

CASWELL COUNTY BOARD OF EDUCATION MINUTES

Special Called Meeting

July 22, 2020

The Caswell County Board of Education met in a special called meeting on Wednesday, July 22, 2020, at 1:00 p.m. in the Administration Building of Caswell County Schools. Members present: Chairman Gladys Garland, Vice Chair Wayne Owen, Donna Hudson, Ross Gwynn, Tracy Stanley, Vennie Beggarly, and Mel Battle. Others present include Superintendent Dr. Sandra Carter, Attorney Ron Bradsher, Medina Jones, Asst. Supt. Andrew Tyrrell, Carol Boaz, Amy Chandler, Julia Fair, Michelle Webster, Kim Meadows, Sonia Granado, Franchesca Gantt, Lisa O'Donnell, Stephanie Williamson, and Debra Ferrell with the Caswell Messenger (Note: some of the names listed attended the meeting virtually). Connie Kimrey recorded the minutes.

I. A. CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order by Chairman Garland and turned over to Superintendent Dr. Sandra Carter.

2020-2021 Review of Re-entry

Dr. Carter shared about the discussion held at the last meeting in which Plan B was approved and gave an overview of that plan. During the time of the last meeting and today survey results have been reviewed as well as announcements from Governor Roy Cooper as well as continued information and updates on COVID-19.

With the original Plan B which was approved, the decision was to allow elementary students (once safely in their classroom and six feet apart) the option to remove masks. Since Governor Roy Cooper's announcement the decision was made that all students and staff are to wear a mask unless a physician's medical note was provided.

Results were shared from parents and staff and it was questioned that a low response was submitted for staff. Dr. Carter shared that may be due to the fact that the majority of the teachers are out for the summer and did not check their email.

Dr. Carter shared information on so many avenues that are being directed to the school systems in which to follow and noted examples of purchasing a sprayer to clean classrooms, etc. and now the CDC guidelines suggest not using them.

The survey results indicated an overwhelming concern for safety.

Dr. Carter shared that she would like the board to consider Plan C for the first nine-weeks of schools to give time to put concerns to the side for the social and emotional aspect as well as allow time to transition back and to allow parents time to plan daycare assistance. She noted that the board will meet on September 28, 2020 and to use that date as a benchmark to review the implementation of Plan C and look at how students are progressing and send out another survey at that time and to evaluate protocols.

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The PowerPoint was shared with the board and time was allowed for questions.

Dr. Carter shared that the CARES fund will be used to purchase additional hotspots in the county that have internet connectivity to assist parents and students. Contact has been made to area churches who are interested in assisting in this area.

Concerns were shared that the hotspot will not work with satellite internet. Dr. Carter wasn't sure if that was accurate or not. Dr. Carter shared that teachers and principals will have input on scheduling and will change depending on the need. A draft of an elementary, middle and high school schedule was shared with the board to just give an example of what a student day will look like. Teachers will be teaching every block.

Concerns were mentioned to have technology personnel available for all schools. Also, a question was asked if a student's internet was not working on a particular day what would they do. Dr. Carter shared that they would be able to check their assignments.

Dr. Carter shared that the first week of school would be used as orientation for students and parents and review plans for each school's specific needs.

Concerns shared included paychecks for bus drivers, mechanics, maintenance personnel, custodians and cafeteria workers noting that if students are not in school what will they do. Dr. Carter shared at this time she did not want to put specific guidelines on these positions; however, these areas will need to be addressed soon. Other concerns included athletics and not waiting for the state to make a decision but for the board to move ahead with a decision noting it may not be worth the risk.

Other concerns included the high school classes which will require some "hands on" learning and noted that nine weeks is a long time. Dr. Carter expressed that there may be some virtual learning and hopefully these classes can be shifted to the spring semester.

Board Attorney Ron Bradsher shared concerns if staff is furloughed. Dr. Carter shared that there is still Covid-19 Relief funding through the fall. This is one possibility that can be looked into. Board Attorney Ron Bradsher shared that the state has not offered much guidance and continues to be in the "talking" stage.

One suggestion was to make sure the nurses are involved with planning and safety issues and guidelines and to start now on safety procedures to train our staff.

A comment was made that suggested that some think we are depriving the students of public education that they are entitled to. Board Attorney Ron Bradsher shared that we are obligated to provide an education but not obligated to provide buildings. Attorney Bradsher shared that Plan C makes the most sense at this time.

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Other concerns included the access on Chromebooks and hope that the IT Department is keeping watch on this as there will be more checked out. Dr. Carter shared that all of the Chromebooks have a program on them that indicates inappropriate use and alerts the IT Department.

Further discussion took place among board members of the need to go to Plan C. Dr. Carter recommended approval to change from Plan B to Plan C for the beginning of the 2020-2021 school year and continue for the first nine weeks with remote learning. The board will reevaluate at the September 27, 2020 meeting. Wayne Owen moved, seconded by Mel Battle to approve moving from Plan B to Plan C for the beginning of the 2020-2021 school year with remote learning. The motion carried 6-1 with Tracy Stanley voting "No."

XI. ADJOURN

Ross Gwynn made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 2:30 p.m., Mel Battle seconded the motion and it carried unanimously. The next regular meeting of the Board of Education will be held on July 27, 2020, at 9:00 a.m. in the Caswell County Schools Administration Building.

Gladys Garland
Chairman

Dr. Sandra Carter
Superintendent