

**Perquimans County Board of Education
Regular Session – October 26, 2020**

The Perquimans County Board of Education met in regular session on Monday, October 26, 2020, at 6:00 p.m. in the administrative offices of Perquimans County Schools. This meeting was held in accordance with Governor Cooper's Executive Order No. 141, Section 7, which states that the prohibition on Mass Gatherings does not apply to educational institutions or government operations. However, social distancing was observed and as a result, seating was limited. In addition, in accordance with Executive Order No. 147, face coverings were worn unless an exception applied. Audio access was available to the public by dialing a telephone number and entering a meeting ID and passcode.

Board Chair Dr. Anne White called the meeting to order and welcomed everyone to the meeting. The audience recited the Pledge of Allegiance to the American Flag and Amy Spaugh said a prayer.

Board members present: Chair Dr. Anne White, Vice-Chair Amy Spaugh, Russell Lassiter, Matt Peeler, and Leary Winslow. Board members absent: Arlene Yates.

Approval of Agenda

Upon motion by Amy Spaugh and second by Matt Peeler, the Board voted unanimously to approve the agenda and addendum as presented.

Approval of Minutes

Upon motion by Amy Spaugh and second by Matt Peeler, the Board voted unanimously to approve the minutes of the September 28, 2020 regular meeting as presented.

Consent Agenda

Superintendent Turner explained that this year the class size mandate for Grades K-3 is 18 students. The numbers of students in Kindergarten and 1st grade are fine unless there is a huge influx of students. However, the numbers of students in 2nd and 3rd grades have been teetering back and forth since the beginning of school. At this point, the district has hesitated hiring a teacher. The number of students in Kindergarten is low, which seems to be the case across the state. Our 1st grade has eight teachers. If the number of Kindergarten students stays the same when they move up to 1st grade next year, Central School will not need eight teachers for 1st grade. Teachers would have to be shuffled around based on class size, unless they leave. If another teacher is hired now, the probability of needing the teacher next year is slim. At the end of November, the Superintendent has to sign an affidavit to confirm the district is within the class sizes mandated by the State. At a meeting last week, the State Superintendent said the State Board of Education was going to have a one-time class size waiver for school districts that would cover all grades and all situations. It would be an "act of God" waiver to cover the situation with students phasing in and out because of COVID. The form was to be available within a week, but it still has not been provided.

A neighboring school district, Gates County Schools, has chosen not to go back to school face-to-face until January. Because of this, our district has received out-of-county student transfer requests from parents in Gates County who want face-to-face instruction for their students. Two of those requests are for 2nd and 3rd grade students. The district would like to accept them, but it is uncertain if the students will remain in our district. The district will need the class size waiver or another teacher will need to be hired. Even if the district doesn't get the waiver or accept the out-of-county students, a teacher may need to be hired because more students may move into the county.

While waiting on the special waiver form, the current class size waiver form was completed and included in the board packet. The waiver has "act of God" listed on it and the same reasoning was used as in the meeting with Mark Johnson. If board approved, the waiver request will be submitted to the State for approval while the district is waiting on the other form.

Following her comments, Ms. Turner entertained questions and comments from board members.

Upon motion by Leary Winslow and second by Russell Lassiter, the Board voted 4 to 1, with Matt Peeler opposing the motion, to approve the Student Transfer Requests Report for October 26, 2020 as presented by Superintendent Tanya Turner.

Upon motion by Leary Winslow and second by Matt Peeler, the Board voted unanimously to approve the personnel recommendations in the Personnel Summary Report and addendum for October 26, 2020 as presented by Superintendent Tanya Turner.

Public Hearing / Requests from the Public

Instructions were provided in the agenda for participation during the public comment period. No virtual or written requests were received for public comment.

Unfinished Business

Superintendent Turner entertained questions and comments from board members regarding the proposed district strategic plan that was presented for a first reading at the September meeting. After a time of discussion, the following action was taken. Upon motion by Leary Winslow and second by Amy Spaugh, the Board voted unanimously to adopt the Perquimans County Schools District Strategic Plan for 2020-2023 as presented.

New Business

Class Size Waiver Request

After hearing the explanation provided by Ms. Turner for the student transfer requests, the Board took the following action. Upon motion by Russell Lassiter and second by Matt Peeler, the Board voted unanimously to approve the class size waiver request as provided by North Carolina State Board of Education Policy to submit to the Department of Public Instruction prior to November 30th of the current school year if there is an overage as of the 40th instructional day, specifically for class size exception pursuant to G.S. 115C-301(g), emergencies, or acts of God that impact the availability of classroom space or facilities.

School Improvement Plans

Perquimans Central School Principal Tracy Gregory and Hertford Grammar School Principal John Lassiter responded to concerns from the Board Chair regarding their schools' respective School Improvement Plans. Upon motion by Leary Winslow and second by Amy Spaugh, the Board voted unanimously to approve the School Improvement Plans for Perquimans Central School and Hertford Grammar School for 2020-2021 as presented.

Teacher Working Conditions Survey Results 2020

Chief Academic Officer of Curriculum and Instruction Melissa Fields presented the results of the North Carolina Teacher Working Conditions Survey. The survey has been administered biennially by North Carolina since 2008 through Governor Easley's Teacher Working Conditions Initiative. Perquimans County Schools has conducted local surveys in alternate years. Results are one data source used in developing school and district improvement plans. The results are also used as artifacts in the administrator evaluation instrument.

In each area surveyed, Mrs. Fields noted that Perquimans County Schools' average results exceed North Carolina's average results. She also illustrated the results by region and by each

school in Perquimans. Mrs. Fields noted the pluses and deltas for each area surveyed—time, facilities and resources, managing student conduct, teacher leadership, school leadership, community support and involvement, professional development, instructional practices and support, and new areas, equity and school safety. Overall, the responses of teachers in Perquimans County Schools indicated that their school is a good place to work and learn and that their school uses the results from the North Carolina Teacher Working Conditions Survey. Mrs. Fields concluded her presentation by providing a link to the actual survey results and entertained questions from board members.

Budget Amendments

Chief Finance Officer Rube Blanchard presented budget amendments for the Board's consideration. Mr. Blanchard explained each amendment in detail and answered questions asked by board members. Upon motion by Leary Winslow and second by Matt Peeler, the Board voted unanimously to approve State (Fund 1) – Budget Amendment #2, Local (Fund 2) – Budget Amendment #2, Federal (Fund 3) – Budget Amendment #2, Capital Outlay (Fund 4) – Budget Amendment #2, and Local (Fund 8) – Budget Amendment #2 as presented by Mr. Blanchard.

Monthly Financial Report

Mr. Blanchard presented the monthly financial report for October 2020. The first report showed year-to-date spent, outstanding POs, escrow, budget (pending approval) and year-to-date percentage spent for Fund #1, #2, #3, #4, #8, and #5. The benchmark was 33% and the actual year-to-date spent of the total budget was 27%. The second report provided summary information sorted by 2-digit Purpose Code for Funds #1, #3, #5, #2, #4, and #8. The last report provided an update on Capital Outlay as of October 19, 2020. The report showed revenue and expenses with current budget, year-to-date spent/encumbered, and budget remaining.

Superintendent's Report

Superintendent Tanya Turner provided the following report.

Current Enrollment

As of October 19, 2020, the district had 1,624 students: PreK – 35, PCS – 370, HGS – 332, PCMS – 418, and PCHS – 468. Face-to-face enrollment increased at all schools—PCS: 68% to 82.54%, HGS: 65% to 79%, PCMS: 54% to 67%, and PCHS: 51% to 60%. There is a total increase of 214 students.

Attendance Update

Ms. Turner noted that COVID-19 has led to an increase in the number of students who are absent on a typical school day, almost double compared to normal circumstances. Before the pandemic, daily absenteeism rates were roughly equal among elementary, middle and high school students. Now, the numbers suggest high school students are more likely to be absent. In addition, taking attendance is more challenging in remote learning environments.

Engagement Level

Unengaged students are students who do not complete coursework and/or do not log into Google Meets or Learning Management Systems. Many unengaged students are returning to school. However, approximately 10% of the remote learners in Kindergarten through 8th grade are unengaged and 36.5% of remote learners in 9th through 12th grades are unengaged. Contacts are being made to those students by way of phone calls (individual and whole school), social media posts, home visits, hotspots, email, texts, letters and in-school and virtual meetings.

Obstacles to Sound Basic Education for All

Some of the obstacles to a sound basic education for all include reaching the unengaged, students being caregivers, employment, identifying the hardship and providing the help, teaching

online/remote and face-to-face, paper packets, parents who “over help”, and last year’s “grace and flexibility.”

Strengths and Opportunities for Improvement

Ms. Turner noted that many school districts have called or visited our district to learn more about our procedures and processes for re-entry. Students are abiding by the mask guidelines and social distancing procedures. Parents are monitoring their students’ health and assisting with bus attestation tickets. Custodians, maintenance, transportation, child nutrition, and nurses have had to redefine how they do business. Teachers are teaching students in their classrooms and at home simultaneously. The technology department is supporting our teachers and our ability to manage remote and face-to-face instruction. Our learning platforms are uniform for our students—K-8 using Google Classroom and 9-12 using Canvas. Areas for improvement are continuing to expand our teachers’ ability to seamlessly provide live teaching K-12 and to remove barriers for our students learning from home. Communication with the community and eliminating the unengaged continues to be a focus.

Positive Cases/Quarantines Since August 17th

Since August 17th, there have been 11 employees who tested positive for Coronavirus (2 additional prior to school starting) and 28 isolations/quarantines (3 of the 28 isolated twice). Overall, there have been 2 students who tested positive for Coronavirus. At Perquimans Central School, 5 students have been quarantined by the Health Department for contact exposure and 7 have been isolated due to symptoms presented at school. At Hertford Grammar School, 6 students have been quarantined by the Health Department for contact exposure and 7 have been isolated due to symptoms presented at school. At Perquimans County Middle School, 5 students have been quarantined by the Health Department for contact exposure and 5 have been isolated due to symptoms presented at school. At Perquimans County High School, 2 students have been quarantined by the Health Department for contact exposure and 3 have been isolated due to symptoms presented at school.

Discipline Update

There have been no out-of-school suspensions and only minor discipline issues occurring. With an increase of over 200 students in our face-to-face environment, these dynamics may change.

Celebrations

- Shante’ White graduated with her teaching degree in EC and Elementary Education.
- Remote meal curb side service is increasing, serving as many as 70 children.
- Students eat free till the end of the year!
- Our CTE program made the top 10 in the state for credentials earned despite the pandemic! In fact, the number of credentials earned last year increased from 120% to 162%.
- The district received notification of an award of \$153,500 in PRC 29. This will help support the social and emotional needs of our students by funding our social worker and two behavior support assistants.
- Qualcomm is featuring student projects from the summer camps to display on their website to serve as an example for students at Thinkabit Lab sites across the country. One of our 8th grade student’s projects at PCMS was selected to be one of the featured videos. Only 12 out of the over 200 submitted videos were chosen!
- Our school system is continuing to be recognized throughout the state.
- Congratulations to Rachel Benge, Becky Benton, Ashley Winslow, and Lindsey Benton on receiving the Kim Hunter-Daugherty mini-grants this year.
- Mr. Bunch is back at work!

Board Chair's Comments

Dr. White congratulated everyone in the school system for all that they are doing. She extended a special thank you to Transportation Director Jeff Miller, the transportation staff and school leadership for all the changes they have had to make to the bus routes. She reminded board members about the upcoming NCSBA virtual conference on November 5-7. Also, she thanked the Board for nominating her for the NCSBA Board of Directors; unfortunately, she was not selected.

Title IX Training

It was the consensus of the Board to conduct the three-hour Title IX training on either November 9th or 13th starting at 4:00 p.m. at the Central Office. The date will be confirmed with Chief Human Resources Officer Michelle Maddox when she returns next week.

Announcements

- North Carolina School Boards Association Annual Conference (Virtual) – November 5-7, 2020
- Veterans Day – Wednesday, November 11, 2020
- Regular Board of Education Meeting – Monday, November 23, 2020, at 6:00 p.m., Central Office

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 8:12 p.m.



Dr. Anne White, Chairperson



Tanya Turner, Superintendent