

**Minutes
Transylvania County Board of Education
August 16, 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
6. Re-Entry Update 2021-2022
7. ~~Calendar Waiver Request for 2022-2023 (removed)~~
8. ~~Bond Projects Update (tabled)~~
9. ~~FY22 Budget Update (tabled)~~
10. ~~Superintendent's Update (tabled)~~
11. ~~Important Dates (tabled)~~
12. ~~Public Comment (tabled)~~
13. ~~Other Items (tabled)~~
14. ~~Closed Session (removed)~~

The Transylvania County Board of Education met in regular session at 6:30 p.m. on Monday, August 16, 2021 in the Rosman High School Media 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 150 guests, the following individuals were in attendance.

BOARD MEMBERS:

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

BOARD ATTORNEY:

Kris Caudle, Campbell Shatley

MEDIA:

Dan DeWitt, *Brevard NewsBeat*
WLOS-TV

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
Missy Ellenberger, Director 9-12 Education
Audrey Reneau, Director, Federal Programs
Kevin Smith, School-Community Relations Coordinator
Jason Ormsby, Principal, RHS
Scott Strickler, Principal, RMS
Blake Tesnow, Technology Specialist
Chris Lambert, Technology Specialist

SCHOOL RESOURCE OFFICERS:

Greg Stroup Kelly Cook
Mike Hall Brandon McGaha
David Wright Scott Thomas

1. Approval of Agenda

Due to the large number of people who had signed up to speak, MRS. MCCOY MADE A MOTION to extend the total time allotted for public comment from 30 minutes to 1 hour

15 minutes; said allotment to incorporate the second public comment opportunity; and to remove item 7 (Calendar Waiver Request 2022-2023) and item 14 (Closed Session) in the interest of time due to the potential for more flooding later that evening. MRS. DOMOKUR SECONDED, and the motion passed unanimously.

2. Public Comment

Chairman McCoy reviewed the guidelines for public comment and requested that everyone be respectful. She temporarily left the media center to address the overflow crowd in the hallway and informed them that a livestream feed of the meeting would be made available in the auditorium. During her absence, several members of the assembly began to sing "Amazing Grace." While the livestream was being set up, Chairman McCoy returned to the media center. She reported that Dr. Jeff McDaris had issued a statement on Sunday night, August 15, notifying parents, students, and staff that masks would be required on Monday, August 16, the first day of school, due to a spike in COVID-19 infections among students and teachers over the weekend. She reported that the board had been informed of this decision and that Dr. McDaris had acted within his authority as superintendent of schools. *[The livestream feed was finalized and public comment began at approximately 6:50 p.m.]* Excerpts from the speakers are listed below:

Lauthea Goff, fifth grader - I do not like masks. I was looking forward to another year at school. I wanted to see my friends. Why can't you make up your mind? I want to go back to school. We should have the choice to wear masks or not. God did not make masks. If you are mowing grass, that is when you need a mask because you can see the particles. Make masks optional, please.

Scott Baker, retired pastor - I have lived in Brevard for six years. I have two grandchildren. I speak as a Christian pastor seeking to follow the message of Jesus. Some have distorted that message. Jesus said you shall love your neighbor as yourself. Jesus gave his life for us because he loved us. Look at the parable of the Good Samaritan. In the book of Matthew it says that whatever you do to the least of my brothers, you do to me. Jesus rebuked his followers when they acted as if children were lesser. It is our job to protect our children. To give examples of caring and concern for the sick. This virus is an unprecedented threat. We must do all we can to eradicate it and protect the children. It is a small sacrifice to wear a piece of cloth on our faces. I am fully vaccinated but could pass the virus on to someone else. If a mask prevents that, I am willing. I disagree with those who say it is their own business what they do. It is everyone's job to keep everyone safe. Wearing masks is neighbor love. I urge the board to revisit their decision and require masks.

Ora Wells, MD - I am here on behalf of the Pisgah Health Foundation Physicians Roundtable. A pandemic is a three-year cycle. We will live with it at least through 2022. We had our numbers down, but now we are dealing with the Delta variant. It is a new virus and it is why we are seeing the curves go up. Delta is much more infectious. Its curve goes straight up. For masks to work, everyone needs to wear one. I saw 25 patients on Saturday and five of those had COVID. So 20% of my patients had the virus. Last year is the first year I saw no cases of flu. That's because we all wore masks. That's how you prevent respiratory diseases from spreading. Six to eight weeks ago we took off our masks because we thought we had this thing beaten down. That's when we saw an explosion of cases. We ask the board to reverse their decision and require masks for K-12. Only if everyone wears a mask will it work. Otherwise it's like sending your child to sit in a classroom full of chickenpox.

Ann Kimble, parent - I request that masks remain optional. It is an individual's right to choose. Viruses mutate with speed or fidelity; they cannot do both. If parents are concerned about close contact spread, they can mask their kids. I support keeping temperature check stations and optional masking. That allows every parent and staff member to make their own choice. "My" health does not have "u" in it. Our rights are based on the rights of individuals in the Constitution. Optional masks are fair. I never would force a parent to take a mask off their child; they should not force me to make my child wear one.

Alice Lance, parent - I am here for freedom. Elementary kids are trying to build their immune systems which the masks harm. Doctors and nurses know how to wear masks. Kids don't. They touch and tug their masks all day. That spreads more germs. Since COVID there has been a 31% increase in child suicide. Mental health just as important as physical health. My grandson has a deviated septum, so putting a mask on him is child abuse. Freedom isn't free. Each person to their own. It's all about freedom.

Robert Adams - I have one question, at what point is it okay for no masks? At what point do we get back to normal? Kids have a 98 percent survival rate. How many kids have to wear masks to reach the point where we can stop?

Justin Fisher - I spoke the last time. I will continue to fight until this is resolved. We will be replacing some of you next year. I have talked with the Republican party. (Held up a depiction of microbes). Water vapor has the ability to get through masks. If water vapor can make it through, then COVID can come through too. Masks only stop sputum. You can see it for yourselves.

Scott Livingston - My visual aid is a ball and a bucket. Everyone takes their mask down and touches it. It picks up all kinds of things. Your mouth is the dirtiest place on your body. The mask is letting kids breathe in all that stuff all day long. Pastors say we are not being good Christians. Does anyone have a case on their phone? (Several people held up phones). OMG, cases are up! Do the cases actually have symptoms? Some do, some don't, but they don't tell us that. How did we almost have it beat if everyone was not wearing masks? I am just a carpenter, but I know that 99 comes before 100, which is the survival rate of all this. You are willing to make our kids not be able to breathe just because you fear something. I'm asking for masks to be a choice. We are not asking for something on you.

Meredith Licht, BHS teacher and TCAE president - Thank you to Dr. McDaris for his emergency call last night to mandate masks for the first day of school. Last year, you all decided that it was important for kids to be in school in person for their social and emotional well-being. I remind you of the data you have received that shows the low spread of COVID in schools when all kids are masked. I remind you of the letter from local physicians who are keeping up with the ever-changing information. Do not disregard their knowledge and expertise. If we do not mask, we will be going back to virtual learning in no time. That will mean more social isolation, limited access to food, and lost time and wages to family members who must stay home and quarantine with their kids. It will be a negative impact to the entire community. We talk about our mission of shared responsibility. We talk about safety. I ask that you consider the physical safety of our students and staff.

Brittani Summey, parent - My child did not go to school today because of the mandatory mask mandate. We have decided to home school. (Read the Preamble of the U.S.

Constitution). Posterity is future generations. That's why we are here. Congress shall make no law abridging the right of people to petition. I will continue to come to every meeting. How many are willing to withdraw their children? (Many hands went up). We hold the truth to be self-evident that all men are created equal. We the parents are ticked off. Our children are not scientifically safe with masking. My question to you is what is your position?

Wendy Henderson, foster parent - I am here to talk about body autonomy and the state of self-governing. Teaching children that they have no choice about what is put on their body is a dangerous slope. Also conditioning children to accept unwanted touch and whatever someone in authority wants to force on them. Masking will only lead to things far worse.

John Hogan, retired social studies teacher - We have heard a lot things said about freedom and rights. In this country we don't have absolute freedom or absolute rights. Our rights extend only so far in that they don't infringe on the rights of others. I ask you to consider that. We are not unlimited in terms of rights or freedoms. As a compromise, consider looking at masking for the next 4-6 weeks as we approach the most severe aspects of this virus. There is no denying that it is spreading rapidly. Then revisit at that point. It doesn't have to be an end-all or be-all decision. We do have to take into account what is happening here and in our neighboring counties, plus the impact on our teachers and teacher assistants, and the possibility of some schools having to shut down.

Jami Reese, parent - This is no longer about masks. There is no evidence to support masks. They are harmful and discriminatory. Physicians have said they will no longer write us exemptions. Masks did not prevent flu last year. It is about the inconsistent quarantine practices from our health department and local government. They focus on fear tactics. I would like to believe the superintendent's decision was made in the best interest of children. But I am losing trust. It's about if our elected officials have the best interests of children and if you support the parents. I don't expect the schools to have fairness and equity. Consider what has worked in other states. Maintain your stance for optional masking for Transylvania County Schools.

Jonathan Owen - I believe we have a board trying to do the best for kids. You have to look at numbers and what makes sense. The CDC director says they have not seen a definitive study that shows masks protect children. The CDC website reported 188 deaths among children in 2017-2018. The CDC number for COVID-19 was 292 children ages 5-19 who have died from COVID-19. Keep it in perspective. It is my choice. You don't have the numbers to back it up. Flu kills more kids than COVID. There are no studies to support masks. It is what is best for our kids. You don't mandate things for kids that are not yours. Keep it in perspective.

Cassandra Broshears - I am the parent of a child with medical issues. My son has a re-entry plan for when he is fully vaccinated. Now he may not be able to return this year. How do I explain to him that the board and community have chosen not to follow the advice of doctors? We have seen a tremendous uptick in pediatric cases recently. Kids are at severe risk. There are long-haul effects. It's not just the sickness, it's everything that happens after that. It's time for our school system and community to absorb some of the burden. Is there some magic number that makes it acceptable to prevent protecting them? Who can enjoy their freedom if it comes at the expense of someone else's child? We have a responsibility to each other. It is irresponsible of the board not to follow the

advice of medical professionals. My son won't have access to same enrichment activities and social-emotional contacts if he can't go back to school. He will lose out for the third year so that someone else's kid is not put out. Children will be eligible to be vaccinated within months. This all ends when all people that want to be vaccinated can be and that includes children.

Audible jeers and comments were directed at Mrs. Broshears from some in the assembly, followed by a verbal altercation. Chairman McCoy called for order.

Madison Cawthorn, U.S. Congressman - I am hated and derided by the mainstream media. I would rather be hated and derided by them and loved by the people of Western North Carolina. I am not here as a parent. I am here as an elected representative. You have a duty to stand up when something is wrong. You have a duty to represent parents. Disobey the state rules. It is your duty to listen to parents. Do not look at me the wrong way when I choose not to wear a mask. Our founding fathers gave freedom to us for generations to come. A generation is watching to see if you will submit to the mob rule. If you poll counties, you will see that parents want the option to mask or not. It is your duty to stand in the gap when people are trying to put in tyrannical mandates that try to take the rights of parents away to choose what is right for their children. Take the arrows on behalf of the parents of Transylvania County. If you don't, it will make our country weaker and more susceptible to tyranny. *Applause and standing ovation from the audience.*

Joshua Parker, parent - I am standing up for my stepchildren's rights. There is a low death rate for kids. Are you crazy? I have a higher [chance] of being shot in the head than dying from COVID. Our kids are citizens too. There will be people put off the board next year. Dr. Wells, you told my mom to let me mingle with kids with chickenpox because it builds antibodies.

Trent Baker, parent - We recognize the problem. We didn't know how to solve COVID at first and we took all the medical advice. We took every precaution and my family got it. Thankfully, I had the worst symptoms. I have lost family members to COVID too. If you are at an increased risk, listen to your doctors and make an adult decision. Wear masks if you want. Do as you deem necessary. But it is not your prerogative to tell other households what to do. Prior to COVID, I didn't know who was on the board. We know your names now. We are paying attention. We urge you to assist us and not be a problem that we have to solve. The number of people paying attention is staggering.

Josh Tinsley, BHS teacher - We have heard you say that masks are uncomfortable. But we do other uncomfortable things like wearing seat belts, donating blood, and wearing football helmets. Every single freedom is still protected if you wear a mask. If you don't wear a mask, you are taking my freedom away. Masks promote the general welfare. Life is our right too. God created men and women smart enough to invent masks. You use many things that God did not invent. This is an argument about how quickly we return to virtual school. It will impact our entire community when people have to quarantine. I will pray for all of us to be healthy. I ask for civility at these meetings. We have separate opinions. Give all people the freedom to speak.

Paul Edwards, retired teacher - I commend the board for revisiting this issue. I commend the superintendent for the decision he made yesterday. I taught for 28 years at Brevard High School. I am a grandfather of a fifth grader. He is too young to have the freedom of choice to get vaccinated. He had no choice this morning but to wear a mask. For that he

and I are grateful. Freedom of choice ends when it harms someone else. Now and in the days to come, this could be the most serious choice our board faces. It's the kids that count. Years ago that used to be our school system's logo. What counts more than life itself regarding our kids? The life of our kids, teachers and staff is more important than freedom of choice. Nowadays if you don't have the facts, just make more noise. Facts are facts. This is not a federal issue. Mr. Cawthorn has no standing here. He is not a resident of this county. You must continue the mask mandate until our schools are safe.

Leah Woods, parent - There are nine schools and roughly 3400 students watching every action and word that we say. They are witnessing bullying and division on a mask mandate. This is a county issue. Last night I got the message that masks were required for the first day of school. I ask you, Dr. McDaris, where is your mask at this moment? Is it do as I say, not as I do? You are a public official. Parents are ticked off and about to pull their kids out of school. My kid did not go to school today because he can't breathe with a mask. I just contaminated the podium and microphone. Everyone has been exposed. The buck stops here. I did not sign up to co-parent with you. If you are a teacher, I thank you for all that you do for our kids. I stand up against bullying. For a teacher to go into a workplace to try to intimidate a child is unacceptable.

Outburst from the assembly. Chairman McCoy called for order.

Kinsley Hudson, sixth grader - I have asthma and allergies. A mask does not help my health. It hurts my health. (Read the disclaimer on a box of masks). Masks do not stop the spread of COVID. You tell kids masks are optional, then 11 hours before school you change it. You are taking away our happiness. Making masks mandatory will ruin our lives. You are making life harder. Masks are making mental health horrible every day. My glasses always fog up when I wear a mask. Please make masks optional.

Joshua Sexton - The older gentleman who spoke earlier took his mask off so you could hear him. I only wear a mask when I have to. I pulled mine out from the floor of my truck. I am a pastor too. I hear you say that my rights end where your rights begin. That's a slippery slope. Some say we are gun-toting cousin-lovers who don't like masks. Some say educated people like masks. I'm not sure what neighbor love is. It's a gross mischaracterization. Human freedom skyrockets with the spread of the gospel. Jesus valued people as individuals. We should do the same. I don't want anyone to die for my freedom. Every tyrannical government started for the sake of the common good. It's a slippery slope. That's what we are worried about. We want our kids to grow up in a country where their parents can decide what is good for them.

Chris Weiner - I am former military. I will continue to fight against government overreach. This is no longer about masks. We should not be debating government mandates. We should not accept government overreach. (Read a quote from Nikita Khrushchev on communism). Khrushchev said that small doses of socialism would be the start of the fall of our country. There are eight levels of control needed to create a true socialist state. Controlling health care is the first step. I suggest that you remember how Reagan dealt with the air traffic controllers.

Carol Watkins - Just last week Dr. Wells had five kids in his office with COVID. Delta is more contagious and it is affecting children. It just took a while for our county to see its first case. Read the progression of cases each week. On August 4 there were 93 cases. On August 11 there were 125 cases. On August 4 there was a 47% positivity rate. In

the past, people rolled up their sleeves to get vaccines. Why are we not able to come together to protect our most vulnerable and why would we allow them to develop long-term symptoms? COVID-19 can cause infertility. All we have to do is put masks over our faces. My daughter teaches. My grandson wears a mask all the time. Please consider our young children and vote for mandated masks until children can be vaccinated.

3. Good News Report

Dr. McDaris reported that since the beginning of the pandemic shutdown through the 2020-2021 school year, school district employees have done their best to continue to educate, feed, nurture and support students. At its meeting on June 25, the Board of Directors of the North Carolina School Boards Association adopted a resolution to express appreciation to these special men and women for all they have done during this unprecedented time. Dr. McDaris read the NCSBA resolution aloud (see attached).

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.

5. Consent Agenda

ON A MOTION BY MR. GRIFFIN, SECONDED BY MRS. DOMOKUR, the minutes of the August 2, 2021 meeting and the personnel report for August 16, 2021 (attached) were unanimously approved.

6. Re-Entry Update 2021-2022

Dr. McDaris reported that a number of students could not attend the first day of school today due to flooding overnight in the upper end. More heavy rains are expected tonight and tomorrow; therefore, schools will operate on a two-hour delay on Tuesday, August 17. Staff will be checking roads in the morning for washouts and mud slides.

Dr. McDaris thanked the board for their support of his call to require masks for the first day. He reported that when they got the news Sunday night about increased COVID numbers they were concerned about classroom coverage. Dr. McDaris reported that Elaine Russell, Transylvania County Public Health Director, could not attend this meeting because she and her staff are preparing emergency shelters. He read the following statement from Ms. Russell:

“Transylvania County, like the remainder of NC and most of the country is experiencing a fourth wave of COVID cases. The Delta variant spreads faster and causes more infections than earlier forms of the virus. Since the last Board of Education meeting on August 2, 2021, 240 cases have been added to the county’s COVID line list. Among the 240 cases, 24% have been among children (birth to 18 years). A total of 83 students and 12 staff from Transylvania County Schools are currently in isolation or quarantine due to COVID-19. Without appropriate control measures, the agency expects the number of students and staff in isolation and quarantine to increase. Transylvania Public Health and the Transylvania County Board of Health continue to support implementation of the *StrongSchoolsNC Toolkit* issued by NCDHHS. Based on recommendations of the American Academy of Pediatrics and CDC, this guidance for COVID-19 control measures provides school systems with the strongest position to achieve an in-person learning experience.”

Dr. McDaris shared a breakdown of cases. He reported that the BHS football team is under quarantine for a second week, and the BMS football team is now under quarantine as well. Open Houses were held at seven schools last week and were well attended. It was estimated that approximately 85-90 percent of those in attendance did not wear masks. Dr. McDaris stated that the administration would proceed in whichever direction the board decides. Chairman McCoy introduced board members, staff and the board attorney. She opened the floor for discussion among board members.

Mr. Kiviniemi reported that during his career as a teacher and principal, he strived to make data-driven decisions. He believes that our school district was more successful than most last year because we stringently followed the guidelines from health professionals. He reported that each board member has received a letter from a group of local doctors urging the board to enact a mask mandate. He stated that he never has and never would make a decision based on getting re-elected because that goes against his values as a Christian.

Mr. Griffin reported that in his 15 years teaching and coaching at RHS and 15 years at BHS, he has taken care of a lot of kids and has even taught several who were present in the room. He said that he cares about kids and is scared that we may lose one. He asked who would be willing to give up their child just to avoid masks, and remarked, "I am my brother's keeper, and I am going to look after your kids."

Mrs. Domokur stated that this is a difficult and emotional decision for her because she has a child in the school system. She stated that she has tried to have respectful conversations with everyone, but when someone says that they wish your child was on a ventilator because you don't agree with them, that's going too far. She stated that the board wants every student to be in school. It does not want to lose them to anything. The board is trying to keep everyone safe. She wants kids to be comfortable in our schools.

Mr. Jackson stated that he too is concerned and scared about what is going on. He reported that his son, a contractor, recently spent two weeks in bed, in pain, with difficulty breathing, because he never wore a mask and never got vaccinated. He does wear a mask now. Mr. Kimsey stated that he himself does not like wearing masks. And even though he is fully vaccinated, he knows that he is taking a chance by not wearing one except when required. He is torn by what to do. He said he has received over 400 emails and has read each one. He stated that he is not concerned about re-election because he will be 91 when his term expires and he does not expect to run again. He stated that you have to make the best decision possible based on data, and the data for this county is not good. A number of kids and teachers have COVID, and the administration was not sure there would be enough staff to open schools today. He does not want to return to online learning or for parents to have to homeschool their kids. He added that he lived through the polio epidemic, and the key to overcoming that was the vaccine.

Chairman McCoy asked Dr. McDaris to review the protocols that determine whether a student must quarantine and for how long after coming into contact with an infected person. Dr. McDaris explained the variables that can go into the decision to quarantine (mask/no mask, length/type of exposure, test results, symptomatic or asymptomatic, fever or no fever, alternate diagnosis, vaccine status, exposure history, etc.). The schools follow the recommendations of the school nurses and Transylvania Public Health, which sets quarantine protocols and makes the final decision.

There was an outburst from the assembly, and Dr. McDaris offered to have the person removed.

Mrs. Domokur said that she is struggling because the state is recommending but not mandating masks, and asked why, if this is so recommended, the decision is being left up to local school boards? She asked what does it look like to have masks for the first day, when last time the board voted for optional masks? Parents rearranged their lives based on that decision. What happens if we have to redo everything again? What if we get enough cases that we have to shut down? Does it go on and on?

Mr. Kiviniemi stated that from a purely public health perspective, the board has no choice but to require masks. The fact that our numbers went up since August 2 supports that. Health officials are consistent in their recommendations for masks in schools K-12.

More jeers and outburst from the assembly. Chairman McCoy reminded everyone that this was the board's time for discussion and to be respectful.

Mr. Kiviniemi stated that his concern is for the health of students and their families, staff and their families, and the community. He reported that a vibrant, healthy woman from his church is on a ventilator and in grave danger. She was anti-mask and anti-vaccine. Mr. Kiviniemi stated that his son works in the public health field and advises that schools require masks for K-12 students based on professional medical advice. Mr. Griffin stated that he too lived through the polio epidemic and the only way that was stopped was with the vaccine.

Another outburst. Chairman McCoy warned that she would have people removed if they continue to interrupt.

Chairman McCoy stated that is hard to make a decision when there are so many factors to consider. For example, if the board requires masks, what happens after kids leave school and take them off? Some things are just the facts. If we have more teachers testing positive, we may have to close classrooms or schools. She worries about kids on quarantine for two weeks getting behind. She worries about returning to remote learning. She stated that we all want kids in our schools in person. We all agree on that.

Mr. Kiviniemi addressed the question, "When does it [masking] end?" He stated that it ends when public health experts say it is no longer necessary.

Jeers from the assembly. Chairman McCoy requested order.

Chairman McCoy addressed the assembly, saying "I know how passionate you are. I appreciate your comments earlier. I ask for respect. I was excited to think we were going to start schools without masks. I understand why it changed. I am fearful that we are going to reach a place where more children are quarantined. I don't want that to happen. How do we best move forward? If we stay optional, we are going to revisit this often. We don't know what is going to happen. There are going to be positive results no matter what."

Mr. Jackson asked how the cases break down among children under 12 and children over 12. Dr. Brian Weaver reviewed the numbers for elementary, middle, and high

schools. Mr. Jackson remarked that most appear to be in the high schools and middle schools.

Chairman McCoy laid out the board's options: (1) Do nothing and masks stay optional until the board revisits the issue on September 20; (2) Offer a motion to rescind or amend the August 2 decision for optional masks; or (3) Make masks mandatory and revisit on September 20. MR. KIVINIEMI MADE A MOTION to rescind the August 2, 2021 decision to make masks optional; to resubmit his original motion to begin school with a mask mandate; and revisit at the board meeting on September 20, 2021 and on the third Monday of each month until the health emergency is over. MR. GRIFFIN SECONDED THE MOTION. MR. JACKSON REQUESTED AN AMENDMENT that the board hold a special meeting on August 30, 2021 to revisit the issue.

The assembly erupted in loud jeers and catcalls including "The CDC is a liar!" "Stand up if you are going to homeschool your kids!" "Let's leave and take our kids out of school and take their jobs!" "How dare you!" and "You will all lose your jobs!"

Chairman McCoy called for a 15-minute recess beginning at approximately 9:05 p.m. The meeting was resumed at 9:22 p.m. Chairman McCoy warned the assembly that anyone disrupting the meeting would receive one warning before being removed.

Chairman McCoy asked for a second to Mr. Jackson's amendment. Mr. Griffin stated that he would second if the date were changed from August 30 to September 13. He feels that August 30 is too soon, and the numbers may spike again after Labor Day. Mr. Jackson said that he picked August 30 because that gives us two weeks of school. MR. GRIFFIN SECONDED THE AMENDMENT. There was no discussion. Chairman McCoy called the vote to allow the amendment, and THE AMENDMENT WAS DEFEATED 2:3 (FOR: Jackson, Griffin; AGAINST: Domokur, Kiviniemi, McCoy).

The board discussed Mr. Kiviniemi's original motion. Mr. Jackson stated that additional cases could mean closing a school. He is concerned for staff and teachers. On the other hand, he does not want to put a lot of burden on kids. He is concerned about the impact of a large outbreak on the community. He wants in-person learning. He reported that some of his family members teach school in Florida and the situation there is not good. Students don't wear masks but the teachers do. He stated that he "is a person who tends to favor personal freedom, but there are laws we all must follow, and it is not a matter of complete freedom to do anything you want anywhere."

Chairman McCoy stated that she fears reaching a point where the number of quarantines mean we can't operate schools. She stated that she has been doing this for a long time, and has never made a decision affecting children that is based on politics. The fact that this has become a political issue makes her sad because it should be about kids. She stated that everyone in the room is there because they care about children. Either way the vote goes, the decision will be revisited on September 20.

Mr. Griffin asked if the superintendent has the same authority as last year to close a school in the event of a surge, outbreak, or emergency situation. Mr. Caudle explained that is at the board's discretion. Dr. McDaris clarified that Mr. Griffin was referring to closing a school if there is not sufficient staff coverage. He added that any decision to close a school would be made in conjunction with a recommendation from the county health department. Board members asked what would happen if a school had to close. Dr. McDaris reported that we would move temporarily to online options. The ability to re-

open would depend on available staffing and other factors. In the case of a long-term closure, students would go to OLP.

Chairman McCoy called for a vote on the motion and THE MOTION FAILED 2:3 (FOR: Kiviniemi, Griffin; AGAINST: Domokur, Jackson, McCoy). The August 2 decision to make masks optional in school remains in effect and the issue will be revisited again on September 20. Chairman McCoy stated that there will continue to be cases of COVID in the schools, and students who get the virus or get exposed will still have to follow protocols. The board will continue to monitor, and if cases reach a level that is unacceptable, the board may have to revisit the decision sooner.

Dr. McDaris gave a reminder that schools will operate on a two-hour delay on Tuesday, August 17. He cautioned everyone about the heavy ground saturation and more rain.

Chairman McCoy stated that she does not want anyone to think that any member of the board would make a decision for any reason other than the safety of children. ON A MOTION BY MRS. MCCOY, SECONDED BY MR. JACKSON, the board unanimously tabled the remaining agenda items until the next meeting.

There was no further business, and ON A MOTION BY MRS. MCCOY, SECONDED BY MR. KIVINIEMI, the meeting was unanimously adjourned at 9:49 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Chairman

Secretary



RECOGNITION OF NORTH CAROLINA'S K-12 PUBLIC SCHOOL EMPLOYEES

WHEREAS, to ensure the health and safety of all North Carolinians, public schools across the State closed on March 13, 2020, due to the COVID-19 pandemic, and most have provided virtual instruction since then as classroom teaching and learning evolved; and

WHEREAS, local school districts utilized their autonomy to decide if new instruction would continue and the format in which the instruction would be presented; and

WHEREAS, local school boards worked collaboratively with their superintendents, educators, parents and community stakeholders in providing technology, resources, curriculum content, social and emotional support and meals to children during the pandemic; and

WHEREAS, strong and stable leadership by local school district superintendents has been vital in serving children through the pandemic; and

WHEREAS, local school district employees have responded to the health, safety, welfare and education needs of each child while creating school cultures, even in the midst of a pandemic, that serve all children, regardless of their circumstances; and

WHEREAS, local school district employees utilized guidance from the Centers for Disease Control, North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services, North Carolina Department of Public Instruction, North Carolina State Board of Education, North Carolina General Assembly, local health departments and local case data in fulfilling numerous unprecedented responsibilities to their communities; and

WHEREAS, all local school districts have exhibited extraordinary care, commitment, and direction while leading their students and communities through the pandemic crisis; and

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the North Carolina School Boards Association Board of Directors does hereby recognize the outstanding leadership, responsibility, and dedication of the employees of the State's 115 public school districts and the employees of the Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians during the COVID-19 pandemic.

ADOPTED this 25th day of June, 2021.

Amy K. Churchill
NCSBA President
Buncombe County Schools

Leanne E. Winner
Secretary/Executive Director
NCSBA

PERSONNEL REPORT
August 16, 2021

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

Licensed Personnel

None

Classified Personnel

Kevin Smith, School-Community Relations Coordinator, MEC, effective August 27, 2021

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

Licensed Personnel

Peggy Ellison, Teacher, RES, effective August 25, 2021

Joseph Rivers Smith, Interim Teacher, BHS, effective August 13, 2021 through September 3, 2021

Ann Stone, Part-time Teacher, DRS, effective August 16, 2021

Linda Underwood, Teacher, TCH, effective August 9, 2021

Classified Personnel

Lyndon Clayton, Interim Teacher Assistant, BHS, effective August 16, 2021

Jaime Harris, Custodian & Bus Driver, RHS, effective August 16, 2021

Jennifer Maupin, NC Education Corps Part-time Reading Tutor, BES, effective September 13, 2021

Cassie Meece, Teacher Assistant, RES, effective August 16, 2021

Mary Palmer, Teacher Assistant, PFES, effective August 12, 2021

Alyse Sheppard, NC Education Corps Part-time Reading Tutor, PFES, effective September 13, 2021

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

Licensed Personnel

Callin Driver, from Teacher, BMS, to Teacher, BES, effective August 9, 2021

Lindsay Phillips, from Distance Learning Facilitator, RHS, to Teacher, RHS, effective October 11, 2021

Zachary Rohrer, from Teacher Assistant, BMS, to Teacher, BMS, effective August 10, 2021

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

Yvonne Krowka

Substitute School Nutrition Workers

None