

The Rockbridge County School Board held a special meeting on Thursday, November 14, 2019 at the Rockbridge County School Board Office.

Present: Chairman Wendy Lovell; Trustees, Heather Hostetter, David McDaniel, and Neil Whitmore; Superintendent Phillip Thompson; Deputy Clerk Haywood Hand. Absent: Trustee Corey Berkstresser.

Board of Supervisors Members Present: R.W. Day, J.M. Higgins, A.J. Lewis, II, D.E. Lyons; Spencer Suter, County Administrator and Clerk to Board; Steve Bolster, County Director of Fiscal Services. Absent: D.W. Hinty

CALL TO ORDER

School Board Chairman Lovell called the meeting to order at 5:02 p.m.

MEETING OBJECTIVES

Dr. Thompson stated that the school board and staff will provide detailed information about the programs the budget helps to fund.

RCPS PROGRAMMING OVERVIEW – ACADEMICS AND CAREER & TECHNICAL EDUCATION

Mr. Tim Martino, Director of K12 Curriculum and Instruction, provided information on the CTE program and noted that each student must be college or career-ready upon graduation.

Mr. Haywood Hand, Assistant Superintendent, provided information on the dual graduation and dual enrollment programs. He stated that it is anticipated that the school division will have a student, or students, graduate from Rockbridge County High School with an associate's degree from Dabney S. Lancaster Community College (DSLCC). He also reviewed ACT and SAT test score results while noting that Rockbridge County High School students scored above the state average.

- Supervisor Lewis inquired how long Rockbridge County High School has had dual enrollment.
 - Mr. Hand responded that dual enrollment has been in place but that the new program offers sixty college credits in applied science, to allow for a full associate's degree upon graduation. He also stated that there are currently eleven to fourteen eligible students. Students can still acquire a general studies certification, which equates to one year of college.
- Supervisor Higgins inquired as to what four-year colleges students generally apply.
 - Mr. Hand stated that most Rockridge County High School students apply to colleges within an hour or so from home, including Virginia Tech, James Madison, The University of Virginia, Liberty University, Radford University, Bridgewater College, and Roanoke College.
 - Mr. Tim Martino stated that many students take advantage of the program and take the college-credentialed courses during high school.
 - Dr. Thompson stated that Dr. John Rainone, President of DSLCC, waived the tuition and fees for the current academic year, and that the Commonwealth is attempting to establish a uniform fee schedule for next year.

Mr. Paige Owens, Supervisor of Career and Technical Education, provided information about the CTE programs. He stated that CTE has two major initiatives: 1) work-based learning opportunities, and 2) CTE Credentialing. He further stated that each student must have the opportunity to receive work-based learning experiences, noting that 250 students are getting work-based credentialing. He stated that all students must take Economics and Personal Finance classes which qualify for meeting the credentialing requirement. He stated that community partners involved with the CTE programs include DSLCC for evening HVAC courses. He also stated that the staff of Rockbridge County Public Schools, in coordination with the Rockbridge County Emergency Services is working towards expansion of the EMT program to include Firefighter I and II training, referring to a recent survey which reflected interest from an estimated ninety students. He also provided an overview of business/community partners who are involved with the CTE programs.

- Supervisor Lewis inquired if there are students from other schools participating in the HVAC program.
 - Mr. Owens stated that the program is open to other schools but that there are no other schools participating at this time.
- Supervisor Lewis stated that private funds are contributing to the education of students in Rockbridge County with the public/private partnership arrangement.

Mr. Owens provided a review of new courses that are being considered for the 2020-2021 academic year, including feeder programs at Maury River Middle School.

- Chairman Lovell expressed her appreciation to the board for their assistance in making past improvements at Maury River Middle School which has enabled the feeder programs to thrive.

DIVISION-WIDE FEASIBILITY STUDY PROGRESS

Dr. Thompson provided an update on the school division's feasibility study and noted that a draft should be ready in January or February 2020. He extended an invitation to the Board of Supervisors to attend the presentation of the draft.

ATHLETIC FIELD UPDATE

Mr. Randy Walters, Director of Transportation and Maintenance, provided an update on the Maury River Middle School Practice Field, noting that the goal is to be prepared for seed in the spring.

- Supervisor Higgins requested clarification on the funding mechanism.
 - Dr. Thompson explained that the funding is in a silo in the escrow reserve fund.
- Supervisor Higgins inquired on the status of the track at Rockbridge County High School.
 - Dr. Thompson stated that the process has been slowed, because there has been community discussions about the potential for raising funds for a turf field inside the track. He also noted that he would revisit consideration of moving forward on the project.

BUDGET SCHEDULE DISCUSSION

Mr. Spencer Suter, Rockbridge County Administrator, presented the adopted budget schedule of the Board of Supervisors, noting that there are key dates that will impact both boards. He expressed his appreciation for the school division's willingness to provide a soft budget number prior to the required March 30 submission.

- Supervisor Higgins requested confirmation of the September ADM.
 - Dr. Thompson stated that the September 30 ADM number was low by 24 students.
 - Trustee McDaniel stated that the ADM estimation for FY20 budget preparation was the same as the one the school division had begun with, but they used the state's higher estimated number. He further stated that if the March 30 ADM number is that low, the school board could end up shy \$140,000 in the FY2020 budget.

Supervisor Higgins stated that this is his last joint meeting and he expressed his appreciation to all those present for the work over the past eight years. He reflected to the success achieved through formation of the Joint Executive Committee and joint meetings of the two boards. He then recognized Dr. Thompson and congratulated the school board for executing a new contract with Dr. Thompson. Supervisor Higgins wished everyone the best and noted that there are only so many tax dollars to go around.

- Trustee McDaniel concurred with Supervisor Higgins, noting that the boards are in a much better place than when they began eight years ago.

The next regularly scheduled Joint Meeting of the Rockbridge County School Board and Rockbridge County Board of Supervisors is scheduled for Thursday, January 16, 2020 at 5:00 PM / Location : Rockbridge County School Board Office, 2893 Collierstown Road, Lexington, Virginia.

ADJOURNMENT

Upon motion by Trustee McDaniel, seconded by Trustee Whitmore and passed by 4-0 vote, the meeting was adjourned at 6:06 p.m.


Wendy W. Lovell, Chairman


Haywood M. Hand, Deputy Clerk of the Board