

Perquimans County Board of Education
Emergency Meeting – March 16, 2020

The Perquimans County Board of Education met for an emergency meeting on Monday, March 16, 2020, at 3:00 p.m. in the administrative offices of Perquimans County Schools. The purpose of the meeting was to provide an update on plans and preparations related to Executive Order No. 117 from Governor Roy Cooper. Board members in attendance included Dr. Anne White, Amy Spaugh, Russell Lassiter, Matt Peeler, Leary Winslow, and Arlene Yates. Also in attendance were staff members, directors, chiefs, and Miles Layton of The Perquimans Weekly.

Chair Anne White called the meeting to order. Matt Peeler led the audience in reciting the Pledge of Allegiance to the American Flag and Amy Spaugh said a prayer.

Approval of Agenda

Upon motion by Arlene Yates and second by Amy Spaugh, the Board voted unanimously to approve the agenda as presented. Mr. Peeler retracted his request to add make-up days to the agenda when Superintendent Turner stated she had received no guidance on make-up days.

Update on Plans and Preparations related to Executive Order No. 117 from Governor Roy Cooper

Superintendent Turner stated that principals and directors met yesterday afternoon to develop a plan for addressing the school closures. There was a conference call with state officials at 3:00 p.m., followed by brainstorming and planning for the weeks ahead and possibly longer. Ms. Turner expressed her appreciation to the staff for their dedication and willingness to come out on a Sunday afternoon to prepare for the work week.

On the conference call, there were three priorities that NCDPI addressed: feeding children, child care, and instruction. Ms. Turner explained to the Board the information she is receiving is constantly changing and could change again before the end of the meeting. In fact, the information received on Friday has already changed and adjustments are being made as information is received.

School Nutrition Director Kim Cullipher presented information about meal distribution plans beginning Wednesday, March 18 through Friday, March 20, 2020. There will be two hub sites—Hertford Grammar School and Perquimans Central School—where lunch will be distributed from 11:00 a.m. – 1:00 p.m. using the drive-through method. Plans for mobile meal distribution in the community will be announced soon. Meals are available for all students and children under the age of 18 on a first come, first serve basis. Following her presentation, Ms. Cullipher fielded several questions from board members.

In regard to remote learning/home learning, Chief Technology Officer Martha Nixon stated she was on a call this morning with county officials, Inteliport and others in the county. Steve Lane of Inteliport is working to set up locations for internet for our students. His first plan includes a hub for internet service at the recreation center where students can access from the parking lot. Mr. Lane will be securing equipment for internet to work in Belvidere, New Hope and other remote areas of the county. The state has said they will provide money to purchase the equipment to make it work. Local churches and businesses will be contacted and a list will be compiled of places where students can access the internet. Mrs. Nixon said she has turned up the internet at the schools to allow for drive up access in the school parking lots. Following her presentation, Mrs. Nixon entertained questions and comments from board members.

Chief Academic Officer of Curriculum and Instruction Melissa Fields shared information about home learning plans. At Perquimans Central School, each grade level has created learning packets for students. Individual teachers will provide login information for technology resources that they use regularly. Use of this technology is optional, but is accessible to them. The plan now is to distribute the packets during the meal pick-up times. If the packets are not picked up, buses may be used to drop the packets in students' mailboxes.

Hertford Grammar School has created a hyperdoc to organize electronic options for each grade level. There is one section for things that all students will do. In addition, each grade level has a section where grade-specific, content-specific resources are available. The learning plan will also be available in print, with a focus on day users and students who do not have internet access.

At Perquimans County Middle School, learning packets will be available for individual subjects and grade levels. Teachers will follow-up with each student by phone or email to help support their remote learning. In lessons learned from other counties that have been through this crisis, the focus is not so much on the technology, but on the personal contact. Teachers will not be introducing new content, but reinforcing things they have already been practicing. Teachers will use Google Classrooms and other resources they are already using.

Perquimans County High School will have specific options for each class and course specific work. They will use resources they are already using. Print resources will be available. There are less than 20 high school students without 24/7 access. Day user packets will be mailed or picked up. In regard to college classes, College of The Albemarle has moved Spring Break back a week to prepare and plan. In addition, there are some changes in testing and accountability. Mrs. Fields also entertained questions and comments from board members. Ms. Turner stated many of these questions have already been asked, but there are still many unanswered questions. Board members expressed their appreciation to staff for all they have done and are doing in response to this crisis.

Ms. Turner stated the third priority is school districts having a child care facility. Additional guidance from the Department of Public Instruction and the Department of Health and Human Services is expected in the coming days on matters concerning child care, in particular to support the needs of critical health care professionals and first responders.

Ms. Turner stated the Governor's Executive Order did not grant vacation days for staff and does not state individuals will be paid if they are not working. The Governor has assured state and local officials that funds are available to pay all school employees who are working, even if the duties they are performing are different than their typically assigned responsibilities. While this applies to all school system employees, this assurance is particularly designed to support classified employees who would not traditionally work if students are not in school. The state is recommending that the next two weeks be treated as optional teacher workdays. Ms. Turner stated that today was a required workday per direction from State Superintendent Mark Johnson and the next two days will be optional workdays. She is waiting for further direction from the Governor for the remainder of the days during the closure. If and when she is able to make a recommendation, Ms. Turner stated she would like to recommend to the Board that the days during the two-week period be optional workdays as there is a lot of work to be done during this time. A question was asked about teachers having the option to work remotely from home. Ms. Turner said there is some flexibility and the days may be made mandatory and/or mandatory and work from home. She is waiting for guidance on this. She said our teachers were allowed to bring their children to school and to keep them in their work spaces. Ms. Turner stated that not all of our employees have the flexibility to work from home. The custodians can't clean the schools

from home; bus drivers can't drive their bus from home; and child nutrition workers can't prepare meals to serve our students from home. She stated there are equity issues and all of our employees are important, and should be valued and treated the same. Board members had discussion about teachers working remotely from home.

Interim Maintenance Director Aubrey Tynch said he has had training sessions for custodians and principals at each school to reiterate the disinfecting procedures in the schools. He has ordered pack backs for each school to dispense Vital Oxide, a disinfectant spray which is effective on the coronavirus. The staff has been trained, the product has been dispensed, and it will be utilized as needed.

Chief Academic Officer of Student Services Kanika Griffin spoke about EC services. She said about a year ago, she worked with her team on writing IEPs for sessions per semester so they would not be locked in to a certain amount of services per week. She said teams are collaborating with the General Ed teachers to help compile the packets. She discussed offering services to the medically fragile, of which some parents have voiced their concerns about staff coming to their house because of their weak immune system. If the closure extends beyond the two weeks, the high school team will work with some of the General Ed teachers to develop videos to reteach various strategies and individualizing those videos according to the individual student's IEP. In addition, teachers will differentiate packets to meet IEP goals of their students.

Chief Finance Officer Rube Blanchard stated he is not sure what impact this will have on the budget. DPI plans to request supplemental funding from the General Assembly and the Office of State Budget and Management. They are asking each district to track all for expenses related to COVID-19. Mr. Blanchard is setting up special codes for the expenses incurred related to this to track the costs for the district. He has notified Transportation, Maintenance, and the directors about this special coding procedure. NCDPI has scheduled a webinar with finance officers tomorrow at 9:00 a.m. with this being the topic of the conversation. He stated he is concerned about the impact it might have on future years which could affect our funding.

Ms. Turner reviewed several FAQs that had been submitted to the State for response.

- **Will these days be forgiven?**

Only the General Assembly has the authority to waive or forgive instructional days and hours required by the state's school calendar law. We will continue to advocate for districts' flexibility within the calendar that best meets the needs of students.

- **Now that the Governor has declared all NC schools to be closed for the next 2 weeks, do we have to count the days as non-instructional OR can we allow our students to work from home and count the days as instructional?**

DPI and the State Board plan to petition the General Assembly to count the days as if students were in the building. The GA, just like everyone else, understands the unusual circumstance we are all in.

- **Are there defined expectations for instruction during the closing to allow for students and teachers to be counted present or days to be counted as days of instruction?**

During this closure period, local boards of education and school leaders should create plans for remote or distance learning opportunities in the event that a longer period of school closure is

needed. Executive Order No. 117, however, does not mandate that remote or distance learning opportunities for students be offered between March 16 to March 30. Local boards of education and school leaders may provide remote or distance learning opportunities for students if they are able. Local boards of education and school leaders should continue current virtual learning opportunities.

- **How will this mandated closure impact scheduled spring breaks that have not yet occurred? What will the protocol be for families who have already scheduled trips and paid deposits? Will that be determined by the state or will those types of decisions be determined by the LEAs?**

Local Boards of Education have the authority to make these scheduling decisions. Some districts have elected to move up or extend spring break periods. We recognize the circumstances are not ideal.

- **Are there any contingencies for bringing smaller groups of students on campus at different intervals to receive academic support (ex. Using buses to bring certain grade levels to schools on a particular day of the week to keep numbers low but to allow for direct instructional support)?**

Executive Order No. 117 directs that public school facilities be closed as instructional settings for K-12 students through March 30. Local school districts may continue to utilize facilities for other purposes as identified by local boards of education and school leaders. However, usage must be consistent with other aspects of Executive Order No. 117, including the provisions prohibiting mass gatherings of greater than 100 individuals. Any facility use should also comport with guidance from local boards of health and emergency management.

- **Should school buildings have hours each day they might be open for parent or student questions and/or support or does the closure mean buildings should be closed during the entire two week period?**

While schools have been ordered closed as instructional institutions, buildings should remain open.

- **Does NCDPI advise that districts cancel local board meetings to comply with the executive order?**

Local boards should continue to meet in order to provide direction to school leaders and keep parents and students updated. Where feasible, local boards can utilize technology to facilitate meetings. If local boards have questions about how to conduct meetings in light of the prohibition on mass gatherings identified in Executive Order No. 117, they should contact their attorneys for additional guidance.

- **What will happen to EOGs/EOCs?**

At this time, no decision has been made about accountability. We are working with the USED on potential flexibilities in our ESSA plan around accountability.

- **Will students be held accountable for the mastery of North Carolina Standards as they relate to preparation for learning and end of year and course testing?**

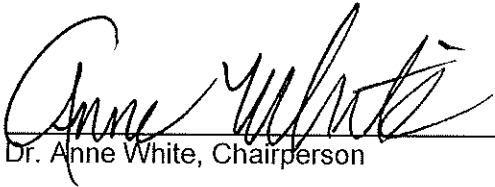
Schools will need to prepare for remote learning options to potentially continue instruction of the NC Standard Course of Study remotely for all students. No decisions have been made yet regarding accountability measures.

Ms. Turner stated she will continue to update the Board as she receives new information.

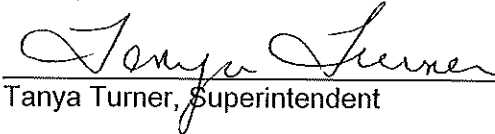
Announcement

Regular Board of Education Meeting – Monday, March 23, 2020 at 6:00 p.m., Central Office

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 4:20 p.m.



Dr. Anne White, Chairperson



Tanya Turner, Superintendent