

The Rockbridge County School Board held their regular meeting on Tuesday, September 10, 2019 at the County of Rockbridge Administration Building.

Present: Chairman Wendy Lovell; Trustees, Corey Berkstresser, Heather Hostetter, David McDaniel, and Neil Whitmore; Superintendent Phillip Thompson and Clerk Rhonda Humphries.

CALL TO ORDER

Chairman Lovell called the meeting to order at 5:00 p.m.

CHANGES TO THE AGENDA: None

STUDENT / STAFF RECOGNITION:

Superintendent Thompson introduced Ms. Sharon Myrick, Retired Teacher, Rockbridge County High School, and Dr. Lenna Ojure, Retired Professor of Education, Washington and Lee University who wrote the booklet, "Innovations in Learning" representative of support to Project Based Learning (PBL).

- Ms. Myrick stated that the inspiration for the project was to share two changes happening in the Rockbridge County Public Schools division. The first change is the training for teachers in the form of PBL, which focuses on student-centered learning, student needs and interests, student choice, and voice, which results in student energy and in turn invigorates teachers. The second change is the opening up and welcoming of community people in schools. She shared that partnerships are being formed with school staff, students, and the community. She reflected that she feels this is a great opportunity for students to learn outside of the school wall. She expressed her hope that the booklet will be widely distributed to community members and spark greater interest in what partnerships could be formed.
- Dr. Ojure shared her sentiments that the booklet reflects how successful the PBL program as a result of the interviews of teachers and students, and telling their stories. The interviews revealed that students are learning content, learning how to work in groups and how to plan projects. She stated that she feels the booklet captures the voice of teachers and students. She also stated that teachers had a chance to review the booklet before it was final.
 - Chairman Lovell, on behalf of the Rockbridge County School Board, expressed appreciation for telling the story of our teachers and students.

PUBLIC COMMENT: None

CONSENT AGENDA

Upon recommendation by Chairman Lovell, motion by Trustee Berkstresser, seconded by Trustee Whitmore, the board approved the following items on the Consent Agenda:

- Minutes: 1) August 13, 2019 [Regular Meeting]; 2) August 26, 2019 [Special Meeting]
- Field Trip and Bus Use Requests
- Fundraiser Requests
- Application for Use of Facilities
- Enrollment Update
- **Appointments and Resignations**

Appointments

Support Staff

Mary Lupsha, 21st Century Grant Site Coordinator, Maury River Middle School,
2019 – 2020 school year

Christina Harlow, Teacher Assistant, Mountain View Elementary School,
2019 – 2020 school year

Tracy Dunlap, Contracted Bus Driver, 2019 – 2020 school year

Melissa Bennington, School Nurse, Fairfield Elementary School, 2019 – 2020 school year

Wendy Tolley, Teacher Assistant, Natural Bridge Elementary School,
2019 – 2020 school year

Substitute Bus Driver

Dana Ramsey

Car Drivers

Renita Nelson

Richard Humphries

Deborah Staats

Car Aide
Pam Harris**Food Service Workers**Mary Arthur, Food Service Worker, Fairfield Elementary School, 2019-2020 school year
(time-sheet)Amy Harris, Food Service Worker, Rockbridge County High School, 2019-2020 school year
(time-sheet)**Substitute Teachers**

Deborah Perlozzo

Joy Lively

Ron Loy

Robbie Chaplin

Substitute Nurses

Sarah Clark

Amelia Richards

Coaches**RCHS**

Elena Correa, Girls' JV Soccer Coach, 2019 – 2020 school year

Club Sponsors

Mary Holton, RCCHS, Newspaper

Brian Hamelman, RCCHS, Yearbook

Amanda Burks, RCCHS, Forensics

Chris McGrath, RCCHS, Academic Team

Patrick Bradley, RCCHS, Academic Team Assistant

Pam St. Clair, RCCHS, SCA

Davina Copsy, RCCHS, NHS

Cynthia Duffield, RCCHS, Drama Club

Amy Hinkle, RCCHS, Destination Imagination

Elizabeth Schmidt, CES, Gifted Coordinator

Michelle Hughes, CES, Destination Imagination

Tracey Hall, FES, Gifted Coordinator

Cathy Whitesell, FES, Destination Imagination

Gail Clark, MVES, Gifted Coordinator

Beth McElroy, NBES, Gifted Coordinator

Sarah Schultz, MRMS, Destination Imagination

Amber Lewis, MRMS, Yearbook

Candace Kincaid, MRMS, NJHS

Sarah Edwards, MRMS, Gifted Coordinator

Cyndi Tucker, MRMS, SPED Coordinator

Tasha Polly, MRMS, Activities Coordinator

Resignation**Support Staff**

Scott Lemmer, Technology Specialist, Central Office, resigned effective August 30, 2019

Jenna Ryan, Teacher Assistant, Natural Bridge Elementary School, resigned effective
August 28, 2019• **Business Items**

- Approval for new grant appropriations to Fund 50 in the amount of \$200,000.00.
- Approval for CIP appropriation from the Rockbridge County Government Escrow account in the amount of \$363,500.00
- Approve Monthly Financials in the amount of \$2,518,602.80.

BUDGET PLANNING: No update.**COMMITTEE REPORTS:** None

INSTRUCTIONAL REPORT:

Ms. Lori Teague, Principal, Mountain View Elementary School, and Ms. Sally Moore, Teacher, Mountain View Elementary School, provided information on the Therapy Dog Pilot Program that began for the 2019-2020 school year at Mountain View Elementary School. Lass, MVE Therapy Dog, was also in attendance. Ms. Teague expressed her appreciation to the Rockbridge County School Board and to Superintendent Thompson for taking a chance on the program. She shared her belief that Lass has had an impact on the social-emotional health of the entire Mountain View Elementary School student body. She further explained that after the South River Market incident, the staff began to process what they could do for each other and for their students, in dealing with anxiety and stress and social-emotional health. Ms. Moore had brought Lass to school previously and thought that students reacted well to him. Specifically, after the event in May, the realization that Lass was providing support to the students and staff as well. Ms. Teague and Ms. Moore researched, and followed, the process for certifying Lass as a Therapy Dog through Blue Ridge Mountain Therapy Dogs and Carol Metts, Trainer. Ms. Teague expressed her appreciation to Ms. Moore for her dedication to this project. Lass worked with the PETC class during the summer under the observation of Ms. Metts. Lass will be present in the Math Classes for the 2019-2020 school year. The goals for Lass are: 1) support in the regular classroom, guidance, and principal's office; 2) broaden PETC Program. Ms. Teague reflected that she is excited to hear of positive ideas for utilizing the Therapy Dog Program.

- Ms. Moore explained that Lass has a daily routine that consists of: 1) greeting students in the hallway in the morning and at the end of the day; 2) assisting students to deliver attendance to the office and interact with staff; 3) assisting in the classroom as students seem to concentrate better when she is in the room; and 4) being present in the PETC classroom.
- Nicole Wilhelm and Kellee Phillips, Mountain View Elementary School PETC Teachers, reflected that Lass works on social-emotional needs with the children by promoting eye contact for attention and group interaction as Lass is the center of attention at times, providing a reading challenge as students like to read out loud, and enticement for attendance to see Lass at Mountain View Elementary School.

Mr. Mike Craft, Principal, Rockbridge County High School, and Ms. Rhonda Pedigo, School Counselor, provided an update on the Dual Graduate Program. Ms. Pedigo reported that there are currently 255 students enrolled in the Dual Enrollment classes for credit. She stated that students who complete the full 62 credit hours of approved courses will earn an Associate of Arts and Sciences (AAS) Degree in General Studies from Dabney S. Lancaster Community College. This degree is intended to provide the first two years of student for many four-year college or university majors. The AAS in General Studies is commonly known as the "transfer degree".

- Trustee Whitmore inquired about the cost is for the 2019-2020 school year.
 - Mr. Craft stated that there is no cost from the community college this year. The cost for the 2020-2021 school year will be determined by VCCS and State Budget.
- Chairman Lovell inquired if the number is known of students who go to community college or four-year college using the credits obtained at RCHS.
 - Ms. Pedigo shared that the dual enrollment option could save \$2,500 on tuition per student in the first semester of college.
- Mr. Craft stated that the classes are a mixture of students, not just those who are taking dual enrollment classes.
- Mr. Hand stated that there are currently 13 AP courses in conjunction with 20 dual enrollment courses at Rockbridge County High School. He further explained that scores are vital in AP courses and that dual enrollment courses are easily transferred.
- Superintendent Thompson reflected that in addition to students potentially graduating with an Associate's Degree, there are students graduating from four-year colleges who did so a semester early because of dual enrollment and carrying credits from high school. He emphasized that the student has to be willing to put in the work to utilize the opportunity for dual enrollment.
- Trustee McDaniel inquired if there are anticipated courses to develop more local partnerships and internships, specifically for CTE students. He stressed the importance of students to be able to obtain certification while in high school.
 - Mr. Craft responded that there continues to be community interaction with hopes to build into partnerships and internships. He also noted that there have not been any academic sacrifices because of the dual enrollment classes.

INFORMATIONAL ITEMS:

Mr. David Daniels, Director of Financial Services, provided information on the Purchasing and Surplus Manual. He stated that he has previously presented the small purchase guidelines and, from discussions with staff, developed the Purchasing and Surplus Manual. The purpose of the manual is to clarify procedures to be used for all contracts to which the Rockbridge County School Board is a party.

Mr. Haywood Hand, Assistant Superintendent, provided information on the Teacher Advisory Council (TAC), which is part of the Project Based Learning (PBL) Program in Rockbridge County Public Schools. He shared the following:

- The purpose of the Division PBL Implementation Team is to facilitate and provide direction to the PBL Leadership Team while focusing on division-wide PBL implementation.
- The purpose of the PBL Leadership Team is to guide, support and encourage PBL within individual schools and across the school division.
- The purpose of the Teacher Advisory Council (TAC) is to provide a structure that ensures the daily operations meet the mission of Rockbridge County Public Schools. He stated Dr. Melanie Falls and Mr. Tim Martino have been charged with the leadership of the TAC, which met once before the end of the 2018-2019 school year, and is now meeting monthly. The TAC has a representative of each school, upon recommendation from their principal. These representatives were the first staff member at their school to receive PBL training. One of the functions of the TAC is to ensure that there is time built into the calendar to allow more time for PBL projects, via summer or after-school activities. Mr. Hand stated that he anticipates presenting the 2020-2021 calendar as an informational item at the October board meeting.

Mr. Hand presented the document, "PBLWorks", which was generated by the RCPS PBL Implementation Team and partners at PBLWorks. The document will be released formally to teachers on September 11, 2019. The document illustrates the Ambition Statement for PBL in Rockbridge County. The document is representative that the three groups work together to achieve the goals and initiatives of PBL for Rockbridge County Public Schools.

- Chairman Lovell expressed her sentiment that it has allowed for collaboration and leadership opportunities for staff and expressed her appreciation for the work being done.

ACTION ITEMS:

Upon recommendation by Chairman Lovell, motion by Trustee Hostetter, and passed by a 5-0 roll call vote, the Board approved the waiver of the required thirty (30) days advance notice to all members and agreed to vote on the renegotiated Superintendent's contract during this meeting, as provided for under Virginia Code section 22.1-60(D).

Upon recommendation by Chairman Lovell, motion by Trustee McDaniel, and passed by a 5-0 roll call vote, in recognition of Dr. Thompson's outstanding performance, the Board approved the reappointment and employment of Dr. Thompson at the expiration of his current term for a new term of four (4) years as Division Superintendent beginning July 1, 2020 and ending June 30, 2024; and that the board direct the Chair to execute the contract on behalf of the board.

- Chairman Lovell expressed her appreciation to Dr. Thompson for the year to come and the continued four years of leadership of Rockbridge County Public Schools.
- Dr. Thompson expressed his appreciation to the School Board Members for entrusting him with the responsibility to continue on with the great work that he feels the division has been doing the past several of years. He stated that he feels extremely fortunate to work with some of the best across the school division in respect to students, teachers, staff, and administrators and feels there is on-going collaboration and great things happening in Rockbridge County Public Schools.

NEW BUSINESS: None

SCHOOL BOARD

There will be a joint meeting of the Rockbridge County School Board and the Rockbridge County Board of Supervisors on Tuesday, September 17, 2019 at 5:00 p.m. for the purpose of discussion. The meeting will be held at the Rockbridge County School Board Office, 2893 Collierstown Road, Lexington, Virginia.

Superintendent Thompson shared that November has been designated by the VSBA as "Take Your Legislator to School Month".

Superintendent Thompson shared that the 2019 VSBA Annual Convention will be held in Williamsburg, Virginia beginning from November 20, 2019 through November 22, 2019.

The next regular meeting of the Rockbridge County School Board will be on Tuesday, October 8, 2019 / 5:00 PM / Location: County of Rockbridge Administration Building, 150 South Main Street, Lexington, Virginia.

ADJOURNMENT

Upon motion by Trustee McDaniel, seconded by Trustee Whitmore, and passed by 5-0 vote, the meeting was adjourned at 5:44 p.m.



Wendy W. Lovell, Chairman



Rhonda B. Humphries, Clerk of the Board