

**Joint Meeting Minutes  
Transylvania County Board of Education &  
Transylvania County Board of Commissioners  
March 4, 2024**

- I. Call to Order / Welcome
- II. Presentation:
  - A. Education Capital Workgroup & Axias – Analysis of School Facilities
- III. Adjournment

The Transylvania County Board of Education met in joint session with the Transylvania County Board of Commissioners on March 4, 2024 at 4:00 p.m. in the Multipurpose Chambers at the Transylvania County Administration Building. The purpose of the meeting was for the boards to receive the report from the Education Capital Work Group and consulting firm Axias on the analysis of school facilities.

**CALL TO ORDER / WELCOME**

Commissioner Jake Dalton led an invocation and Commissioner Emmett Casciato led the Pledge of Allegiance. Chairman Jason Chappell welcomed everyone and reviewed the rules for the special called meeting. Chairman Chappell called the Board of Commissioners to order and introduced the county commissioners and staff in attendance. Chairman Kimsey Jackson called the Board of Education to order and introduced the school board members and staff in attendance. In addition to approximately 75 guests, the individuals listed below were present:

**BOARD OF EDUCATION:**  
Kimsey Jackson, Chair  
Tanya Dalton, Vice Chair  
Tawny McCoy  
Bryan O'Neill (attended remotely)  
Chris Wiener

**BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS:**  
Jason Chappell, Chair  
Jake Dalton, Vice Chair  
Emmett Casciato  
Larry Chapman  
Teresa McCall

**SCHOOL BOARD ATTORNEY:**  
Chris Campbell, Campbell Shatley

**COUNTY ATTORNEY:**  
Bill Bulfer, Teague and Campbell

**STAFF:**  
Dr. Lisa Fletcher, Superintendent  
Jenny Hunter, Admin. Assistant  
Gabi Juba, Finance Officer  
Kerry Putnam, Facilities Director

**STAFF:**  
Jaime Laughter, County Manager  
Trisha Hogan, Clerk to the Board

**MEDIA:**  
Jon Rich, Transylvania Times  
Dan DeWitt, Brevard NewsBeat

**PRESENTATION**

Dr. Lisa Fletcher introduced the members of the Education Capital Workgroup, a collaborative effort that was agreed to by both boards to identify the needs of the school system and to provide options for moving forward to improve schools together. Members include Transylvania County Schools Superintendent Dr. Lisa Fletcher, Transylvania County Manager Jaime Laughter, retired Henderson County Schools Superintendent Dr. Bo Caldwell, retired Henderson County Manager Steve Wyatt, and Axias Vice President Jonathan Bailey. Dr.

Caldwell and Mr. Wyatt discussed their respective careers as a former school administrator and former county administrator and their histories with large, complex building improvement projects over the course of their careers. They presented the following:

Workgroup's Starting Assumptions:

- Boards and community are not interested in consolidation of schools as an option
- Focus on the existing building conditions to identify projects needing investment
- The original expectation of the bond projects cannot be built for the amount of the bond due to rising costs and inflation as evidenced by the bid processes previously undertaken
- The 2018 school bond referendum for \$68 million is still a financing tool available to finance investment in schools and can be used for sites beyond RHS, RMS and BHS

Summary Step 1 – Investment Recommendations:

- Invest in schools by moving forward projects identified as:
  - High priority, critical needs and deferred maintenance
  - Focus on safety, building envelope (roofs and structure), major systems (mechanical, electrical) and site improvement. Focus in on updates to existing except for cases where a critical need is not in place like vestibules recommended from the safety assessment
  - Projects scheduled before 2031 in the assessment
- Step 1 cost estimate \$62 million (construction cost plus 30% to cover professional fees as an estimate)
- Use the 2018 General Obligation Bond approval to fund Step 1 Investment with a first tranche bond sale and draw down of funding

Dr. Caldwell and Mr. Wyatt recommended starting work this summer.

Jonathan Bailey presented the Axias Facility Condition Assessment Report for Transylvania County Schools. The report states that overall, the school facilities are in fair condition from a systems and structural condition standpoint. Capital investments over the years have primarily focused on repair and replacement of mechanical equipment and life extension measures to roofing systems along with some roof replacements. To stabilize and preserve the school facilities, significant investments are required over the next ten years. A strategic, proactive approach must be taken to mitigate risks associated with aged systems and components. To accomplish this, a structured, multiyear capital investment plan must be implemented focusing on reducing the deferred maintenance backlog along with planning for future capital renewal items. A total estimate of \$94 million would be needed over the next ten years to preserve and maintain existing structures (expect \$121 million after contingency, professional fees, and other costs). Mr. Bailey gave breakdowns of expenditures by category, system, and risk, and presented current and ten-year facility condition need indexes. To view the full report and other documents, go to [www.transylvaniacounty.org/transylvania-county-special-projects](http://www.transylvaniacounty.org/transylvania-county-special-projects).

County Manager Jaime Laughter presented the following:

Step 1 – Investment Next Steps. Both boards would review and agree to the project list for Step 1 and authorize a project scoping session with Axias, school facility staff and county staff.

County staff would schedule General Obligation Bond sale to fund Step 1 projects as soon as possible.

Step 2 – Refresh. Identify interior renovation priorities across all schools, such as RES geothermal conversion, BHS cafeteria upgrade or new building, etc., and develop a funding plan for implementation.

Step 3 – Ongoing Collaboration. Projects beyond Step 1 can be prioritized for annual capital requests by the board of education or grouped for financing purposes like Step 1 and worked into the Capital Plan such as Bond Sale Tranche 2. Plan to conduct joint facility assessments every 5-7 years to maintain a long-range joint capital plan moving forward. Develop a method to archive project information to maintain historical information and support future projects.

Mr. Wyatt and Dr. Caldwell recommended the following Best Practices that they have identified as key for success:

- Hire a project manager
- Coordinate with school staff
- Both boards receive the same comprehensive report once a month on every agenda
- Form a joint facilities committee to look at capital planning
- COMMUNICATION, COMMUNICATION, COMMUNICATION
- Accountability to the public. The public needs to see that they are getting the most for their tax dollar.
- The county commissioners and the board of education must be on the same page. They must work as one group.
- Recommend continued assessment of procedures to improve the process.

### **ADJOURNMENT**

Chairman Chappell thanked the presenters, staff, and workgroup. He stated that he would like to see the boards bring something back within a month. Chairman Jackson stated that he also looks forward to the boards working together and pledged his full cooperation. Mr. Chappell noted that board of education member Bryan O'Neill was out of town, but had listened to the meeting remotely.

There was no further business, and ON A MOTION BY MR. CHAPPELL, SECONDED BY MR. DALTON, the board of commissioners unanimously adjourned at 5:01 p.m. ON A MOTION BY MRS. MCCOY, SECONDED BY MRS. DALTON, the board of education unanimously adjourned at 5:01 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

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Chairman

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Secretary