

Next Step

A report on Board action
Cumberland County Board of Education
Virtual Regular Meeting
May 12, 2020

Superintendent Updates the Board

Superintendent Dr. Connelly opened his comments by expressing his pride in Cumberland County School employees for having “gone above and beyond, doing everything possible to support our students and families through this unique circumstance.”

- He shared that 20 schools in the district were recently recognized by the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction for demonstrating military-friendly practices and a commitment to military students and families. As 2020 Purple Star Award winners, the schools will receive a special banner with the designation during a virtual awards ceremony. While Dr. Connelly congratulated this year’s award-winning schools, he said that next year, “the goal is that all 87 schools will receive this recognition.”
- He announced that Morganton Road Elementary School teacher Tamika Walker Kelly is the newly elected president of the North Carolina Association of Educators (NCAE) and extended to her his best wishes.

Dr. Connelly’s COVID-19 Impact Update

- Through an Interlocal Agreement, the County of Cumberland has reached out to CCS about operating mobile test collection sites for the COVID-19 virus at some schools. The location sites will be based, in part, upon elevated disease incidents and/or high-risk populations or neighborhoods. Dr. Connelly further stated that the County will utilize parking lots at the identified schools and bear full responsibility for the operation of the mobile test collection sites.
- In his graduation update to the Board, Dr. Connelly reported that the Graduation Planning Team made up of all high school principals and approximately 40 senior leaders have virtually met. The seniors expressed how strongly they felt about being able to walk across the stage to receive their diplomas. Dr. Connelly said that district administrators want to honor the seniors’ request. Contingent upon Governor Roy Cooper’s direction and access to the Crown Auditorium amidst the COVID-19 graduations, he said that “we are planning to provide the opportunity for principals to invite graduating seniors to

Board of Education

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Superintendent
Dr. Marvin Connelly

‘walk across the stage’ to receive their diplomas between July 15 – 23.” He added that because of current COVID-19 restrictions, the district will not be able to have the graduation ceremonies in May, as scheduled. The district hopes to provide a limited number of tickets to parents and guardians of graduating seniors, pending guidance from Gov. Cooper and the Cumberland County Health Department. If social distancing and other Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) precautions are still in place, the district is working to provide a way for guests to view the graduation ceremonies via livestream or through another media platform. Dr. Connelly said that through the district’s commitment to honor its seniors, each graduating senior will receive a special cord of resilience to wear as they receive their diploma. Furthermore, the district has approved a distribution plan for senior regalia. While practicing social distancing rules, each senior and their family will receive a pick-up schedule and a yard sign from CCS recognizing them as a proud 2020 graduate. Dr. Connelly ended his remarks by acknowledging how inspiring the patience and grace demonstrated by CCS students, parents and their families during this pandemic has been. He thanked CCS’ premier professionals and the community “for pitching in and doing some ‘heavy lifting’ on behalf of our students.”

Superintendent’s Recommended Budget for 2020-2021 Approved

Dr. Connelly’s recommended budget for the 2020-2021 school year was approved. After examining current expenditures, repurposing more than \$1.5 million and deferring more than \$4.9 million worth of identified needs, the Board will take his recommendation of asking for an increase of \$4.2 million in local funding from the Cumberland County Board of Commissioners. Of this request, \$1,360,796 is due to legislative impact, \$912,000 is targeted to support low-performing schools and \$1,093,875 is earmarked to support the district’s premier professionals. Dr. Connelly said the budget request further supports actions outlined in The Cumberland Commitment: Strategic Plan 2024.

Administrative Recommendations

Exceptional Children’s Coordinator
EC/ERC Kimberly Hash

Board Approves Waiver for Student Participation in Extracurriculars & Organizations

Because of the impact of COVID-19 school closures, members of the Board approved waiving the 2.0 GPA or minimum of 70 grade average requirement of Policy 3620, Paragraph B.1 for the first semester of the 2020-2021 school year only. The waiver further states that if a student is promoted in 2019-2020, they will be eligible for participation in extracurricular and co-curricular activities, including athletics, for the first semester of 2020-2021. After the first semester, the policy’s existing academic eligibility requirements will go back into effect.

Board Officers Provide Update

Acknowledging May 4 – 8 was Teacher and Staff Appreciation Week in CCS, the School Board Vice

Chair Greg West expressed the Board's gratitude toward educators throughout the district for showing "resilience, resourcefulness, creativity and above all, dedication to our students ... you quickly jumped into action, delivering education to our children in a completely new way with very little time to plan or prepare ... You continue to support our students and provide them with nutritious meals and other resources. We have some of the best educators and staff in the country."

Board Chair Alicia Chisolm went on to applaud the Class of 2020's determination, perseverance and positivity during this pandemic and congratulate them on graduating. Afterward, she exercised a point of privilege by first thanking Dr. Connelly, his Cabinet and Extended Cabinet members and all other staff who have remotely worked extra-long hours during this pandemic to keep the district safe and maintain essential operations. "Because of all that, I am making a personal request of all of the board members to respect their time and energy and to avoid passing new work or questions from the community onto them without first letting Dr. Connelly or me know. We strive to be transparent and responsive to our public in all that we do, but during this unique emergency, we need to ensure that the vital work of the school system comes first. Thank you, board members, for your consideration, and thank you again, Dr. Connelly and the full staff of this marvelous school system."

Chisolm ended her portion of the update by sharing the date of the next regular Board Meeting, which is Tuesday, June 9, 2020.

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