

The Cumberland County Board of Education met on Tuesday, May 10, 2022 at 6:00 PM with the following board members present: Alicia Chisolm, Greg West, Deanna Jones, Susan Williams, Nathan Warfel, Charles McKellar, Judy Musgrave, Carrie Sutton and Donna Vann.

Others present were Superintendent Marvin Connelly and Board Attorney Nick Sojka. Associate Superintendents: Ron Phipps, Betty Musselwhite, Joe Desormeaux, Lindsay Whitley, Mary Black, Ruben Reyes, Stacey Wilson-Norman, and Clyde Locklear.

1. OPENING ITEMS

1.01 Greg West called the meeting to order at 6:00 PM. The Pledge of Allegiance was led by Donna Vann and the Invocation by Susan Williams.

2. RECOGNITIONS

2.01 RECOGNIZED Student Ex-Officio Officers

Benjamin Jenkins - Massey Hill Classical High School

Morgan Wheeler - Cumberland Polytechnic High School

2.02 RECOGNIZE High School State Athletic Accomplishments

Brooke Bieniek - Cape Fear High

Won the 3A NC State Doubles Tennis Championship

Girls' Tennis Team & Chris Lucas - Cape Fear High

Won 3A State Tennis Team Title (First Ever in School History)

Samuel Aponte - Cape Fear High

Won the 106lb 3A State Wrestling Individual Championship

Calan Staub - Cape Fear High

Won the 152lb 3A State Wrestling Individual Championship

Cheerleading Team & Stephanie French - Gray's Creek High

Won the 4A State Cheerleading Championship Competition

Women's Bowling Team & April Norton - Jack Britt High

Won the 4A State Bowling Team Championship

Nicholas Letourneau - Jack Britt High
Won the Men's 4A Bowling Individual Title

Men's Basketball Team & Tony Jones - Seventy-First High
3A Regional Champions & 3A State Runner-up

2.03 RECOGNIZED Extra Mile Award Winners – Derrell Handberry, Sr. (Operations)

2.04 RECOGNIZED Committed Community Support Award Winner: Johnny Wilson
(Fayetteville Urban Ministry)

2.05 RECOGNIZE 2022 National Outstanding Assistant Principal - Dr. Queesha Tillman
(Loyd Auman Elementary)

2.06 RECOGNIZE STARward STEM Expo Winners

Denise Renfro and the 11th- & 12th-Grade Team - Douglas Byrd High

Andrea Hildel-Reyes and the 2nd-Grade Team - Cumberland Road Elementary

April Braddy, Theresa Pinheiro, & 4th-Grade Team - Mary McArthur Elementary

2.07 RECOGNIZE Brian Edkins Scholarship Award Winners

3. Superintendent's Update

3.01 Superintendent's Remarks - Dr. Marvin Connelly, Jr.

Dr. Connelly began: Good evening, Board members! It is another GREAT day in Cumberland County Schools! As this school year begins to wind down, and our End-of-Grade and End-of-Course testing begin, I am proud of our students and premier professionals for working hard this school year. We wish our students all the best as they take their EOGs and EOCs – we look forward to having a strong finish to this school year.

May Observances

Today, and every day, we appreciate how hard our premier professionals work to provide top-notch learning experiences for our students. Regardless of their roles and responsibilities, it takes everyone working together to help our students succeed in the classroom and ultimately in life.

As you can see on the screen, throughout the month of May, there are multiple observances to recognize the hard work that our employees do each day. While some groups of employees may have been recognized in previous months, this

month, the focus is on celebrating ALL employees who work hard to support students. Be sure to tell a CCS employee "THANK YOU" when you see them this month.

How Are the Children?

One of the greatest joys of my superintendency is dialoguing with our young people. Each month, I have the tremendous opportunity to meet with the Superintendent's Student Voices, a group made up of high school students from across the district. Their candid feedback is invaluable. Over the past two years, as we have endured a global pandemic, a lot has transpired and been discussed; however, we need everyone to think a little more about how all of this has impacted our children – not just academically, but mentally, socially and emotionally. There is an old African saying, "Kasserian Ingera" {KHAA-SEAR-REE-AN EN-JER-A} (which translates to "and how are the children?"). This greeting conveys the tremendous value of ensuring our children's well-being in everything that we do. As I often say, if you really want to know what is going on in our schools, ask our young people. Tonight, I will keep my comments brief, because I want to hear directly from our students. They will briefly share how students are doing and what we can do to support them moving forward. At this time, Kristy Newitt will introduce each of our student speakers this evening.

How are students doing?

Gracie Shearin & Dawson Jarman - PFHS

Dawson: There's no doubt, the students, teachers, and faculty are burnt out and tired. It is not because we are close to the end of the year or the days are getting warmer as the school day seems to become longer. This feeling of being burnt out started before the second semester even began, honestly it started within the first 3 months of school. Students were expected to return back to the classroom with the same standards that were set prior to the COVID-19 pandemic. Ideally, this doesn't seem too hard to do. But, online learning took a toll on students more than any educator could've expected. I was grateful enough to have been able to succeed with online learning but, many of my friends started to fall behind. I saw it first hand with students from kindergarten through sixth grade. I was asked to help tutor children who had experienced the "learning curve". These children were lacking vital social skills as well as struggling to keep up with their education. Unfortunately, this toll has led several students in Cumberland County to end their lives. To my knowledge, there has been 4 or more suicides of Cumberland County students this school year. That is 4 too many. I urge you to put more emphasis on

the mental health of your students, no child should ever feel that their only way out is to end their own life.

Gracie: As students returned back to school there was a noticeable decline in the mental health of students. There has been a rise in numbers for students diagnosed with anxiety disorders, depression, eating disorders, and many other mental health disorders.

A great number of my peers have mentioned that they were personally battling depression, anxiety, etc., and coming back to school made it worse. For example, a friend of mine mentioned that being called on in class, as a student with a SAD, would make her think about that encounter for the remainder of the day. Also, for some students lunch would be an obstacle in their day due to an eating disorder or social anxiety intimidating them because they wouldn't know where to sit or who to sit with.

Not only are students battling their own mental health but we're also required to attend school in which there was a delay in social experience. With that said, jumping back into "normal" life set some students back socially. Overall, it was very noticeable that students were struggling when returning to school and even though things have been getting better, there are still so many students who are unwell and struggling.

What does staff need to be aware of?

Hailey Sackewitz - Cumberland Polytechnic

The impact that the staff of a school has on a student cannot be underestimated. The way a teacher reacts to a student's behavior can either assist the student or amplify the situation. I believe that it is necessary for the staff to become more self-aware on the impact of their comments and actions in order to cultivate a better learning environment for students of all ages. Small comments that were thought to be harmless can cause a student stress. An example of this is: A student was conversing with the lunch staff and mentioned how she loved the biscuits. The lunch staff responded with "well be careful, they can go straight to your hips." What the lunch staff was unaware of is that the student had an eating disorder and this small, joking comment caused her to relapse in the school's bathroom. Being aware of underlying issues, searching for signs of mental conditions and disorders which become more prevalent at specific age brackets, and a general social interactions refresher are a few things that from a student's perspective, are what we might need. One way we could tackle this issue would be a collaboration with Student Services members/counselors and social workers to assist on cultivating the best environment for students.

What are some current teacher practices that have helped?

Riley Nazario - MHCHS & Jada Murrain - RRCHS

My AP Language teacher based what we have done during her class on our energy levels. So, she went around and asked if a majority of her class was tired, with a show of hands. And with this we were able to still do something productive such as discussing stylistic choices in a book we had been reading, which required less energy than doing something like a timed writing for the day. This helps the students feel like they are being cared and listened to in a working environment. Some teachers also do email check-ins. Where you just ask a question or two on mental well-being, such as something exciting they have done that week and being able to go into detail on it in a private email. So that you can build a connection with your teacher as well. At the beginning of class my theatre teacher does check-ins for how your day is going or how you're feeling. You'd either put a thumbs up, sideways, or down. Based on the majority we might have circle time to talk or a chill day to do whatever we'd like. It makes it a lot easier not to have to put your emotions into words or to just be able to take a break.

What would you like to see teachers do in the future?

Anaya Forte & Kennedi Lyons Goode-Bey - GCHS

Input teachers having a small break in their lesson plans for about 5-8 minutes, where a student can have a moment to themselves (maybe middle of the class or the end?)

Implementing a daily check-in at least once during the school day, asking students how the school day is going or how they feel using a simple system like (thumbs up, thumbs in the middle, thumbs down or smiley faces etc.)

Dr. Natasha Scott, Executive Director of Student Services gave a 5-minute review on current CCS Student Services practices and procedures to help support students and staff.

Dr. Connelly ended his comments by applauding our successful students. They truly provided us with great input to consider as we endeavor to meet the needs of the 'whole child.' Thanks was also given to Mrs. Newitt and Dr. Scott, for all that they do to support our students. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

4. PUBLIC FORUM

We received 1 speaker for Public Comment this evening:
Carmela McKellar-Smith

5. ADOPTION OF AGENDA

5.01 CONSIDER Adoption of Agenda

Upon a motion by Susan Williams, seconded by Nathan Warfel, the Board unanimously adopted the agenda.

6. CONSENT AGENDA

Upon a motion by Donna Vann, seconded by Susan Williams, the Board unanimously approved the Consent Agenda.

- 6.01 CONSIDER Approval of the Minutes of the April 12, 2022 Regular Board Meeting
- 6.02 CONSIDER Approval of Release of Certain Students
- 6.03 CONSIDER Approval of Personnel as recommended by the Personnel Committee (*Exhibit A*)
- 6.04 CONSIDER Approval of Leaves of Absence and Special Leaves of Absence Requests as recommended by the Personnel Committee (*Exhibit B*)
- 6.05 CONSIDER Approval of Administrator Contract Renewals as recommended by the Personnel Committee (*Exhibit C*)
- 6.06 Consider Approval of Superintendent's Non-Renewal Recommendations as recommended by the Personnel Committee (*Exhibit D*)
- 6.07 CONSIDER Approval of Superintendent's Administrative Recommendations as recommended by the Personnel Committee (*Exhibit E*)
- 6.08 CONSIDER ELA K-5 Core Product Adoption as recommended by the Curriculum Committee (*Exhibit F*)
- 6.09 CONSIDER Approval of the 2022 General Assembly Short Session Legislative Agenda as recommended by the Legislative Committee (*Exhibit G*)
- 6.10 CONSIDER Approval of the 2022-23 Student Code of Conduct as recommended by the Student Services Committee (*Exhibit H*)
- 6.11 CONSIDER Approval of the 2022-23 Alternative Accountability Models as recommended by the Student Services Committee (*Exhibit I*)
- 6.12 CONSIDER Approval of the Nursing Contracts for the 2021-22 & 2022-23 School Year as recommended by the Student Services Committee (*Exhibit J*)
- 6.13 CONSIDER Approval of E.E. Smith Concession Stand Donation as recommended by the Auxiliary Services Committee (*Exhibit K*)
- 6.14 CONSIDER Renewal of the Roofing Services Contract as recommended by the Auxiliary Services Committee (*Exhibit L*)
- 6.15 CONSIDER Renewal of our Countywide Recycling Services Contract from GFL as recommended by the Auxiliary Services Committee (*Exhibit M*)
- 6.16 CONSIDER Renewal of our Countywide Dumpster Service Contract from GFL as recommended by the Auxiliary Services Committee (*Exhibit N*)
- 6.17 CONSIDER Approval of the Brady Chiller Annual Service Agreement as recommended by the Auxiliary Services Committee (*Exhibit O*)

6.18 CONSIDER Approval of the Supplemental Janitorial Services Contract as recommended by the Auxiliary Services Committee (*Exhibit P*)

6.19 CONSIDER Approval to Purchase Water Cooler/Bottle Filling Stations as recommended by the Auxiliary Services Committee (*Exhibit Q*)

6.20 CONSIDER Approval Request to Name the Media Center at E. Melvin Honeycutt Elementary "The Lori Mueller Media Center" as recommended by the Auxiliary Services Committee (*Exhibit R*)

6.21 CONSIDER Child Nutrition Services Contract Extensions for the 2022-23 School Year as recommended by the Auxiliary Services Committee (*Exhibit S*)

7. DISCUSSION AGENDA: Auxiliary Services Committee Report - Deanna Jones

8. DISCUSSION AGENDA: Student Services Committee Report - Susan Williams

9. DISCUSSION AGENDA: Budget/Finance Committee Report - Carrie Sutton

9.01 CONSIDER Approval of Superintendent's Recommended Budget 2022-2023 as recommended by the Finance Committee (*Exhibit T*)

Dr. Connelly presented a summary to support the recommended budget. Clyde Locklear added brief highlighting remarks. Mr. McKellar commented on his support and Ms. Musgrave agreed adding how teachers' support and the low-performing schools (PACE schools) are shown as a priority. Mr. McKellar concluded with next steps: Outreach to the community explaining the budget and each year have a review/audit of proposals vs. actuals. Upon a motion by Carrie Sutton, seconded by Susan Williams, the Board unanimously approved the Superintendent's Recommended Budget 2022-2023.

10. DISCUSSION AGENDA: Policy Committee Report - Charles McKellar

10.01 CONSIDER Approval of Revised Policy 6141, COVID-19 Face Coverings (*Exhibit U*)

With the motion by Donna Vann seconded by Nathan Warfel, the motion passed by the following vote:

In favor: West, Chisolm, Vann, Warfel and Williams

Against: Jones, McKellar, Musgrave and Sutton

11. DISCUSSION AGENDA: Curriculum Committee Report - Donna Vann

12. DISCUSSION AGENDA: Personnel Committee Report - Nathan Warfel

13. DISCUSSION AGENDA: Legislative Committee Report - Judy Musgrave

13.01 CONSIDER Request for the Electoral Redistricting Consultants to Provide Two Additional Options (*Exhibit V*)

Upon a motion by Susan Williams, seconded by Donna Vann, the Board voted unanimously for the Electoral Redistricting Consultants to Provide Two Additional Options.

14. ADDITIONAL BUSINESS: None

15. CLOSING ITEMS

15.01 Board Members' Update (Limited to comments regarding school system business and school systems events only)

Donna Vann mentioned the E.E. Smith Fire Academy Graduation, Deanna Jones attended as well – an awesome program. Susan Williams mentioned the Eagle Feather Ceremony – impressive, incredible performance, scholarships were awarded, very eye-opening. Dr. Connelly added, according to DPI and the Governor's office CCS is the only school system in NC that host such an event for Native American students.

15.02 Chairman's Update

On behalf of the Board, we want to thank our student officers for staying to the end of our meeting, thank you for your leadership as well as the student voices who shared their experiences with us on tonight. A night full of recognitions, both local and statewide, you make Cumberland County Schools proud. In the month of May we celebrate various observances among our employees, we appreciate what you do for our students. Graduation season is here! Class 2022, congratulations on achieving this milestone. To the Board members and staff, rest up we have many graduation ceremonies ahead of us. Have a Happy Memorial Day and we'll see you during our next Board Meeting on June 14, 2022.

15.03 ADJOURNMENT

With no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 7:49 PM.

Dr. Marvin Connelly, Superintendent