

**Minutes  
Transylvania County Board of Education  
October 4, 2021**

INVOCATION/PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

CALL TO ORDER/WELCOME

BUSINESS ITEMS (including amendments and rescissions):

1. Approval of Agenda
2. Public Comment
3. Good News Report
4. Former Students in the Military
5. Consent Agenda:
  - A. Minutes
  - B. Personnel Report
6. Student Fees 2021-2022
7. FY22 Budget Update
8. ESSER Funding Update
9. Appointment to Community Relations Board
10. Superintendent's Update
11. Important Dates
12. Other Items
13. Closed Session

The Transylvania County Board of Education met in regular session at 6:30 p.m. on Monday, October 4, 2021 at the Morris Education Center. Ron Kiviniemi led in a moment of silence and Marty Griffin led the Pledge of Allegiance. Chairman McCoy welcomed everyone and called the meeting to order. In addition to approximately 12 guests, the following individuals were in attendance.

**BOARD MEMBERS:**

Tawny McCoy, Chair  
Ron Kiviniemi, Vice Chair  
Courtney Domokur  
Marty Griffin  
Kimsey Jackson

**STAFF:**

Dr. Jeff McDaris, Superintendent  
Jenny Hunter, Administrative Assistant  
Dr. Brian Weaver, Assistant Superintendent  
Missy Ellenberger, Director 9-12 Education  
Audrey Reneau, Director, Federal Programs  
Meredith Licht, BHS Teacher; TCAE President  
Chris Whitlock, Director, Technology Services  
Blake Tesnow, Technology Specialist  
Brent Owen, School Resource Officer

**MEDIA:**

Jordon Morgan, Transylvania Times  
Dan DeWitt, Brevard NewsBeat

1. **Approval of Agenda**  
ON A MOTION BY MRS. DOMOKUR, SECONDED BY MR. GRIFFIN, the meeting agenda for October 4, 2021 was unanimously approved as presented.
2. **Public Comment**  
Chairman McCoy reviewed the guidelines for public comment. She announced that a maximum time of 30 minutes would be allotted for public comment and that each speaker would have 3 minutes. Excerpts from the speakers' comments are listed below.

**Ann Kimble** - As reported in the August 16 meeting, I sent you information on the coronavirus. The virus can replicate with speed or fidelity but not both. The virus is spreading fast, which means it is weakening. Every student is allotted a free basic

education without masks. How can teachers teach if kids can't see their faces? Dr. Ora Wells says that he has been treating kids for 40 years, and the vaccine will let us look at results in large groups of children. Would you want your kids used as guinea pigs? That puts the burden of accountability on children, impairing their education and possibly their health with medicine that has not been vetted or fully approved.

**Julie Kerr** - My kids were delighted to get back to in-person learning. I did not want them wearing masks, but my kids said they did not want an exemption because they would be ostracized. COVID-19 has never been isolated so you can't make rules mandating anything. It is 99% survivable. We should not be a society ruled by fear. Survivors will carry antibodies for at least 12 months. Why are we not following expert science? The truth cannot make it past the one narrative that is being shoved in our masked faces. I urge you to get educated. Masks generate bacteria, reduce oxygen, reduce trust, and increase suicidal ideation. Rand Paul said that the vaccinated are seven times more likely to get sick than the unvaccinated. Celebrities are having indoor events without masks. North Carolina schools are getting COVID money per district. Some of that money is going to stakeholders and outside contractors. How do you decide the best allocation for our kids and dollars?

**Jami Reese, parent** - There are five types of knowledge. As a nurse, I rely on a combination of types when developing assessments and caring for my patients. What kind of knowledge have you relied on for our children? We lost a precious young man after he took acne medicine. Why do you think he was doing that? Masks. Others have been taken for medical treatment after wearing masks. I stand for the kids. I stand for the sweet boy who is no longer here. I have shed tears for loved ones who have died. COVID is not what is killing our children. That is why I am standing here asking you to take this burden from our children. Telling kids they can make their loved ones sick is creating stress and burden on our children. All I am asking is to allow parents to make the best decision for their children. To allow teachers to return to teaching rather than policing masks. To allow children autonomy over their bodies.

**Brittani Summey** - I am here to provide facts from Transylvania Public Health and other public records. Only one side of the information is being presented. As of 9/29/21, Transylvania Public Health reports a zero death rate. I ask you to stop looking at scare tactics and look at concrete data that shows our kids are not at risk. I do not accept Dr. Weaver's data. As for Jeff McDaris, Josh Tinsley, and Meredith Licht, I say fall back and stay in your lane. The fact that the three of you held a secret meeting to plan is terrible. The three of you need to keep your personal beliefs to yourselves, and you should be removed immediately.

**Zach Quinn, parent** - You've heard about the things you are doing to our children. You haven't followed the *Toolkit* recommendation to improve ventilation systems. You have been presented with ionizing products that would do the job. This would only cost \$100,000. Instead you are counting on our kids to carry the water. So many other things could be done but you are not doing them. The specific product I'm talking about would filter the air and kill the viruses. Dr. Weaver assured me that he would split the presumptive cases and the confirmed cases. This hasn't been done. These presumptive positives cannot stand. If a kid is struggling, but due to a phone call they don't get the instruction that they need. Stepping outside the guidance of the state cannot stand. Mr. McDaris led us to believe the metrics would be provided. I would like to see those metrics by the next meeting.

**Chris Weiner, parent** - I received notification from PowerSchool that my daughter was put out of school on Friday because she was being quarantined. I received 20 messages this morning. She went to school and got kicked out of first period. I was told she was being quarantined because she was in close contact with a positive case. I knew that was her boyfriend. We have a blended family of five kids. All of my kids should have been on quarantine. I am generally one of the calmest people you will ever know, and I was disgusted by the way I was treated. I was forced to leave the school building in order to talk with Dr. Abernethy outside. He could not tell me any information. My daughter is holding a 4.97 GPA right now. She did not do well last year online. She needs to be in the classroom. You are denying her that and affecting her mental health and her lifelong learning potential. I am not wearing shoes because I was on a pig farm earlier today.

**3. Good News Report**

Dr. McDaris recognized the student artwork from Brevard Middle School that was on display in the board room and thanked Officer Brent Owen for attending the meeting.

The Burlingame Country Club recently raised \$36,964.61 for the T. C. Henderson School of Science & Technology during their 2021 fundraiser event, "Chromebooks for Kids." The funds are targeted for the sole purpose of purchasing Chromebooks for TCH students in grades Pre-K through 2. Our thanks to Linda Crowther, Chairperson of the Fundraiser Committee, and the members of Burlingame Country Club for their generosity and ongoing support of T. C. Henderson.

**4. Former Students in the Military**

The board recognized the list of former students from Brevard High School, Rosman High School, and Davidson River School who are currently serving or have previously served in the U.S. Military. There were two new names on the list, Isaiah Tyler Williams and Dominick Adolf.

Chairman McCoy announced that the board would not be discussing masks during this meeting.

**5. Consent Agenda**

ON A MOTION BY MRS. DOMOKUR, SECONDED BY MR. JACKSON, the minutes of the September 20, 2021 meeting and the personnel report for October 4, 2021 (see attached) were unanimously approved.

**6. Student Fees 2021-2022**

Policy 4600, Student Fees, requires that fees for items such as graduation supplies, yearbooks, supplies for elective classes, etc., be consistent among the different levels and schools. Each principal is required to submit a list of fees to the superintendent for board approval. A schedule of fees, charges, and solicitations must be published on the school system's website by October 15 of each school year and within 30 days of any revisions to the schedule. Dr. Brian Weaver presented a list of fees for the 2021-2022 school year and answered questions from the board. He reported that 4600 is a revised policy so this is the first time that a list of fees has been compiled. He explained how fees can differentiate among schools based on factors such as discounts for early purchases, school-based fundraising, outside donors, size of school, and program-specific costs such as athletics, band, color guard, art, and CTE competitions. Dr. Weaver reported that schools typically set aside some funds each year to help the students who cannot afford to purchase yearbooks or other items. Booster organizations

and parents also raise funds to help. Mr. Griffin asked about the costs for class rings. Dr. Weaver reported that it is hard to determine a price range for class rings because students no longer purchase rings from just one vendor. ON A MOTION BY MR. KIVINIEMI, SECONDED BY MR. GRIFFIN, the list of student fees for the 2021-2022 school year was unanimously approved.

**7. FY22 Budget Update**

Dr. McDaris reported that the House and Senate have agreed on a number, but have not yet announced it. It has been rumored that there may be a state budget for FY22 by next week.

**8. ESSER Funding Update**

Federal Programs Director Audrey Reneau gave an update and breakdown of federal ESSER funds. She reported that the purpose of the American Rescue Plan Act (ESSER) is to provide funding to prepare, prevent, and respond to COVID-19 with emphasis on addressing learning loss through evidence-based interventions that respond to students’ academic, social, and emotional needs; preparing schools for reopening; and testing, repairing, and upgrading projects to improve air quality in school buildings. The ESSER funds cannot take the place of capital outlay projects that were planned prior to COVID and that are not in response to COVID. When determining use, we asked ourselves the questions listed below:

- Is this related to the prevention, response, or reducing the spread of COVID?
- Is this the most cost-effective solution to this problem? The funds are fiscally monitored so we must have documentation to prove our needs.
- Is this expenditure allowable, necessary, and reasonable?

<b>Allowable Uses</b>	<b>ESSER II (must be spent by 2023)</b>	<b>ESSER III (must be spent by 9/30/24)</b>
Address learning loss	Opened an additional Pre-K classroom: <b>\$27,492.87</b>	20% required for learning loss: <b>\$1,462,518.20</b>
Improve air quality	<b>\$2,445,156.11:</b> Approved but working on the uniform guidance and EDGAR laws to meet compliance. This is considered a capital expense since it exceeds \$5,000.00	
Provide principals/leaders with resources for coordination of preparedness	<b>\$180,000.00</b>	N/A - not an allowable expense
Address unique needs of special populations		<b>\$1,342,500.72:</b> Pre-K teacher and 2 TAs; 2 MS Interventionists; MTSS Support; Online positions - 2 ES, 2 MS; Enrichment Specialist - ES; Ed Corps Literacy Tutors - 4; Teacher Assistants - 9; ELL Liaison
Education Technology	<b>\$20,000.00</b> OLP Equipment	<b>\$932,049.00:</b> 358 Newline panels; software
Mental Health Services		<b>\$877,500.00:</b> additional school counselors

Summer Learning	<b>\$500,000.00:</b> 62 Teachers; 31 EC; 15 EC Teacher Assistants; 3 Counselors; 560 General Ed Students; 201 EC Students; (23.7% attended summer school)	<b>\$520,539.37</b>
Other ESSER-Eligible Activities: IDEA (EC); Carl Perkins Act (CTE); McKinney-Vento Act (Homeless)	<b>\$91,729.02:</b> Indirect costs 2.81%	<b>\$2,177,483.71:</b> 4 Reading Specialists ES; Graduation Coach/DropOut Prevention - MS/HS; Academic Coach/Specialist (works with all schools); Reading Diagnostic, grades 4-5; Summer school staffing; K-5 math consumable materials with new adoption; Indirect cost 2.81% (now 3.229%)
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>3,264,378.00</b>	<b>\$7,312,591.00</b>

Mr. Griffin asked how the new positions will be paid when the ESSER funds run out. Mrs. Reneau stated that new hires have been made aware that the ESSER funds will only be provided for three years. It is hoped that we can continue paying some positions with other funding sources after the ESSER funds expire.

Mr. Jackson asked if any ESSER money has been used this year. Mrs. Reneau reported that we are making expenditures, but have not received our full allotment yet. Mr. Jackson asked how the money gets paid to the vendors. Mrs. Reneau reported that the ESSER funds are deposited into our system's federal budget, where each line item is tracked. When we write a check out of a federal line item, the documentation goes to the state. Our federal money is administered by the state and stays in the state's bank account until we use it.

**9. Appointment to Community Relations Board**

The Transylvania County Community Relations Board (CRB) works to foster positive community relations and reduce discrimination and/or bullying of any citizen. The board of education is responsible for appointing two student representatives to serve on the CRB. Dr. McDaris reported that one of the student members, Jessica Chappell (RHS), has resigned her seat due to other commitments. Mr. Ormsby has recommended another Rosman High School student, Collin Jones, to serve as her replacement. ON A MOTION BY MR. JACKSON, SECONDED BY MR. KIVINIEMI, the board unanimously appointed Collin Jones to the Transylvania County Community Relations Board. Mr. Kiviniemi stated that the student representatives have been active and worthwhile contributors and he is honored to serve with them.

**10. Superintendent's Update**

Dr. McDaris reported that he and the principals of BHS and RHS are working with Dr. Terry Grier, a retired NC superintendent, on a potential project that could provide additional revenues to both high schools. The program, called Grads Give, is an opportunity for high school alumni to donate toward specific ventures identified by individual schools. There are no costs to the schools or the school system, and any and all donations would be voluntary. The program does not compete with booster clubs. A

number of NC systems are working with Grads Give and seeing positive outcomes. We are exploring a short-term partnership to see how it goes.

Dr. McDaris gave an update on House Bill 91, which seeks to change the way in which the NC High School Athletic Association (NCHSAA) governs high school sports. In September, a bipartisan group of lawmakers from the Senate and House met with representatives from the governor's office, the State Board of Education, and the NCHSAA. After the meeting, several lawmakers said that an agreement had been reached; however, officials with the NCHSAA did not feel that an agreement had been reached. The meeting came about after Governor Roy Cooper expressed concerns about HB 91 earlier this month. HB 91 was initially introduced this summer as a bill that would have dissolved the NCHSAA and replaced it with a government agency to oversee high school athletics. After several amendments, the bill now focuses on reforming the relationship between the NCHSAA and the State Board of Education. The bill passed the Senate, but the House voted 98-0 not to concur with the Senate. The non-concurrence vote means the bill will go to a conference committee to try and reach a consensus. The NCHSAA says it believes the State Board of Education already has the statutory authority to enter into a formal memorandum of understanding with the NCHSAA without legislative action. The NCHSAA and other groups involved in high school sports have raised concerns about the latest version of HB 91, which would restrict the association from doing many of the activities in which it is currently involved. NCHSAA Commissioner Que Tucker said in an interview that the bill could impact state championship operations and venues, realignment, the ability to give scholarships and grants to students and schools, and other aspects of high school sports. Stay tuned.

#### 11. Important Dates

Oct. 18	REGULAR MEETING, 6:30 p.m., MEC
Oct. 19	Remote learning day
Nov. 1	REGULAR MEETING, 6:30 p.m., MEC
Nov. 11	Veterans Day holiday
Nov. 15	REGULAR MEETING, 6:30 p.m., MEC
Nov. 24	Annual leave day (no students)
Nov. 25-26	Thanksgiving holidays
Dec. 6	REGULAR MEETING, 6:30 p.m., MEC
Dec. 20	REGULAR MEETING, 6:30 p.m., MEC
Dec. 22	Students dismissed at noon
Dec 23-Jan 3	Christmas break
Jan. 4, 5	Teacher workdays
Jan. 6	Students return from break
Jan. 17	MLK Day (annual leave, no students)
Jan. 18 (Tue)	REGULAR MEETING, 6:30 p.m., MEC

Mr. Jackson asked if the December 20 board meeting would take place. Chairman McCoy affirmed that the December 20 meeting would take place as scheduled.

#### 12. Other Items

Mr. Jackson reported that he had seen information showing that schools did worse on state test scores for the 2020-2021 year than they did in 2019. He said there needs to be a plan to bring the scores up. Dr. McDaris gave a reminder that no school system in the state did better than they did in 2018-2019 due to the COVID-19 pandemic, and DPI ruled that none of the scores would be counted against districts due to the extreme and unforeseen circumstances. Mr. Kiviniemi explained to Mr. Jackson that as Mrs. Reneau

had just reported, the main purpose of the federal ESSER funds is to address learning loss resulting from the pandemic. Chairman McCoy stated that it has been a very difficult time for students and staff, and scores will certainly improve as we get back to normal. Mr. Griffin asked Mr. Jackson if he was referring to an email showing Transylvania to be in the top 15-20% in the state. He stated that although we need to bring scores up to pre-pandemic levels, we should also recognize how well our schools did during very hard times. Chairman McCoy stated that she is proud of our school system for being well-prepared to provide online learning when schools had to shut down in-person learning.

**13. Closed Session**

CHAIRMAN MCCOY MADE A MOTION for the board to go into closed session pursuant to G.S. § 143-318.11 under subsection (a)(1) to discuss confidential personnel information protected under N.C.G.S. § 115C-319-321. MR. GRIFFIN SECONDED and the motion passed unanimously. Chairman McCoy called for a 10-minute recess before the board entered closed session at approximately 7:50 p.m. The following board members and others were present in the closed session: Tawny McCoy, Chair; Ron Kiviniemi, Vice Chair; Courtney Domokur; Marty Griffin; Kimsey Jackson; and Superintendent Jeff McDaris. The board presented the superintendent's consensus evaluation for the 2020-2021 school year. No action was taken in closed session. ON A MOTION BY MRS. DOMOKUR, SECONDED BY MR. KIVINIEMI, the closed session was adjourned and the board returned to open session at 8.38 p.m. ON A MOTION BY MRS. MCCOY, SECONDED BY MR. GRIFFIN, the board voted unanimously to extend Dr. McDaris' employment contract to 2025 and increase his base salary by four percent.

There was no further business, and ON A MOTION BY MR. GRIFFIN, SECONDED BY MR. JACKSON, the meeting was adjourned at 8:41 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

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Chairman

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Secretary

**PERSONNEL REPORT**  
**October 4, 2021**

- I. ACCEPT THE REPORT OF RESIGNATIONS/TERMINATIONS ACCEPTED/INITIATED BY THE SUPERINTENDENT FROM/FOR THE FOLLOWING PERSONS:

Licensed Personnel

Shelly Miller, School Social Worker, BES & PFES, effective October 26, 2021  
Erica Starr, Teacher, PFES, effective September 24, 2021

Classified Personnel

William Stanley, Bus Driver, BHS, effective December 31, 2021  
Debra Thompson, Teacher Assistant, BES, effective October 8, 2021

- II. APPROVE THE EMPLOYMENT RECOMMENDATIONS MADE BY THE SUPERINTENDENT FOR THE FOLLOWING PERSONS:

Licensed Personnel

Jessica Tidmore, Teacher, BHS, effective November 1, 2021

Classified Personnel

Janette Broda, Director of Child Nutrition, MEC, effective November 1, 2021  
Christina Duenes, Custodian & Bus Driver, PFES, effective October 6, 2021  
Jeremy Gibbs, Bus Driver, BMS, effective September 24, 2021  
Michelle Mason, Teacher Assistant, RES, effective September 27, 2021

- III. ACCEPT THE REPORT OF TRANSFER OF ASSIGNMENT MADE BY THE SUPERINTENDENT FOR THE FOLLOWING PERSONS:

Licensed Personnel

None

Classified Personnel

None

- IV. APPROVE THE LEAVES OF ABSENCE RECOMMENDED BY THE SUPERINTENDENT FOR THE FOLLOWING PERSONS:

Licensed Personnel

None

Classified Personnel

None

- V. APPROVE THE SUPERINTENDENT'S RECOMMENDATION FOR THE FOLLOWING SUBSTITUTE EMPLOYEES:

Substitute Teachers

Barbara "Katie" Martin  
Ezra Scalf

Substitute School Nutrition Workers

None