

Henderson County Board of Public Education

MINUTES

March 9, 2020

The Henderson County Board of Public Education met in a regular business meeting on March 9, 2020, in the Boardroom of the Administrative Offices located at 414 Fourth Avenue West, Hendersonville, N. C.

Board Members Present: Blair Craven, Chairman; Rick Wood, Vice Chairman; Michael Absher; Mary Louise Corn and Jay Egolf

Board Members Absent: Dot Case and Amy Lynn Holt

Administrative Staff Present: Bo Caldwell, Ed.S. Superintendent; John Bryant, Ed.D., Associate Superintendent, Administrative Services; Jan King, Ed.D., Assistant Superintendent, Curriculum & Instruction; Scott Rhodes, Chief Human Resources Officer; Bernie Sochia, Chief Finance Officer and Rick Fender, Chief Technology Officer. Board Assistant, Kathy Johnson.

Attorney Present: Cynthia Lopez

CALL TO ORDER – PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Board Chairman, Mr. Blair Craven called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m. and requested that everyone present stand as the West Henderson High School Army JROTC posted the colors. Mr. Craven led those in attendance in the pledge of allegiance to the American Flag. The JROTC unit is under the direction of Colonel Randy Lytle.

AGENDA APPROVAL

Mr. Craven acknowledged the receipt of the meeting agenda and asked for a motion to approve. Mrs. Mary Louise Corn moved that the agenda be approved with one edit; under Board/Superintendent's Reports, Move item A. *District Response to Coronavirus*, to below item XI. Consent Agenda. Mr. Rick Wood seconded. *(Unanimously approved.)*

RECOGNITIONS

SUGARLOAF RECERTIFIED AS *LEADER IN ME* LIGHTHOUSE SCHOOL

Dr. Jan King stated that Sugarloaf Elementary School has been A Leader in Me school since 2013, and gained Lighthouse status in 2015, and has once again earned recertification as a Leader in Me Lighthouse School.

SOUTHERN LIGHTS SQUARE DANCING TEAM'S CONTRIBUTION TO PHYSICAL EDUCATION & ARTS

Mrs. Beverly Danielson, Physical Education teacher at Sugarloaf Elementary, recognized the Southern Lights Square Dance Team for their contribution to Physical Education and the Arts. She stated that for the past 8 years, Bill Cohort and the Southern Lights Square Dancing team have annually visited several of our elementary schools to teach square dancing to 4th- and 5th-graders as an extension of physical education classes that incorporates the arts. At the end of the two week unit, parents are invited for a final performance featuring the new skills the students have learned.

KEN WISE'S CONTRIBUTION TO STUDENT VISION HEALTH

Mrs. Kim Berry, School Nurse Supervisor, introduced Mr. Ken Wise of the Etowah Lions Club. She stated that for the past six years, Mr. Wise and the Etowah Lions Club have annually supported our school nurses in the mass vision screen tests they must conduct for 1st, 3rd, 5th, and 7th grade students across the county. Each year, Mr. Wise volunteers his time and the use of the club's \$7,000 Spot Vision Screening Camera, which provides much more vision information than the Snellen chart, and is more efficient for the nurses to use. For example, the tool tests for myopia, astigmatism, gaze issues, unequal power, unequal pupil size, and more.

FLAT ROCK MIDDLE SCHOOL

Principal Melanie Adams recognized Flat Rock Middle's NC Science Olympiad teams which placed 5th and 7th in Junior Varsity and Varsity divisions, respectively. From the JV team, the following students earned 1st Place medals in the JV division for individual events: Jaxon Metcalf and Olivia Stepp (Boomilever) and Victor Morales (Density Lab).

RUGBY MIDDLE SCHOOL

Principal Scott Moore recognized the varsity NC Science Olympiad team which placed 6th in their division. Leland Biskup and Noah Toler will advance to State for their 1st Place win in the Dynamic Planet event.

EARLY COLLEGE HIGH SCHOOL

Principal Beth Caudle stated that the Early College sent two Junior Varsity teams and one Varsity team to the NC Science Olympiad in February. The JV teams came in 4th and 5th Place in their division, and the Varsity team earned 5th Place in their division. The following Varsity students have earned 1st Place in their events and will advance to the State Finals: Cameron Patterson and Abigail Delaney (Boomilever), Annalee Washburn and Grace Bowen (Codebusters), Evan Johnson and Jared Sitton (Detector Building), and Kayla Bennett and Tanner Queen (Ornithology).

EAST HENDERSON HIGH SCHOOL

Principal Carl Taylor recognized East Henderson High's NC Science Olympiad Regional Winners. He introduced Aidan McAllister and Micah Marr who will advance to the NC Science Olympiad State Finals for their 1st Place win in the Geologic Mapping event.

WEST HENDERSON HIGH SCHOOL

Assistant Principal, Whitney Ashbrook stated that both the Junior Varsity and Varsity NC Science Olympiad teams from West Henderson High came in 2nd Place in their divisions, and the Varsity team earned a spot to compete at the State competition. The following students have earned 1st Place in individual events at the regionals. From the JV Team: Jackson Parent and Ryan Saldutti (Anatomy & Physiology), Davis Little, Jessica Archis, and Paisley Stepp (Codebusters), Kerrington Barksdale and Marissa Detwiler (Experimental Design), Emily Chambliss and Jessica Archis (Forensics), Garrett Poole and Paisley Stepp (Fossils), Garrett Pool and Jackson Cook (Ping Pong Parachute), Kerrington Barksdale and Nissa Holmquist (Water Quality); from the Varsity Team: Zoya Zalevskiy and Steven Davis (Disease Detectives), Megan Huske and Remi Shook (Gravity Vehicle), Aliya Shook and Steven Davis (Ping Pong Parachute).

PROGRAM HIGHLIGHT

Mr. Matt Gruebmeier, Director of Student Services, presented an update on the Student Services department. He stated there are 33 school counselors and 11 school social workers in Henderson County Schools. The schools they serve and the number of staff assigned to a school is determined by the Average Daily Membership (ADM) of the school. Mr. Gruebmeier stated that we are fortunate to have additional support services through the following partnerships; The Henderson County Health Department, School Nurses (18); Blue Ridge Health [SBHCs, Behavioral Health (3), Crisis Counselors (2)] and Crossnore, School-Based Therapists (4). He added, the priorities of the school social workers are addressing school needs; providing broad, partnered experiences; connecting to families and communities; and building upon existing or previous services. School-based therapy, health centers (behavioral health) and crisis counselors' priorities are maximizing resources and balancing resources and school needs. He stated that crisis counseling resources are funded by 50% local dollars and 50% from the school safety grant. Mr. Gruebmeier said that the majority of middle school counseling issues deal with peer or friendship issues, home or family problems, anxiety and stress or anger and depression. The majority of high school counseling issues deal with academics and scholarships or anxiety and stress. He added, that school social workers have documented 3,252 interactions with students and staff, for the 2019-2020 school year so far with the majority of the interactions happening at the high school level. Within the 3,252 interactions the majority focus was on school success and meeting basic needs. Mr. Gruebmeier added that HCPS Student Services Staff are currently working with more than sixty community partners to strengthen our students, schools and communities. The Collaboration with *the Henderson County Partnership for Health* works with the following initiatives: Hope Rx; Behavioral Health Summit: Living Road Map / After Hours Crisis Action Team; Committee for Activity and Nutrition and Safe and Affordable Housing. The collaboration with the *School Safety Community Training Grant* activities include, Youth Mental Health First Aid and Trauma Sensitive Schools and Organizations. Mr. Gruebmeier thanked the Henderson County Board of Education and the Henderson County Commissioners for their support in providing additional funding which allowed for social workers placement within our schools.

Mr. Blair Craven asked if the current allocation of funds and placement of social workers within the schools is working well and if we are using the funds wisely? Mr. Gruebmeier responded, yes, he said that he would allocate staff the exact same way if he were to start over at the beginning with this program. Mr. Gruebmeier stated that

each school has a Health Leadership Team that ensures the resources are used wisely and the Health Leadership Team works to ensure students are seen by the appropriate health care provider.

BOARD CHAIR OBSERVATIONS

None

BOARD MEMBER OBSERVATIONS

None

PUBLIC COMMENT

Mrs. Rhonda Corn signed up to speak but left the meeting before time for Public Comment.

CONSENT AGENDA

Mr. Blair Craven cited the Board's receipt of the Consent Agenda presented for approval upon recommendation of the Superintendent. Prior to the meeting, Board members received documentation relative to the Consent Agenda as follows:

Meeting Schedule

1. HCBPE Budget Workshop [*Wednesday, April 8, 2020, 12:00 p.m. - 2:00 p.m. (Central Office, Room 1A)*]
2. HCBPE Regular Business Meeting [*Monday, April 20, 2020, 6:30 p.m., (Boardroom)*]

Minutes

1. February 10, 2020 (*Regular Business Meeting*)

Personnel (*as presented in closed session*)

Student Acceptances/Releases (*as presented in closed session*)

Records Retention and Disposition Schedule (*as presented in closed session*)

Budget Amendment (*as presented in closed session*)

Resolution – Public School Volunteers Week

Resolution – “We Are Hope” Week

Resolution – National Social Worker Month

Resolution – Art in Our Schools Month

Board members read the resolutions into record: Mr. Rick Wood read Public School Volunteer Week; Mr. Michael Absher read “We Are Hope” Week; Mr. Blair Craven read National Social Worker Month; and Mr. Jay Egolf read Art in our Schools Month.

Mrs. Mary Louise Corn moved that the Consent Agenda be approved as presented. Mr. Rick Wood seconded. (*Unanimously approved.*)

DISTRICT RESPONSE TO CORONAVIRUS (COVID-19)

Mr. Steve Smith, Henderson County Health Director and Dr. Diana Curran, Medical Director from the Henderson County Health Department along with Mr. Jimmie Brissie, Henderson County Emergency Services Director, presented an update on county responses regarding the COVID-19 virus outbreak. Mr. Smith said that the Health Department and the Emergency Services Department have a solid history of cooperation and working together on health issues. Dr. Curran stated this is a new virus and people do not have much immunity protection against it which has caused the worldwide pandemic. As of today, there are 423 cases in the US affecting 35 states so far and 19 deaths have been reported. As of today, North Carolina has 7 confirmed cases of COVID-19.

Dr. Curran emphasized that this is an evolving pandemic and the data will be different tomorrow. She added, the symptoms of COVID-19 are very similar to a cold; children have been experiencing mild symptoms so far and 80% of adults won't even know they have been infected. Dr. Curran said that studies show the virus is spread through respiratory droplets from coughing or sneezing and it can live on surfaces for up to 9 days. She said if you are within 6 feet of someone who is coughing or are in a small space for 2 minutes or longer, with a person who is infected, you could get sick. People who are exposed to the virus could show symptoms within 2-14 days but the average time period is about 5 days. Once exposed, an incubation period of 14 days with isolation and quarantine are extremely helpful for containment of the virus. She stated that testing for the virus will not be done within the school system but by the state lab via the Henderson County Health Department. Dr. Curran said that that recommendations are: for students and staff to stay home if they are sick or have any symptoms; they should avoid close contact; wash and dry your hands often throughout the day; use alcohol based hand sanitizers; cover your mouth when you cough and your nose when you sneeze; and stressed that masks are only recommended for people who are actually sick, not for healthy individuals. She stated that student field trips are something that the school system should monitor closely depending on the destination and the current level of active cases in that

area. She encouraged school personnel to clean all surfaces frequently, follow the safety protocols already in place, and use the school nurses as a resource for referral protocols.

Mr. Brissie stated that the Emergency Services Department (EMS) has been planning for this type of event for several years and he feels there is a strong partnership between the EMS community and the Henderson County Health Department. He stated that the EMS response will be the standard for a pandemic, establishing an Incident Command Structure which evenly divides responsibility and brings order to the situation and also helps each unit focus on their strengths as they respond to needs. He added that the EMS will rely heavily on Health Department officials for their expertise and they are currently meeting for daily updates. He suggested that as employers, we should identify priorities, develop an action plan and look for alternate solutions on how to do business if required. Mr. Brissie feels fortunate to have the Board of Education as a partner.

Mr. Egolf thanked Mr. Brissie for his work. Mr. Egolf feels we are very prepared and stressed that people should not panic but keep doing what we've been doing up until now.

Mr. Craven asked Dr. Curran about her level of concern regarding school field trips. She stated there are no travel restrictions within the US at this time but school leaders should be prepared if the situation changes.

Mr. Craven asked Mr. Smith what the proper School Board response would be if we have a teacher who tests positive for COVID-19? He stated that the prudent response would be to understand the contacts that the person had before the diagnosis and see if we can establish a firewall of where the last contact was. He added that many aspects would have to be taken into consideration.

Mr. Caldwell added that we have no crystal ball and we don't know what is going to happen with this pandemic but we are planning for all types of scenarios. We should encourage hand washing within our facilities and continue cleaning and disinfecting keyboards etc. Mr. Caldwell assured everyone that as the situation evolves, we will be working closely with Mr. Smith and the Henderson County Health Department and Emergency Management Services to make the best decisions for our students and staff.

Mr. Caldwell stated that Governor Roy Cooper had placed North Carolina in a State of Emergency earlier in the day. Mr. Smith stated that the state of emergency is generally happening when they perceive a community spread is happening and they cannot trace back to where it came from. Currently, there are no confirmed cases of COVID-19 in Henderson County or in Western North Carolina.

OLD BUSINESS

NONE

NEW BUSINESS

- A. Approval – 2018-2019 Audit Report – *(Carland and Andersen, P.A.) (Mr. Bernie Sochia, Chief Finance Officer)*

Mr. Carland presented the results of the 2018-2019 Audit Report covering the audit process and procedures, Governmental Funds, Enterprise Funds and the final audit report. The audit report contains an unqualified opinion on the Board's financial statements, and there were no questioned costs or reportable conditions. The full report is attached.

Mr. Michael Absher moved that the 2018-2019 Audit Report be approved as presented. Mr. Rick Wood seconded. *(Unanimously approved.)*

- B. Approval – Resolution Conveying Hendersonville High School Property to the County – *(Ms. Cynthia Lopez, Attorney)*

Ms. Cynthia Lopez, Board Attorney, stated that the *Resolution conveying Hendersonville High School Property to the County and Authorizing Chair, Vice Chair and Superintendent to Execute the Lease and Agency Agreement and Deed*, would allow Henderson County to secure funding for the ongoing Hendersonville High School construction project. She added that the land would go to the County and be leased back to the school system, as has been done in the past with other building initiatives.

Mr. Jay Egolf moved that the Resolution Conveying Hendersonville High School Property to the County and Authorizing Chair and Superintendent to Execute the Lease and Agency Agreement and Deed be approved as presented. Mr. Michael Absher seconded. *(Unanimously approved.)*

- C. Approval – Summer School Plan – *(Dr. Jan King, Assistant Superintendent)*

Dr. Jan King presented the 2020-2021 Summer School Plan. She stated that the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction requires local school district to report a Board-approved plan for administering summer school. The proposed dates for summer programming are attached.

Mr. Rick Wood moved that the 2020-2021 Summer School Plan be approved as presented. Mr. Jay Egolf seconded. *(Unanimously approved.)*

- D. Approval – 2021-2022 School Calendar – *(First Reading) (Dr. John Bryant, Associate Superintendent)*
Dr. Bryant stated that the draft calendar had been reviewed by the Superintendent's Calendar Committee, teacher groups, parent groups and community stakeholder groups across the county. He said that the response has been overwhelmingly positive for the proposed changes and all groups have been in favor of aligning spring break dates, Christmas holidays and end of semester dates within the county as well as aligning with the Blue Ridge Community College calendar. Mr. Caldwell added that aligning our school calendar with the community college calendar removes the barrier of working with the community colleges on course availability for our graduates.
Mrs. Mary Louise Corn made a motion that the Henderson County Board of Public Education approve the 2021-2022 School Calendar as presented for first reading. Mr. Rick Wood seconded. *(Unanimously approved.)*

BOARD / SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORTS

- A. Dr. John Bryant presented the Construction Update. He stated that we are finalizing GMP3 for the Hendersonville High School project which finalizes the scope of work for the last phase and how we will flex that space. GMP3 is the final bid package for the Hendersonville High School project. Also, the County Commissioners approved and released the funding for the Rugby Middle and Flat Rock Middle Schools project. Dr. Bryant stated that we are preparing to meet with the approved contractor who received that work and that work will begin immediately. Also, we are currently finalizing the revised scope of the Upward Elementary School renovation as well. He continued, the Edneyville Elementary School project is in its final phase and the grading work is beginning to look like the front of a school. The Rugby Middle School front entrance renovation and rework comes together on April 1, when the bid tabs are totaled. Dr. Bryant stated that at Mr. Craven's request, he will begin to provide weekly construction updates through Superintendent Caldwell's *Week in Review* email.
- B. Mr. Bernie Sochia presented the Financial Statements for the Local Current Expense/Other Restricted Funds as of February 28, 2020. He stated that the results of operations of the Local Current Expense and Other Restricted Funds for the 2019-20 fiscal year as of February 29, 2020 are: Revenues total \$23,942,436 and expenditures total \$19,205,532. The expenditures are 61.8% of the current combined budgets for both funds. This is down from 62.7% in the prior year. This is the result of a decrease of \$139,831 in expenditures year to date combined with a budget that is \$245,099 larger.
- C. Mr. Caldwell acknowledged the receipt of the Calendar of Activities for March and April. He mentioned '*We Are Hope*' week March 30, 2020 through April 3, 2020. He also encouraged those in attendance to spread the word about our Kindergarten Readiness Rally to be held on April 2, 2020, at the Blue Ridge Mall in Hendersonville. Mr. Caldwell shared the dates of Kindergarten registration.
- D. Superintendent Caldwell shared information on three items under General Operations:
1. He told Board members that the letter they requested showing Board support of our teachers and encouraging the General Assembly to pass a budget has been sent to Governor Roy Cooper, Senator Phil Berger, Representative Tim Moore, Senator Chuck Edwards and Representative Chuck McGrady.
 2. He spoke about the school-based polling locations for the recent Primary election held on March 3, 2020. Mr. Caldwell stated that the adding increased law enforcement presence, making staff parking adjustments and posting additional personnel at the main school entrances were a great success ensuring student safety and security during the voting process. He added, the same procedures will be in place for the May 12, 2020 run-off election. He reminded everyone that 11 of our schools are used as polling places.
 3. Superintendent Caldwell stated that at the April 20, 2020 School Board meeting, he will present a request asking for an increase to lunch prices for the 2020-2021 school year. Mr. Caldwell will propose an increase of ten cents per school lunch and a 15 cent increase for the Mega Meal lunch. He added, labor and food costs have gone up and no price adjustments have been made over time to stay in line with these increases.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, Mr. Michael Absher moved that the meeting be adjourned. Seconded by Mr. Rick Wood. *(Unanimously approved at approximately 8:50 pm.)*

Minutes approved: May 11, 2020