

**Minutes
Transylvania County Board of Education
January 27, 2020**

CALL TO ORDER/WELCOME

Work Session - Budget

ADJOURN

The Transylvania County Board of Education met in special session at 1:30 p.m. on January 27, 2020 at the Morris Education Center to hold a budget work session. Chairman McCoy welcomed everyone and called the meeting to order. In addition to one guest, the following board members, staff, and others were in attendance:

BOARD MEMBERS:

Tawny McCoy, Chair
Ron Kiviniemi, Vice Chair
Courtney Domokur
Marty Griffin
Alice Wellborn

STAFF:

Dr. Jeff McDaris, Superintendent
Jenny Hunter, Administrative Assistant
Dr. Brian Weaver, Assistant Superintendent
Norris Barger, Director, Business Services
Missy Ellenberger, Director, Curriculum & Instruction
Kevin Smith, School-Community Relations Coordinator
Chris Whitlock, Director, School Technology
Greg Stroup, School Resource Officer

WORK SESSION

Dr. McDaris gave an overview of the vision, mission, and strategic goals for the State Board of Education and for Transylvania County Schools. He stated that local funding priorities are driven by what we value as a school system. The board reviewed an extensive list of the items and programs that are provided through local funds (based on FY19 actual expenditures). Dr. Weaver discussed the variables that affect pay for assistant principals and principals based on the state salary schedule. Mr. Barger reported there is a constant flow every month moving higher paid staff to state pay and lower paid staff to local pay. Dr. Weaver explained how salary line items can fluctuate throughout the year based on teachers' achievement of national board certification or advanced degrees; transfers of years' experience from other states, and other factors.

There was considerable discussion about 1:1 technology in grades K-2. Dr. McDaris reported that we have 1:1 capability in K-2 classrooms through shared carts, but we do not yet give our youngest students devices that can be taken home. Teachers do not feel that kindergartners are ready to be responsible for individual Chromebooks. Also, there are concerns about the amounts of screen time for young children. The board discussed the potential cost savings that might be realized by not pursuing 1:1 in grades K-2. Mr. Whitlock reported that he gets regular requests from K-2 teachers for more devices for their classrooms. The board requested more information regarding how teachers feel about 1:1 for primary grades.

There was some discussion about reducing costs for the annual "Teacher of the Year" celebration and other "of the year" awards. Mrs. Wellborn reported that the most important thing to teachers is the recognition. The administration will look into options for celebrating these recognitions.

The board took a 10-minute recess from 3:05 to 3:15 p.m.

The board reviewed charter school funding. Mr. Barger reported that we paid over \$1 million last year to six different charter schools. State law requires that when a student enrolls in a

charter, the school district is required to pay local funds to the charter school as long as the student resides in the district, even if the district has never received state funding for that student (i.e., home school).

Mr. Barger reviewed the plant operations program. He reported that the state does not pay any costs associated with school buildings, other facilities, grounds, repairs, utilities, or property insurance; all are paid with local funds. He confirmed to the board that all facilities, with the exception of one shed at BHS, are in flood-safe areas.

Local supplements were discussed. Dr. McDaris explained there are different percentages for local supplements based on occupation. Teachers currently receive an 8.5% local supplement. Mrs. Wellborn stated that she would like to bring all teachers up to 9.0%. Mr. Barger estimated that would cost approximately \$113,000 plus benefits. That amount would increase to roughly \$152,000 plus benefits assuming a 5% raise for teachers. Mr. Griffin stated that he would like to see veteran teachers bumped up to 9.5% if other teachers are increased to 9.0%. Mrs. Wellborn stated that she would also like to see a schedule for all local supplement categories to receive an increase.

Mr. Barger reviewed the estimated lottery balance and estimated local current expense and capital outlay fund balances for FY20 and FY21. He discussed the many restrictions on the use of lottery proceeds by schools, noting that “we can use lottery funding to replace a roof, but not to repair one.”

Mr. Barger gave a capital projects status report. Mr. Kiviniemi stated that the board and the county need to have a meaningful discussion about how to address the \$25 million in needs at the six schools that will not be included in the upcoming school bond improvements. Mr. Barger noted that the capital projects status reports are regularly sent to the county manager to share with the board of commissioners. The board suggested some revisions to the report for clarity.

The board looked at challenges/needs for future funding. Mr. Kiviniemi asked about any new positions that may be needed for next year. Dr. McDaris reported that the English Language Learner (ELL) population continues to grow. One ELL position was added this year.

Dr. McDaris reported that the mental health crisis is an ongoing concern. Teachers, administrators and SROs are having to spend more time dealing with mental health issues than ever before. We no longer have a day treatment program at the middle school. Dr. Weaver explained that we are unable to get all students the help they need due to procedural, staffing, and insurance issues with Meridian Health.

Mr. Griffin stated that the board needs to give consideration to raising local supplements for staff who coach athletics. Dr. McDaris reported that we are being passed in this area by other counties. Mrs. Wellborn asked about staff who supervise other types of activities such as clubs or afterschool labs. Dr. McDaris noted that rightly or wrongly, athletics set the tone for a school's culture. Some sports bring in revenue and some do not, but we offer them all because the community values them. Mrs. Wellborn agreed, adding that we should be leaders in finding ways to reward efforts for staff who perform extra duties in all areas.

Mr. Barger reported that the county has done away with its previous funding formula for the school system. They funded the school system this year at the same level as last year with an additional amount held in reserve pending passage of a state budget for 2019-2020. The board discussed the idea of requesting the reserve funds to provide increases in local supplements in the event the legislature never adopts a state budget. Mrs. Wellborn reported that data shows that supplements are the number one factor in teacher retention.

Dr. McDaris noted that our school system provides many things that other systems do not. We do not charge athletic fees, activity fees, or school nutrition indirect costs. We fund supplies and materials with local money to make up state shortfalls. We have a higher rate of local funding for CTE. We have invested in our community schools. The board discussed that this year's budget message to the board of commissioners should emphasize what we value, why it matters, and outcomes in addition to test scores. Dr. McDaris remarked that schools are not factories, and students are not widgets.

Chairman McCoy summarized the issues for which more information or discussion is needed:

- Feedback from teachers regarding the need (or not) for 1:1 technology in grades K-2
- Suggestions for other ways to recognize "of the year" educators
- A plan for raising local supplements for all categories
- Develop a different budget delivery method focused on outcomes, success stories, what we value as a school system, and why it matters.

There was no further business, and ON A MOTION BY MR. GRIFFIN, SECONDED BY MR. KIVINIEMI, the meeting was adjourned at 5:45 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Chairman

Secretary