

**Perquimans County Board of Education
Regular Session – July 26, 2021**

The Perquimans County Board of Education met in regular session on Monday, July 26, 2021, at 6:00 p.m. in the auditorium at Perquimans County High School. 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. Arlene Yates led the audience in reciting the Pledge of Allegiance to the American Flag and Leary Winslow said a prayer.

Board members present: Chair Dr. Anne White (in person), Vice Chair Russell Lassiter (in person), Matt Peeler (in person), Amy Spaugh (remote), Leary Winslow (in person), and Arlene Yates (in person).

Approval of Agenda

Upon motion by Matt Peeler and second by Arlene Yates, the Board voted unanimously to approve the agenda with addendum as presented.

Special Recognitions

Perquimans County High School Pirates' Track & Field Team

Superintendent Dr. Tanya Turner presented the 2021 NCHSAA 1A state qualifiers and competitors with a certificate on behalf of the Board of Education. Those recognized included Malik Haverland Bassert, Jahsiah Felton, Tre'Quan Griffin, Jayden White, Tyrese Brothers, Lexi Williams, Shaun Garcia, Machani Privott, Tony Riddick, and coaches Jon Nixon and Aaron Burke.

Perquimans County High School Pirates' Baseball Team

Dr. Turner presented the 2021 NCHSAA 1A State Champions with a certificate and a personalized ornament created and donated by Cindy Phthisic, who retired recently. Team members recognized included Ty Nixon, Jackson Russell, Eli Gregory, Colby Brown, Avery Biggs, Dylan Cox, Jakob Meads, Collin Roberts, Macon Winslow, Bryson Sawyer, Mason Bryum, Jett Winslow, Landon Gregory, Trent Byrum, Stetson Proctor, Trenton Sawyer, Tanner Thach and coaches Richard Thach, Jeff Winslow, Mason Votava, and Justin Roberson. Also recognized were Athletic Trainer Amanda Lankford and Bookkeeper Tiffany Mathis. The team took the Conference Championship after defeating Edenton 16-7. In the playoffs, they defeated Ocracoke in Round 1, Hobbton in Round 2, Bear Grass in Round 3, and Granville Central in Round 4 to earn the NCHSAA 1A East Regional Championship. The Pirates beat East Surry 5-4 in ten innings in Game 1 and 7-5 in Game 2 to win the State Championship. Eli Gregory was named the recipient of the NCHSAA Sportsmanship Award for exemplifying strong character, good sportsmanship, and being a great teammate. In addition, Tanner Thach was selected the 1A State Championship Series Most Valuable Player. A 4' x 8' team photo, which was unveiled after the presentation, will be framed and displayed in the PCHS gymnasium.

Following the special recognitions, the Board took a brief recess at 6:25 p.m. to move to the Central Office to continue with the agenda. At 6:36 p.m., the meeting continued.

Signing of Code of Ethics Statement

In accordance with Board Policy 2120, at the annual organizational meeting of the board, all board members are expected to sign a code of ethics statement that includes the provisions in the policy. Board members read and signed the code of ethics statement as stated in board policy.

Election of Officers

Chairperson Dr. Anne White relinquished the gavel to Superintendent Turner to conduct the election of the board chair. The floor was opened for nominations. Russell Lassiter nominated Dr. Anne White. Matt Peeler moved to close the nominations. The Board voted unanimously to elect Dr. Anne White as the Chairperson.

Dr. Turner relinquished the gavel to Chairperson White to conduct the election of the vice chair. The floor was opened for nominations. Arlene Yates nominated Amy Spaugh. Mrs. Spaugh, however, declined the nomination. Mrs. Spaugh nominated Arlene Yates. Leary Winslow nominated Russell Lassiter. Matt Peeler moved to close the nominations. Russell Lassiter, Matt Peeler and Leary Winslow voted to elect Russell Lassiter. Amy Spaugh, Dr. Anne White, and Arlene Yates voted to elect Arlene Yates. With there being a tie, Dr. White withdrew her vote. Therefore, upon majority vote, the Board voted to elect Russell Lassiter as the Vice Chairman.

Approval of Minutes

Upon motion by Arlene Yates and second by Matt Peeler, the Board voted unanimously to approve the minutes of the June 29, 2021, regular meeting as presented.

Consent Agenda

Upon motion by Leary Winslow and second by Russell Lassiter, the Board voted unanimously to approve the student transfer requests and addendum for 2021-2022 as presented by Superintendent Turner.

Upon motion by Leary Winslow and second by Arlene Yates, the Board voted unanimously to approve the personnel recommendations in the Personnel Summary Report and addendum for July 26, 2021 as presented by Superintendent Turner.

Public Hearing / Requests from the Public

None

Unfinished Business

Upon motion by Leary Winslow and second by Russell Lassiter, the Board voted 2 to 4, with Mr. Winslow and Mr. Lassiter voting for the motion and Mr. Peeler, Dr. White, Mrs. Spaugh and Mrs. Yates voting against the motion to adopt new and revised Policy 7502 Excessive Absenteeism, Policy 7510 Leave, Policy 6316 Classified Employees Duty to Drive a School Bus, and Regulation 6316R Classified Employees Duty to Drive a School Bus. Upon motion by Leary Winslow and second by Matt Peeler, the Board voted unanimously to approve Policy 7502 Excessive Absenteeism and Policy 7510 Leave as presented.

New Business

Teacher Working Conditions Results

Chief Academic Officer for Curriculum and Instruction Melissa Fields presented a review of the 2021 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 conducts local surveys in the alternate years. Mrs. Fields provided Plus (85+) and Delta (<84) items in the areas of Time, Facilities and Resources, Managing Student Conduct, Teacher Leadership, School Leadership, Community Support and Involvement, Professional Development, Instructional Practices and Support, Equity, and School Safety. Overall, all schools indicated that their school is a good place to work and learn.

Capital Outlay Projects Update

Maintenance Director Jamie Johnson presented an update on Capital Outlay and ESSER 2 & 3 Funds projects. He listed the Capital Outlay prioritized needs for 2021-2022 and estimated costs which included paving around the back loop at PCS, repaving the service entrance to the kitchen at HGS, enlarging and paving the parking lot at HGS, renovating the science lab at PCMS, upgrading the camera system at PCMS, upgrading the kitchen equipment at all schools, repainting the epoxy floor in the kitchen at PCS, obtaining a lawn mower for the Maintenance Department, and having a furniture allotment for PCS and HGS.

Mr. Johnson also listed ESSER 2 & 3 projects for 2021-2024 and estimated costs which included carpet removal for all schools, asbestos abatement at HGS, DDC Phase 2 for PCMS and HGS, replacing custodial equipment for all schools, shop roof and insulation at the Maintenance Department, ceiling in the kitchen at PCHS, exit doors at PCMS, HVAC at all schools, touchless equipment at all schools, and PPE at all schools. He shared a timeline showing the projected schedule for the work to be done.

Proposal from Damuth Trane

Upon motion by Matt Peeler and second by Leary Winslow, the Board voted unanimously to approve a proposal from Damuth Trane to upgrade our BAS (Building Automation System) to include Hertford Grammar School and Perquimans Middle School upon approval of federal funds non-competitive procurement request as presented by Maintenance Director Jamie Johnson.

Service Agreement with Damuth Trane – Contract 790

Upon motion by Arlene Yates and second by Leary Winslow, the Board voted unanimously to approve a continuation of service agreement with Damuth Trane, Contract 790, with an amendment to include Perquimans High School, Perquimans Middle School, and Hertford Grammar School chiller systems for two inspections per year for Perquimans High School and Perquimans Middle School and three inspections per year for Hertford Grammar School as presented by Maintenance Director Jamie Johnson.

Service Agreement with Damuth Trane – Contract 923

Upon motion by Matt Peeler and second by Leary Winslow, the Board voted unanimously to approve a continuation of service agreement with Damuth Trane, Contract 923, for the building automation systems at Perquimans High School, Perquimans Central School and Central Office as presented by Maintenance Director Jamie Johnson.

Finance

Budget Amendment

Upon motion by Leary Winslow and second by Russell Lassiter, the Board voted unanimously to approve Child Nutrition (Fund 5) Budget Amendment #2 for FY ending June 30, 2021 as presented by Chief Finance Officer Rube Blanchard.

Transfer of Funds

Upon motion by Arlene Yates and second by Russell Lassiter, the Board voted unanimously to approve the transfer of funds with regards to the preparation of Financial Statements for FY 2021 as presented by Chief Finance Officer Rube Blanchard. This is to record the transfer of Child Nutrition expenses paid with State PRC 125 COVID funding.

Monthly Financial Report

Mr. Blanchard presented the monthly financial report which included each fund, year-to-date spent, outstanding POs, escrow, continuing budget amount, and year-to-date percentage spent.

At this time, 10% of the total budget has been spent. This report was run on July 21, 2021 so it did not include expenditures paid after that date. In regard to Capital Outlay, \$70,182.00 has been spent/encumbered as of July 21, 2021.

Revised Strong Schools NC Public Health Toolkit

Superintendent Dr. Tanya Turner presented key changes to the Strong Schools NC Toolkit which has been updated to align to the CDC Guidance for COVID-19 Prevention in K-12 Schools. To allow for operational transition time, the provisions of the Toolkit are effective July 30th at 5:00 p.m. Each section of the Toolkit has been organized into categories that prioritize implementation of the strategies that have been shown to be most effective in lowering the risk of COVID-19 exposure and spread in school sessions and school activities. Dr. Turner noted actions that have been removed from the Toolkit as well as quarantine changes. There is an emphasis on the importance of in-person learning regardless of prevention strategies implemented in the schools. A difference has been seen in remote students' grades and test scores compared to face-to-face students and the district agrees with this emphasis.

Dr. Turner summarized the key strategies that the toolkit says should be implemented including requiring all children and staff in schools K-8 to wear face coverings consistently when indoors and ensuring that face coverings are worn indoors by all individuals who are not fully vaccinated, including students in grades 9-12, workers, teachers, guests, other adults and children age two or older, unless an exception applies. Other strategies include physical distancing, symptom screening, diagnostic testing of individuals who exhibit symptoms, cleaning and disinfecting procedures, quarantine guidance, adequate supplies to support healthy hygiene behaviors, wearing face coverings on buses and other school transportation.

Strategies that should be considered include individuals who are not fully vaccinated wearing a face mask, physical distancing, posting signage that people who have been symptomatic with fever and/or cough not enter, educate students, families, teachers, and staff about the signs and symptoms of COVID-19, allowing flexible, non-punitive, and supportive paid sick leave policies and practices, establish and encourage liberal use of sick days for students, developing plans for backfilling positions of employees on sick leave, and hygiene practices, among other strategies.

ARHS is seeing the impact of the Delta variant locally as it is being seen statewide and nationally. The data is showing that the delta variant can and is being transmitted very easily as it accounts for over 90% of cases. It is, however, responding well to the vaccine which is effective against severe illness and hospitalization. For those not vaccinated, additional efforts are needed to prevent infection and exposure such as social distancing and masking. A chart was displayed showing the numbers of active, recovered and deaths in the counties serviced by the ARHS.

Dr. Turner shared with the Board legal advice and recommendations received from Campbell and Shatley Attorneys at Law regarding face coverings based upon revisions by NCDHHS regarding the Strong Schools NC Public Health Toolkit K-12 effective July 30, 2021. The firm states that despite the lack of any legal mandate by the State regarding masks, the Toolkit states that school districts should require masks of all employees and students in elementary and middle schools (grades K-8) and require masks for unvaccinated students and employees in high school (grades 9-12). The CDC issued a federal order requiring face coverings on all school buses.

The attorneys also recommended that the Board receive a full briefing on factors and criteria impacting the decision regarding face coverings before taking any action or no action to provide a record of what was considered. The minutes should provide sufficient detail regarding the information considered by the Board in making its decision.

It was noted that except for school buses and other modes of transportation, the Toolkit leaves it to the local districts to determine whether face coverings are required, and if so, in what capacities they are required. Dr. Turner also provided information from the attorneys about legal liability, adopting a procedure with future contingencies including the delegation of powers to the Superintendent to implement face coverings under certain conditions, allowing individuals to voluntarily provide their vaccination status to be exempt from the mask requirement, evidence that districts can require for students seeking the medical exemption, protocols for violations of the face covering policy or protocols approved by the Board, providing an informed consent document to parents and students, and parents signing a liability waiver.

The following options were presented:

Option 1 – Based on the needs of the community, school administrators may opt to make mask use universally required, with sincerely held religious belief and behavioral/medical exceptions.

Option 2 – Follow the NC DHHS recommendation to require face coverings for all children and staff in grades K-8 to wear face coverings consistently when indoors and require students and staff in grades 9-12 who are unvaccinated to wear masks.

Option 3 – Make masks optional grades K-12 with layered mitigation strategies in place, with a recommendation to the Board to affirmatively state that it reserves the right to require face coverings in the future if it is determined face coverings are necessary to keep schools open.

After discussion, the Board took the following action. Leary Winslow made a motion to make masks optional in grades K-12, giving the Superintendent the authority to make masks required as needed in consultation with DHHS. Matt Peeler seconded the motion. Voting in favor of the motion were Leary Winslow, Matt Peeler and Russell Lassiter. Voting against the motion were Arlene Yates, Dr. Anne White, and Amy Spaugh. According to this vote, which was split 3-3, masks will be optional. The Superintendent will create a layered mitigation plan to share with parents.

Resolution regarding House Bill 91

Upon motion by Russell Lassiter and second by Arlene Yates, the Board voted unanimously to adopt a resolution opposing House Bill 91 which would remove the North Carolina High School Athletic Association from its role in administering interscholastic athletic competition.

Reports/Updates

None

Superintendent's Report

The following are highlights from Dr. Turner's report:

- Topics from "Operation Polaris," State Superintendent Catherine Truitt's long-term plan that aims at district and school transformation through the office of learning recovery, were used to guide our administrative retreat this summer. Topics include literacy, human capital, accountability and testing, and student support services.
- The district strategic plan is perfectly aligned to the four areas outlined in Operation Polaris. Each of these areas were reviewed to remind our district and school leaders of our priorities.
- A major emphasis for curriculum and instruction K-12 will be literacy across all content areas. The Superintendent and Melissa Fields have collaborated with DPI since January to design and implement literacy focused studies in all of our schools.

- In a personnel update, Dr. Turner noted the current vacancies in the district, as well as in athletics and year-long postings.
- The Back to School Bash will be held on August 5, 2021 from 3:00 – 7:00 p.m. in the gymnasium at PCHS. There will be food, games, backpacks, school supplies, and school information.
- Convocation will be held on August 16, 2021 from 9:00 – 11:00 a.m. in the gymnasium at PCHS. Teachers of the Year, BT Teacher of the Year, and the EC Teacher of Excellence will be recognized, new employees will be introduced, and schools will participate in spirit challenge games.

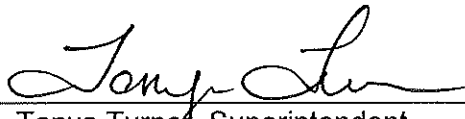
Announcements

The next regular Board of Education meeting will be held on Monday, August 23, 2021 at 6:00 p.m. at the Central Office.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 9:41 p.m.



Dr. Anne White, Chairperson



Dr. Tanya Turner, Superintendent