

CASWELL COUNTY BOARD OF EDUCATION MINUTES
 Joint Meeting with Board of Caswell County Commissioners
 February 22, 2021

The Caswell County Board of Education met in a joint meeting with The Caswell County Board of Commissioners on Monday, February 22, 2021 at 9:00 a.m. The virtual meeting was conducted with the following members of the Caswell County Board of Commissioners present: Chairman David Owen, Vice Chair Jeremiah Jefferies, William Carter, John Dickerson, Nathaniel Hall, Rick McVey, and Steve Oestreicher and Bryan Miller, County Manager. The Caswell County Schools Board of Education present: Chairman Wayne Owen, Vice Chair Gladys Garland, Donna Hudson, Tracy Stanley, Vennie Beggarly, and Trudy Blackwell. Mel Battle was absent. Others virtually present included Superintendent Dr. Sandra Carter and Finance Director Amy Chandler. Connie Kimrey recorded the minutes for the Board of Education and Paula Semester, Clerk to the Board of County Commissioners, recorded the detailed minutes for the County Commissioners. *(Note: The public could attend via Zoom.)*

I. A. CALL TO ORDER

The Board of Education meeting was called to order by Chairman Wayne Owen at 9:00 a.m. (The Commissioners opened the meeting and were the host via Zoom.) Commissioner Chairman David Owen welcomed the Board of Education to the meeting.

Dr. Carter shared a PowerPoint presentation which included answers to the questions provided from the Board of County Commissioners.

An overview of school finances was shared which included K-12 funding sources for 2019-20, (Current Expense, State Expenditures, Local Expenditures, Federal Expenditures, and Local and Fund Balance History).

An overview of State versus Local role in public school funding was shared referencing General Statute 115C-408(b)

- “.....it is the policy of the State of North Carolina to provide from State revenue sources the instructional expenses for current operations of the public school system as defined in the standard course of study.
- It is the policy of the State of North Carolina that the facilities requirements for a public education system will be met by county governments.”

Per Pupil Expenditure Ranking for 2019-20 was shared.

Caswell County Schools	State	State	Fed.	Fed.	Local	Local	Total	Total
	PPE	Rank	PPE	Rank	PPE	Rank	PPE	Rank
	8,921.91	13	696.54	51	1,347.92	102	10,966.37	27

PPE = Per Pupil Funding is received from three sources: Federal, State, and Local funding.

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(Ranking is based on 115 school districts in North Carolina (highest funding is # 1 to lowest funding #115).

Local K12 Revenue Notable Data (2019/20)

- Statewide \$2,254.92 average per pupil local revenue
- Highest Local funding per-pupil Chapel-Hill/Carrboro City Schools (\$6,222.77)
- Caswell County Schools \$1,347.92
- Lowest Local funding per pupil Robeson County Schools (\$742.80)

State Funding Categorical Allotments

Funding to purchase services necessary to address the needs of a specific population or service.

Different formulas to calculate amount received. Examples:

- At-Risk Student Services
- Transportation – based on budget rating formula using the following factors: Pupil’s transported, eligible operating expenditures, number of buses operated.
- Disadvantaged Student Supplemental Funding
- Low-Wealth – based on a funding formula set by legislature of a County’s ability to generate revenue and if the County is meeting the minimum effort. The county must fund current expense at no less than 95% of the average local current expense appropriations per student for the 3 prior fiscal years. The LEA would lose this supplemental funding if minimum effort is not shown.
 - In 2019-20, Caswell County Schools received \$1,028,000 in low wealth funding to fund supplemental instructional support personnel (instructional coaches, program enhancement at the middle and high school)
 - In 2020-2021 low wealth funding was redirected to CRF funding – CCS lost \$73,000 of low wealth to use for COVID, but additional funding was not received to make up for the difference.

LEA and Charter School Funding

- Charter Schools receive funding based upon and from the LEA which the student otherwise would be assigned.
- State Funding:
 - LEAs receive money through allotments and funding formulas
 - Charter schools receive money in a per-pupil block grant
 - A proportionate share of all allotments are rolled up except for Limited English Proficiency and Exceptional Children.
 - This means that charters are receiving a portion of allotments for programs or grade spans that they do not serve (i.e. teacher assistants, CTE)
- LEAs must send local dollars to charter schools for each domiciled student enrolled in the charter school.
- In 2019-20, CCS sent approximately \$219,000 of our local funds to charter schools.

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Questions from the Board of County Commissioners and board responses were shared at this time. Those include:

Can some of the \$1.4 million go towards offsetting the tax increase that will be incurred by the taxpayers for the new school? (buses not running, drivers not being paid, etc.) A chart was shared (listed below to address the questions).

Source	Amount	Purpose
State Coronavirus Relief Funds -	\$1,326,914	Allocated across 11 allotments that each have their own set of spending parameters to be used for necessary expenditures incurred due to the public health emergency with respect to COVID-19. May not be used to account for revenue shortfalls. Expired December 30, 2020.
Federal CARES Act Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief Fund (ESSER)	\$822,064	Allocated across 3 allotments that each have their own set of spending parameters to be used for necessary expenditures incurred due to the public health emergency with respect to COVID-19. May not be used to supplant local and state dollars. Expires September 30, 2022
Federal Governor's Education Emergency Relief (GEER)	\$134,055	Allocated across 2 allotments that each have their own set of spending parameters to be used for necessary expenditures incurred due to the public health emergency with respect to COVID-19. May not be used to supplant local and state dollars. Expires September 30, 2022
Federal CARES Act Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief Fund II (ESSER II)	\$3,031,337	Planning Allotment-- Allowable uses of funds related to preventing, preparing for, and responding to COVID-19 to include addressing learning loss, preparing schools for reopening, and testing, repairing, and upgrading projects to improve air quality in school buildings and summer learning program. HB filed to require schools to operate a 6 week summer program for all K-12 students with no additional funding to be provided.

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For the first semester, what was the online absentee rate?

- The average daily absentee rate is 7.71% for the 2020-2021 school year. The average attendance rate was 92.29% through January 27, 2021.

If the online absentee rate was too high, how will the School Board address this issue?

- Attendance rates have been and continue to be monitored carefully.
- Teachers and school staff have worked diligently to implement engaging activities and incentives to encourage in class participation throughout the day.
- Students who are chronically absent or not participating in class are receiving letters home to parents and continue to receive support to try to engage in online classes.
- In addition to teachers and principals, school counselors are reaching out to families, as well as the school social worker.
- School resource officers are conducting wellness checks on students and families.
- School staff utilizes many varied forms of communication including traditional postal service mail, telephone, email, text, alert now messages, social media apps, private message, and other available online messaging services.

What is the School Board doing or planning to do to catch up the students who are falling behind?

- Reaching out to students and families to create opportunities for support and notify parents of student progress
- Pre assessments and analysis of student learning data to address student weaknesses and learning gaps
- Daily small group instruction and remediation to assist students in instructional needs
- Small group and individual tutoring offered by subject area
- At risk students have been identified, are monitored, and are offered added support
- School administrators are utilizing all staff possible to provide the maximum amount of remediation sessions
- Individual remediation and intervention provided as appropriate through the Multi-Tiered Systems of Support (MTSS)
- Extra time for assignment submission during the fall semester
- Principals have utilized individual contracts and agreements for special circumstances to assist students in catching up if needed
- Parent meetings and virtual parent conferences to inform parents of expectations and support available
- Schools have encouraged the use of mobile Hotspots to encourage as much participation in live instruction as possible
- Summer program opportunities to include high school credit recovery options and K-8 math and reading summer remediation
- Embedded spiral review throughout the course/subject area

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What is the School Board doing or planning to do to make sure the seniors are where they need to be? (Don't want the seniors to have a false hope when starting college.)

- Cross-referencing of seniors to see who are at-risk and create tailored support for these seniors.
- Continual contacts have been made with at-risk seniors to encourage them to attend tutoring in the subject areas of needed support.
- Consistent monitoring of at-risk seniors and priority have been given to seniors with a focus on credits needed to graduate.
- Some seniors received additional support such as credit recovery to help them prepare for graduation.
- Some senior's schedules were adjusted for additional support towards graduation which may have included changing an elective.
- Parent contacts have been made to increase support with student encouragement and motivation towards graduation.

What has been done for students with special needs?

- In addition to all services available above for all students , EC students continued to receive specialized designed instruction during remote learning based on their Individual Education Plan.
- All students with IEPs had Remote Learning Contingency Plans (RLCP), which are specialized plans for any time remote services may be required. The RLCPs were developed at the beginning of the year (with periodic reviews) to address the individual services that students would receive during remote instruction.
- EC staff continue to monitor the progress of students with IEPs. Progress monitoring data is used to support the needs of the students and will support future discussions if additional services may be needed for individual students who may not have made adequate progress towards their IEP goals

Where is the \$50,000 scholarship money going?

- The BOE voted to create a \$50,000 student scholarship fund with the Community Foundation.
- The Community Foundation provided yield of 5% interest (3.75%), compared to other banks ranging from yield of 0.2% to 0.01%. Based upon the 3.75% yield, yearly scholarship amounts utilizing interest only could be up to \$1,875.
- Scholarships will only be awarded to BYSHS graduates/seniors who plan to go into the education field.

How many people remain on the payroll with the School system? Number of staff before COVID and after COVID.

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- January 2020 -- 480 employees received paychecks including substitutes and BOE members.
- January 2021 -- 355 employees received paychecks including substitutes and BOE members. Bus drivers are the only employees not receiving checks at this time.

(NOTE: John Dickerson and County Manager Bryan Miller exited the meeting at approximately 10:05 a.m.)

Upon review of the PowerPoint, Dr. Carter answered additional questions from the Board of Commissioners.

Action: The Board of Education was asked to share information showing metrics of success in regards to how the school system is measuring students who are falling behind and with the continuous improvement methods to show how effective these programs have been.

Action: The Board of Education was asked to share a chart of how many students participated virtually or used flash drives during the current year (up until now) and also a chart of how many have opted to return beginning March 1, 2021.

Questions to the Board of County Commissioners from the Board of Education were also addressed as follows:

What are your positions for teacher supplements? The last appropriation from the county was 2017-2018 for \$300,000.

The Board of County Commissioners (BOC) responded that although they realized this is important it is difficult to fund this especially with a budget deficit. Discussion took place regarding teacher turnover and the Board of Education (BOE) responded that teachers leave for various reasons; however, a percentage is due to other counties offering a supplement and in some situations a bonus. A chart was shared with surrounding districts and the supplements that are offered. Those include:

Caswell	\$0	Randolph	\$9,661
Orange	\$9,699	Guilford	\$10,459
Chapel Hill	\$10,270	Granville	\$5,415
Rockingham	\$3,679	Durham	\$10,074
Person	\$8,532	Alamance	\$7,615
Wake	\$14,295	Chatham	\$8,775

ADM (Average Daily Membership) Comparable Districts include:

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Madison	\$1,000	Polk	\$2,274
Warren	\$2,900	Thomasville City	\$3,389
Halifax	\$2,377		

Action: The Board of Education was asked to provide a listing and show data of the reasons for teachers leaving.

What is the status of the broadband internet for the whole county?

The BOC responded that the county cannot provide the service but can provide the infrastructure. At this time, funding is not available to do so; however, areas in the county have been identified and companies that are willing can come into the county and provide service. Correspondence has been shared with local and state legislatures of the need for funding to facilitate this for the county. Another question was asked if the maps included areas that have satellite service but it does not work. The BOC was unsure if that was included.

Action: The Board of County Commissioners will share the map information for the broadband with the BOE.

Are you willing to meet on a quarterly basis? If so, can a schedule be developed.

All were in agreement and felt it would be beneficial to meet on a quarterly basis.

Action: Superintendent and County Manager will work on making a schedule for quarterly meetings.

Will you be providing board members with the responses you have compiled?

Action: The BOC will provide written response to the questions from the BOE.

Additional questions:

The BOE asked if in the event necessary, will the BOC help with programs for the summer to assist our students.

The BOC responded that they are not aware of the funding that is available and currently there is not an excess of extra funds noting as a county there is not a lot of revenue. The BOE was asked to keep the BOC informed and let them know in the event of needs.

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Discussion took place on the unusual year for both boards and felt that both boards have done all they can to continue to work under difficult situations and take things seriously to provide safe environments for all employees.

Action: The BOC requested a copy of the PowerPoint presentation.

A Board of Commissioner member shared additional questions he was presented with from community members within his district. Those include:

- Concerns with a large percentage of the high school failing and asked if the BOE can give details. It was shared that within one class 80% of the students are failing. Dr. Carter responded that this information shared has been listed by grade span (not on one particular classroom). Every class is monitored and remediation opportunities are given.
- Why are so many teachers leaving Caswell County. (The response to this question was addressed earlier in the meeting). Discussion took place with both boards having difficulties with surrounding counties offering higher pay and/or supplements.
- Will all students who return be in the same class (i.e., those that did flash drives and may be behind vs. all remote/online and have succeeded?) Dr. Carter shared that every situation will not be the same and the numbers will be looked to see what is best for the student and what will work the best at each grade level.
- What happened to the teacher workdays and snow days that are built into the calendar? Dr. Carter shared that Caswell County complies with the 1025 hours of instruction required by the State. As in the past, teacher workdays have been built into the calendar and at this time, the students have not lost anything noting that even on the days out, remote instruction has continued. The two days that were used recently for teacher workdays allowed the teachers to setup their classrooms for the return of in person learning on March 1, 2021.
- How do you plan to get students caught up? (Answers to this question was addressed in the PowerPoint presentation). Dr. Carter shared that all avenues will be looked into and the need for extra funding for social workers to provide mental and emotional support will be critical this year due to Covid and stress related situations. A BOE member asked the question “why does everyone think we are behind” and felt there is a misunderstanding noting that last school year the students were affected and those have went on to college and are succeeding.
- What happened to the COVID money (nothing done to prepare to return). Dr. Carter shared she disagreed with this comment noting that planning has taken place from the beginning to make sure all schools will be safe for the return of students. She shared examples of PPE equipment, additional school nurses, electronic thermometer readings, etc.)
- On January 25, why could the students not go back to school on the hybrid model rather than now in which they will return four days a week (elementary)? What is the difference? Dr. Carter responded that upon the date of the decision, the biggest concern was the percentage of positivity rates within the county and within the school system. We also had a higher number of staff who were out of school due to being under quarantine. With students remaining virtual, staff could continue to work if they tested positive or were in a quarantine situation.

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- Why is it so difficult to rent the Caswell County Civic Center? Concerns included the cost has increased and lack of participation to local businesses. Dr. Carter shared that, prior to Covid, the Civic Center lost approximately \$30,000 and we do not recoup this as utilities and janitorial expenses continue. The process to rent the Civic Center is very simple. 1) call the central office; 2) fill out an application; 3) and put down a deposit. Upon COVID, the Civic Center has not been available for rent, but once this has lifted it will be available for rental. Currently the high school staff are using the lobby and offices due to the construction. The large auditorium will still be available for rent once Covid has been lifted. It was shared from the BOE that if questions arise from community members to please ask them to contact the Superintendent or a board member so that these questions can be answered correctly and avoid a long awaited response. Dr. Carter shared that ongoing improvements have occurred at the Civic Center including replacing damaged seats, and upgrades to lighting and sound. Dr. Carter shared that prior to Covid, a grant was applied for and received in the amount of \$25,000 from the Dan River Foundation to hire an Art's Consultant to promote the art's at the Civic Center. We look forward to moving in that direction once things are back to normal.
- What is the status of the temporary classroom and is spending on track? Dr. Carter shared the temporary classrooms are completed and the building has been used to house teachers for virtual learning and used for onsite testing to assist with CDC (Center for Disease Control) guidelines. It has been used for its purpose and stayed within budget for completion.

Upon no further questions from either board the meeting was adjourned by the Board of County Commissioners.

At 11:07 a.m. Gladys Garland made motion, seconded by Trudy Blackwell, to adjourn the Board of Education meeting. The motion carried unanimously.

Wayne Owen
Chairman

Dr. Sandra Carter
Superintendent