

**Minutes
Transylvania County Board of Education
August 2, 2021**

INVOCATION/PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

CALL TO ORDER/WELCOME

BUSINESS ITEMS:

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
 - C. Non-Faculty Coaches
6. Re-Entry Guidance 2021-2022
7. Policy: Spring 2021 Custom Updates
8. Capital Projects Status Report
9. Bond Projects Update
10. FY22 Budget Update
11. Approval of Property Acquisition
12. Superintendent's Update
13. Important Dates
14. Public Comment
15. Other Items
16. Closed Session (*postponed*)

The Transylvania County Board of Education met in regular session at 6:30 p.m. on Monday, August 2, 2021 at the Morris Education Center. Tawny McCoy led in a moment of silence and Ron Kiviniemi led the Pledge of Allegiance. Chairman McCoy welcomed everyone and called the meeting to order. In addition to approximately 75 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
Norris Barger, Director, Business Services
Carrie Norris, Director, K-8 Education
Kevin Smith, School-Community Relations Coordinator
Mike Hall, School Resource Officer
David Wright, School Resource Officer

BOARD ATTORNEY:

Chris Campbell, Campbell Shatley

MEDIA:

Jordon Morgan, *Transylvania Times*

PRESENTER:

Elaine Russell, Director, Transylvania Public Health

1. Approval of Agenda

ON A MOTION BY MRS. MCCOY, SECONDED BY MR. KIVINIEMI, the meeting agenda for August 2, 2021 was amended to remove item no. 16 (closed session) and place it on the next regular meeting agenda.

2. Public Comment

Due to the large number of people who had signed up to speak, MRS. MCCOY MADE A MOTION to extend the total allotted time for public comment from 30 minutes to 1 hour if needed. MR. JACKSON SECONDED, and the motion passed unanimously. Chairman McCoy reviewed the guidelines for public comment and requested that everyone be respectful. The following individuals spoke:

Jami Reese, parent - Students and parents have complied with masks since the beginning, mostly. There were a lot of unknowns and still are. Only a couple of types of masks are effective, and they must be properly fit tested. My research shows that face coverings do not provide any medical benefit. As a nurse, I think we will be seeing the toll on our children from having to wear masks for years to come. My kids have trouble wearing masks. As a pastor's wife, I have prayed for everyone. I hope the board doesn't make everyone wear masks again this year.

Jacqueline Gillespie, student - I found the masks a comfort at first, but found it hard to communicate normally with peers. Masks made my glasses fog up, making it hard to see my computer screen. It also made it hard to do shooting team. I took the mask off whenever I could for relief. I found it hard to breathe and needed a water bottle to stay hydrated. Sometimes I felt like I was screaming on the bus and in class.

Lauthea Goff, fifth grader - I want everything to go back to normal. I would want masks to be an option. If God wanted us to wear them, he would have made them. Masks make it so you can't see emotions. No matter what you say, we will not wear masks or get vaccinated.

Julie Bowen, teacher - I saw lots of psychological trauma to my students last year. The school system continues to exploit them. The harm of masks far outweighs the benefits. Masks create an unhealthy state of isolation. Students are losing the skills and desire to assert themselves into this world. If we were all honest, we would admit that the virus is passing through the masks if we can breathe in them. The virus is a low risk to young children. Why should they pay the price? Why are we subject to medical tyranny? The government is manufacturing a state of emergency to hijack our bodies and freedoms. They cannot override our personal sovereignty. We are not the ones imposing our will on others. We are sovereign beings. A society that uses its children is not a society worth saving.

Heather Blythe, parent - I have a vested interest in stopping all the forced agendas ahead. Sometimes cooperating and tolerating is not the right thing to do. Children should not be ridiculed for not wearing masks. They are missing their friends' smiles. This is blatant bias. It smells of authoritarianism. I advocate for the children of Transylvania County. Martin Luther King, Jr. said, "Our lives begin to end the moment we become silent about the things that matter." This whole debacle has extended beyond gender, religion, etc. We are separating folks by mask-wearing and vaccination shaming. Children don't need adults' agendas shoved in their faces.

Michelle Mendes, parent - Masking violates our children's body autonomy. Companies have accepted millions of dollars to support masks. There is no evidence that masks prevent the spread of disease. Masks cause anxiety and headaches. Teenagers have died while wearing them. Children have zero chance of becoming ill or dying. The CDC guidelines do not take into account the number of people who have fought off COVID.

Masks hinder facial recognition and non-verbal cues for children. Fauci and others have spewed lies. Masking children could cause catastrophic and lifelong consequences.

Justin Fisher, parent. I am a disabled veteran. Parents have the supreme authority in deciding what is best for their children. Not you, not the incompetent governor, not the government, or any others. My children had to spend a year hiding their faces. Masks are proven to cause multiple issues such as depression, anxiety, facial acne, etc. Mask mandates take the power away from us as parents. We have to pay the bills for therapy if you continue the mask mandates. We have spoken with multiple attorneys. My son cries when he has to wear a mask. My daughter has migraines every week. Masks should be optional. Leave the decision up to us as parents.

Leah Woods, parent - I had to deal with a lot of issues last year with my son. He has a 504 plan. He is on medication for swollen adenoids and has asthma and breathing issues. I asked my 11-year old son how wearing a mask made him feel. He said it takes his focus away, he can't think straight, cannot breathe, needs frequent breaks to pull the mask down, and feels like he is having panic attacks. This is affecting my child's physical and mental health. After wearing a mask for eight hours, he has to go home and have breathing treatments. It's not just physical but also mental stress.

Jennie VanDyke, parent - The ending will be this. Each of you will represent us, the parents. I voted for each of you. As I said two weeks ago, thank you for what you have done. Your personal opinion is not how you vote. Masks are ineffective and do not stop the spread. There are long-term effects. A mask is a medical device and should require informed consent. There are many studies about the long-term harm. Will you require informed consent and list all the risks? Parents made decisions for their kids all summer long. You must represent the parent and let the parent decide. Please let us make the decision and make masks an option.

Ely Carnathan, parent - When the pandemic began, I said the masks were the problem. If your mask doesn't filter, it won't work. More effective is washing hands and cleaning surfaces. What about the kids that don't have a voice tonight? I understand there is opposition. Meet in the middle and make masks optional. Big government pushes the agenda. If you go optional, everyone wins. Do what is best for the children. Mental health is a silent killer. Masks take a toll on these kids. Masks aren't going to stop it.

Meredith Licht, BHS teacher & TCAE president - I would remind you of the mission of Transylvania County Schools, which is to prepare students to become caring and productive citizens through shared responsibility. It is clear that you all care. This new Delta variant is terrifying. Contractibility is very high. It is our responsibility to keep everyone safe. We have done a lot to ameliorate the effects. My children and family also have struggled with masks. We may disagree about the science. We need to show caring and be adaptable to changing situations. Our goal is that every child has excellent educators. If we don't wear masks, we will have a situation like what happened at the Wilds Summer Camp. I ask you to follow the CDC, American Academy of Pediatrics, and the Governor's recommendations.

John Hogan, retired teacher - I have heard a lot of people here tonight say you have to listen to the people. I would remind you that you were elected as our representatives. We vote for representatives with the idea that they will vote in our best interests, not strictly for what we want them to do. Last year, the vast majority of kids who got ill from COVID got it from exposures at home. Because the schools required masks. I ask that

you think about what is in the best interest of students, not necessarily the majority here tonight. Sometimes you have to do what is in the best interests of all even if they do not recognize it.

Josh Tinsley, BHS teacher - I read the same novel to my students four times because it was comforting, so I do understand the mental health issues. Yes, masks are a pain. I have two family members that have died from COVID. At the end, they had agonal breathing. This is what it sounded like (gave demonstration). I have fought for mental health care at BHS. I ask the board to require masks. We don't balk at dress codes. I hate masks too, but I do care for my fellow man as I was taught by my religion and my parents. Wearing a mask is a very small thing. The numbers are clear. I appreciate the civility here tonight. Thank you for providing us an opportunity for democratic debate. Send me an email at jtinsley@tcsnc.org if you would like to discuss student mental health. Please mandate masks until this variant is under control.

Regina Kralik, parent - I hate masks and my family hates masks. But we ask you to continue the mask mandate until we can better protect our students. My kids have health issues, one very serious. They cannot be vaccinated yet. They miss their friends and have missed a lot. The best way to protect my kids for now is a mask. Doctors are still wearing masks to protect themselves and their patients. I ask you to protect my kids. It sucks, but if my kids can endure wearing masks, then healthy children can too. Sometimes we have to put others' needs above our wants. I will wear this crappy mask as long as it takes to protect my kids and yours. My kids want to live too. All we can do is to protect them with the knowledge that we have. I ask you to mask up for just a while longer. This is life or death for my kids. I can't change that my daughter was born sick. I can ask you to change your behavior.

Jordan Kralik, student - My sister has heart disease, so could everyone wear a mask to protect her?

Bo Lance, parent - I want to talk about our school system. It is great. I came back here to let my kids go to school here. As you make your decision, think about why you did or didn't wear a mask today. As you decide, I implore you to avoid something that could make our children fail and instead give them something to be free.

Kiwi Mason, parent - Lots of people are here for both sides. I can't imagine why you would put masks on kids. Science shows it is a terrible decision.

Trent Baker, parent - When COVID started we were all scared. We all took all the precautions. As time has gone by, we have learned more about it. I have three kids in Transylvania County Schools. One has an IEP. He struggles. My oldest would benefit greatly from being able to speak to others without a mask. I get the fear, but this should be the parents' decision. It should not be political. It should be between parents and their doctor. We would like to make the decision ourselves.

Tara McDonald, parent - I am a mom of two kids who both have muscular dystrophy. Ponder the situation. My teen is vaccinated. She was going back in person with the understanding that masks would be mandated. She can't go back otherwise. If you decide to take away masks, please re-open the online learning path. My son has 50% breathing capacity. He has a history of cyanosis. He wore his mask diligently while playing with friends, and his pulse-oximeter levels showed 98% oxygen saturation. So wearing a mask, even with breathing challenges, does not diminish oxygen intake. I

would hope that all teachers and staff get vaccinated. If you don't have a mask mandate, we are offering lambs to the slaughter. We are our brothers' keepers, according to Jesus. I ask you, what would Jesus do?

Betsy Burroughs, Brevard College teacher - Our college made the decision that all of our students and staff must be vaccinated. However, we are a private school. My colleagues and the teachers in my classes have asked me to come and speak for them. They feel that we should keep the masks and in-person learning. The board of education has two responsibilities. First, you are educators and your decisions should be based on science and critical thinking. We want our students to believe in science. If we had all followed the science and CDC guidelines from the beginning, we would not be here now. The sooner we follow the science, the sooner we can get back to normal. Your second responsibility is to keep everyone safe. We are a community that should take care of the most vulnerable among us. Keep students masked. I know the difficulties. I train teachers. Teachers can build community in the classroom. That is more difficult to do if we have to keep them out of school due to outbreaks.

3. Good News Report

Dr. McDaris reported the following items:

FRESH FRUIT & VEGETABLE GRANT APPROVED

Transylvania County School Nutrition has been approved for a USDA Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program grant in the amount of \$94,704 for the 2021-2022 school year. The grant will provide fresh fruit and vegetables two days a week at each of our four elementary schools.

DAVIDSON RIVER SCHOOL'S TAMIKA HUNTER RECOGNIZED FOR HER WORK

Communities in Schools of NC's *Jobs for North Carolina Graduates* (JNCG), provides vulnerable high school juniors and seniors with academic and social/emotional support, employability skills training, and guidance for one year after graduation. Each JNCG classroom is headed up by a college and career specialist, who helps students overcome barriers and make it to the graduation stage. At Davidson River School, JNCG college and career specialist Tamika Hunter recently received national recognition with the JNCG "5 of 5" Award. This award recognizes that Hunter's outcomes are exceptional, with 100% of her 2021 seniors graduating from high school this year despite facing obstacles such as low-income households, single-parent homes, Wi-Fi connectivity issues, or housing insecurity. JNCG programs are proven to work with the majority of students graduating and entering college or the workforce

- 95% of JNCG seniors graduated in 2021.
- 62% of JNCG students are working part-time or full-time while attending high school.
- 51% of JNCG graduates go directly into the workforce or the military after graduation.
- 10% of JNCG students attend community college or university after graduation. (Transylvania Times, July 26, 2021)

LET'S GO BOYS AND GIRLS STEM PROGRAM EXPANSION AT TCH

The STEM program that T. C. Henderson School of Science & Technology piloted last year with the non-profit LET'S GO Boys and Girls, Inc., will be expanded this year to grades 3-5. LET'S GO works to break the cycle of poverty by partnering with schools

and youth organizations to establish high-quality, “hands on, minds on” informal STEM programs for youth in under-resourced communities. The program budget for the 2021-2022 school year is \$29,250, all of which will be funded by volunteer donations.

Dr. McDaris thanked Officers Hall and Wright for attending the meeting.

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 no new names on the list. Mr. Griffin encouraged everyone to send in names.

5. Consent Agenda

ON A MOTION BY MR. GRIFFIN, SECONDED BY MR. KIVINIEMI, the minutes of the July 13 and July 19, 2021 meetings; the personnel report for August 2, 2021 (attached); and the following non-faculty coaches for fall sports 2021 were unanimously approved.

BHS

Troy Kessinger, Football
 Mark Ellenberger, Football
 Tanner Pettit, Football
 Heidi Jordan, Statistician
 Craig Long, Varsity Soccer
 Nell McMurtry, JV Volleyball
 Kenneth Barton, Women’s Golf
 Jackie Witherspoon, Women’s Cross Country
 Scott Keeley, Women’s Tennis
 Amanda Lambert, JV Football Cheerleading

BMS

Manny Deshauteurs, Football
 Kyle Justice, Football
 Cody Ashe, Football
 Randy Barton, Men’s Soccer
 Brad Toms, Soccer
 Heidi Spradlin, Men’s Cross Country
 Chelsea Smith, Women’s Cross Country

RHS

Corey McCall, Football
 Jessica Whitmire, JV Volleyball

6. Re-Entry Guidance 2021-2022

Dr. McDaris reported that on June 21, Governor Roy Cooper and Health and Human Services Secretary Dr. Mandy Cohen presented the updated *StrongSchoolsNC Public Health Toolkit* taking effect on July 30, 2021 to help schools prepare for the 2021-2022 school year. Under the key changes, the state will no longer have a statewide mask mandate in place for schools, and local school boards will need to decide whether to require masks and under what circumstances. The June 21 Toolkit recommended the following: (1) Because children under age 12 are not yet eligible for the vaccine, elementary and middle schools should require all students and staff to wear masks indoors; and (2) High schools should require all unvaccinated students and staff to wear masks indoors. On July 29, due to a sharp increase in new COVID-19 cases statewide, Governor Cooper issued a new [Executive Order No. 224](#) effective July 29 through August 31, 2021 and made additional changes to the Toolkit which *recommends masks for all K-12 students and staff, regardless of vaccination status*. Governor Cooper also stressed that getting more North Carolinians vaccinated is the most important thing we can do to slow the spread of COVID-19 and keep students safely in school.

Transylvania Public Health Director, Elaine Russell, gave an update on COVID-19 cases in our community. She reported that Transylvania County had just three cases during the week of June 6-12. By the week of July 25-31, the number had risen to 69 cases. She attributed this jump to the more contagious and deadlier Delta variant which is spreading rapidly among the unvaccinated and creating breakthrough cases among

some vaccinated. Based on the data, she gave the following guidance for the start of the 2021-2022 school year:

- Transylvania County Schools should adopt and enforce the guidance outlined in the *StrongSchoolsNC Public Health Toolkit*. This is based on recommendations from the CDC and the American Academy of Pediatrics and prioritizes strategies shown to be most effective in lowering risk. If these prevention strategies are not consistently implemented, anticipate spread of COVID-19 in classrooms and extracurricular settings. This could result in more isolation and quarantine for students and staff, additional missed instructional time, and possible staffing shortages.
- Promote vaccination. Require staff to report COVID-19 vaccination status. Require staff who are not vaccinated or do not disclose status to participate in regular screening testing. Encourage staff, eligible students, and families to be vaccinated.
- Require all children and staff in schools K-12 to wear face coverings consistently when indoors and on buses and other school group transportation.
- Minimize exposures. Maintain at least 3 feet of distance between students to the greatest extent possible without excluding students from full-time learning. Follow guidelines for youth sports. Consider steps to limit close contact in areas where staff may congregate.
- Offer free rapid testing on-site at school for students/staff with symptoms or close contact to someone with COVID-19. Follow reporting and isolation/quarantine procedures as directed by local public health professionals.
- Promote hand hygiene and clean surfaces. Ensure safe water and ventilation systems. Protect vulnerable populations. Offer remote or other learning options for students at risk or not in school due to isolation or quarantine.

Chairman McCoy thanked Mrs. Russell for her presentation and partnership with the school system in keeping students and staff safe, and especially the strong role that our school nurses have played in those efforts. She opened the floor for questions from the board.

Mr. Kiviniemi asked if the new cases are due to the original COVID strain or the Delta variant. Mrs. Russell reported that testing shows that 80% of the new cases are due to the Delta variant. Mr. Jackson asked how many of the safety recommendations were in effect last year. Mrs. Russell reported that masking, social distancing, and hygiene measures were all in place. Vaccines for adults were not readily available until spring 2021. Mrs. Domokur asked how many of the cases were children ages 5-19. Mrs. Russell offered to pull that data and send it to the board. Mr. Kiviniemi asked how many transmissions among students and staff were in-school transmissions. Mrs. Russell reported about half a dozen. Mr. Griffin asked if he, as a vaccinated person, could infect unvaccinated people with the virus. Mrs. Russell stated that with the Delta variant, anyone can be an asymptomatic carrier and transmit the virus. Mr. Jackson asked about breakthrough cases. Mrs. Russell reported there were seven breakthrough cases among vaccinated people in July. Mrs. McCoy asked how many students tested positive

for COVID-19 last year. Mr. Kiviniemi reported that Dr. Weaver could provide that data as he gets weekly updates from the school nurses. Mr. Griffin stated that polio and smallpox were defeated by vaccines, and asked what percentage of people would need to be vaccinated in this county. Mrs. Russell reported that 80-85% would be needed; currently only 51% of county residents have been fully vaccinated. Chairman thanked Mrs. Russell and directed board members to send any further questions to Dr. McDaris who would forward them to Mrs. Russell. Mrs. Russell departed the meeting.

Chairman McCoy opened the floor for discussion. Mr. Jackson reported that he has family members teaching in Florida, and all staff and teachers will be required to wear masks for 30 days in the district in which his family members work. Mr. Kiviniemi reported that he has discussed this issue with his son who is a public health professional in Kentucky. His son's advice was to follow through with masking because masking is effective. Mr. Kiviniemi noted that his personal physician recommends masks. He also reported that he had just spent a week in the hospital with his wife who had surgery, and 90% of the nurses, CNAs and others that he spoke with said that masks are effective and recommended requiring them. He stated that he is concerned by the geometric growth rate of cases in our county and would like the board to consider starting school with a mask requirement and then revisit at the September 20 meeting.

Mr. Griffin asked if anyone present has a child or grandchild that has had COVID-19 to raise their hand (several hands went up). He reported that he has family members who have had and do have COVID, one of whom has had to quit their job and will have long-term health problems. Mr. Griffin asked what is a piece of cloth if you can save a life? He reported receiving a letter from someone who said that masks weren't needed because only 2% of kids in North Carolina who got COVID had died. Mr. Griffin said he prays for that person.

A guest shouted, "It's about freedom, man!" Chairman McCoy called for order and gave a reminder for civility and decorum.

Mrs. Domokur stated that she was glad to see the Governor's recommendations said "should" and not "shall." She added that as a parent, she would like her kids not to have to wear masks. For herself, she wonders when will this end. We are living in fear of what could happen. Statistics from the health department show that we entered into school safely last year. Giving parents the choice is what she supports. She knows other parents feel differently and wants everyone to respect those who choose to wear masks. She stated that her older son will carry a mask in his backpack, and he may choose to wear one. That is up to him and his family. This should not be political at all.

Chairman McCoy stated that no matter the board's decision tonight, there will be cases of COVID which will require isolation and quarantine. There will not be the same widespread remote learning opportunities as last year, but our teachers will work with students in those cases. COVID-related absences would be excused. Whatever decision is made can be revisited at any time. Dr. McDaris will have the same authority to make emergency calls for the schools as needed. Masks will be required on buses because that is a federal mandate. If the board votes for optional masks, there will be no tolerance for bullying, finger pointing, or other inappropriate behaviors. She feels that this is a more difficult decision than the re-entry decision was last year. She expressed appreciation for everyone coming out and sharing their thoughts with the board.

MR. KIVINIEMI MADE A MOTION to begin the 2021-2022 school year with a mask mandate for students, staff, and visitors, and to revisit the issue at the board meeting on September 20, 2021. MR. GRIFFIN SECONDED THE MOTION. The motion was defeated on a 3:2 vote (FOR: Kiviniemi, Griffin; AGAINST: McCoy, Domokur, Jackson).

MR. JACKSON MADE A MOTION to begin the 2021-2022 school year with masks optional for students, teachers, staff, and visitors, and to revisit the issue at the board meeting on September 20, 2021. MRS. DOMOKUR SECONDED THE MOTION. Chairman McCoy opened the floor for discussion.

Mr. Griffin recommended that outsiders coming into the K-8 schools be required to wear masks because they could be carriers. Mr. Jackson offered an amendment to his motion to require visitors and vendors to be masked and tested upon entering the schools. There was a large outcry from the assembly, and Mr. Jackson clarified that he meant temperature checked, not tested. There was no second to the amendment.

Dr. McDaris advised that enforcement of visitor masks would be difficult due to the volume of daily traffic in the schools. He reported that some districts have said optional masks for students and mandatory masks for staff unless the staff member has proof of vaccination. All counties will require masks on school buses due to federal mandates. Mr. Campbell reported that most boards are continuing an honor system for visitors.

Chairman McCoy stated that one system did a good job of announcing all of its prevention strategies, and should our board do the same? Mr. Campbell advised that legally, that would fall within the superintendent's authority (i.e., rules for cleaning, handwashing, etc.). He stated that the board does not need to vote on those items unless they just want to. He added that the board could choose to make a motion to authorize the superintendent to employ layered mitigation strategies and inform the public.

Mr. Griffin asked if the board chooses optional masks for students/staff, would they need to be tested weekly? Mr. Campbell clarified that testing would follow health department guidelines.

Mrs. Domokur asked if we have enough substitute teachers available for this year. Dr. Weaver reported that our substitute roster increased in the latter half of the spring semester after vaccines became available. Mr. Griffin asked about school bus drivers. Dr. McDaris reported that every school system in the state wants more bus drivers. We are in good shape right now, but that could change at any time. The bus driver shortage pre-dates the pandemic.

There was a consensus to amend the motion on the floor to make it effective August 9, 2021. Mr. Griffin asked whether the motion should address putting up signs at the schools. Dr. McDaris reported that the proper postings will go up on all doors. Mr. Griffin asked about the rules for visitors attending away games. Mr. Campbell reported that NCHSAA rules say that the minimum requirement for the home team will be the rule for attendees at all sports events. Chairman McCoy called for the vote. The board voted 4:1 to make masks optional for students, teachers, staff, and visitors, effective August 9, 2021, and to revisit the issue at the board meeting on September 20, 2021 (FOR: Domokur, Griffin, Jackson, McCoy; AGAINST: Kiviniemi).

The board took a 20-minute recess at 8:45 p.m.

7. Policy: Spring 2021 Custom Updates

Forty-seven revised policies were presented as first-read information on June 21. Since that time, three policies have been further revised. Dr. Brian Weaver reviewed the new changes:

- 3460, Graduation Requirements - removed language regarding the local Career and College Readiness portfolio requirements. This requirement was paused in 2020 due to COVID-19. A new entry plan for the portfolios will be decided at a future time.
- 3620, Extracurricular Activities and Student Organizations - per recommendation by the board attorney, returned to existing language which states that a student may participate only on the team consistent with the gender on their birth certificate unless otherwise permitted under NCHSAA rules and regulations.
- 5030, Community Use of Facilities - removed language that was added previously to temporarily restrict use of school facilities during COVID-19. This would once again allow community organizations including youth sports leagues to use school facilities in accordance with the rules and fee structures set forth in policy 5030 and regulations 5030-R. Board members briefly discussed procedures for site supervision and fee schedules.

ON A MOTION BY MR. KIVINIEMI, SECONDED BY MRS. DOMOKUR, the board unanimously approved the 47 policies listed below as revised.

Spring 2021 Custom Updates (second-read approval)	
1310/4002	Parental Involvement
1510/4200/7270	School Safety
1610/7800	Professional and Staff Development
1710/4020/7230	Discrimination and Harassment Prohibited by Federal Law
2310	Public Participation at Meetings
2440	Policy Review and Evaluation
3102	Online Instruction
3230/7330	Copyright Compliance
3300	School Calendar and Time for Learning
3460	Graduation Requirements
3470/4305	Alternative Learning Programs/Schools
3610	Counseling Program
3620	Extracurricular Activities and Student Organizations
3640/5130	Student Voter Registration and Preregistration
4040/7310	Staff-Student Relations
4050	Children of Military Families
4125	Homeless Students
4240/7312	Child Abuse and Related Threats to Child Safety
4270/6145	Concussion and Head Injury
4335	Criminal Behavior
4400	Attendance
4700	Student Records
5000	Schools and the Community

5020	Visitors to the Schools
5030	Community Use of Facilities
5070/7350	Public Records - Retention, Release, and Disposition
5071/7351	Electronically Stored Information Retention
5210	Distribution and Display of Non-School Material
6120	Student Health Services
6125	Administering Medicines to Students
6140	Student Wellness
6210	Organization of School Nutrition Services
6220	Operation of School Nutrition Services
6230	School Meal and Competitive Food Standards
6305	Safety and Student Transportation Services
6315	Drivers
6320	Use of Student Transportation Services
6321	Bus Routes
6450	Purchase of Services
7100	Recruitment and Selection of Personnel
7130	Licensure
7232	Discrimination and Harassment in the Workplace
7430	Substitute Teachers
7720	Employee Political Activities
8310	Annual Independent Audit
8341	Limited Claim Settlement
9020	Facility Design

8. Capital Projects Status Report

Norris Barger gave an update on the status of current capital projects. He reported that there is a backlog on backup generators. With summer school taking place at all sites this year, air handler replacements have been delayed. The Pisgah Forest Elementary HVAC piping project has been put on hold until prices come down. Mr. Barger noted that many of the projects on the list have been done in-house to avoid paying high labor costs. Mr. Barger will send the capital projects status report to the county manager.

9. Bond Projects Update

Mr. Barger gave an update on July 26 to the board of commissioners regarding the bond project bids. He will be meeting with the architects during the week of August 30 to look at options for modifications to the plans. He expects the options will be presented to the board at its meeting on September 20. The new target date for bids is spring 2022.

10. FY22 Budget Update

Dr. McDaris reported there has been little movement on the state budget. The Senate and House have agreed only on a top number. Mr. Jackson asked where we stand on fund balance. Mr. Barger reported that total fund balance is approximately \$1 million currently. There is approximately \$800,000 in the capital outlay fund balance with a large portion of that encumbered for summer projects. Mr. Jackson noted that county commissions are recommended to keep 8% in their fund balances. Mr. Barger reported that best practices for school systems recommends that boards keep at least one month's operating expense on reserve.

11. Approval of Property Acquisition

At its meeting on June 7, 2021, the board authorized the superintendent to negotiate the purchase of the former Paul's Quick Service property in Rosman, NC. Dr. McDaris reported that an offer to purchase has been accepted by the owner and is within the limits set by the board at its prior meeting. Terms are as follows:

- Purchase price - \$100,000
- Non-refundable due diligence fee - \$2,500. This allows an examination of the property by the board for up to 90 days.
- Closing to take place no more than 60 days after the end of the examination period.

A Phase 1 Environmental Site Assessment has been performed and recommends a Phase 2 study be completed on the property because of the nature of the former business and the presence of fuel tanks. This study will begin once all approvals for the purchase have been secured. Chairman McCoy asked what would happen if the second study comes back as unacceptable. Mr. Barger reported that the board could back out of the deal within 90 days, but would forfeit the \$2,500. He reported that there have been no hazardous findings on the property; a Phase 2 study is simply a best practice for this type of property purchase. Mr. Campbell noted that the time frames do not begin until the county has approved the purchase price. ON A MOTION BY MR. JACKSON, SECONDED BY MRS. DOMOKUR, the board voted unanimously to approve the purchase of the Rosman property with the agreed upon terms, and to authorize the superintendent to request an agenda item at the next Board of Commissioners meeting for the purpose of approval by the Board of Commissioners as to price.

12. Superintendent's Update

Dr. McDaris stated that today is the first day for fall sports practices and band camps. In many ways, the school year officially begins now. He added that this will be his 39th year as an educator, and he looks forward to a great school year.

13. Important Dates

Aug. 9	Regular 5-day schedule resumes
Aug. 9	New Teacher Orientation, 8am - 4pm, BHS Auditorium
Aug. 9-13	Teacher workdays
Aug. 16	First student day
Aug. 16	REGULAR MEETING, 6:30 p.m., MEC
Sept. 3	Remote learning day
Sept. 6	Labor Day holiday
Sept. 20	REGULAR MEETING, 6:30 p.m., MEC
Oct. 1	Students dismissed at noon
Oct. 4	REGULAR MEETING, 6:30 p.m., MEC
Oct. 18	REGULAR MEETING, 6:30 p.m., MEC
Oct. 19	Remote learning day

14. Public Comment

Meredith Licht, teacher, urged the board to reinstate livestreaming meetings. She stated that the pandemic highlighted many inequities in our county, including food deserts, lack of affordable housing, and wi-fi accessibility. She feels it is important to remove as many barriers as possible to make meetings accessible to all.

15. Other Items

Mr. Griffin requested that the local teacher supplement be revisited at the September 20 meeting. He feels that the board owes it to teachers to somehow provide an increase. Mr. Kiviniemi stated that he has heard that some districts are using COVID-19 relief funds to reward their teachers. Mr. Campbell reported that the Burke County school system has approved a \$1,000 COVID-19 retention incentive bonus for school system employees who continue their employment throughout the next school year. Chairman McCoy recommended that the administration study this and give the board an update at the September 20 meeting. Dr. McDaris gave a reminder that plans for using federal ESSER funds must be approved. He stated there is no question that teachers and staff deserve something for all their hard work. He reported that ESSER money is currently being used in our schools to expand Pre-K, hire additional counselors, and meet other needs.

There was no further business, and ON A MOTION BY MRS. MCCOY, SECONDED BY MRS. DOMOKUR, the meeting was unanimously adjourned at 9:50 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Chairman

Secretary

PERSONNEL REPORT
August 2, 2021

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

Licensed Personnel

Lisa Gillespie, Teacher, RHS, effective July 27, 2021
Holly Jones, Teacher, RHS, effective July 13, 2021
Pamela Michelle Ridenour, Teacher, BES, effective August 20, 2021
Elizabeth Thompson, School Psychologist, BES, effective July 29, 2021
Melissa West, Teacher, RMS, effective July 31, 2021

Classified Personnel

None

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

Licensed Personnel

Dustin Haithcox, Teacher, RHS, effective August 9, 2021
Andrew Jameson, Teacher, BHS, effective August 9, 2021
Emily Taylor, Teacher, RMS, effective August 9, 2021
Jennifer Victory, Teacher, PFES, effective August 9, 2021

Classified Personnel

Mary Grace Morrow-Johnson, Teacher Assistant, PFES, effective August 12, 2021
Lydia Odell, Distance Learning Coordinator & In-School Suspension Supervisor, BHS, effective August 12, 2021
Patrick Rich, Teacher Assistant, BES, effective August 12, 2021
Gilda Ruddy, Office Support, MEC, effective July 26, 2021
Cadence Sorrells, Teacher Assistant, BES, effective August 12, 2021
Tabaitha Travis, Teacher Assistant, PFES, effective August 12, 2021

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

Licensed Personnel

None

Classified Personnel

David Laney, from Distance Learning Coordinator & In-School Suspension Supervisor, BHS, to Teacher Assistant, BHS, effective August 12, 2021

- 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

Madison Cline

Substitute School Nutrition Workers

None