

**Minutes
Transylvania County Board of Education
August 21, 2023**

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
 - C. Non-Faculty Coaches
6. Attendance Update
7. Capital Bond Funding Update (*addition*)
8. Change in Meeting Schedule
9. Nominations for NCSBA Board of Directors
10. Important Dates
11. Other Items

The Transylvania County Board of Education met in regular session on August 21, 2023 at 6:30 p.m. at the Morris Education Center. Chairman McCoy led in a moment of silence and Tanya Dalton led the Pledge of Allegiance. Chairman McCoy called the meeting to order and welcomed everyone. In addition to eight guests, the individuals listed below were in attendance.

BOARD MEMBERS:

Tawny McCoy, Chair
Kimsey Jackson, Vice Chair
Tanya Dalton
Bryan O'Neill
Chris Wiener

STAFF:

Dr. Lisa Fletcher, Superintendent
Jenny Hunter, Administrative Assistant
Dr. Brian Weaver, Assistant Superintendent
Audrey Reneau, Director, Federal Programs
Janette Broda, Director, School Nutrition
Jessica Sharp, Dropout Prevention Coordinator
Chris Whitlock, Director, Technology Services
Kelly Cook, School Resource Officer

BOARD ATTORNEY:

Kris Caudle, Campbell Shatley

MEDIA:

Nick Haseloff, Transylvania Times

1. Approval of Agenda

CHAIRMAN MCCOY MADE A MOTION to add a capital bond funding update between items 6 and 7. MR. JACKSON SECONDED and the motion passed unanimously. ON A MOTION BY MR. JACKSON, SECONDED BY MR. O'NEILL, the meeting agenda for August 21, 2023 was approved as modified.

2. Public Comment

None

3. Good News Report

Dr. Lisa Fletcher thanked Officer Cook for securing the meeting and shared the following good news:

Free School Meals for 2023-2024 School Year

For the 2023-2024 school year, EVERY student will be provided breakfast and lunch each school day at no cost. This is the first year Transylvania County Schools has offered the Community Eligibility Provision (CEP) district-wide. CEP is a key provision of The Healthy, Hunger-Free Kids Act of 2010, allowing districts and schools to serve all students free meals without the burden of free and reduced applications. Funding is provided by USDA through the operation of the National School Lunch and Breakfast Programs. The decision to offer CEP district-wide for Transylvania County Schools was made during the early summer months of 2023 in preparation for the school year 2023-2024. We are excited to offer this benefit to our students and families and look forward to serving nutritious meals that fuel student achievement. The free meals start on the first day of school--August 28, 2023. For more information, contact the Transylvania County Schools Nutrition Office at 828-885-7377.

Brevard Elementary School

- Brevard Elementary welcomed 50 new Bees at its recent Kindergarten Jumpstart Camp. Thanks to the BES staff for their hard work.
- BES and the OPT along with the Patton Foundation completed construction of the new Outdoor Classroom earlier this summer. This \$50,000 project would not have been possible without the generous investments of Frank and Donna Patton, BES families, and the GoGrant.

Brevard High School

- Renovations to the Brevard Field House are complete. Approximately \$150,000 of private funds were raised to purchase new weight equipment, flooring, signs, paint, sidewalks, drainage, etc.
- A new CTE storage building was installed over the summer adding a new covered workspace for Masonry and Core Construction students.
- The new security fence to enclose the open area between the masonry shop and social studies wing has arrived and will be installed in the next couple of weeks.

Brevard Middle School

- Brevard Middle School SELF students attended a Summer Camp August 15-17 which included team building, outdoor activities, a field trip, and more.
- Biltmore Church partnered with BMS to beautify the school on August 19 from 8am to 12pm.
- As recipient of a Lake Toxaway grant, BMS was able to purchase an online curriculum for all subject areas called Flocabulary that will integrate rigor and rhythm and also items to beautify the front of the campus.

Pisgah Forest Elementary School

- Pisgah Forest recently held its Kindergarten Jumpstart and is very excited to have all the new Rangers joining the PFES family next week.
- The new PFE playground was installed this summer. Thanks to everyone who contributed funds to this project.

Back to School Staff Kick-Off – Aug. 22

Transylvania County Schools will hold a “Back to School” Staff Kick-Off for the 2023-2024 school year on Tuesday, August 22, from 8am to 11am at Brevard High School. The kick-off will feature breakfast, games, prizes, and comments from our new superintendent, Dr. Lisa Fletcher. Early bird breakfast service will begin at 7:40 a.m.

Buses will provide transportation from RHS for any staff from the Rosman area. Buses will leave at 7:40 a.m.

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. O'NEILL, SECONDED BY MR. JACKSON, the consent agenda consisting of the minutes of the June 19 and June 26, 2023 meetings and closed sessions, the personnel report for August 21, 2023 (see attached); and the non-faculty coaches for fall sports 2023 (see below) were unanimously approved.

BHS

Troy Kessinger, Assistant Football
 Jeff Rice, Assistant Football
 Manny Deshauteurs, Assistant Football
 Craig Long, Head Varsity & JV Soccer
 Rachel Tritt, Head JV Volleyball
 Caleb Hill, Assistant Volleyball
 Kenneth Barton, Head Women's Golf
 Jackie Witherspoon, Head Women's XC
 Scott Keeley, Head Women's Tennis
 Maddie O'Hearn, Varsity Cheerleading Assistant
 Amanda Lambert, Head JV Football Cheerleading

RHS

Corey McCall, Assistant Football
 Jerry Ihme, Assistant Football
 Kris McCall, Assistant Football
 Gage Orr, Assistant Football
 Ronnie Leonard, Assistant Football
 Jacob Montgomery, Videographer
 Brian Chapman, Statistician
 Jessica Whitmire, Head JV Volleyball
 Bailey Bagwell, Assistant Volleyball

BMS

Kyle Justice, Assistant Football
 Tanner Ellenberger, Assistant Football
 Brad Toms, Head Men's Soccer
 Randy Baron, Assistant Soccer
 Mary Allyson "Ally" Carlton, Head Men's XC

RMS

Heather Greene, Assistant Volleyball

6. Attendance Update

Dropout Prevention Coordinator Jessica Sharp reported that Transylvania's attendance committee had begun working on attendance improvement strategies before the COVID pandemic resulted in rates falling dramatically across the state. Attendance has rebounded, with a 31% overall reduction in total and unexcused absences from 2021-2022 to 2022-2023. Ms. Sharp attributed this improvement to a three-tiered intervention approach at the high school level. She reviewed goals for this year. Currently a student is counted as present if they attend 50% of the day. She believes that number should be increased to 75%. Messaging efforts should be consistent across the county. More parents need to sign up for parent portal and school messenger. Under the current make-up policy, students may make up missed work, but they will lack the classroom interaction. The make-up policy should address in-person attendance. Parents may write notes for up to 10 absences per year because not every absence requires a doctor visit. Schools are collaborating with the DA's office and SROs to work with families to identify causes of chronic absenteeism.

Ms. Sharp addressed questions from board members. Mr. Wiener stated that his two children who just graduated told him that a number of their peers missed 50% of class time, did the make-up work, did not participate in group projects, and were still promoted out of the class. He asked how many students who missed more 20% of a single term

were allowed to graduate. Ms. Sharp stated that she did not have that data with her, but credits earned and other factors would have been taken into account. She reported that the attendance committee and principals are looking at this issue and considering making 60 the highest grade that can be earned on make-up work. Mr. Wiener asked how the board can help with attendance. Dr. Fletcher reported that some the changes will be in place by end of the 2nd nine weeks and some parents may have complaints. Board members pledged their support of the administration's efforts. Chairman McCoy thanked Ms. Sharp for all that she is doing.

7. **Capital Bond Funding Update**

Dr. Fletcher reported that she has requested a line item breakdown of everything in the educational capital fund from the county manager. She hopes to hear back later this week. We are waiting on the results of the capital reserve study. The full report could take up to six months. The board discussed asking for a timeline and completion date and who pays for the study. Mr. Jackson stated that the county instigated the study so they should be the ones to pay for it. Mr. O'Neill stated that he has heard that the \$3.1 million in capital funding promised by the county manager has now been reduced to a million or so.

Mr. Wiener stated that he believes it is time sever the bond from the BHS, RHS, and RMS improvement projects and commit the remaining funds to repairs throughout the district. Mr. Jackson stated that the county has collected approximately \$30 million in taxes on the bond so far and he believes the board should have access to those funds. Chairman McCoy stated that the board and the commissioners have formed a committee comprised of the superintendent, county manager, a former superintendent, a former county manager, and attorneys from both sides with the goal of finding a path forward for funding, potentially including bond. The county decided on its own to requisition a capital reserve study, and the committee and boards now await that report. Mr. Wiener recommended that the board come up with a list of smaller projects that can be funded with the bond money, request a joint meeting, and as the reserve study comes in, tackle those projects. Chairman McCoy stated that the committee first needs the reserve study results so that both sides are looking at the same information. Mr. Jackson noted that the commissioners have ignored every offer to meet jointly. Mr. O'Neill stated that every time the board starts to move forward the county comes up with another obstacle.

Mr. Wiener stated that the language on the ballot for the bond referendum indicated it was intended for capital improvements at all nine schools. Chairman McCoy stated that was wrong. The ballot specified improvements at BHS, RHS and RMS. She reported that those three schools were presented to the public in every public meeting, presentation, and promotional event regarding the bond. She further explained that a referendum must include certain language in case there is money left over so that it can be used elsewhere. She agreed that the board needs to obtain a timeline and completion date for the reserve study, but thinks the board needs more information before requesting a joint meeting. She requested that the superintendent talk with the county manager and bring back an update at the September 18 meeting

Mr. Wiener recommended that a plan be developed between now and October 2 regarding how the board would spend the remaining bond funds in order to be ready for a potential joint meeting. He feels the capital reserve study is just a suggestion and that the board should be in position to request funding from the commissioners based on

what it already knows. There was a general consensus come up with a spending plan if the commissioners agree to a joint meeting.

8. **Change in Meeting Schedule**

On August 7, the board discussed potential changes to its monthly meeting schedule effective October 2023:

- Meetings and work sessions would begin at 6:00 p.m. instead of 6:30 p.m.
- The first Monday of the month would be a regular business meeting. A board attorney typically would not attend. *It was noted that this was a change from the last meeting. Ms. Hunter noted that due to the number of work sessions the board attorneys have to cover on the first Mondays, the board discussed swapping dates in order to ease scheduling constraints.*
- The third Monday of the month would be a work session. A board attorney would attend. Work sessions would be presentation and discussion items in order to set the agenda for the next business meeting. No action would be taken. Public comment is typically not provided at work sessions.

Board members had also proposed other changes:

- (Wiener) Having two public comment sessions per work session.
- (Jackson) Meeting on a night other than Monday. *This was dismissed due to the number of school events and conflicts on other nights of the week.*
- (Jackson) Holding work sessions at schools and/or community centers. *This was dismissed due to the extra work created for district staff and hosting schools, plus the likelihood of livestream failures and equipment problems.*
- (Jackson) Having a different seating configuration for work sessions.
- (Wiener) Upgrading livestreaming equipment in order to project the overhead screens and a wider view. *Additional staff and equipment would be needed. No capital outlay funds have been encumbered for this purpose.*

There was consensus agreement to change the start time to 6:00 p.m., have an attorney present at both meetings (for now), have public comment at work sessions and business meetings, and consider meeting on the first Tuesday of the month when the first Monday is a holiday or conflict.

Mrs. Dalton stated that several boards only meet once a month and she would like to see our board to return to that schedule at some point. Dr. Fletcher noted that some boards that meet once a month have a work session followed by a business meeting on the same night.

Mr. Jackson asked if the board could still take action at work sessions if it chooses. Chairman McCoy explained that would be a business meeting. Attorney Kris Caudle further explained that that doing so would violate the public meeting notice which advertises that no action will be taken at a work session.

MR. WIENER MADE A MOTION for the board to hold a regular meeting on the first Monday of the month and a work session on the third Monday of the month, change the start time to 6:00 p.m., and have one public comment opportunity at the work session and one public comment opportunity at the business meeting. MR. O'NEILL SECONDED AND THE MOTION CARRIED 3:1 (FOR: Jackson, McCoy; O'Neill;

AGAINST: Wiener. Mrs. Dalton did not vote). Chairman McCoy announced that the new schedule would start in October.

9. Nominations for NCSBA Board of Directors

Chairman McCoy reported that the North Carolina School Boards Association (NCSBA) is seeking nominations for vacancies on the 2023-2024 NCSBA Board of Directors. The term of service is two years and members are eligible to serve for two terms. The board holds in-person meetings in Raleigh in November, March and June and a virtual meeting in September. Other meetings may be scheduled as needed. Members also serve on committees that meet virtually. Nominees should be able to attend all regularly scheduled meetings. Nominations must be made by official board action and received by September 29, 2023. There were no nominations. The board will revisit this item at the September 18 meeting.

10. Important Dates

Aug. 21	Regular 5-day schedule resumes		
Aug. 21-25	Teacher workdays		
Aug. 21	New Employee Orientation For Licensed Educators	8am to 4pm	Rogow Room, Trans. Co. Library
Aug. 21	REGULAR MEETING	6:30 p.m.	MEC
Aug. 22	TCS Staff Kick-Off for 2023-2024	8am to 11am	BHS
Aug. 28	First pupil day		
Sept. 4	Labor Day holiday		
Sept. 12	BOARD TRAINING SESSION	6:00 p.m.	MEC
Sept. 4	NO MEETING		
Sept. 18	REGULAR MEETING	6:30 p.m.	MEC

Chairman McCoy reported that a training session meeting for new and veteran board members is planned for Tuesday, September 12. The board agreed to start the meeting at 6:00 p.m.

Dr. Lisa Fletcher reported that schools will be holding Open Houses and “Meet the Teacher” nights this week.

11. Other Items

None

There was no further business, and ON A MOTION BY MR. JACKSON, SECONDED BY MR. O’NEILL, the meeting was adjourned at 8:32 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Chairman

Secretary

PERSONNEL REPORT
August 21, 2023

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

Licensed Personnel

Hannah Souther, Teacher, RES, effective August 18, 2023
Jennifer Speckman, Teacher, RHS, effective September 8, 2023

Classified Personnel

Rosalia Valdez, Custodian, BMS, effective August 14, 2023

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

Licensed Personnel

Jennifer Axtell, Teacher, BMS, effective August 21, 2023
Janna Carlson, School Counselor, BES, effective August 22, 2023
Jay Farrell, Teacher, BMS, effective August 21, 2023

Classified Personnel

Jill Chaney, Bus Driver, BMS, effective August 22, 2023
Annette Cooper, Custodian & Bus Driver, BMS, effective August 28, 2023
Matthew Kelley, Distance Learning Coordinator and In-School Suspension Supervisor, BHS, effective August 22, 2023
Margaux Lewis, Teacher Assistant, BES, effective August 22, 2023
Benjamin Meade, Bus Mechanic, Bus Garage, effective September 11, 2023
Clarissa Ramey, Teacher Assistant, RES, effective August 22, 2023

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

Licensed Personnel

Roman Evans, from Teacher, BHS, to Teacher, BES, effective August 21, 2023

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

Gwen Devlin
Alyse Hollingsworth
Esther Koppel
Eric LaRowe
Leslie Prescott

Substitute School Nutrition Workers

None