

Currituck County Schools**Board of Education Meeting****09/16/2021 06:30 PM****Meeting Minutes****Printed : 10/15/2021 2:40 PM ET**

Historic Currituck County Courthouse

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Attendees

Voting Members

Karen Etheridge, Chairman
Dwan Craft, Vice Chairman
Dr. Bill Dobney, Board Member
Janet Rose, Board Member
Kelly Williams Peters, Board Member

Non-Voting Members

Dr. Matt Lutz, Superintendent
Albert Mercado, Student Board Member
Daniel Walker, Student Board Member

A. Call to Order

1. Invocation

For the invocation Dwan Craft spoke on the memorial services held for CCMS student Julie Randel, who was tragically struck by a vehicle while crossing the highway. Julie passed away due to her injuries.

2. Pledge of Allegiance

3. School Spotlight- Principal Denise Fallon & JP Knapp Early College

The school spotlight featured JP Knapp Early College. Principal Denise Fallon spoke on the student leadership opportunities at the school. Student members of the FBLA Club and College of The Albemarle Student Government Association were present and spoke on the positive experiences gained from having the opportunity to participate.

B. Public Comment Session

Mr. Jason Smith spoke favorably of the Board of Education and how their recent actions showed they cared. However, he believed they have been strong-armed by the Health Department and CDC to require masks in the schools. Mr. Smith said that masks do not stop the spread of COVID, students lose their identity and the masks create other health issues. He suggested that the schools and health department work together to remove the mask mandate.

C. Approval of Agenda (Action)

Dr. Dobney asked to make a revision to the August 5, 2021 meeting minutes. Janet Rose asked that the Attendance Policy #4400 be revisited before approving.

Motion made by: Dwan Craft

Motion seconded by: Kelly Williams Peters

Voting:

Unanimously Approved

D. Student Board Member Report

Student BOE Members reported on student activities, school events, and athletics.

E. End of Grade & End of Course Testing Data

Sandy Reynolds, Chief Information Officer, presented the 2020-21 Testing Data.

Ms. Reynolds presented data for individual schools and the district. She explained that due to the pandemic a Virtual Academy was created to accommodate students during the 20-21 school year. The state waived the 95% participation rate. Schools and the district as a whole scored higher than the state in many areas. Ms. Reynolds explained how the Virtual Academy scores were hand calculated - meaning the state's business models were not applied. The 20-21 testing data was also compared to the 18-19 school year. The pandemic forced schools to close and operate virtually during the 19-20 school year. The data showed a learning loss for elementary and middle school students. However there were some improvements to the high school scores. Ms. Reynolds explained that Christy Hodges, Curriculum Director, would provide a presentation on the district's plan to address the learning loss. She added that some ESSER funds would also be used to address the loss. Ms. Reynolds stated that she was proud of the district's ability to provide services during the closing but also looked forward to moving ahead.

The testing data will be added to the BOE minutes and posted.

F. Curriculum Strategic Plan Presentation

Christy Hodges, Director of Curriculum & Instruction, presented the district's curriculum strategic plan. She included a timeline showing the process. Listening sessions were scheduled to identify the needs of the staff and a team of stakeholders was formed. She read the curricular belief and mission statements, explaining that each word had been thoughtfully added. The team created pacing guides for each grade level with input from staff. Along with the pacing guides, resources were selected by using a vetting process. The four content areas were reviewed and parameters were developed. She explained the difference between required use and optional use.

Following the review of the gathered data, it was determined that staff needed and wanted continued support. The district has responded with additional support positions including the hiring of Instructional Coaches.

Dr. Dobney asked how the district would ensure the pacing guides would be used. Ms. Hodges said the guides were created with the collaboration of teachers. Therefore the guides are supported by teachers, their peers, Instructional Coaches and Administration. The supplied information will also assist with meeting the standards at the end of the school year. Dr. Dobney asked about using longitudinal data to track improvement. Ms. Hodges said it was her plan to use qualitative and quantitative data.

Ms. Hodges said the curriculum plan would help parents to understand that subjects are being taught the same in all of the district's schools. Dr. Lutz added that the plan would help address those types of concerns within the district's six elementary schools. He believes the plan will be successful. Dwan Craft added how it was important to have the ½ day early releases on Fridays reserved for staff development. Janet Rose asked about accreditation. Dr. Lutz said the plan was moving forward with anticipation of being accredited in 2023.

G. Safe Schools Update (Covid)

Virginia Arrington, Student Services Coordinator, presented the district's COVID update. The district began the year without masks, except on buses where they were required. However, due to the quarantine mandate the Board reconvened and voted to require masks in the schools.

Ms. Arrington said the district is partnering with a company to conduct diagnostic COVID testing. Testing will be performed by the school nurses and conducted only with parental consent. Test results can be available to parents within 24 hours. Negative results can allow students to return to school quicker since many medical offices and clinics are overwhelmed. Parents can sign up ahead of time or when services are needed. Ms. Arrington explained how the form does speak to other services, but the district will only conduct COVID testing. In addition to the consent form, parents will be contacted prior to testing. Parents should be present during the testing of elementary students. Parents will be given a choice to be present when older students are tested. Ms. Arrington also explained the 5-year data retention clause that parents can opt out of at any time.

The Board discussed the large number of students who had to be quarantined due to COVID exposure prior to the mask mandate. The lost school days were significant. The mask mandate has greatly lowered the number of students out of school. Dr. Lutz said that masks will continue to be used in the schools.

Kelly Peters inquired about the availability of water bottles and the refilling stations. Ms. Arrington said bottled water was available and stations are being installed.

The Board and Dr. Lutz discussed the district's abilities and plan should a COVID cluster appear. It was important to keep the students in the school setting. The Board discussed the need for mask breaks and using the outside areas to do so. The Board also discussed the mental health of students and possible anxieties. Dr. Lutz said the district has a mental health team in place to assist the students as they return to the buildings.

Daniel Walker, CCHS Student Representative, said that everyone appeared to be happy and excited to be back in the school, especially with the opportunity to join clubs. Albert Mercado, JPK Student Representative, said it was nice to have direct teacher and student interactions again.

H. School Nutrition Update

Angela Rodriguez, School Nutrition Director, gave the Board an update on the department. Ms. Rodriguez said the department was struggling to fill vacant positions and food supplies have sometimes been low. However the need for student meals has increased. The department served approximately 1,300 more meals than in 2019. She thanked building administrators for being patient with the staffing shortages.

Ms. Rodriguez announced that although student meals are being provided at no charge for the 21-22 school year, it was imperative that eligible families complete and return the free and reduced meal applications. Title I funding and technology funding is still based on the free and reduced data. Currently only 19% of the applications have been returned. Chairman Etheridge asked if the information could be pushed out by the district's new PR position. Incentives cannot be used to encourage the return of the forms. The Board thanked the School Nutrition staff for their hard work.

I. Transportation Update

Renee Dowdy, Assistant Superintendent, provided a brief transportation update. This year the shortage of drivers caused double runs and long routes. The driver shortage is being felt nationwide, not just in Currituck. The department continues to work through the shortage by actively recruiting and hiring drivers. Ridership is more accurate now than at the beginning of the school year. COVID and quarantine mandates still create problems but bus drivers have worked hard to accommodate the students. In addition to hiring drivers, a TIMS operator was added. Routes continue to be modified and shortened.

Dr. Dobney asked about the custodians driving. Ms. Dowdy said that every custodian is required to have a CDL and to drive. Dwan Craft added that she understands it's easy to plan the routes but once students are added it can create various issues. Ms. Dowdy said Administration was surprised by the amount of new houses and developments. The bus tracking application is not available to parents until all the student data is correct. The Board discussed the possibility of needing more buses. Dr. Lutz said the department will continue to make changes.

J. Consent Agenda (Action)

Motion made by: Kelly Williams Peters

Motion seconded by: Dwan Craft

Voting:

Unanimously Approved

1. Personnel Report Dated September 16, 2021
 - a. Leave Report - Confidential
2. Board of Education Meeting Minutes for August 5, 2021
A spelling error in the Public Comment minutes was corrected.
3. Closed Session Minutes for August 5, 2021
4. Technology Contract
 - a. Trafera - Chromebooks
5. Essential Services Contracts
6. Transportation Contracts:
 - a. Edulog Transportation
 - b. Samsara (GPS for Buses)
7. 2nd Reading & Adoption of Policies #4400 Attendance & #3620 Extracurricular Activities and Student Organizations
Administration will develop administrative guidelines for make-up work in order to ensure uniformity through the district.
8. Banking Reconciliations (Informational Only)
9. LPR Ground Transportation (Informational Only)

K. Information Items

1. Work Session - October 21, 2021- Knapp Professional Learning Center, 4:00 p.m.
2. Board of Education Meeting - October 21, 2021 - Historic Currituck County Courthouse, 6:30 p.m.

L. Board Members & Superintendent Comments

Kelly Peters asked for clarification on the early release Fridays. Early release is not scheduled for every other Friday, but instead two are strategically planned each month when possible. The holiday schedule can cause conflicts.

Janet Rose extended sympathy to the family of Julie Randel. She welcomed students back, thanked parents and staff for reaching out to her and was delighted with the turnout for the Senior Breakfast. She also gave a special thank you to Virginia Arrington and school nurses as they deal with issues caused by the pandemic.

Dwan Craft said College of The Albemarle was very complimentary about the math readiness of the students at JP Knapp Early College. She spoke about her visits to

the schools.

Dr. Dobney also gave his condolences to the Randel family. He thanked everyone for the smoothest school opening possible and also to Dr. Durham, who he feels is doing an outstanding job with communication.

The benefits of a vocational track for high school students was discussed again. With the district's graduation cohort at 84% - the vocational track would be critical to reducing the dropout rate. A vocational track does not mean less rigor, but different rigor that could be personalized to the student's needs

Dr. Lutz asked that motorists slow down on the roads and he thanked law enforcement for their efforts. He also thanked the staff for coming to work. He noted the steady work of the Maintenance Department. The size of the department may need to be increased to meet the demands of the district.

Chairman Etheridge spoke on Julie Randel's middle name - which was Hope. She said Julie was now giving hope to many people because she was an organ donor. She extended her condolences to the Randel family.

M. Adjourn Meeting (Action)

Motion made by: Dwan Craft

Motion seconded by: Dr. Bill Dobney

Voting:

Unanimously Approved

Chairperson

Secretary