva

March 27, 2018

6:00 p.m.

The Jackson County Board of Education met in regular session at 6:00 p.m. on Tuesday, March 27, 2018, at 398 Hospital Road, Sylva, North Carolina. The following members were present:

Ken Henke, Chairman
Ali Laird-Large, Vice-Chair
Elizabeth Cooper
Margaret McRae
Wes Jamison

Also present were Dr. Kimberly Elliott, Superintendent; Jacob Buchanan, Assistant Superintendent Elect; Dr. Kevin Bailey, Personnel Director; Dean Shatley, School Board Attorney; and Cora Fields, Board Assistant.

CALL TO ORDER

Chairman Ken Henke called the business meeting to order.

Mr. Henke led the Pledge of Allegiance.

INFORMATION: SAFE SCHOOLS UPDATE

Dr. Kim Elliott, Superintendent, thanked everyone for attending the board meeting. She said that in light of the events of the last few days, she wanted to provide the board with a Safe Schools update. She asked everyone to update or verify their telephone numbers for Connect Ed calls, and encouraged everyone to take a copy of the School Safety slide presentation, provided at the entrance.

Dr. Elliott said that we have had multiple threats and each must be taken seriously, even if they are a prank. She thanked Officer Cabe and Officer Hooper and the School Resource Officers for attending the meeting. She asked parents to speak with their children about the seriousness of these threats. She informed the board that we have three ongoing investigations. She said that Kathryn Kantz, Principal of Cullowhee Valley Elementary School, has an internal investigation of two students and they will be recommended for long-term suspensions. She also said that law enforcement will do their part in the investigations.

Dr. Elliott thanked Mr. Mau and Mr. Luker, Jackson County Commissioners for attending tonight and said that the County has funded \$400K for the purchase of security cameras, which is on the agenda tonight for action.

Dr. Elliott said that the school system will request funding to hire six additional school counselors, due to a need for mental health services. The national average is one counselor for every 250 students. She feels these threats are a call for help from these students when they write on a wall. She stated that we are here to help, but students will have maximum consequences for these threats, to the extent allowed by regulations. These threats are costing thousands of dollars

and taking law enforcement away from possible emergencies, but that if we call and need them, they will respond to any emergency.

Dr. Elliott explained the protocol for her response to this type of incident – she must be on site, make sure everyone is evacuated, ensure all students and staff are safe and accounted for, and make sure no one is injured before releasing information. Each school has several confidential evacuation locations. To ensure student safety this information will not be released.

Dr. Elliott said that the JCPS Safe School Plans have been commended by the state. She thanked Dr. Rebecca Ensley for her hard work in the development and implementation of these plans. She commended the teachers for doing a great job, and the students for being model students. She thanked Laura Cabe and the School Nutrition staff for helping with relocation and feeding of the students and staff. Dr. Elliott commended the trainers and officers, the emergency management team, Mr. Todd Dillard, Mark Hooper and the transportation staff, and each school principal.

Dr. Elliott introduced Kathryn Kantz, Principal of Cullowhee Valley Elementary School, and asked her to share her perspective from the school side.

Kathryn Kantz, CVES Principal, shared the following perspective: “CVES had three written threats: two bomb threats and a gun on campus. I felt this was a prank, but we don’t operate in a vacuum. There is a protocol. We evacuated even though it could be a prank. One student asked “Where do we go?” I told her that your teacher knows where to go. We don’t sit and wait. We have a plan. We train all faculty and staff on the plan. After the Florida event, we revisited the plan. We have to make sure children are safe. We notify the Superintendent and call 911. Then we make the first Connect Ed call to parents. I did a sweep of the building to make sure no one was left in restrooms, as the students were being relocated. I had to trust my Assistant Principal on the other end. The students and staff were so orderly, so calm. Since we were calm, the kids were calm. We have trust. Some children cried, one hyperventilated, but we are in control, teachers just step in. Law enforcement was there to support us. They will always be there. Everyone rallies. We are as safe today as we were three days ago. We need to re-educate our kids about threats, so we brought in the DARE Officer. I am angry, we are all angry – the person who did this on Monday was there on Friday and saw how upset some of our younger kids were. The kids were angry at these students who did this. But for a handful of kids, we have great children. We are not putting up with this behavior - the kids are behind this and this is the majority view.

Behind the scenes we receive sex offender notifications on our computers, we notify bus drivers and staff. We deal with custody orders – we will meet with both parents to ensure we don’t have conflicts. Any conflicts, we call law enforcement and they remove the person for an interview. We have Meridian Health Services on campus for mental health support. We tell kids that if it’s dangerous, illegal or bullying to report this to an adult. We are our best defense. We know our kids. We make sure their emotional needs are met. We are proactive. We don’t sit around waiting for something to happen. At no time were we in fear for our safety. We do everything we can to make sure kids are safe at school. During car pick up we formed a line without any prompting – it is a natural instinct. I am proud of our school and community. Can we get better? Yes. Dr. Elliott’s leadership is making us safer. We are always looking at ways to improve. Thank you to everyone for supporting us.”

Dr. Elliott concluded the update by saying she is proud of all our schools that have experienced these threats. They all followed protocols. She stated that our board’s prime concern is to make schools safer. We are going to single entry – buzz in systems, enclosing courtyard areas so

buildings do not have easy access, and adding additional mental health services. She again thanked everyone for attending the meeting tonight.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Upon a motion by Mrs. Ali Laird-Large and seconded by Mrs. Margaret McRae, the board voted unanimously to approve the Agenda.

OPEN SESSION FOR PUBLIC COMMENTS

Jessica Stewart said that she wanted to speak in support of Jackson County Public Schools as a parent of a sixth grade student at Scotts Creek and a staff member. She said that the Scotts Creek evacuation went smoothly. She stated that the directions were clear and they were secure in their leadership. Ms. Stewart said that she appreciated that all threats are taken seriously and that this is a reflection of our strong leadership. Mrs. Stewart said that as a parent she will have a conversation with her kids and explain what is serious.

Greg Stewart said that as a parent and a staff member, he wanted to say thank you to the JCPS leadership, Mark Hooper and the school bus drivers, and law enforcement. He explained that he knows just about everyone at all of the schools and he appreciated how much they cared for his children. He also stated that he couldn't be more proud.

Lena Woods spoke to the board about her support for Epi Pens and the medical administration. She said that her child has a three-part peanut allergy and has to take extra precautions. Ms. Woods said that JCPS has a lot of policies that are reactive in relation to the use of Epi Pens and medical support. She would like to see JCPS be more pro-active. For example, when children use Epi Pens they aren't required to take the device to lunch, she would like to see this changed. She said that she was at Fairview during the evacuation and everything was done for the kids. She stated that the school personnel did a great job.

Jeff Goss stated that he has two children at Fairview Elementary School and he would like to echo the comments made by the other parents – he appreciates all the efforts in keeping his children safe. He told the board that he has two points to make – 1) He would encourage the board to connect safety measures and capital project funding. He said he would like to encourage public work sessions so that parents can talk with the board and County Commissioners. 2) He said that these threats are by middle grade students who are the perpetrators. He asked the board if there is a plan to open Middle Schools in Jackson County.

Sara Stahlman told the board that she is the parent of a Fairview Kindergartener. She said that she is the product of public schools and that both of her parents were public school employees. She stated that she does trust the schools, but that what the schools are doing does little to solve what happened. She said that students hear threats all the time and asked the question “When are we going to stop modeling threats?” Ms. Stahlman said that we need a big cultural shift from punishment and rewards and made a call to reform school discipline. She suggested using behavior management and said “Rather than emphasizing control over our students, we need to develop community and connection.”

Laura Dills told the board that tonight she is here as the mother of a Fairview Kindergartener. Ms. Dills said that what she saw today was teachers going out of their way to make kids feel safe, counting the children, and smiling at the kids. Ms. Dills thanked the teachers, Dr. Elliott, and law enforcement. She urged people to encourage county commissioners to do things that are not going to be popular, like possibly raising taxes. She said “I’ll pay more money in taxes if it means my baby comes home every night to me. I’ll pay any percent I need to.”

Abigail Clayton informed the board that she was at Fairview during the evacuation today. She said that she had nothing but great things to say. She told the board that her children thought they were on a field trip because the teachers stayed calm and continued to reassure the children.

Tiffany Shuler said that she has a unique perspective due to her past. She was a student at Fairview and wanted to be a teacher. Ms. Shuler said that she has been a home-school parent, but not because she was anti public schools. Ms. Shuler volunteered to help at the school and said she was present during the evacuation. She said that she felt her child was safe and that the kids are loved beyond measure. She encouraged everyone to thank the schools and to talk to our kids about the consequences of their actions.

Joshua Marks said that he has a student at the high school. He addressed the board room and said “It starts at home, y’all.” He told the board that his child would know when she gets home after doing something stupid like this, the repercussions of it. He said it is up to us to teach our children.

Mr. Henke said that he appreciated all the comments. He said that it is up to individuals to make a better change. He stated that our safety plans are excellent, but that we can’t share this information for safety reasons. He said that the board is trying to find solutions and encouraged parents to come speak with the board, let them know what they are thinking. Mr. Henke said that we need parents, that they are the ones that need to raise their kids. The schools are an avenue to help.

Mrs. Laird-Large said that the staff, the Principals, and law enforcement love our kids. She said that she is thankful we have all these people and we should all be proud. She said that the board will work diligently to keep children safe and give them a good education.

CONSENT ACTION AGENDA

Action: *Upon a motion by Mrs. Ali Laird-Large and seconded by Mrs. Elizabeth Cooper, the board unanimously approved the consent action agenda:*

- A. Open Session Minutes of Regular Meeting on February 26, 2018.
- B. Open Session Minutes of Special-Called Meeting – Student Safety Forum on March 14, 2018.
- C. Open Session Minutes of Special-Called Joint Meeting/Work Session with Jackson County Commissioners on March 15, 2018.

INFORMATION AGENDA

- A. **Agenda Item:** Superintendent’s Report
Presenter: Dr. Kim Elliott, Superintendent

Dr. Elliott reported on the following:

1. The following students earned medals at the Western Regional Elementary Science Olympiad competition: Hayden Chapman, Bella Wooten, Calvin Huffman, Ella Small, James Collins, and Josh Vinyard. James and Josh both medaled in two events.
2. The following students earned medals at the HOSA Statewide competition: Kendal Wike, Katie Cochran, Jenaya Reagan, Ashley Clark, Abby Jenkins, Tayla Messer, Emily Yang, Madison Page, and Chloe Reagan. SMHS HOSA had 24 students compete in events. Some of the other events were Pharmacology, Emergency Management Services, Public Health, Forensics, and Physical Therapy.

B. Agenda Item: Capital Projects Update

Presenter: Darin Allison, Director of Capital Projects and Facility

Mr. Allison provided the board with a graph showing completion of various capital projects throughout Jackson County Public Schools.

C. Agenda Item: Maintenance Update

Presenter: Jason Watson, Maintenance Director

Mr. Watson updated the board on the following maintenance projects:

- Safety items at all schools are being assessed
- Preventive maintenance – thermal scans and inspections are underway
- Bus Garage roof arch
- Front entrance door upgrades
- Fairview Elementary School front sidewalk repairs
- Upgrade to controls at Scotts Creek Elementary School
- Power and Electric bill review – higher due to colder winter months

D. Agenda Item: Annual Asset Report

Presenter: Gwen Edwards, Finance Officer

Ms. Edwards presented the annual asset report and informed the board that during the past five years we have made approximately \$65,000.00 by selling declared surplus items on govdeals.com.

E. Agenda Item: Unaudited Financial Summary

Presenter: Gwen Edwards, Finance Officer

Ms. Edwards presented the Unaudited Financial Summary as of March 27, 2018.

ACTION AGENDA

A. Agenda Item: Budget Amendments

Presenter: Gwen Edwards, Finance Officer

Ms. Edwards asked for approval of budget amendments and transfers for the State Public School Fund, Local Current Expense Fund, Federal Grants Fund, and Other Specific Revenue Fund.

Action: *Upon a motion by Mrs. Ali Laird-Large and seconded by Mr. Wes Jamison, the board voted unanimously to approve the budget amendments and transfers to the State Public School Fund, Local Current Expense Fund, Federal Grant Fund, and Other Specific Revenue Fund.*

B. Agenda Item: 2019-2020 Weather Waiver

Presenter: Dr. Kevin Bailey, Personnel Director

Dr. Bailey presented the 2019-2020 LEA based calendar waiver request for weather related causes and asked the board for approval.

Action: *Upon a motion by Mrs. Ali Laird-Large and seconded by Mrs. Margaret McRae, the board voted unanimously to approve the 2019-2020 Weather Waiver.*

C. Agenda Item: Approval to Purchase Security Cameras

Presenter: David Proffitt, Technology Director

Mr. Proffitt asked the board to approve the purchase of additional security cameras to install in areas that need coverage in the schools, and asked the board to authorize the Superintendent to approve future purchases.

Action: *Upon a motion by Mrs. Ali Laird-Large and seconded by Mrs. Elizabeth Cooper, the board voted unanimously to approve the purchase of additional Security Cameras and authorize the Superintendent to approve future purchases.*

D. Agenda Item: CTE Laptop Computer Purchase

Presenter: Angie Dills

Mrs. Dills presented the quote for the purchase of laptop computers for the CTE program.

Action: *Upon a motion by Mrs. Ali Laird-Large and seconded by Mr. Wes Jamison, the board voted unanimously to approve the purchase of CTE Laptop Computers.*

E. Agenda Item: Policy Updates

Presenter: Dr. Kim Elliott, Superintendent

Policy Updates:

1. Administering Medicines to Students (6125)
2. ~~Teacher Contracts (7410)~~ Moved to April Agenda
3. Leave (7510)
4. Military Leave (7530)

Dr. Elliott reviewed the above listed policy updates and asked for board approval.

Action: *Upon a motion by Mrs. Ali Laird-Large and seconded by Mrs. Margaret McRae, the board voted unanimously to approve the above listed policy updates.*

F. Agenda Item: Field Trips

Presenter: Dr. Kim Elliott, Superintendent

1. Blue Ridge Early College – Grades 9-11, Camp Grier, Morganton, NC, April 24 to 25, 2018, TT 4575.
2. Fairview Elementary School – Grade 5, Dollywood, Sevierville, TN, May 4, 2018, TT 4535.
3. Fairview Elementary School - Grade 8, Outer Banks, Kinnakeet, NC, May 1-4, 2018, TT 4489.
4. Fairview Elementary School – Grades 6-8, NC State University, NC, April 20 to 22, 2018, TT 4551.
5. Smoky Mountain High School – Grades 9-12, Atlanta Dragway, Atlanta, GA, May 4, 2018, TT 4584.
6. Smoky Mountain High School – Grades 9-12, Dollywood, Sevierville, TN, May 4, 2018, TT 4578.
7. Smoky Mountain High School - Grades 9-12, New Echota Historic Site, Calhoun, GA, April 6, 2018, TT 4549.

Dr. Elliott reviewed the above listed field trip requests and asked for board approval.

Action: *Upon a motion by Mrs. Ali Laird-Large and seconded by Mrs. Elizabeth Cooper, the board voted unanimously to approve the above listed field trips.*

CLOSED SESSION

The board unanimously approved a motion by Mrs. Ali Laird-Large and seconded by Mr. Wes Jamison, to enter into closed session pursuant to G.S. 143.318.11 for the following purposes: under subsection; (a) (1) to prevent the disclosure of privileged or confidential personnel information pursuant to G.S. 115C-319-32 and (a) (3) to discuss matters protected by attorney-client privilege.

Upon a motion by Mrs. Ali Laird-Large and seconded by Mr. Wes Jamison, the board voted unanimously to return to open session.

OPEN SESSION

PERSONNEL ACTION AGENDA

Action: *Upon a motion made by Mrs. Ali Laird-Large and seconded by Mrs. Elizabeth Cooper, the board voted unanimously to approve the personnel agenda as recommended by Dr. Elliott. The board unanimously approved the following recommendations:*

Employee Recommendations:

1. Addertion, Chandler – Activity Bus Driver, Fairview Elementary School
2. Danner, Connie – Tutor, Scotts Creek Elementary School
3. DeBord, April – Instructional Technology Facilitator, Central Office
4. Gribble, Steven – Activity Bus Driver, Fairview Elementary School
5. Jones, Susan – School Nutrition Assistant, Smokey Mountain Elementary School
6. Mastrolia, Christy – Teacher Assistant, Blue Ridge School
7. Potis, Kelly – School Nutrition Assistant, Smokey Mountain Elementary School

Employee Resignations:

1. Helton, Matthew – Custodian and Bus Driver, Smokey Mountain Elementary School
2. Long, Deena – Bus Monitor, Bus Garage
3. Long, James – Bus Driver, Bus Garage
4. Long, James – School Nutrition Assistant, Scotts Creek Elementary School
5. Osborn, Fred – Principal, Fairview Elementary School
6. Sharp, Carole – Media Specialist, Fairview Elementary School
7. Taylor, Mark – Assistant Athletic Director Spring Sports, Smoky Mountain High School – Returning Staff

Employee Retirements:

1. Madill, Deborah – Teacher, Cullowhee Valley Elementary School

Staff, Non-Staff, and Returning Coach Recommendations:

1. Ashe, Jeffrey – Assistant Coach Baseball, Scotts Creek Elementary School – New
2. Crowe, Claudia – Head Coach Softball, Fairview Elementary School – Returning Non-Staff
3. Davis, Trisha – Head Coach Softball, Scotts Creek Elementary School – New Non-Staff
4. Jones, Leah – Assistant Coach Softball, Scotts Creek Elementary School – New Non-Staff
5. Taylor, Mark – Assistant Athletic Director Spring Sports, Smoky Mountain High School – Returning Staff
6. Williams, Shane – Head Coach Baseball, Scotts Creek Elementary School – New Staff

ANNOUNCEMENTS

The next regularly scheduled business meeting of the Board of Education is April 24, 2018, at 6:00 p.m., at the Administrative Offices of the Board of Education, 398 Hospital Road, Sylva, North Carolina.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no objection, Chairman Henke adjourned the meeting at 8:58 p.m.

Ken Henke, Chairman

Dr. Kim Elliott, Secretary