

VIRGINIA: At a regular meeting of the Tazewell County School Board held at the Tazewell County Career and Technical Student Center on December 10, 2018 at 5:00 p.m.

PRESENT: Donna Whittington, Chair
Chris Moir, Vice-Chair
Jimmy Jones, Member
Irene Mullins, Member
David Woodard, Member
George G. Brown, Division Superintendent
Vicki Bailey, Clerk

Chair Whittington called the meeting to order at 5:00 p.m.

Unscheduled Agenda Items

None

Approval of Agenda

Mrs. Moir made a motion to approve the agenda as presented. Mrs. Mullins seconded the motion, and the Board unanimously approved.

Closed Session

Pursuant to section 2.2-3711 of the Code of Virginia, a motion was made by Mrs. Mullins, seconded by Mr. Woodard, and unanimously passed to convene to a closed session for the purpose of discussing the following specific matters:

Personnel – Discussion, consideration, or interviews of prospective candidates for employment; assignment, appointment, promotion, performance, demotion, salaries, disciplining or resignation of specific public officers, appointees or employees as authorized by Section 2.2-3711 A 1 of the Code of Virginia.

Students – Discussion or consideration of admission or disciplinary matters concerning a student(s) as authorized by Section 2.2-3711 A 2 of the Code of Virginia.

Contracts – Discussion of the award of a public contract involving the expenditure of public funds as authorized by Section 2.2-3711 A 29 of the Code of Virginia.

Legal Advice - Consultation with legal counsel and briefings by staff members or consultants or attorneys, pertaining to actual or probable litigation, or other specific legal matters requiring the provision of legal advice by counsel as authorized by § 2.2-3711 A 7 of the Code of Virginia.

Property – Discussion or consideration of the acquisition of real property for a public purpose, or of the disposition of publicly held real property as authorized by Section 2.2-3711 A 3 of the Code of Virginia.

Regular Session

The Board returned to open session at 6:45 p.m. Chair Whittington called the open session portion of the meeting to order.

Certification from Closed Session

In accordance with the Freedom of Information Act, a roll call vote was taken in which all members affirmed that only public business matters lawfully exempted from open meetings, as identified in the motion for closed session, were heard, discussed, or considered by the Board.

Pledge of Allegiance

Chair Whittington called for a moment of silence. Mrs. Moir led the Pledge of Allegiance.

Consent Agenda

Mrs. Moir made a motion to approve items A, B and C of the consent agenda. Mrs. Mullins seconded the motion, and the Board unanimously approved.

Mrs. Moir made a motion that Employee A be reinstated. Mrs. Mullins seconded the motion, and the Board unanimously approved.

Student Actions

Mrs. Moir made a motion to approve home instruction for those families who submitted requests for the 2018-19 school year pending receipt of proper paperwork. Mr. Woodard seconded the motion, and the Board unanimously approved.

Recognitions and Instructional Focus

- A. Annual Sixth Grade Boys' and Girls' STEM Conferences hosted by the Virginia Tech Southwest Center, November 2, 2018 and November 30, 2018, *Craig Earls, presenter; and Ashley Maxfield, Supervisor of Finance***

Craig Earls and Ashley Maxfield shared information with School Board members about their presentations to sixth grade boys and girls at the STEM Conferences on November 2, 2018 and November 30, 2018. Mr. Earls shared his passion for bringing technology to the classroom with students, and Ms. Maxfield talked with the students about being an actuary.

Hearing of Citizens

None

Hearing of Employees

Greg Deskins, Tazewell High School teacher, spoke in regard to the three-hour delay schedule on the agenda for Board approval. He stated he appreciated the fact that safety trumped everything, but shared several reasons it might not be a good idea: (1) two-hour delay already caused problems; (2) with accreditation already being an issue the three-hour delay could make that worse; (3) a three-hour delay could complicate things for DECA and COE students trying to get to work on time; etc. Mr. Deskins said if it helped with attendance, he would be for it. If it did not help with attendance, he did not think it would be worth adding the three-hour delay. Mr. Deskins asked the Board to take everything into account before making a decision.

Unfinished Business

- A. Crisis Management Plans, *Sgt. Ron Holt, Tazewell County Sheriff's Office/Tazewell County Public School Safety Coordinator, and Dr. Chris Stacy, Assistant Superintendent***

Sgt. Holt told Board members they should have received a copy of the Crisis Management Plans that he had revamped. He stated the plans were not perfect, but certain areas had been changed significantly. Sgt. Holt indicated he would be happy to discuss the plans in detail with Board members in a closed session, but in order to maintain safety, did not want to discuss everything in public.

Mr. Woodard stated he was very happy that the Town Police Department was involved in the lives of the students, but would like to work toward the Sheriff's Office being the agency who took care of school issues across the board. He indicated anything that would happen in the schools would be a county issue. Mrs. Mullins asked if Sgt. Holt could coordinate a meeting with the Police Chiefs and the Sheriff to talk about establishing consistency with the way situations were handled in all schools. Sgt. Holt indicated he was working toward a county safety committee and hoped to get that off the ground soon.

B. Home School Information, *George G. Brown, Division Superintendent*

At the November 5, 2018 School Board meeting, Mr. Woodard suggested the superintendent reach out to Senator Edwards and/or the Virginia School Boards Association to suggest or request that they look into home school accountability. On November 9, 2018, Mr. Brown reached out to Senator Edwards and spoke with legislative assistant Luke Priddy. He mentioned to Mr. Priddy that both he and School Board member David Woodard had visited with Senator Edwards previously to discuss home school, at a meeting that was initiated by Senator Edwards. Mr. Priddy was foreign to home schooling in Virginia. Mr. Brown walked him through the concerns and sent him the Virginia Department of Education link on home schooling and the home instruction packet. Mr. Brown mentioned the concern was not for legitimate home school children, but those escaping truancy, academics, etc. which result in a loss of funding for the school division after educating the children for most of the year, as well as severe lapses in the educational attainment upon their return to public education. Although Tazewell County is outside Senator Edwards' area of representation, Mr. Brown offered to assist in making home schooling (especially after the start of school) more difficult and more supervised, if Senator Edwards was interested. Mr. Priddy took Mr. Brown's contact information and stated he would reach out to Senator Edwards with Mr. Brown's concern. Mr. Brown also provided Mr. Priddy with a link for the home educators association of Virginia website, and mentioned that home schooling has a powerful presence and he did not want to initiate a battle with legitimate students.

Mrs. Moir, Mrs. Mullins, Chair Whittington and Mr. Brown attended the Annual Legislative Listening Tour at the Higher Education facility in Abingdon on November 29, 2018. Delegate Terry Kilgore, Delegate Jeff Campbell, Delegate Israel O'Quinn, Delegate Todd Pillion, and Senator Charles Carrico were in attendance. Mr. Brown told Board members that during the question and answer portion he thought about addressing the home schooling concerns, but decided a better approach would be to send more detailed information the next morning. On November 30, 2018, Mr. Brown sent home school information to the five legislators so they could better understand the process. To date, Mr. Brown had not heard back from any of the legislators, but he hoped to initiate some conversations in the very near future as to how this process could be made a bit more arduous for parents who want to escape the responsibilities of public education.

New Business

A. Bus Discipline Follow-up, *Richard Mullins, Manager of Transportation*

After the October School Board meeting, Mr. Mullins was asked to look at additional bus driver training in the field of handling bus discipline. Mrs. Mullins had asked Mr. Mullins to contact Surry County regarding the program used there. He discovered Surry County was using a PBIS program taught by elementary, middle and high school assistant principals. Mr. Mullins discussed this with Mr. Brown, along with other programs, and had decided to implement a Master Teacher Program. This was a professional school bus driver training program that will be taught at the in-service in January focusing on five areas: (1) establishing a positive environment on the school bus; (2) dealing with severe disruptions; (3) establishing a positive attitude and taking care of yourself; (4) handling students with special needs; and, (5) the professional driver and school student safety.

B. Three-hour Delay Schedule, *Richard Mullins, Manager of Transportation*

Mr. Mullins stated this had been a difficult year for everyone with a tough budget and rough weather. The wet and cold weather had made it difficult for transportation and in keeping the grounds clear. Because of that, he had been looking at the safety of the students and drivers. Mr. Mullins proposed a three-hour delay schedule to Board members. He noted that many drivers started at 6:25 a.m. on a normal day. With a two-hour late schedule, buses would start around 8:25 a.m. Mr. Mullins showed pictures of recent road conditions and incidents caused by inclement weather. He shared that while the Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT) did a great job working the roads, they were dealing with some of the same difficulties as the school division. They were trying to do more with less, their budgets were getting smaller, they had less resources, etc. A three-hour delay schedule would allow VDOT more time to treat all the roads, and might allow the school division to have school on days it would otherwise be canceled. He stated several counties around Tazewell had gone to a three-hour delay, including Mercer County and Dickenson County.

Mrs. Moir asked if a three-hour delay would cause breakfast to be eliminated. Mr. Brown indicated breakfast would be worked into the schedule.

Mr. Woodard stated he was not aware the VDOT had a smaller budget, but had actually noticed their budget increased. He stated he was not in favor of the three-hour delay, and added there would not a huge amount of difference in the road conditions from a two-hour delay start to a three-hour delay start.

Mr. Mullins showed projected schedules from several schools if a three-hour delay were to be implemented. After seeing the projected schedules, Mr. Deskins indicated he was not as opposed to the three-hour delay as stated earlier. Mrs. Moir asked how the TCCTC classes would be affected, and Mr. Brown indicated that would be the biggest problem with a three-hour delay. Cynthia Beavers, TCCTC Principal/Supervisor of Technology, mentioned since this was not expected to be used often, thoughts were that the morning and afternoon groups would be alternated on three-hour delay days.

Mr. Woodard stated that both parents work in most families, and this would throw another wrench in the mix for those families when trying to find child care. Mrs. Mullins asked if employees would still have to be in the schools early to watch children whose parents have to drop children off at the regular time, and Mr. Brown indicated they would.

Mrs. Moir questioned how often other counties used the three-hour delay. Mr. Mullins indicated Dickenson County had been the leader in Region VII for this schedule. Mrs. Mullins commented that everyone should remember that county's SOL scores compared to the scores of Tazewell County, and added she did not see any advantage in the three-hour delay schedule for students or teachers.

Mrs. Mullins, Mr. Woodard and Mr. Jones all indicated they were not in support of the three-hour delay schedule.

C. The Virginia Personal Responsibility Education Innovative Strategies Program (VPREIS), *James Madison University, Vision of You, Dr. Gary Williams, Director of Secondary and Middle School Education*

A partnership agreement was made between Tazewell County Public Schools and James Madison University some time ago to conduct the Vision of You Study with students attending the Placement Academy. James Madison received a \$2.6 million grant to conduct this study, but had not received the numbers they expected across the state. In Tazewell County, the assistant principal gives the parent information regarding the study along with a parent consent form. Students also have a consent form. Both parents and student have to have an agreement to participate. They receive a password from JMU to participate and complete the survey online. An evaluation and an incentive structure guideline would also be given to those participating. Parents receive a

\$10 gift card for signing up, and also receive the gift card for completing the information even if they do not sign up. Students who participate would receive incentive cards in the amounts of \$10, \$15 and \$20. This program is totally voluntary. So far, Tazewell County Public Schools had a total of two students in the last two years to participate.

At a recent meeting, some of the assistant principals thought the school division would have a larger number of students to participate if they could develop a cohort within the school. The cohort would be based on students who would want to participate only. Assistant principals feel they could control the cohort better, disseminate the information quicker and easier, and would be able to get the numbers. This incentive goes away in three years. Once it is finished, a decision would have to be made as to whether the school division would continue to be part of the study. The results will be combined at some point and will be used in Virginia and internationally to redevelop the current program used by Tazewell County Public Schools, which is in the form of Family Life but not as in depth. Dr. Williams noted that the number of teenage pregnancies had increased since the Family Life Program (taught by Carolyn Burnette) had been cut several years ago.

Mr. Woodard made a motion that the Tazewell County School Board allow assistant principals the opportunity to develop Vision of You cohorts at their schools. Mrs. Mullins seconded the motion, and the Board unanimously approved.

Mr. Woodard mentioned since the school division had to cut the Family Life Program taught by Mrs. Burnette several years ago and the number of teenage pregnancies had increased, maybe the program should be brought back. Dr. Williams stated there could possibly be grant money available for a Family Life Program. Mr. Woodard suggested sharing with the Board of Supervisors that the consequence of cutting the Family Life Program several years ago had resulted in an increase of teen pregnancies.

Superintendent's Report

A. Budget update, *Ashley Maxfield, Supervisor of Finance*

Mrs. Mullins asked Ms. Maxfield if the school division had received any money from the county. Ms. Maxfield stated money had been received for July. She shared that the money for August through December should have been received on December 10, 2018. Since the courthouse was closed on December 10, 2018, Ms. Maxfield indicated she would be making contact the next business day.

Ms. Maxfield shared the school division would be going into the beginning of the year with about five million dollars coming from the county (which had not been received as of the Board meeting). Of the five million dollars, \$3.5 million would be for the January 15 payroll and another million will be the January 30 payroll. While the school division would be receiving a good amount of money, it should not be looked at as a windfall. Ms. Maxfield stated the school division was still in a budget crisis, and for that reason she asked approval to move \$300,000 of the money received from the county into the health care account. Ms. Maxfield shared that five million dollars had been spent so far this year on healthcare, and it did not look as if that would slow down any time soon. She stated this money was needed to buffer the account and to make sure there would be enough money to cover the upcoming expenses she expected going into flu season.

Mrs. Moir made a motion to move \$300,000 of the money received from the County into the health care account. Mrs. Mullins seconded the motion, and the Board unanimously approved.

Mr. Woodard shared that he had received numerous calls that the insurance was not paying claims, and gave a specific example of an employee that a specialist would not even see again unless the employee personally paid \$700 up front. Mrs. Maxfield stated the problem was that BPA did not send the school division the first claim until six weeks in, and BPA was not keeping up on the claim end. Ms. Maxfield told Board members she had been sending checks to BPA twice a week, which amounted to a great deal of money, and she could not figure out why claims were not being paid. Mr. Woodard stated his personal opinion was that the money was sitting in a bank

account somewhere drawing interest, so BPA could make money off of it before paying it out. He also mentioned he knew of at least one doctor's office (in the network) that had not received a penny from any claims billed since the school division switched to BPA. Mr. Woodard asked for someone to contact BPA and look into this so it could be settled.

B. Superintendent updates, *George Brown, Division Superintendent*

Mr. Brown offered congratulations to the Graham High School Football team for winning the 2018 AA Championship.

Mr. Brown gave the following updates:

- Attendance continued to suffer and had dropped as follows: June–5585, September–5498, October–5470, November – 5441, and 5437 as of the December 10, 2018.
- Public comment for the 2018-2019 Budget would be open through December 19, 2018.
- Thanked Deidra Hill, Beverly Beavers and Jill Vogel for the very informative December newsletter.
- Tazewell County Sheriff's Office would be conducting an exercise at Springville Elementary on December 11, 2018 and would be holding an active shooter response training at Dudley Primary School on December 12, 2018 for teachers and staff. On December 20-21, 2018 a law enforcement response to an active shooter training would be conducted at Graham Middle School. Mr. Brown commended the Sheriff and his employees for their initiative.
- Thanked Mrs. Mullins, Mrs. Moir and Chair Whittington for attending the Annual Legislative Listening Tour at the Higher Ed facility in Abingdon on November 29, 2018. Dr. Terry Arbogast, Giles County Superintendent, offered data on Region VII's plight with respect to the rest of the Commonwealth; Haydee Robinson, Dickenson County Superintendent, talked about the lack of certified teachers; Dr. Brian Ratliff, Washington County Superintendent, discussed the unfunded and underfunded mandates; Dr. Greg Mullins, Wise County Superintendent, addressed school construction renovations; Dr. Brian Austin, Lee County Superintendent, presented on the loss of student enrollment; Dr. Keith Perrigan, Bristol Superintendent, presented the small and rural school coalition; and Matt Hurt offered data on academic successes for Region VII. The meeting was very informative and much information was shared by both entities.
- Martha Montgomery, School Psychology Specialist with the Department of Education, and members of her staff were to present professional development to the staff of Richlands High School on January 2, 2019 about recognition of suicide symptoms and suicide prevention, how to handle mental health concerns that students become aware of, as well as what bullying is and what it is not. Ms. Montgomery and her staff were also to work with employees to assist with long-term planning for crisis intervention, and to develop protocols for suicide screening, threat assessment and crisis management. Richlands High School was to hold a round table discussion in the afternoon to discuss long-term crisis intervention. High School and Middle School administrators, guidance personnel, etc. would be attending the round table discussion to ensure that students have and know how to access mental health supports.
- SATIRA personnel were working to book the illusionist Tom Coverly for high school and middle school students. Mr. Coverly was vulnerable to bullying as a child. He offers a program tailored to students in order to help in handling negative situations and create healthier overall environments.

Board Member Comments

Mr. Woodard thanked fellow School Board members, Mr. Brown and Mrs. Bailey for working with him during the year, and wished everyone a Merry Christmas.

Mrs. Mullins thanked Mr. Mullins for working on implementing a bus discipline program. She hoped this would help with student behavior. She congratulated the Graham High School football team for winning the state championship. Mrs. Mullins thanked Ms. Hill for the valuable HR newsletter; thanked fellow school board members, Mr. Brown, Mrs. Bailey and Central Office staff; and wished everyone a Merry Christmas.

Mr. Jones congratulated the Graham High School football team on their 2018 championship.

Mrs. Moir congratulated the Graham High School football team and coaches for the great victory. She stated it was nice to see the rapport in Region VII with the superintendents, school board members and legislators at the Annual Legislative Listening Tour. Mrs. Moir expressed appreciation for all of the invitations from schools to attend programs and events. She wished everyone a Merry Christmas and a safe and happy holiday season.

Chair Whittington also offered congratulations to the Graham High School football team. She thanked staff members for all they do, and thanked principals for continuing to send school activity calendars to School Board members. Chair Whittington also thanked fellow School Board members, Mr. Brown and Mrs. Bailey for being a great group to work with throughout the year.

Mr. Woodard made a motion to adjourn at 7:49 p.m. Mrs. Mullins seconded the motion, and the Board unanimously approved.

David Woodard, Board Chair
(Newly elected chair at the 1/21/19 School Board meeting)

Date

Vicki Bailey, Clerk

Date

Approved by School Board: January 21, 2019