

**Minutes
Transylvania County Board of Education
September 18, 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
6. Request for Authorization of School Trip
7. Safe Schools Update
8. Policy:
 - A. Spring 2023 PLS Updates
 - B. S.L. 2023-106 Special Updates
9. Budget Update
10. Bids for BHS Astro turf Repair
11. Capital Outlay Schedule
12. Update on Capital Reserve Study
13. Nominations for NCSBA Board of Directors
14. Reports from Training Event
15. Important Dates
16. Other Items

The Transylvania County Board of Education met in regular session on September 18, 2023 at 6:30 p.m. at the Morris Education Center. Chairman McCoy led in a moment of silence and Chris Wiener led the Pledge of Allegiance. Chairman McCoy called the meeting to order and welcomed everyone. In addition to approximately 16 guests, the individuals listed below were in attendance.

BOARD MEMBERS:

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

BOARD ATTORNEY:

Kris Caudle, Campbell Shatley

MEDIA:

Nick Haseloff, Transylvania Times
WLOS News

STAFF:

Dr. Lisa Fletcher, Superintendent
Jenny Hunter, Administrative Assistant
Dr. Brian Weaver, Assistant Superintendent/HR
Gabi Juba, Finance Officer
Missy Ellenberger, Director, 9-12 Education
Carrie Norris, Director, K-8 Education
Audrey Reneau, Director, Federal Programs
Kerry Putnam, Director, CTE/Facilities
Andrew Healy, Teacher, Brevard High School
Chris Whitlock, Director, Technology Services
Mike Hall, School Resource Officer

1. **Approval of Agenda**
ON A MOTION BY MR. JACKSON, SECONDED BY MR. O'NEILL, the meeting agenda for September 18, 2023 was approved as presented.

2. **Public Comment**

Chairman McCoy reviewed the guidelines for public comment.

Claudia Hawkins – I am struggling to understand where we are with regular capital funding and the \$68 million in bonds. My request is to issue a press release, post information on the website, etc., with focus on where we are now. Point out 1) what amount has been approved for the current year, 2) is any coming from the tax collection that was set aside, and 3) how much has been spent so far. Explain the role of the capital study work group. How can this be clarified? How will the reserve study report be used to affect the bond? How will the board involve the community in how the bond money will be used? It may be beneficial for the information to come from the two chairs.

David Borman – I agree with Ms. Hawkins. How is the bond being spent and where do we stand in the process? I heard a lot about this at last meeting. I heard Mr. Wiener say that \$100,000 would be a drop in the bucket. My kids' teachers sent me wish lists for school supplies. Can you appreciate the irony? How does the board expect learning to happen without the right tools? Our county has over 250 highly educated teachers ready to do what they do best. You quibble over wording of a policy and play politics with an open seat. We can't solve every problem with Sharpies, but can't we insure that teachers stop begging for the basics? Maybe this board should figure out how the next drop in the bucket would help students and teachers.

Alice Wellborn – Over 100 years of research shows that grade retention is an ineffective strategy. It is also expensive by forcing taxpayers to foot the bill for an additional year of school. The money serves no positive purpose for the students being retained. No reputable research shows any long-term significant benefit. Retention rates are highest among the poor, minorities, and special education students. We are simply punishing struggling students rather than helping them. Retention causes behavioral and emotional problems. There is a strong correlation between retention and dropping out. The students who are retained early are usually retained again. Many alternatives are available that are more effective.

3. **Good News Report**

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

September is Attendance Awareness Month

September is National Attendance Awareness Month to help spread awareness and reduce chronic absences (missing 10% or more of school days). We salute the TCS staff who are working hard to address the issues surrounding chronic absenteeism and finding ways to improve attendance districtwide.

National Arts in Education Week – Sept. 10-16

The week of September 10-16, 2023 was National Arts in Education Week. The arts are an essential part of a complete education, and students of all ages benefit from artistic learning, innovative thinking, and creativity. We thank our arts educators for all they do and our community for their strong support of arts programs in our schools.

Constitution Day – Sept. 17

Constitution Day in the United States commemorates the September 17, 1787 signing of the final version of the United States Constitution by the delegates to the Constitutional

Convention. The U.S. Constitution contains the main rules and amendments that instill law and order, protect the rights of citizens, and govern politics and daily life in America. It is critical for students to learn how the power of this governing charter strengthens our nation and informs what it means to be free.

National IT Professionals Day – Sept. 19

National IT Professionals Day was created in 2015 to show appreciation to the often unsung tech wizards who are essential to keeping our work stations and networks operating flawlessly. Without them we would be back to typewriters, chalkboards and overhead projectors. Please join us in thanking Transylvania County Schools' outstanding team of IT professionals who keep us up to date, troubleshoot problems, provide training, and protect users from online threats:

Technical Support

Chris Whitlock , Director
Chris Lambert
Blake Tesnow
Stephen Shields
Brenda Byrd

Instructional Support

Alyse Sheppard
Alicia LaDow
Kathryn Bailey
Erik Wahus
Bridgette Whitlock
Candace Reese

#TeachAG Day – Sept. 21

National #TeachAg Day is recognized on September 21, 2023 to celebrate the important role of school-based agriculture education and to encourage students to consider careers as agriculture educators. Ag teachers are community leaders and role models, and they help students develop the skills to become leaders themselves. Ag teachers never have the same day twice. Consider a rewarding and fun career as an Agriculture teacher.

BES Artwork Displayed at Mountain State Fair

Students in the self-contained classroom at Brevard Elementary School traveled to the Mountain State Fair on Friday, September 15 to see their artwork displayed in the Very Special Arts Exhibit. Congratulations on bringing home the Judges' Choice Award and first, second, and third place wins.

PFES Fairy Tales, Flannel & Flapjacks

Second graders at Pisgah Forest Elementary celebrated the Fairy Tales and Tall Tales Core Knowledge Language Arts Domain with a "Fairy Tale, Flannel and Flapjack Celebration" on September 13.

Homecoming Week

September 11-15, 2023 was Homecoming Spirit Week at Rosman High School and Brevard High School. Students and staff celebrated with bonfires, dress-up themes, door decorating contests, pep rallies, dances and more.

NCSBA 2023 Bell Awards

At the NCSBA LEAD Training Session on September 7, the Transylvania County Board of Education received the Silver Bell Award in recognition of all members having earned CEU training credits during the 2022-2023 school year.

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 July 24, 2023 meeting and closed session, the August 7, 2023 meeting and closed session, the August 21, 2023 meeting, and the personnel report for September 18, 2023 (attached) were unanimously approved.

6. **Request for Authorization of School Trip**

Brevard High School teacher Andrew Healy reported that BHS has participated for a number of years in an international student exchange program with the Mariagerfjord Gymnasium High School in Hobro, Denmark. The exchange alternates each year—one year their students come to Brevard and the next year our students go to Hobro. Students spend a week with host families, attend school, and explore local life and areas of interest. The last exchange was scheduled for the spring of 2020 but was cancelled due to the COVID pandemic. Brevard High School is seeking approval for an exchange trip to Denmark this spring. School trips that require travel outside of the continental United States must be approved by the board upon recommendation by the superintendent or designee. Dr. Fletcher reported that she had met with Mr. Healy to review the details and has no objections to the proposed trip.

Mr. Healy discussed the itinerary, costs, chaperones, and travel arrangements. He reported that approximately 20 students have expressed interest in going; however, the trip will be limited to 12 students this year. The school is holding parent meetings and working on permission forms, obtaining teacher recommendations, and planning fundraising to help offset costs for participants. The total cost per student is estimated at \$3,000. The trip would coincide with spring break and participants would miss only four days of school. Mr. Healy answered questions from board members. ON A MOTION BY MR. WIENER, SECONDED BY MR. JACKSON, the board unanimously approved the Brevard High School student exchange trip to Hobro, Denmark on March 27 to April 6, 2024.

7. **Safe Schools Update**

Director Missy Ellenberger gave a Safe Schools update. Transylvania County Schools had 23 reportable offenses in 2022-2023. This was an increase from 14 reportable offenses in 2021-2022. Mrs. Ellenberger noted that offenses were up last year across the state. The TCS offenses ranged from possession of alcohol, possession of controlled substance, possession of a weapon (pocketknives), and one sexual assault. Mr. Wiener asked for more details regarding the incidents. Mrs. Ellenberger reported that would have to be shared in closed session due to student confidentiality laws. Mr. Wiener asked that reportable offenses be regularly reported to the board.

Mrs. Ellenberger gave an update on School Resource Officers and shared a log of SRO activities for the 2022-2023 year:

Parent Contacts – 1,071
 Student Contacts – 2,332
 Sporting Events Worked - 234

Classes Taught - 253
 Home Visits - 270

Mr. Wiener requested more information on home visits and asked about Brevard Academy. Mrs. Ellenberger reported that home visits typically involve an SRO accompanied by a school social worker. Reasons for home visits may be checking on attendance, needs in the home, or other individual circumstances. Mr. Wiener asked for more specific data sets. Mrs. Ellenberger explained that if members would like to have more specific data presented at a board meeting, she would be happy to do so provided they let her know ahead of time. It was noted that Brevard Academy is not a part of the Transylvania County Schools and it does have an SRO.

8. Policy

Spring 2023 PLS Custom Updates

Dr. Brian Weaver presented seven policies with minor changes from the NCSBA Spring 2023 PLS Custom Updates as first-read information:

- **1610/7800, Professional and Staff Development.** References a new state law G.S. 115C-81.57 effective beginning with the 2023-2024 school year that requires local boards to provide professional development to carry out state law provisions regarding education in middle and high schools on the Holocaust and genocide.
- **4155, Assignment to Classes.** Updates a legal reference.
- **4334/5035/7345, Use of Unmanned Aircraft (Drones).** Updates the legal references.
- **5028/6130/7267, Automated External Defibrillator.** Updates the hyperlinks in Other Resources.
- **6410, Organization of the Purchasing Function.** Updates a hyperlink in the legal references.
- **7340, Employee Dress and Appearance.** Updates the legal references.
- **7650, Employee Travel and Other Expense Reimbursement.** Updates a hyperlink in the Other Resources.

Mr. Wiener stated that the changes were innocuous in nature and MADE A MOTION to approve the seven policies as presented. MR. JACKSON SECONDED. Attorney Caudle gave a reminder that if the board chooses to approve the policies on first read, it must first take action to suspend its policy requiring two reads. MR. WIENER AMENDED HIS MOTION to accept the policies as first-read information. MR. JACKSON AMENDED HIS SECOND and the policies were unanimously accepted as first-read information. Second-read approval will be scheduled for the next regular meeting on October 2. Other policies from the Spring Updates will be presented at a future date.

S.L. 2023-106 Special Updates

On August 30, the administration received a Special Custom PLS Update to comply with Session Law 2023-106 (SB 49), which creates a new Chapter 114A of the General Statutes titled "Parents' Bill of Rights" and also amends Chapter 115C of the General Statutes to add new requirements for schools regarding parental guides and notifications. The new requirements apply with the 2023-2024 school year. The effective date is August 16, 2023 (the date the bill was signed); however, the General Assembly may alter some of the timelines and effective dates until January. NCSBA has

identified seven PLS policies that require updates. Dr. Weaver presented the revised policies listed below as first-read information:

- **1310/4002, Parental Involvement.** Substantially revises the policy to address the new requirements of the Parents' Bill of Rights.
- **3210, Parental Inspection of and Objection to Instructional Materials.** The school system must have a written process for parents to inspect and review all textbooks and supplementary instructional materials that will be used in their child's classrooms.
- **3540, Comprehensive Health Education Program.** Adds a provision prohibiting instruction on gender identity, sexual activity, or sexuality in grades K-4.
- **4335, Criminal Behavior.** Changes the requirement for reporting to parents when their child is suspected to be the victim of a crime.
- **4720, Surveys of Students.** Changes parental notification and consent requirements based on new state law requirements. Adds a new section about well-being questionnaires and health screening forms.
- **6120, Student Health Services.** The new G.S. 90-211.10B contains language that prohibits health care practitioners, which includes school employees authorized under state law to perform health care services as part of their job, from providing, soliciting, or arranging medical procedures or treatments for a minor without first obtaining written or documented consent from the parent. This law goes into effect on December 1, 2023.
- **7300, Staff Responsibilities.** Adds an employee responsibility to support parental involvement and never encourage a student to withhold information from their parents.

Dr. Weaver reported that the changes shown in red were recommended by NCSBA and have also been vetted by Campbell Shatley. Additional changes from Campbell Shatley are shown in blue. Chairman McCoy recommended that the board provide an opportunity for parents and stakeholders to give input on the proposed revisions at the October 2 meeting. Second-read approval would be scheduled for a later meeting. The board discussed the following policies:

- Policy 3540 – Mr. O'Neill asked whether instruction on body safety is provided in grades K-4. Dr. Weaver reported that topic does not occur at the K-4 grade level.
- Policy 4335, line 54 – Mr. Wiener suggested replacing "should" with "shall". Mr. O'Neill suggested further discussion at the next meeting based on the context of the overall revisions.
- Policy 4720, line 62 – Mr. Wiener questioned adding "electronic" consent. He reported that a teacher recently used a QR code to obtain parental consent for particular content in a class. He does not feel there are adequate controls in place to be able to verify that the person signing electronically is the parent or legal guardian. Mr. Caudle noted that the law allows written or electronic consent. Chairman McCoy suggested that the board could task the administration with developing a regulation to provide proper security as appropriate.
- Policy 7300, line 26 – Mr. O'Neill asked if electronic consent should be added to this section.

Dr. Weaver confirmed that the board would like to have a dedicated opportunity for public comment on the PBoR policies at the next meeting on October 2; second-read

approval of the policies would be scheduled for November 6; and notice and links will be published on the district's PBoR webpage and sent to parents letting them know the proposed policy revisions are available for review and comment. All members were in agreement. ON A MOTION BY MR. WIENER, SECONDED BY MR. JACKSON, the draft Parents' Bill of Rights policies listed above were unanimously accepted as first-read information and publicization to parents.

9. Budget Update

Finance Officer Gabi Juba presented an expenditure report for FY24. She noted there is still no state budget. She gave an update on Article 40 and 42 money for the last five years showing a cumulative total of \$3.2 million. Mr. Jackson asked if there had been any new communication with the county. Ms. Juba reported that the county finance officer resigned some months ago and a new finance officer would be starting this fall. Mr. O'Neill remarked that instead of giving the school system the sales tax money for capital improvements it seems they took money out of the bond.

10. Bids for BHS Astroturf Repair

Facilities Director Kerry Putnam presented bids for Astroturf repair at Brevard High School. Bids were received from two companies, GeoSurfaces Southeast, Inc., and Shaw Sports Turf. A third company was contacted but did not respond. The GeoSurfaces bid is \$510,110. It provides a higher quality turf (woven instead of glued in), has excellent reviews in our area, and comes with a 10-year warranty. The Shaw Sports bid is \$488,587 and has an 8-year warranty. Mr. Putnam recommended approval of the GEOSurfaces bid due to its longer warranty and higher quality product. He reported that this is the tenth season for the current turf. The county has approved \$400,000 for the project and BHS has approximately \$104,000 in escrow. Board members requested a copy of the warranty; Mr. Putnam will send a copy to members and the attorney. A full contract will come to the board at a future date. Mr. Putnam reported that they would like to start work in January in order to have the field ready for soccer season.

Mr. Wiener asked if there had been an analysis of what it would cost to convert the field back to grass. Mr. Putnam replied no. He reported that the Astroturf was installed to combat excessive wear and tear and risky conditions resulting from frozen soil, dead grass and heavy rains. He added that no one in the region has considered going back to grass after installing turf. Chairman McCoy gave a reminder that the turf had been provided by a generous donor. ON A MOTION BY MR. JACKSON, SECONDED BY MR. O'NEILL, the board unanimously approved the GeoSurfaces Southeast, Inc., bid in the amount of \$510,110 for Astroturf repairs at Brevard High School.

11. Capital Outlay Schedule

Facilities Director Kerry Putnam gave an update on capital outlay projects for FY23-24. He noted that the section shown in gray on the spreadsheet represents completed projects from last year. He reported that it is increasingly difficult to find non-local contractors for certain jobs. Some projects have been pushed out to future years because we did not get bids. He and Jason Merrill plan to bundle some projects together to attract more bidders. Dr. Fletcher commended the spreadsheet design. Mr. O'Neill stated that he feels estimations for budgetary processes have improved.

12. Update on Capital Reserve Study

Dr. Lisa Fletcher reported that Axias is scheduled to present a draft report of the capital reserve study to the ad hoc capital study work group on September 27. Mr. O'Neill

asked if there is any documented scope of work or cost breakdowns. Dr. Fletcher stated that she would ask the county manager for this. It was noted that the county's RFQ may contain this information.

13. Nominations for NCSBA Board of Directors

As reported at the last meeting, 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 submitted by September 29. MR. WIENER NOMINATED TANYA DALTON to submit an application to NCSBA. MR. O'NEILL SECONDED. There were no other nominations and the motion passed unanimously.

14. Reports from Training Events

Bryan O'Neill and Tanya Dalton attended the NCSBA LEAD Training that was held on September 7 at WRESA. They reported that it was an interesting session. Discussion centered on current legislation and a potential self-evaluation instrument being considered for boards to gauge their own effectiveness. Mr. O'Neill stated that he would share copies of the meeting materials.

15. Important Dates

Dr. Fletcher reviewed important dates and gave a reminder of the meeting scheduling changes effective October 2023:

- Regular meeting on the first Monday of the month
- Work session on the third Monday of the month (no action)
- Start time changes to **6:00 p.m.**
- Public comment at work session and regular meeting
- Attorney present at both meetings (for now)

Oct. 2	REGULAR MEETING	6:00 p.m.	MEC
Oct. 6	Students dismissed at noon		
Oct. 11-13	NCSBA Fall Law Conference	3 days	Asheville, NC
Oct. 16	WORK SESSION	6:00 p.m.	MEC
Oct. 27	Students dismissed at noon		
Oct. 30, 31	Teacher workdays		
Nov. 6	REGULAR MEETING	6:00 p.m.	MEC
Nov. 10	Veterans Day holiday		
Nov. 13-15	NCSBA Annual Conference for Board Member Development	3 days	Greensboro, NC
Nov. 20	WORK SESSION	6:00 p.m.	MEC
Nov. 22-24	Thanksgiving break		

16. Other Items

Mr. Jackson stated that he would like to discuss the superintendent's goals and objectives. He does not like NCDPI's evaluation instrument and would prefer instead a

format similar to that used in his former job with Florida Power and Light. Chairman McCoy reported that the superintendent's evaluation is performed annually at the end of the school year. Mr. Owen noted that Dr. Fletcher will be leading the board in updating the district's strategic plan (mission, vision, values, and goals) in the months ahead.

Mr. Wiener stated that he had found an study online that presents benefits associated with holding students back and asked that the link be shared with other members as a rebuttal to the previous public comment regarding the negative impact of student retention.

There was no further business, and ON A MOTION BY MR. O'NEILL, SECONDED BY MR. JACKSON, the meeting was adjourned at 8:30 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Chairman

Secretary

PERSONNEL REPORT
September 18, 2023

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

Licensed Personnel

Megan Libby, Teacher, BES, effective October 1, 2023

Classified Personnel

None

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

Licensed Personnel

Angela Barnes, Instructional Coach, TCH, effective October 2, 2023

Kristin Carbuhn, Speech-Language Pathologist, PFES, effective October 11, 2023

Mary Katherine Chambers, Media Coordinator, TCH, effective September 5, 2023

Ryan Devlin, Teacher, BHS, effective August 24, 2023

Classified Personnel

Rhonda Cloutier, Teacher Assistant, TCH, effective September 14, 2023

Tabitha Galloway, Office Support & Data Manager, RES, effective September 25, 2023

Jenny Hernandez, Teacher Assistant, BES, effective August 22, 2023

Michael Jordan, Custodian, BHS, effective August 28, 2023

Rebecca Sizemore, Custodian & Bus Driver, PFES, effective August 28, 2023

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

Licensed Personnel

None

Classified Personnel

None

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

Licensed Personnel

None

Classified Personnel

None

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

Substitute Teachers

Jennifer Butler

Sharon Kondik

Louissa Shore

Katrina Spivey

Kimberly Ward

Julie White

Substitute School Nutrition Workers

Ambur Cantrell

Cassie Slonecker